



## SESSION 19: MEANING

**TOPIC:** Vocation

### GOAL

The goal of this session is to help the teens develop a better understanding of universal vocation and particular vocation, specifically how they apply to living out the call to holiness as a teen.

### KEY CONCEPTS

Catholics use the word “vocation” a lot, but many teens do not know what it actually means; it includes both universal and particular vocations.

Each person has the same universal vocation: the call to holiness. We must respond to this vocation during every moment of our lives.

Our particular vocation is a specific and individual vocation from God, a calling to live out His will for our lives. This includes the Sacrament of Marriage, the Sacrament of Holy Orders, and consecrated life.

Teens should begin discerning their particular vocation by asking God what He wants for their lives and learning more about the different vocations within the Catholic Church.

### KEY TERMS

**Consecrated Life:** A permanent state of life recognized by the Church, entered freely in response to the call of Christ to perfection, and characterized by the profession of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

**Holy Orders:** The Sacrament of Apostolic Ministry by which the mission entrusted by Christ to His apostles continues to be exercised in the Church through the laying on of hands. This sacrament has three distinct degrees or “orders”: deacon, priest, and bishop. All three confer a permanent, sacramental character.

**Matrimony:** A sacrament that joins one man and one woman in marriage with promises that the couple will be faithful to each other, open to life, and commit to living out their faith as a representation of the love Christ has for the Church.

**Vocation:** The calling or destiny we have in this life and hereafter. The vocation of the laity consists in seeking the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God’s will.

**Vow:** A deliberate and free promise made to God, concerning a possible and better good which must be fulfilled by reason of the virtue of religion.

## **SCRIPTURE**

1 Peter 1:15-23

1 Samuel 3

## **CATECHISM**

1

27

542-543

1533-1535

## **ABOUT THIS SESSION**

Proclaim covers our universal and particular vocations, emphasizing how teens can begin opening themselves to the Lord's call at this stage in their lives. The Break dives deeper into the different types of vocations through rotating stations. The Send invites the teens to ask what God is calling them to do in their lives right now as they live out the universal call to holiness and begin opening their hearts to their particular vocation.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

Hang pictures of people living out their vocations around the room or project a slideshow of the images. Include pictures of married couples, priests, religious sisters, monks, consecrated virgins, etc.

## **AS YOU GET STARTED**

*In preparation for the Proclaim, consider reading chapters five and six of Lumen Gentium, which can be found online at [vatican.va](http://vatican.va).*

## **GATHER**

*Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 min)*

Gather the teens in the main meeting space. Welcome them to the session and begin in prayer.

## **PROCLAIM**

*"Meaning" Teaching (15 min)*

### **What Is a Vocation?**

Ask the teens to imagine what their lives will be like in ten years. *Give them a few minutes to reflect on this and share what they envision their lives will look like with the person sitting next to them.*

How many of you said something about which college you will attend? The job you will have? The vocation you will be living out? Being a wife, a husband, a priest, or a religious sister?

*Briefly share where you thought your life would be like when you envisioned it ten years ago.*

What does the word "vocation" even mean? In the Catholic world, we talk a lot about vocations. We use the word when we talk about the vocation of a priest, religious, or married person. But it does not end there. Vocation also means God's call for how He wants you to live out His will.

## **Universal Vocation**

Many of you were able to easily envision what your life will be like ten years from now, but sometimes it is harder to figure out who we are meant to be in this moment. Many of us are not even asking the most important question: Who does God want me to be right now? We each have the same universal vocation, the same call to holiness. The call to holiness is that God “calls man to seek Him, to know Him, to love Him with all his strength.” It is my call, it is your call, and it is the call of the person sitting next to you. We are called to seek, know, and love the Lord. “But as He who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct.”

*CCC 1, 1533; 1 Peter 1:15*

You are not meant to answer this call in ten years — it is time for you to respond right now. But how do you live a holy life in this moment, as a teen in high school? An easy way to gauge if you are living out holiness in your daily life is to look at how you treat people. Do you take away people’s dignity by talking badly about them? Have you taken time to get to know the lonely student at school? Do you go out of your way to help those in need?

Another important part of living out holiness is being the best student you can be by completing your homework, behaving in class, and taking your education seriously. This does not necessarily mean you have to be a straight A student, but it does mean that you always do your best.

As Catholics, we have been given the great gift of the sacraments to help us live out our universal call to holiness. By going to Mass every Sunday and receiving the Lord in the Eucharist, we become more like Him. By partaking in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we are able to more fully live out our call.

*Consider using CCC 2447 to discuss the corporal and spiritual works of mercy as ways of living out the call to holiness.*

## **Particular Vocation**

We are all called to live out our universal vocation, but we are also called to live out our particular vocation. This is the vocation that was meant specifically for you. Look around at the people sitting next to you. You all have different gifts.

*Name some of the gifts particular to the teens.*

The Lord made each of you unique and thus, He has a specific way for you to live out your particular vocation here on Earth. There are many times in our lives when we think God is trying to trick us, just like Simon did in the Gether. These are the times when cannot figure out what He is calling us to do. The reality is that God is calling us to something specific, but sometimes we do not listen to Him. One of the gifts of the Sacrament of Confirmation is that you will become more firmly united to Christ. This gift allows you to hear His call more clearly, but only if you truly listen to what He is telling you to do.

*CCC 1303*

*Share an example of when you listened to God’s call in your life.*

## **Types of Vocations**

*Briefly introduce the following types of vocations. During the Break, the teens will be given a more in-depth explanation of each.*

We have all probably experienced married couples living out the Sacrament of Marriage and our parish priests living out the Sacrament of Holy Orders, but these are only two of the many vocations within the Catholic Church.

The Sacrament of Holy Orders includes our diocesan bishop, parish priests, and deacons, but it also includes religious priests who are living out a different charism in their ministry, such as the Franciscans, Norbertines, and Dominicans. The Sacrament of Marriage includes couples who are married in the Church. Consecrated life includes people who have chosen to live a life of virginity for the Lord. Some examples of consecrated life are religious sisters, consecrated virgins living in the world, and secular institutes.

## **Your Personal Discernment**

You might be wondering, *“What does all of this mean for me?”* Well, it is important to keep in mind that God calls you to the vocation that will be your surest path to holiness. Although we sometimes feel like God is going to force us into a vocation we do not want, we need to begin discerning our vocation. The process of discernment may seem intimidating, but there are simple steps you can take to begin this process. First, ask the Lord to open your heart so you will be ready to say “yes” when He starts you on the path toward your vocation.

*Share about your own discernment as you found or continue to seek your vocation.*

Second, learn about and experience as many different vocations as you can. The more you learn about them, the better you will hear the Lord when He begins directing you toward your vocation. You can start by researching the different types of religious orders and charisms. For example, some religious are active in education, serve the poor, or take care of the sick. Other religious are cloistered and commit their entire lives to prayer for the Church.

Once you find some vocations that you feel fit your gifts and personality, start getting to know people who are living them out. Spend time with a married couple living out the Lord’s will in their family. Get to know our parish priest and see what his day-to-day life is like. Visit different religious orders. Get to know a consecrated virgin.

The idea of visiting a religious order may seem overwhelming and the people around you might make a big deal out of it, but visiting a convent or monastery does not mean you will become a sister or priest. It simply means you are opening yourself up to whatever path the Lord is calling you to. One day you will enter into your vocation. It will be an outward “yes” to the Lord in following His will for your life. For now, these smaller steps are just that: small steps to help you learn how to live out your call to holiness.

## **BREAK**

### *Vocation Stations (30 min)*

Designate three separate areas for each of the stations: Holy Orders, Marriage, and consecrated life. Divide the teens into their small groups and then divide the small groups into three larger groups. The large groups will rotate through the stations together, but the activities within each station will be completed in small groups. Each station lasts for ten minutes. Use the following outlines to direct the discussion for each station:

#### Station 1: The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Testimony)

For this station invite your parish priest, vocations director, or seminarian to give their testimony about their discernment process. Have them briefly talk about their life as a priest, including some of the things about their vocation they did not realize they would enjoy. Allow five minutes for the testimony and five minutes for a question and answer session.

#### Station 2: The Sacrament of Marriage (Reading of the Vows)

Use the following to introduce the station:

*In this station, we are going to dive into the Sacrament of Marriage by looking at the vows a married couple commits to within the Sacrament. Unlike some other Christian denominations, Catholics are not allowed to write their own vows. The reason for this is that when a man and woman enter into the Sacrament of Marriage, they make very specific vows.*

Divide the teens into their small groups. Give each teen a pen and a copy of the *Marriage Vows* handout. Have the teens complete the handout and then invite them to share the words that describe marriage and those they do not understand with their small group. The teens may use a dictionary or smartphone to look up the definitions of any words they do not know the meaning of. If time allows, use the following questions to facilitate a discussion:

- Do you know a married couple who is living out these vows? In what ways do they live out their marriage vows?
- What part of these vows make you feel that marriage will be beautiful?
- What part of these vows make you feel that marriage will be a struggle?

#### Station 3: Consecrated Life (Consecrated Life Matching Game)

Prior to the session, print out copies of the *Consecrated Life Matching Game* handout for each small group. Cut the handout into individual cards and place the cards in an envelope. Have copies of the Catechism for each small group or print out copies of the sections you need from the online version. Divide the teens into their Confirmation small groups and then use the following to introduce the activity:

*When I say “go,” you are going to match the different forms of consecrated life with one of their attributes, dress, and a saint who lived out their vocation within that form of consecrated life. You may use the Catechism of the Catholic Church for reference, but you may also use your smartphone to look up other information. You will want to refer to sections 914 through 933 in the Catechism.*

The first group who correctly matches each form of consecrated life with their attribute, dress, and saint wins.

## SEND

### *Your Call (10 min)*

Gather the teens in the main meeting space. Create a prayerful environment by dimming the lights and playing instrumental music in the background. Use the following to transition into the activity:

*Today we talked about the universal vocation and your specific vocation. Many of us struggle to hear God's call because we are always so busy — we have music in our ears, activities we have to be at, and social media constantly drawing our attention. However, this is not a new problem. Even people in the Old and New Testaments had a hard time hearing God's call. This struggle is real but if we learn to listen, we will hear the Lord's voice.*

Read 1 Samuel 3:1-11.

*The Lord had to call out to Samuel four times before he finally said, "Speak, for thy servant hears." Often times, the Lord has to call our names many times before we turn to Him and say, "Speak, Lord." Take this time to listen to the Lord. Where is He calling you? Listen to Him and respond, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."*

Give the teens a few moments to silently listen to the Lord, specifically where He is calling them. This might make some teens uncomfortable because they do not often spend time in true silence. Encourage them to lean into the discomfort and when they are ready, use the following to continue the activity:

*We all have a vocation. What is God specifically calling you to do so you can live out your universal vocation, your call to holiness? What is God calling you to do so you can make a step toward your particular vocation?*

Give the teens a few minutes to reflect on and journal about their vocation and then close the session with the following prayer:

*Lord, you have called each of us to live a life of holiness. Show us how to live out that call in this stage of our lives. You have a specific vocation for each of us. Help us to be open to your call and begin learning more about the different types of vocations in the Church. Give us the strength to always say "yes" to whatever it is you are calling us to. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

## Handout: Consecrated Life Matching Game

Form of Consecrated Life	Attribute	Saint
Franciscan	Serving the poor, the sick, and those in need of renewal of faith are the main charisms of this order.	St. Bernardine of Siena
Dominican	The four pillars of this order are community, service, study, and prayer.	St. Catherine of Siena
Carmelite	Contemplation is the main focus of this order.	St. Teresa of Avila
Missionary of Charity	This order was established to answer God's call to serve the poorest of the poor.	St. Teresa of Calcutta
Secular Institute	They share in the Church's task of evangelization in the world and from within the world.	A relatively new vocation in the Church.
Consecrated Virgin	This vocation is a group of women who are living in the world according to the state of life and spiritual gifts given to her.	St. Agatha
Jesuit	Saint Ignatius of Loyola's spiritual exercises are at the heart of this order.	St. Francis Xavier
Hermit	They devote their lives to stricter separation from the world, the silence of solitude, and assiduous prayer and penance.	St. Anthony the Hermit
Salesian	This order's main charism is promoting the growth and education of youth.	St. John Bosco

## Handout: Marriage Vows

Read the following marriage vows. Underline the words that describe the marriage vow and circle the words you do not know the meaning of.

Have you come here to enter into Marriage without coercion, freely, and wholeheartedly?

Are you prepared, as you follow the path of marriage, to love and honor each other for as long as you both shall live?

Are you prepared to accept children lovingly from God and to bring them up according to the law of Christ and His Church?

Since it is your intention to enter the covenant of Holy Matrimony, join your right hands and declare your consent before God and His Church.

I, take you to be my husband/wife. I promise to be faithful to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love you and to honor you all the days of my life.

*Adapted from [catholicweddinghelp.com/topics/catholic-wedding-vows.htm](http://catholicweddinghelp.com/topics/catholic-wedding-vows.htm).*