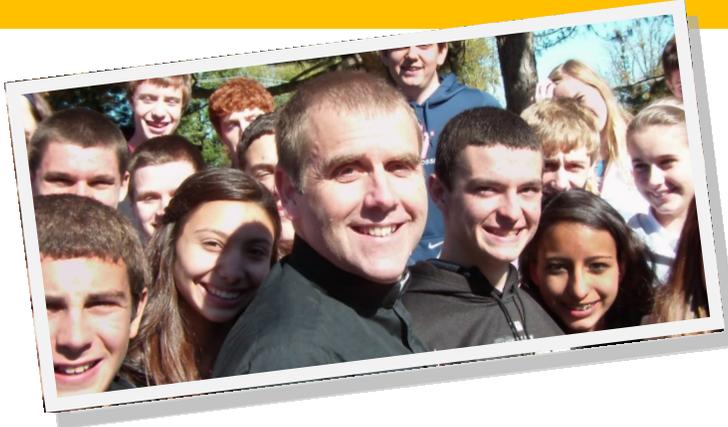


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Biblical Images of Vocation

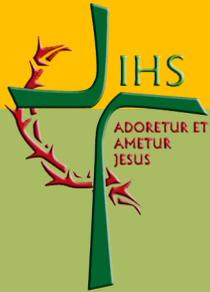
This is an outline for use with youth and young adults in a group setting. Leaders are encouraged to adapt these materials to meet the needs of the group.

- I. Introduction and overview of the topic for the event (5 minutes)
 - Who you are & why are you here?
 - What is it you would like to explore with the group?

- II. General Overview: The Bible & God's call on communities and individuals (15 minutes)
 1. In the Old Testament, God calls the people of Israel to faith—i.e. The Shema (Deut. 6)
 2. In the Old Testament, God calls particular people to carry out a specific task—i.e. Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 17), Moses (Exodus 4), the prophets (Amos 7), (Jer. 1), (Isaiah 6)
 3. In the New Testament, Jesus calls the people to a renewal of faith (Luke 5)
 4. In the New Testament, Jesus calls particular people to join him in mission—i.e. Simon, Andrew, James, John, Levi, Peter

- III. Exploring parallels between the Bible stories and our lives in small groups (30 minutes)
 - Use Matthew 9:9 as a model.
 - Have someone read the text and elicit responses to these questions:
 - ◊ Who are the characters in this story?
 - ◊ What are they doing when they encounter Jesus?
 - ◊ Who takes the initiative in establishing a conversation?
 - ◊ How do the characters respond to this encounter?
 - Divide large group into four smaller groups, asking them to answer the same questions.
 - ◊ Small group 1: **Mark 1:16-20**
 - ◊ Small group 2: **Luke 5:1-11**
 - ◊ Small group 3: **John 1: 43-50**
 - ◊ Small group 4: **John 4:1-30**

- IV. Break (10 minutes)
 - Instruct each group to compile their responses in writing



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- V. Exploring parallels between the Bible stories and our lives in a large group (30 minutes)
- Ask small groups to share the basic plot line of the story they discussed
 - Elicit responses to the questions found above, writing down the responses for all to see
 - Drawing on the groups' responses, thread in this content:
 - ◊ In nearly every story in the Bible, it is God who takes the initiative...Jesus calls
 - ◊ God's call interrupts our everyday life and invites us to find a new trajectory for our lives...we respond
 - ◊ God always gives us the option of opting out of following...our response is voluntary

VI. So what? (5 minutes)

Share this story with the group (taken from Edward P. Hahenberg, *Theology for Ministry: An Introduction for Lay Ministers*, Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2014, pp. 12-13).

(God's) call extends to all. But it is not the same for everyone.

This point was brought home to me several years ago when I returned to my old high school for my younger sister's graduation.

Before commencement, a baccalaureate mass was held in the white frame church next to the school. All the seniors arrived early wearing their caps and gowns. They processed in at the start of Mass. They filled the pews in front. Several of them served as lectors, gift bearers, and eucharistic ministers.

When it was time for the homily, Fr. Charlie came down from the altar and stood before the seniors. They sat there, proud as peacocks on the day of their graduation, with all of us family and friends beaming behind them.

Father began, "What a beautiful day! What a happy day! There is so much to celebrate and enjoy today."

He continued, "But as your pastor, I feel that it is my responsibility to remind you graduates—on this day—of an important truth."

"Your parents never wanted you."

He said it with a straight face. But we all laughed. And after we quieted down, Fr. Charlie repeated solemnly: "Your parents never wanted you."

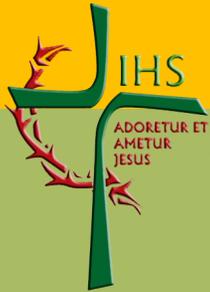
He went on, "Now don't get me wrong, maybe your parents wanted a baby. I am sure they wanted a healthy baby. Maybe they wanted a boy or they wanted a girl."

"But your parents never wanted . . . you."

After a pause, he said, "Only God wanted . . . you."

Father Charlie said it again and again, pointing to each individual graduate in the front row,

"Only God wanted . . . you."



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VI. ...continued

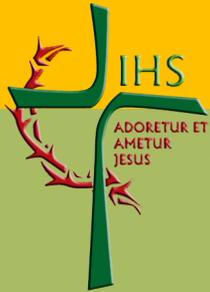
- Ask, rhetorically, what would it mean if we took God's call seriously?
- What does it mean to say that only God wanted you exactly as you are?
- When we allow God to take the initiative in our lives, we begin to hear God speaking, we begin to see through God's eyes, we begin to experience life like the characters in the Bible stories we explored.

VII. Concrete practices (10 minutes)

- Discover who you are: your strengths and abilities and your limitations.
- What activities make you come alive?
- When do you feel most closely connected to God?
- *The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.*
Frederick Buechner
- Begin a personal prayer discipline. God often speaks through the people we encounter every day. Take time to pray for these people every day.
- Start a prayer journal, pray the Rosary, find a prayer book and open it!
- Immerse yourself in the lives and struggles of the lonely, the outcasts and the poor. God often speaks through the people living on the margins of society.
- Join a group and bring the Blessed Sacrament to the elderly living near you. Get involved in a soup kitchen ministry and engage the people you encounter in conversation.
- Stay active in the life of your local parish. We learn the life of Christian discipleship together in community: the prayer, the celebrations, the parish events knit us to one another.
- *God calls me through others for others.* Edward Hahnenberg
- Study the Scriptures in order to understand our sisters and brothers in faith. We grow closer to God by looking at the people in the Bible who experienced God's love and followed God's plan.

VIII. Conclusion

- Close in prayer, offering to stick around afterward to talk or share your contact information.



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Continue the Conversation

Vocations in general- The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has a variety of informative videos and links concerning all vocations: <http://www.foryourvocation.org>. See especially the section “Videos.” In 2009, Fr. Stephen Wang authored an excellent booklet entitled *How to Discover your Vocation: Marriage, Priesthood, Consecrated Life, Permanent Diaconate, Single Life*. Copies can be obtained at <http://www.ignatius-cts.com>.

Discernment- There are a number of organizations in the Church focusing on helping people discern their vocation. One such organization is Catholics on Call, which hosts a yearly discernment program for young people as well as an informative website: <http://www.catholicsoncall.org>.

Marriage- If you are thinking about getting advice and preparing for marriage, begin with a conversation with your parish priest. Additionally, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has a variety of informative videos and links concerning marriage: <http://www.foryourmarriage.org>. See especially the section “Videos.”

Priesthood- Information for Diocesan Priesthood can be found through your local diocesan website. Contact the Vocations Director in your home diocese or ask your local priest.

Consecrated Life- If you are considering consecrated life, contact any congregations or associations you have been attracted to through this informative website: <http://www.vocationnetwork.org>. If you are a male considering consecrated life as a Viatorian brother or priest, contact the Clerics of St. Viator at: <http://viatorians.com>.

Permanent Deacon- Information for the Permanent Diaconate can be found through your local diocesan website. If you are considering the Permanent Diaconate, please inform your parish priest as soon as possible.

Single Life— Information on the single vocation and single life can be found here: <http://www.pathsoflove.com>.

Additional Resources for Educators

Bonnafous, Robert. *Louis Querbes and the Catechists of Saint Viator*. Arlington Heights, IL: Clerics of St. Viator, 1993.

Bonneville, Léo. *Louis Querbes*. Rome: Clerics of St. Viator, 1965.

Hahnenberg, Edward P. *Awaking Vocation: A Theology of Christian Call*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press/Michael Glazier, 2010.

Neafsey, John. *A Sacred Voice is Calling: Personal Vocation and Social Conscience*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006.

Ryan, Robin (ed.). *Catholics on Call: Discerning a Life of Service in the Church*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010.