



MARRIAGE AND HOLY ORDERS: YOUR CALL TO LOVE AND SERVE

Parish Religious Education Adaptations



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Chapter 1: Called to Holiness

Getting Started

Assign the students to read Chapter 1, “Called to Holiness.” Use the following questions from the Student Text to guide a discussion of the chapter:

- Recount a time when someone asked you to be perfect. Explain what happened.
- What does God love about you?
- How does God intend for you to be “perfect”?
- In what ways has your life been surprising and full of mystery so far?
- Tell about a time when you experienced God’s presence.
- What does your own experience tell you about a longing for God?

Then ask the students to read the following article.

Application Reading

- http://www.commonwealmagazine.org/article.php3?id_article=296

AXIOMS OF FAITH: FINDING A LANGUAGE OF BELIEF

By Anna Nussbaum

In mathematics one must accept certain axioms, certain truths. Ten in all. Most important, one must accept the theoretical concepts of a point, a line, and a plane. Their existence cannot be proved or disproved, but they are the beginning of understanding geometry. My instructor explained, “You can’t prove anything from nothing. . . . When you write a dictionary, if you don’t have any words, you can’t define any words.”

Discussion

Lead the students in a discussion of the following questions:

1. The author, Anna Nussbaum, says she and her peers are “a generation trying to write a dictionary of belief without words,” and yet “all around me I find believers.” What sorts of “faith” does she describe in her peers? (Dallas believes in veganism; Tim believes in intellectualism; and Katie is driven by her body.)
2. St. Augustine said, “Our hearts are restless until they rest in You.” In what ways does the author’s essay reflect this truth? (The author and her friends are all seeking meaning in their lives; she begins to find it in the Church.)
3. How do belief and faith (religious or otherwise) shape the way we live our lives? What role did faith play in the different approaches that the author and her friend took toward the crisis of an unexpected pregnancy? (“Avi believes abortion is right in a wrong sort of way. But even if it is wrong, he can’t live it, this belief, all alone. . . . Being Catholic gives me moral principles and solid teaching to bring to life’s challenges. It also gives me courage to ask hard questions because I’m not alone. If this community can believe that the dead will rise again can they also believe that the child of an unmarried teen mother can be loved, can be valued, can be good?”)
4. What role does the Church play in helping the author find God? (The community of believers gives her the strength to believe in God and in miracles.)
5. What are your own “axioms of faith”—those things you believe to be true, even if you cannot prove them?

Activity

A personals ad for God and you

- Prior to this activity, find the personals section of your local paper (or a free personals website online). Cut out a variety of ads to share with the students (screening out any inappropriate material). Collect them on a sheet of paper and make several photocopies, one for each group of students. (Alternatively, you can paste them up on newsprint.) You will also need to provide students with paper and pencils.
- Introduce the activity by noting the popularity of dating websites and personal ads. Read the personal ads you collected before the session.
- Lead the students in a short discussion of the personal ads. What do they say about the way our culture approaches sexuality, both good and bad? What are some common themes in the ads? How is the search for

romantic love similar to or different from our search for divine love?

- Tell the students that the Jewish and Christian traditions frequently use romantic love as a way of describing and understanding the relationship between God and humans. Many saints used romantic images to describe their experience of God. The Song of Songs is a biblical example of romantic love as an image of divine love. And the Church says that the marriage of a man and a woman reflects the relationship that Christ has with the Church. The Church is even known as the bride of Christ.
- Explain to the students that they will be writing their own “personal ads” that describe what they are seeking in God. For fun, encourage them to use the stylistic conventions of a personal ad. Remind students that they will be asked to share their ads at the end of the activity.
- Give the students an appropriate amount of time to complete their ads (perhaps ten to fifteen minutes). Allow them to collaborate, if they like.
- Next, ask them to write a personal ad written by God that describes what God is seeking in the students. Each student’s ad should be written as if God was speaking to him or her. The students should consider what kind of beauty, talent, or characteristics God is looking for in them. What does God want to do with them?
- After the students have completed the second personal ad, gather the whole group together to share and discuss them. How might their desires for God—and their understanding of God’s desire for them—change and evolve as the relationship deepens? What kinds of mistakes do people tend to make in romantic relationships? Do we tend to make some of the same mistakes in our relationship with God? Point out that their personal ads are a starting point for understanding what it means to be called to holiness.

Additional Activities

- Ask students to write a haiku on God’s creation of the world or on an aspect of nature that helps them to know and love God (see the “Nature Haiku” activity on page 19 of the Student Text).
- Have the students brainstorm a list of 25 ways that a person can come to know God.
- Have the students make a collage of photos that reflect each of the Beatitudes.
- Lead the students in a discussion about the nature of relationships as described in the “Extending the Lesson” activity on page 35 of the Teacher’s Wraparound Edition.
- Lead the students in a discussion of the excerpt from Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking Glass* (on the nature of belief) as described in the “Extending the Lesson” activity on page 37 of the Teacher’s Wraparound Edition.
- Have students complete the “Me and My Faith” worksheet from the Teacher’s Wraparound Edition; lead them in a discussion of the worksheets as described in the Bell-Ringers section on page 40 of the Teacher’s Wraparound Edition.
- Lead the students in the prayer service described at the end of Chapter 1 in the Teacher’s Wraparound Edition.

Additional Resources

For Internet links related to this unit, see the Teacher’s Wraparound Edition.

Videos related to this chapter include “How to Get Blessed Without Sneezing” (Ecuofilm, 1994); “Therese of Lisieux: My Vocation Is Love” (Pauline Videos, 21 minutes, 1997).