

Chapter 8

The Sacrament of Holy Orders

Getting Started

Assign the students to read Chapter 8, “The Sacrament of Holy Orders.” Use the following questions from the Student Text to guide a discussion of the chapter:

- Brainstorm a list of ways that God calls people to service.
- How would your parents and family react if you were considering a vocation to the priesthood or religious life?
- How can the Church encourage more priestly vocations?
- If you could ask a seminarian three questions, what would they be?
- What is the best advice you could offer to a new priest on his ordination day?
- What are some qualities a bishop needs to be a good leader?
- How might knowing that it is Christ acting through the priest in the sacraments help you to explain the Sacraments of Eucharist and Penance to a non-Catholic friend?

(See the Student Text for additional questions.) Then ask the students to read the following article.

Application Reading

<http://21stcenturycatholic.blogspot.com/2006/07/why-priesthood.html>

WHY PRIESTHOOD? REGARDING STORIES

By Jacob Maurer

One of the things people love to hear is the story of another. It is an easy way to learn something of the character of a person. It is also a way to learn various truths. At times, a story even needs to be invented to provide the context to better explore certain truths. And of course, sometimes a story is just a story—told for the joy of hearing the adventure.

Discussion

Lead the students in a discussion of the following questions:

- What role did the author’s family play in his early faith formation—and ultimately, his decision to become a priest? His family raised him in the Church, frequently relied on their faith when making important decisions, discussed their faith over meals, and practiced Christian love toward others, especially by adopting two children.
- What first got the author thinking about possibly becoming a priest? After briefly flirting with the idea of becoming a Protestant, he visited with his parish priest and discovered him to be a “normal man.” Learning more about the priesthood from this priest led the author to consider becoming a priest himself.
- At the beginning of his essay, the author says that the most important part of his story is how God has acted in his life. What do you think are some of the most important ways that God acted in the author’s life? Do you think he necessarily recognized God’s work in his life at the time of these important events?
- Do you think the author would make a good priest? Why or why not?

Activity

Lifeline

- In the first part of this activity, the students create a timeline of significant events in their lives so far as a way of reflecting on God’s hand in their lives. In the second part of the activity, the students develop a hypothetical timeline for the rest of their lives as a way of exploring how God is calling them. This activity can be shortened by having students do only one of the timelines.
- For this activity, the students will need a long sheet of paper (a roll of butcher paper works well, or standard-sized paper taped or stapled together) as well as art materials such as markers, pens, crayons, and so on. Optionally, provide the students with old magazines from which they can cut out symbolic pictures to paste into their timelines. Or ask that students to bring copies of family photos from home. Finally, consider playing some fun, appropriate music in the background to facilitate the students’ work.
- After discussing the essay with the students, emphasize the importance of recognizing God at work in our

lives as a part of lifelong vocation discernment. Note that we may not always recognize God at work in our lives at the time; often it is easier to see grace at work in hindsight.

- Tell the students that one way of exploring how God has been at work in their lives is to create a timeline of significant events in their life so far. A “significant event” is one that has influenced who the students are today. It could be a well-defined event, such as a move or the death of a relative, or it might be an ongoing situation, such as the decision of a parent to stay home with young children or a long-term illness.
- The students should create their timelines by first labeling their paper with units of time (probably years) in their life so far. The paper should look something like a ruler when they are finished. Next, they should note the most significant events in their life with some phrases or a short description near the appropriate time; invite them to illustrate each event with their own drawing or with family photos from the time period. Finally, when they have finished this part of their timeline, they should go over it again and note (with either a phrase or a symbol) when and how God has acted in their lives.
- Circulate among the students as they are working to offer encouragement and guidance, especially to those students who have difficulty recognizing God at work in their lives.
- When the students have had enough time to complete the timeline of their lives so far, have them flip their paper over to the blank side. Tell them that on this side of the paper they are to create a hypothetical timeline of the most significant events in the rest of their lives. This timeline should reflect their own hopes and dreams, as well as their ideas about what God is calling them to do with their lives. As with the first timeline, they may use phrases, short descriptions, and illustrations.
- Emphasize to the students that this “future timeline” is not meant to be a hard and fast plan for their lives, and therefore it is not something they should agonize over—discernment is a lifelong process! Instead, they should approach this future timeline with some playful creativity and openness to the work of God in their lives.
- Conclude this activity by asking volunteers to share their timelines with the whole group. What are some examples of unexpected twists and turns in the students’ lives? What are some of the most surprising ways that God has worked in the students’ lives? What are the dangers of expecting that life will unfold exactly according to our plans? How can we remain open to God’s providence?

Additional Activities

- Have the students complete the “More Vocation Awareness” activity on page 234 of the Student Textbook.
- Have the students complete “A Prayer to Hear God’s Call” activity on page 238 of the Student Textbook.
- Have the design images for a chalice as described in assignment #7 in the Assignments and Applications section of the Student Textbook (page 251).
- Lead the students in the listening activity as described under the heading “Extending the Lesson” on page 238 of the Teacher’s Wraparound Edition.
- Lead the students in the prayer service described in step #4 under the Teaching Approaches heading in the “Chapter 8 Review” section of the Teacher’s Wraparound Edition.
- Have the students complete “The Three Orders” handout (Handout 46) found in the Teacher’s Wraparound Edition.
- Have the students complete the “Chapter 8 Vocabulary Puzzle” handout (Handout 49) found in the Teacher’s Wraparound Edition.

Additional Resources

For Internet resources, see the Teacher’s Wraparound Edition.

Check whether you can get a video recording of an ordination from your diocese to show your students.