

For the Classroom – Formation in Christian Chastity, Grade 4

Theme: The mystery of God and our personal relationship to God

Objectives:

1. Students will know how we can offer our lives to God in service to Him in a particular way called a “vocation.”
2. Students will learn about the different types of vocations.
 - Many people are called to love God and neighbor as married people.
 - Some people are called to love God and neighbor as priests in Holy Orders. Bishops and priests serve the people of God by bringing them Jesus in the sacraments, such as Holy Communion and Confession.
 - Some people are called to love God and neighbor as religious brothers or sisters (Nuns). These take vows (special promises) of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They usually live in community with each other.
 - A single person is someone who is not married. They try to be holy in the everyday circumstances of the world.

VOCABULARY:

Vocation - To become a saint, God has chosen a particular kind of life for everyone. This might be marriage, or priesthood, or as a religious brother or sister, or as a single person.

Marriage - Most people are called to be married and have children. The family is also called the Domestic Church.

Holy Orders - Bishops, priests and deacons have a special role in bringing the sacraments to the people, in instructing them and in helping them become holy.

Consecrated Life - A person joins a religious order to live in community and to serve God and neighbor by living the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience as a religious, nun or brother.

Single Person - A person not married, who is trying to become a saint in the everyday circumstance of the world.

Opening Prayer: Our Father

Tell the children that every year the Church sets aside the month of October as “Respect Life” month. Tell the children that when we “respect life,” when we respect others and ourselves, we are practicing, “chastity.” Tell them that you want to talk to them about what “chastity” means.

Write the word “God” on the chalk board in the center. To the left side write the word, “Creation.” Tell the children that God created all things and that all things he created are good. Draw an arrow between “God” and “Creation” and label it “Good.” Ask them to give you examples of good things God created and list them under the word “Creation.” Eventually they will give you examples like “My Mom and Dad,” “Me,” “My Sister,” etc. When you have eight or nine things listed on the board, zero in on “My Mom and Dad,” “Me,” and “My Sister.” Circle these and tell the children that of all the things listed on the board, the things God created that are most special to him are people. Write underneath “God” the word “People” and draw an arrow to it.

Next, tell the children that God created people with both a body and a soul. Tell them we can see our bodies, but we can’t see our souls. Tell them their souls are what gives them life. To the right of the word “People,” write “Body” and “Soul” and draw arrows to them. Tell them that what makes people so special is that God has given them an “immortal soul,” which means that God wants people to live with Him in heaven and be happy with Him forever.

Then, ask the children what the most basic difference is between people. You could ask them to fill in the blanks of the following sentence: “Some people are _____, while others are _____.” If this doesn’t work, pick a boy and a girl and ask them to fill in the blanks of this sentence: “Jack is a _____, while Jill is a _____.” Underneath “People” write the words “Male” to the left and “Female” to the right and draw arrows to them. Be sure to leave enough room between “Male” and “Female” for four columns of words. Explain that “Male” is just another word for boys while “Female” is just another word for girls.

Tell the children that God created people to be either male or female so there would be different kinds of people to take care of children. This is because God has a plan for us. His plan for us is called our “Vocation.” Write the word “Vocation” under both “Male” and “Female” on the board.

First, let’s start with the boys. God wants all men to be spiritual fathers. Write directly under “Vocation” for males, “Spiritual Fathers.” God calls some men to be only *spiritual* Fathers so they can concentrate on leading children and adults to Heaven. Can you give an example of a man you know whose main job is to lead children and adults to heaven? When they answer, “Father So-and-So,” write “Priest” underneath and to the left of “Spiritual Fathers.” At this point, explain that bishops lead priests. Write “Bishop” underneath “Priest.” These men are called to the sacrament of Holy Orders. Deacons are also called to this sacrament, but they can be married.

Then explain that some men are called to be “Brothers” or monks, people who are consecrated (dedicated) to lives of prayer and helping the Church. Write “Brothers” under “Bishop.” These men are living what is called a “consecrated life.” Finally, tell the children that some men are called to be single, meaning they’re not called by God to be married or to be priests or monks, but that God has some special plan for them so they remain single. Write “Single” under “Brothers.” In fact, we may never know here on

earth why some men are called to remain single, but we'll find out in heaven, since it's all part of God's plan.

Many men, however, are called by God to be "Physical Dads." Write "Physical Dads" below and to the right of "Spiritual Fathers." They are called to the sacrament of Marriage. God wants them to get married, have a wife, and take care of and love their children.

God has similar plans for girls. God wants all girls to be "Spiritual Mothers." Write "Spiritual Mothers" directly underneath "Vocations" of females. God calls some women to be nuns or sisters. Write "Nuns" underneath and to the left of "Spiritual Mothers" and "Sisters" underneath the word "Nuns." These women are called by God to dedicate their lives to Him and to live lives of prayer and service. Nuns may spend their whole life just praying for us. Sisters may spend their lives serving others in such jobs as teaching, nursing, and feeding the poor. Do you know any Sisters or Nuns? Possible examples are Mother Teresa, Mother Angelica, etc. Just like brothers and monks, these women are living a 'consecrated life.' Some women, just like some men, are also called by God to remain single, so that they may perform some special task or role for God that sometimes only God knows. Write "Single" underneath "Sisters."

Many women, though, are called to be "Physical Moms." God calls them to the sacrament of Marriage. God wants them to get married, have a husband, and take care of and love their children.

You children can begin right now to pray to God to know which of these He is calling you to be. Whether a mommy, or a Sister, or single, etc.

Now, I'd like to talk about two people – one a priest and one a physical mom - who answered God's call to their vocations and became saints by doing so.

St. Francis of Assisi:

St. Francis lived from 1181 to 1226. He founded a religious order called the Franciscans. He wanted to totally depend on God and belong to God through prayer and sacrifice. People gave the Franciscans food to eat and the Franciscans prayed for the people. St. Francis received the wounds of Christ on his body and was always embracing the cross because of his great love for Jesus.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary:

St. Elizabeth lived from 1207 to 1231. She was a great lady who was a queen and mother. She loved her husband and three children with all her heart. She also loved the poor and would bring them bread. When she was only three years old she gathered her toys and clothes together to give to the poor. When she was older, she built a hospital to take care of the sick and worked there. She died at a very young age but her heart was filled with love for Jesus.

In both instances, God had a special plan for these people and they cooperated with God's plan. They fulfilled their vocation.

Ask the children what they would like to do when they grow up. Do they want to have families? Do any of them want to be priests or nuns? Do any of them want to do particular jobs? Spend some time on this. Let each child talk, if they want. Ask them why they want to do what they want to do. Tell them it's not too early to start praying about one's vocation.

To fulfill our vocation we must try to lead lives of chastity. Chastity is respecting ourselves and others, particularly by remaining pure in what we think and what we do. Without chastity, we can't fulfill the plan that God has for our lives. Regardless of whether we're called to be married or to be priests and nuns, chastity within our vocation is necessary.

Think for a minute about the "Our Father" prayer. Remember, we asked God that His will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. One of the things we're asking in that prayer is for God to give us, personally, the strength to do His will, to fulfill our vocation here on earth.

Another thing we asked for was that God would "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Here we are asking God to help us to live lives of chastity. The two are connected.

I said earlier you could begin praying to know your vocation in life right now. The Our Father is about the best prayer you could pray to discern - figure out - what God wants you to do with your life. You are asking God to do His will and you're asking Him for the strength to live a good and pure life.

Chastity - is trusting in God - one God in Three Divine Persons!
It's praying always.
It's obeying God's voice by obeying Mom and Dad!
It's choosing what is good and not choosing what is bad.
It's taking care of our bodies and respecting the bodies of others.
And its loving God and our neighbor through our vocation.

Conclude with the following prayer. Have it on a hand out for the children.

Closing Prayer: Dear Saints Francis and Elizabeth, help us to do God's will by following the vocation that God has for us. Help us to love God and our neighbor by our prayers and our sacrifices. And help us to keep all of our relationship pure just like Jesus did.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Activity: Vocations Crossword