

VOCATION RESOURCES FOR CONFIRMATION COORDINATORS & YOUTH MINISTERS



OFFICE FOR VOCATIONS
ARCHDIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES

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LAVOCATIONS.ORG



Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Office for Vocations 3424 Los Angeles
Office: (213) 637-7248 Wilshire California
Fax: (213) 637-6138 Boulevard 90010-2202

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Dear Principals, DRE's, Confirmation Coordinators & Youth Ministers,

As we enter into these final months of the **Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy**, let us continue to ask our Merciful Lord Jesus to send us more priestly and religious vocations. May we all do our part as members of the **Vocations Team** to continue to foster a **Culture of Vocations in the Archdiocese!** That's where you come in. You have direct contact with many of the youth of our local Church.

We are pleased to send you some valuable and fun resources to implement in your school and catechism programs. Each packet has been designed to be effective for the age group and program(s) that *you* direct:

- *Catholic Elementary Schools*
- *Parish Catechism Programs*
- *Catholic High Schools and Campus Ministry*
- *Parish Confirmation Programs and Youth Ministry*

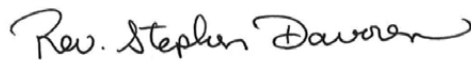
If you need extra copies or a packet for another age group, please contact Maria Vargas in the Vocations Office at mvargas@la-archdiocese.org or call (213) 637-7248.

Here is some of the Good News of Vocations in 2016:

- 9 new Priests ordained on June 4
- 7 new Transitional Deacons ordained on August 13
(To be ordained as Priests on June 3, 2017)
- **26 new Seminarians** entered this Fall
 - 15 new men at St. John's Seminary
 - 11 new men at Juan Diego House
 - Plus 4 men who graduated in May from JDH and also entered 1st Theology at St. John's Seminary
- **93 Total Seminarians for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles**

We are also available to visit your parish or school to give Vocations Talks or to celebrate School Mass and Youth Masses.

In Christ,



Fr. Steve Davoren
Director of Vocations
FrSDavoren@la-archdiocese.org



Fr. Sam Ward
Associate Director of Vocations
FrSWard@la-archdiocese.org

Pastoral Regions: Our Lady of the Angels San Fernando San Gabriel San Pedro Santa Barbara

SIMPLE GOALS

- 1.** Show the DVD “Fishers of Men” and lead a discussion on the call to the priesthood / religious life.
- 2.** Evening of Discernment – develop one evening of reflection and discernment on the call to be of service to the church.
- 3.** Identify Youth Leaders – Identify those members of the group that exhibit the qualities of a priest or religious, and place them in positions of responsibility.

DEEPER GOALS

- 1.** Adopt-a-seminarian: The youth minister/confirmation coordinator will have a prayer card of their seminarian and at meetings will pray the vocation prayer for him and themselves. Letters of support can be also sent to the seminarian.
- 2.** Identify One Candidate: The youth minister/confirmation coordinator will meet to attempt to identify from among themselves, family members, other parishioners at least one possible candidate to the priestly/religious life.
- 3.** Trip to St. John Seminary/Juan Diego House: Through the vocation office, organize a visit by the youth to visit one of our seminaries.

ACTIVITY FOR JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

(Pass out copies of these questions- ask students to read through them and choose the questions that they can identify with. Use these for discussion among themselves or with a priest/religious.)

- 1.** How did you know that you were being called to be a religious or a priest?
- 2.** How old were you when you first started to think about it?
- 3.** How long did it take to be a priest or religious? What was your preparation like?
- 4.** How did your family and friends react to your decision to become a priest or religious?
- 5.** What do priests do? What do religious- sisters and brothers- do?
- 6.** Religious and priests are busy people. Do you ever get a day off? What do you do for fun?
- 7.** Why didn't you get married? Didn't you want to have children?
- 8.** What happens if you "fall in love"?
- 9.** What are vows?
- 10.** Do you enjoy being a priest or religious? Why?
- 11.** What is most difficult or challenging about being a priest or religious?
- 12.** What would you be doing if you weren't a priest or religious?
- 13.** Can you drink or smoke?
- 14.** What is the difference between a brother and a priest?
- 15.** Do you have to be a virgin to enter?

- 16.** Why do some religious wear habits and others do not?
- 17.** Can you quit? Were you ever tempted to quit?
- 18.** Who or what helps support you in the life you are trying to live?
- 19.** Why can't a priest/religious marry?
- 20.** Why can only men be ordained to priesthood?
- 21.** Do you ever get lonely?
- 22.** Can you date?
- 23.** Do you ever wonder about God really being there for you?
- 24.** Isn't prayer difficult at times? Then what?
- 25.** How do religious communities differ from each other?

PRAYER SERVICE FOR A CONFIRMATION CLASS

(ESPECIALLY JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL)

“WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM...”

Reading: (one or more can be chosen)

Matt. 9:35-38

Mark 10:17-27

Luke 5:1-11

John 15:9-17

Opening Song: (Any appropriate song may be sung or played from a tape.)

Communal Prayer:

Leader: God, we gather in your name for you have called each of us by name to be your faithful people. As we anticipate celebrating the sacrament of confirmation, we ask you to send your spirit that we may show your love to the world in the concern we have for each other.

Leader: When the world cries out for love...

All: Help us to love well and recognize our unwillingness at times to love.

Leader: When people seem unable to respond to us...

All: Help us to give and not count the cost.

Leader: When we find it difficult to rely on you, God...

All: Help us to be faithful to prayer and trust that you hear us.

Leader: When we want to be happy and try to find that in the wrong places...

All: Help us to be led back to you and let you be enough for us.

Leader: When we fail to see the good in who we are, feeling that we are unlovable...

All: Help us to recognize the gifts and talents we have been given and be willing to share them with others.

Leader: When we search out any new type of work for ourselves, or join an organization, or become part of a committee for a special purpose, we may ask ourselves if the gifts, talents and interests that we have are in line with those required for the particular thing we are considering. In the area of Christian service, vocation and ministry, it is just as important to take a look at our own gifts.

Do we have what it takes to participate in the mission of Jesus in a special way as the unique people we are? What are our gifts? Our talents? What are some of the personality traits that we have? How can we develop these further as we get older? Let's take a look into our own minds and hearts and see how we are gifted especially with gifts to serve others.

(Hand out copies of the following sheet (see page 9) and invite them to put an "X" somewhere on each line to indicate how they see themselves.)

Conclusion:

Leader: As we finish this activity, let us give thanks for the gifts we have received and gifts that others have received. Let us pray the following prayer together...

(Individual cards can be given to each student with this prayer.)

Lord,
I know you love me
And have great plans for me.
But sometimes I am overwhelmed
By the thought of my future.
Show me how to walk forward
One day at a time.
May I take heart while I search for you,
Learning about all the choices,
Listening to others for advice,
And paying attention to my own feelings.
By doing these things
May I hear your call
To a life
That will let me love
As only I can,
And let me serve others
With the special gifts
That you have given me.
Lord,
Thank you for your hope in me.
Amen

Leader: As a sign of the unity and service to each other that we have achieved and toward which we strive, let us exchange the sign of peace...

Final Song: (Any appropriate song can be used if it is desired.)

1. Good listener _____ Poor listener
2. Sincere _____ Insincere
3. Open _____ Secretive
4. Caring _____ Insensitive
5. Relaxed _____ Anxious
6. Outgoing _____ Very shy
7. Carefree _____ Very serious
8. Active _____ Inactive
9. Affectionate _____ Unresponsive
10. Personal _____ Impersonal
11. Optimistic _____ Pessimistic
12. Trusting _____ Suspicious
13. Helpful _____ Selfish
14. Warm _____ Cool
15. Healing _____ Hurting
16. Spontaneous _____ Stifled
17. Faithful _____ Disloyal
18. Friendly _____ Unfriendly
19. Humorous _____ Humorless
20. Likeable _____ Unlikeable
21. Trustworthy _____ Untrustworthy
22. Emotional _____ Unemotional
23. Dedicated _____ Uncommitted
24. Other-centered _____ Self-centered

EUCCHARISTIC HOUR FOR CHURCH VOCATIONS

AN HOUR OF QUIET REFLECTION TO BE USED BY A PARISH OR BY AN INDIVIDUAL FOR PRIVATE PRAYER.

(Scripture passages may be typed out on a sheet of paper or people may use personal Bibles.)

1. Select a passage-five to ten verses from the Bible (see the passages listed below)
2. Find a place where you will be alone, not bothered, and free to move, speak, and be uninhibited in your response to God's presence.
3. Find comfortable posture, relaxed and peaceful.
4. Be aware of the presence of God. Acknowledge and respond to it.
5. Pray the passage from scripture.
 - Listen to the message God has for you.
 - Read. Whisper aloud so that you can hear, see, and say God's word.
 - Rest on any words that call you to respond in a grateful, loving and adoring way
 - Read on, if nothing seems to happen
 - When the time is up, thank God for speaking to you.

Suggested Scripture Passages

Gen. 12:14; 15:6 Abraham

Ex. 3:11-12 Moses

Deut. 29:3

1 Sam. 3:1-10

1 Kings 19:19-21

Is. 6:1-9 2

Acts 9:1-19; 13:2-3; 16:9-10; 22:6-21; 26:12-19

Jer. 1:4-10; 17-19; 15:10-21

Amos. 7:15

Mk. 1:16-20

Lk. 9:57-60; 5:1-11; 12:49-53

John 1:35-51

Tim. 1:6-13

1 Thess. 5:11

6. Closing Prayer

Loving God, fill your spirit of love so that the fire Jesus came to light blazes with us, and we become more visible signs of the reign of God. This we ask through Jesus, now and always. Amen.

CHOOSING HOW TO USE OUR GIFTS

SESSION THEME: “The Spirit reveals in each one a gift which is also a service.” (1 Cor. 12:7)

SESSION OBJECTIVE: For the youth to realize that in order to use their gifts for the service of others they must make some important choices in their lives.

SESSION MATERIALS: Robert Frost’s poem: “The Road Not Taken”
(See Resources Page Addendum A)

- Paper/pencils
- Candle

SESSION PLAN:

1. Read the poem: “The Road Not Taken” to the youth.
2. Ask them to think about some of the important choices that they have already made in their lives.
3. Accept volunteers to share some of these experiences with the whole group.
4. Tell the youth that everyone has to make choices about the particular lifestyle that will best enable them to share their gifts in service to others. Remind them that some people marry, some stay single, some become priests, brothers, sisters, or deacons.
5. Pass out paper and pencils and tell the youth that you want them to write a special kind of poem about one of their life choices.
6. Explain to the youth that the special kind of poem is called a **cinquain** (pronounced “sin kane”) and is quite easy to write. It is a poem with 5 lines, using this format:
 - One Noun
 - Two adjectives
 - Three verbs
 - Two adverbs
 - Original Noun

7. Share this cinquain with them as an example:

- Choices
- Difficult, Easy
- Make, Change, Fail
- Always, Always
- Choices

8. After the youth have written their poems, collect them and mention that you will read some of them aloud as a sort of prayer.

9. Dim the lights, light a candle, and re-read Frost's poem. Then slowly read some of the poems that the youth have created.

10. Suggest that the youth interview some adults they know who are married, single priests, brothers or sisters about their life choices.

FINDING OUR GIFTS

SESSION THEME: “There are many gifts, but the Spirit is the same.” (1 Cor. 12:4)

SESSION OBJECTIVE: For the youth to realize that each of them is a special gift of God and has been given many gifts from God.

SESSION MATERIALS:

- Various colored construction paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Crayons/colored markers
- Poster board

SESSION PLAN:

- 1.** Catechist begins by asking the youth if they like to receive gifts for their birthday and what kind of gifts they have received.
- 2.** Ask the youth if they can name some of the gifts that God has given to us. Prompt them enough so that the responses move from material gifts to creation to people. Remind them that one of the greatest gifts of God was Jesus and that we celebrate his birthday on Christmas.
- 3.** Then direct the discussion to the fact that they, like Jesus, are also special gifts of God.
- 4.** Now direct the youth's attention to the fact that not only are we ourselves gifts from God, but we all are unique and have special personal gifts, too.
- 5.** Pass out a piece of construction paper to each of the youth and ask them to trace around their hands and then cut out the drawing of their hands.
- 6.** Tell the youth to write something special about themselves on each of the “fingers” of their drawing. They may wish to write their name, nickname, birthday, talents or skills that they have been given by God.
- 7.** Then invite the youth to glue their drawing on a poster board that you have prepared in advance by an outline of a heart large enough to contain all their hand prints.
- 8.** After the youth have completed the task, write the words, “I AM SPECIAL” above the heart and invite them to pray to end the session.

SHARING OUR GIFTS

SESSION THEME: “You are the body of Christ and each of you individually is a part of it.” (1 Cor. 12:27)

SESSION OBJECTIVE: For youth to realize that each of them is a special part of the community of believers and called to share their gifts for the good of the world.

SESSION MATERIALS:

- One 2' piece of colored yarn for each youth
- Copy of the prayer (below in #6)

SESSION PLAN:

1. Pass out a piece of colored yarn to each youth.
2. Ask the youth to tell you what kinds of helpful ways they could use their piece of string.
3. Inquire what could happen if the individual pieces of yarn were tied together.
4. Now ask the youth to tie his or her piece of yarn to another person's piece until there is one long piece of multicolored yarn.
5. Remind the youth that each person in the world is very much like the little piece of yarn. We can do good things by ourselves, but when we join our gifts together, we can do so much more. God asks us to use our gifts, share out gifts with others. That is what happens in the church, the family of God. Each member of the Church (married people, priests, sisters, single people and brothers) has a special gift to share.
6. Ask the youth to form a circle, all holding on the chain of attached pieces of yarn. When the circle is formed, you stand in the center and say the following litany, asking them to respond: “Help us all share our gifts.”
 - Leader:** Thank you, God, for each person within your Church (Response)
 - Leader:** Thank you, God, for married persons.
 - Girls:** Thank you, God, for each of us. (Response)
 - Leader:** Thank you, God, for parish priests. (Response)
 - Boys:** Thank you, God, for each of us. (Response)
 - Leader:** Thank you, God, for single persons. (Response)
 - Girls:** Thank you, God, for each of us. (Response)
 - Leader:** Thank you, God, for religious sisters, priests and brothers. (Response)
 - Boys:** Thank you, God, for each of us. (Response)
 - Leader:** Thank you, God, for each person in your Church. (Response)
7. When the litany is concluded, suggest to the youth that they do a similar exercise at home with their family, thanking God for each member, present and absent.
8. Then ask the youth to pass the section of yarn they are holding to you in the center.

CALLED TO BE GIFTS

SESSION THEME: “People should think of us as Christ’s Servants, stewards entrusted with the mysteries of God. In such a matter, what is required of stewards is that they prove trustworthy.” (1 Cor. 4 1-2)

SESSION OBJECTIVE: To encourage youth and young adults to remain open to various lifestyle options in the church.

SESSION MATERIALS:

- Questions for the panel in advance of session
 1. To me, success is...
 2. For me, ministry is...
 3. Right now, I use my time, talents and money for...
 4. The greatest challenge in my life at the moment is...
 5. In 10 years I see my myself...
 6. I am most looking forward to...
- Questions for youth/young adults (below in #4)

SESSION PLAN:

- 1.** Invite a married person, single person, religious brother and sister, and a priest to come be a part of a panel. Give them the questions (above) in advance.
- 2.** Assign a youth/young adult to introduce each member of the panel, suggesting that they ask the person what they most like to do with their free time and use this as a part of their introduction.
- 3.** Ask the panel member to respond to each question, in turn, and allow the youth/young adults to interact briefly with the panel after each round of responses.
- 4.** After the panel has completed their responses to the questions, hand out these questions to the youth/young adults to answer.
 - The gifts I would bring to the married lifestyle are/the challenges for me would be...
 - The gifts I would bring to the single lifestyle are/the challenges for me would be...
 - The gifts I would bring to the priesthood are/the challenges for me would be...
 - The gifts I would bring to consecrated religious lifestyle are/the challenges for me would be...
- 5.** Encourage the panelist to interact with volunteers who offer to share their responses with whole group.
- 6.** When sufficient time has elapsed end the session with this prayer;
 - Gracious God, we are your stewards, entrusted to bring your mysteries to others. Help us assess our gifts and be courageous in choosing the lifestyle that will best enable us to be about our call. We ask this, knowing that you are always with us. Amen.

PRAYER SERVICE: VOCATION

(JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH LEVELS)

THE GIFT YOU HAVE RECEIVED, GIVE AS GIFT

Opening Song: (Any appropriate song be sung or played from a tape.)

Reader: Take some time now to reflect on how you are a gift to others, how you are called to share in the ministry of Jesus by using your gift to love others.

Response: The ministries of Jesus

Reader 1: “Now once he was in a certain place praying, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said, “Lord, teach us to pray... “He said to them, ‘ Say this when you pray: Father, may your name be held holy, let your kingdom come.” (Jesus, person of prayer)

Reader 2: “Then Jesus took the apostles with him and withdrew to a town called Bethsaida where they could be by themselves. But the crowds got to know this, and they went after him. He made them welcome and talked to them about the kingdom of God; and he cured those who were in need of healing.” (Jesus, the healer)

Reader 3: “Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved. “ (Jesus, the equal opportunity employer)

Reader 4: “Now after this Jesus made his way through towns and villages preaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. With him went the 12 apostles and certain women who had been cured of evil spirit and ailments.” (Jesus, the minister to women)

Reader 5: “Peace I give to you, my own peace I give to you, a peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you.” (Jesus, the peacemaker)

Reader 6: “I am the resurrection. Anyone whom believes in me, even though they die, they will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?
(Jesus, the life-giver)

Reader 7: “Has no one condemned you?” ‘No one, sir,’ she said, ‘Neither do I condemn you.’ Jesus replied.’ (Jesus, the forgiver)

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14a, 15-20

Shared Homily: Led by team- a reflection on the reading, on ministry, on ministry of Jesus, on call, especially emphasizing the words, “Try to discover what the Lord wants of you.”

Response: The Bible is enthroned in the center of the room, and each student is provided with the pencil and an index card. Invite the students to close their eyes and to reflect also on their unique personality, gifts, talents, capabilities, likes and dislikes in order to discover the best way for each of them to continue Jesus' ministry to the world.

The Leader may help this process by reflecting aloud for the students in the following way:

Christ said: I send you...into the world...

I send you...to pray...

I send you...to free...

I send you...to love...

I send you...to challenge...

I send you...to befriend...

I send you ... to reconcile...

I send you...to heal...

I send you...to teach

Then the Leader invites the students to write on the index card

Their "special ministry word" or how they can serve the Lord.

Then the Leader says: "Each of us has written for ourselves 'a special ministry word' which I invite you to insert anywhere in the Bible which is THE WORD, THE WORD OF GOD."

The Leader addresses the following to each student:

"In the name of Jesus, I call you, _____, To follow me, and I send you into the world to continue my Ministry." How will you respond?

(After the student's name is called, he/she places his/her "ministry world" in the Bible.)

Concluding Song: (Any appropriate song may be sung or taken from a tape.)

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

BY ROBERT FROST

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

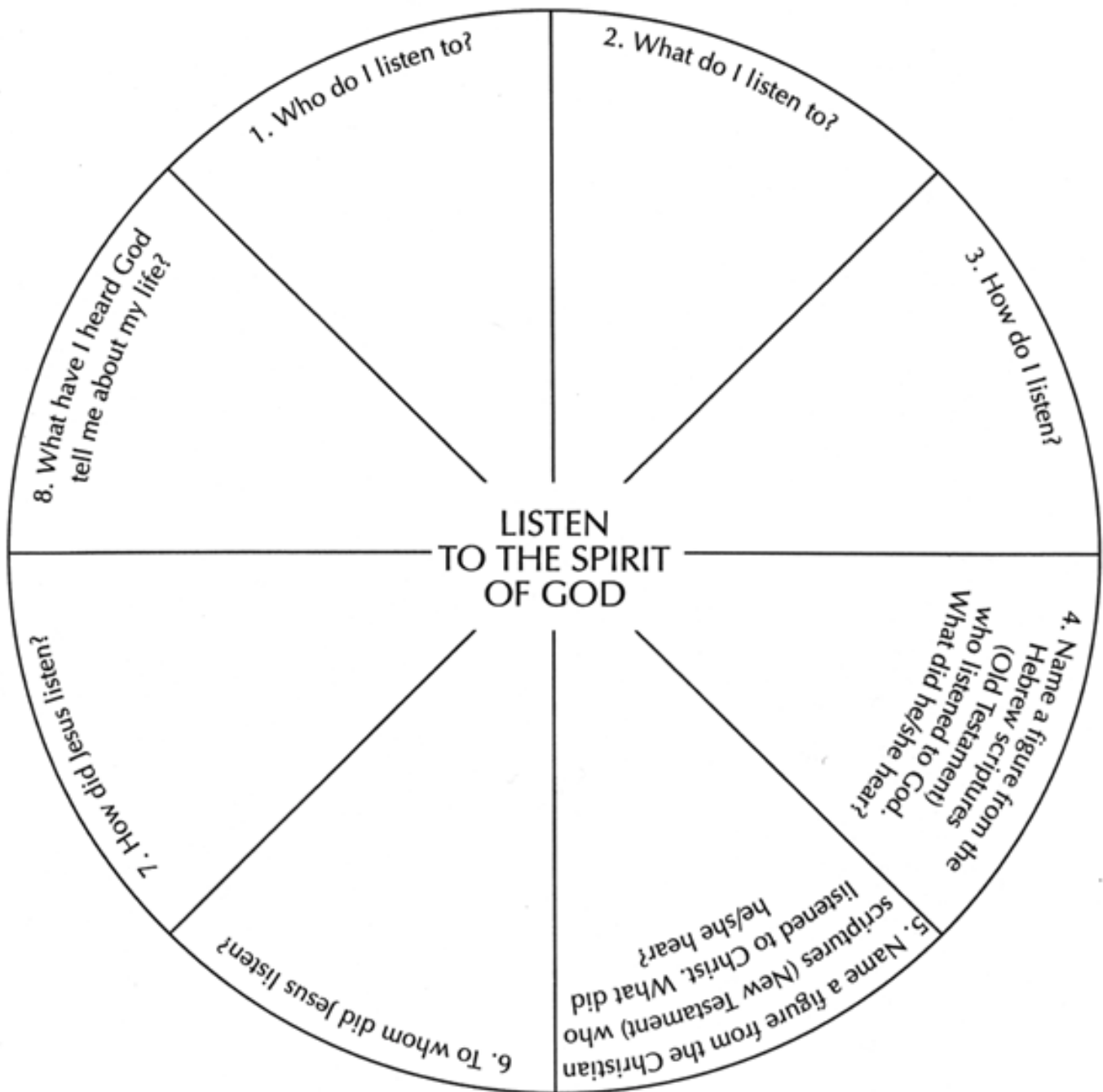
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

RESOURCES PAGE

DISCERNING YOUR VOCATION REQUIRES LISTENING



RESOURCES PAGE

STEPS FOR DISCERNING A PRIESTLY VOCATION

Phase 1: Service

- Inspired to help those in need
- Desire to serve the Catholic Church
- Involved in a parish ministry

Phase 2: Contemplation

- Thoughts of a priestly vocation keep returning
- The desire to serve is deepening and growing
- Others have acknowledged your gifts and said you would make a good priest

Phase 3: Inquiry

- You begin to talk about your interest in the priesthood
- Meet with your parish priest to discuss your vocation
- Contact the Office of Vocations for information

Phase 4: Spiritual Direction

- Meet with the Diocesan Vocation Director
- Monthly Spiritual Direction
- Attend Discernment Retreats & Vocational Events
- Visit St. John's Seminary and/or Juan Diego House
- Continued deepening of prayer and service in your life
- Involvement in Sacramental ministry & parish service

Phase 5: Formal Discernment

- Work with Diocesan Vocational Director for entry into the seminary

VOCATIONS PRAYER

Lord, we thank you for the gift of our vocation, for the call to follow you and imitate Christ, your Son, as priests, consecrated or religious men and women, or in holy matrimony.

We pray, Lord, as you continue to place in the hearts of many, the specific call to serve your people through the priesthood or the consecrated life, that we may hear your voice and respond with joy and generosity to this great grace of love, and to find fulfillment and happiness in our lives.

We pray that through the intercession of Mary, Our Blessed Mother, you grant us many more young men and women willing to serve you in the priesthood or the consecrated life, and that each family and parish may be a place where we can all nurture and encourage the young people of today to hear and follow your call.
Amen.

*Most Reverend José H. Gomez
Archbishop of Los Angeles*



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