

Sixth Grade: Lessons One & Two

Communion of Saints—Treasure in Heaven

Lesson Objective: Students will be able to describe how each vocation allows a person to know God and make God known.

Lesson Assessment: Students will create faith journey maps for the saintly models they research, focusing on the ways they both came to know God and worked to make God known to others.

Lesson Materials:

- Large chart paper
- Copies of the saintly model biographies for pairs of students
- Highlighters
- Pencils

Lesson Outline: Day One of Two

Opening Prayer (3-4 min)

Tell the students that the next couple of lessons are going to be focused on holy men and women, and so today's prayer will be a litany of the saints. Consider including the saints for whom students in your class are named, or asking them to add other saints during the litany, depending on the ability of the class. Instruct them to respond "pray for us" after the name of every saint.

Say: Holy Mary, Mother of God, **pray for us.**

St. Michael, **pray for us.**

St. Gabriel, **pray for us.**

St. Raphael, **pray for us.**

St. John the Baptist, **pray for us.**

St. Joseph, **pray for us.**

St. Peter, **pray for us.**

St. Paul, **pray for us.**

St. Andrew, **pray for us.**

St. Thomas, **pray for us.**

St. John, **pray for us.**

St. Matthew, **pray for us.**

St. Luke, **pray for us.**

St. Mark, **pray for us.**

St. Mary Magdalene, **pray for us.**

St. Monica, **pray for us.**

St. Augustine, **pray for us.**

St. Jerome, **pray for us.**

St. Anthony, **pray for us.**

St. Benedict, **pray for us.**

St. Dominic, **pray for us.**

St. Francis, **pray for us.**

St. Clare, **pray for us.**

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Opening Prayer Continued

St. Teresa of Avila, **pray for us.**
St. Thérèse of Lisieux, **pray for us.**
St. John Vianney, **pray for us.**
St. André Bessette, **pray for us.**
Blessed Louis and Zélie Martin, **pray for us.**
Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, **pray for us.**
St. Teresa of Calcutta, **pray for us.**
Blessed Basil Moreau, **pray for us.**
All you holy men and women, **pray for us.**
Amen.

Assessing Prior Knowledge (5 min)

Determine what your students know about the term “saint.” Have the term written on the top of a piece of chart paper.

Say: *In this lesson and the next one, we are going to talk more about some saintly men and women. What can you tell me about a person who is a saint?*

Use the students’ answers to build to a definition of saintly men and women. Some of aspects to include are:

- Saints provide a model of faith.
- Saints said yes to their vocational call from God and joyfully lived them.
- Saints lived their faith in an exemplary way to know, love, and serve God in their own lives and made God known, loved, and served by others.
- Saints are heroes in our faith.
- Saints are our friends in heaven on our journey with God.

Remind the students that not all holy men and women have been officially canonized by the Church, but that does not mean that they are not saints in heaven. All those in heaven are part of the Communion of Saints.

As a Church we celebrate those saints in heaven who are not officially canonized on the Feast of All Saints on November 1.

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Paired Work (15-20 min)

Say: God also invites us to be certain people in His kingdom, and it is our job to pray and listen for His invitation to learn what kind of person God wants us to be.

Say: Some people hear God calling them to be married. Some people hear God calling them to be priests, religious sisters, or religious brothers. Other people hear a different invitation. They are invited to be a committed single person. God CALLS each of us to live out our vocation and call in a certain way.

Instruct the students that they will be making a chart of these vocations together as a class. Turning the paper length-wise, they will write across the top: "Vocation = God's call to serve Him in our life." Then have them divide the paper in four equal columns. As they write the name of one of the four vocations to head each column, invite the students to share a few things they know or remember about that vocation from previous study. Do not have them record these responses on the sheet.

Then under each of the four vocations, have them write the names of the corresponding saintly models who witness to that vocation for us. They are:

- Priesthood – Fr. Patrick Peyton, C.S.C.
- Religious life – St. André Bessette & St. Teresa of Calcutta
- Committed single life – Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati
- Married life – Blessed Louis and Zélie Martin

Pair the students up, and assign each pair one of the five saints whose biography they will then read.

Say: You may remember these holy men and women from the previous grades, but the biographies I am passing out to you give you a more in-depth story of their lives.

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For additional information on the saintly models, see the supplemental materials on them included in the curriculum.

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Paired Work Continued

Say: *We want to study them more closely so we can learn more about how they came to know, love, and serve God in their vocations, as well as how they made God known, loved, and served by others.*

Have the students read the story of their assigned saint in pairs and ask them to highlight on the biographies ways that saint used his or her life to serve God.

After giving the students time to read the biographies and highlight them with their partners, ask them to split the columns on their chart into two. On the top half they will write: "How he/she came to know God." On the bottom half they will write: "How he/she made God known."

Ask the students along with their partner to fill out the column for their saintly model, recording both how the person came to know God but also how he or she made God known to others.

Group Work (10 min)

When students have completed their work in pairs, have the pairs split up and now form groups of five with students who were assigned the other saintly models. They will then help each other complete the rest of the charts by recording what the others learned about the vocations and the models assigned to them.

Remind the students to keep the charts they have made as they will need them for the next lesson.

Closing Prayer

Say: *Heavenly Father, we thank You for the witness of all holy men and women. We thank You for how they inspire us. We thank You for how they teach us many different ways to follow Your Son, Jesus. Through their intercession, we ask that we may grow in holiness and be saints too. Amen.*

Lesson Materials:

- Copies of the faith journey map example
- Students' charts from Lesson 1
- Blank paper
- Pencils
- Coloring supplies

Lesson Outline: Day Two of Two

Prayer (3-4 min)

Repeat the Litany of the Saints from Lesson 1.

Review of Previous Lessons (5 min)

Ask the students to name the four particular vocations that exist in the Church as well as the holy men and women who model them for us.

Say: *What do you remember about these holy men and women and their vocations?*

Invite different responses from the students, but encourage them to make a connection between what they share about the holy model and his or her vocation.

Independent Work (25 min)

Say: *Today, to help us keep learning more about these vocations and the holy men and women who model them for us, we are going to make faith journey maps. First, I will show you an example of one done from the life of Pope John Paul II.*

Distribute copies of the faith journey map for Pope John Paul II to the students, either individually, in pairs, or in groups. Explain to them that the map charts John Paul II's journey to the treasure of heaven with different stops marked along the way as he came to know God and also made God known.

Instruct the students that they will now make two faith journey maps on the blank sheets of paper using the charts they completed in their groups from the previous lesson. Inform them that they cannot do the saintly model that was assigned to them in their initial pair. They must choose two of the other models. Each faith journey map should have at least 5 "stops" along the way, prior to the person coming to the treasure of heaven.

Wrap Up (5-10 min)

Invite the students to show their favorite of the two faith journey maps either to a partner or to a small group.

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Lesson Outline, Continued:

**Wrap Up
Continued**

Emphasize to the entire class how coming to know God and making God known to others is part of the work of being a saint and finding the treasure of heaven.

Ask the students to continue to save the chart they made from Lesson 1.

Closing Prayer

Say: *Lord, we rejoice in Your holy men and women and how they made You known, loved, and served in this world. We continue to pray through their intercession that we can become saints in our world today, as we pray together the prayer that Your Son taught us: Our Father Amen.*



Carol Wojtyla is elected Pope in 1978, and takes the name John Paul II.



Pope John Paul II travels to more countries and canonizes more saints than any other pope in history.



Pope John Paul II dies April 2, 2005. At his funeral, the crowds chanted "Santo Subito," voicing their belief that he was a saint. He was canonized April 27, 2014



NAME: Saint John Paul II

Carol serves as Bishop of Krakow under communist rule, and stood in solidarity with the people as they struggled for their freedom.



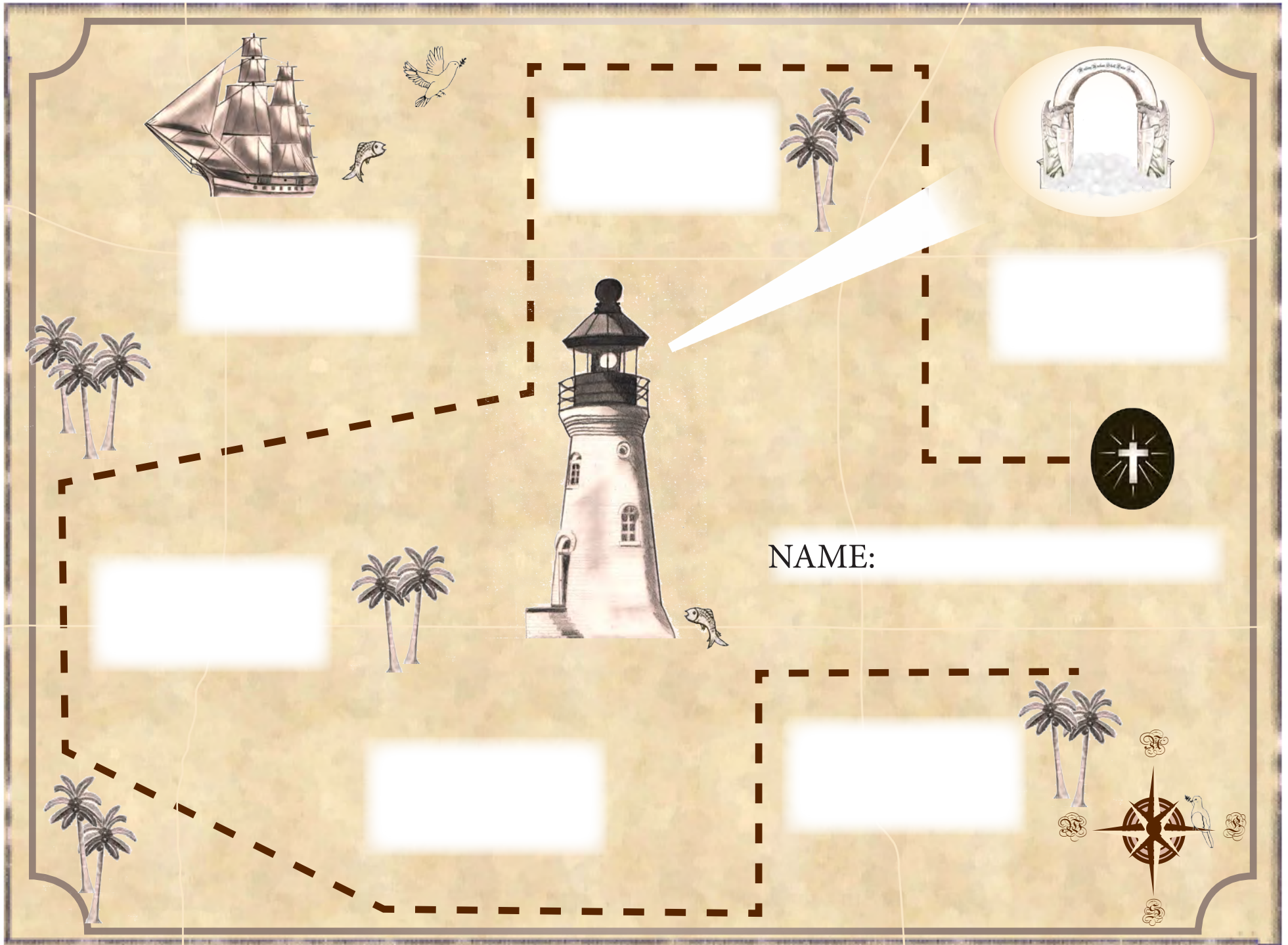
Carol enters a secret seminary in 1942, and is ordained a priest in 1946.



Carol's mother, Emilia, dies when Carol is just 8 years old. Young Carol takes the Blessed Virgin Mary as his mother.

Carol Wojtyla is born May 18, 1920.





NAME: _____

Sixth Grade: Lesson Three

Seeing with God's Eyes

Lesson Objective: Students will be able to learn from the parable of the Good Samaritan that we often know God's call by seeing with God's eyes.

Lesson Assessment: Students will create a scenario in which a person has to see the world through God's eyes and respond to the call to follow His will and show love to others.

Lesson Materials:

- Students' charts from Lesson 1
- Bibles (at least 1 for every 2 students)
- Chart paper
- Pencils
- Coloring supplies
- Blank paper

Lesson Outline:

Opening Prayer (5 min)

Say: God, You say many times in the Scriptures that we do not see as You see. Give us Your eyes to see the world as You see the world, the way that Jesus saw the world. We want to see with Your eyes so we can love with Your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Discussion & Gospel Connection (20 min)

Say: As we have learned from the lives of the saintly models we have been studying, we are all called to make God known, loved, and served in our lives. It is sometimes hard, however, to hear God's voice in our lives. Sometimes, it is even harder to listen to what God is telling us, because doing what God asks of us can seem harder than what we want to do. What are some things that make it hard to live as God would have us?

Record the students' responses on the board, or have a student recorder write them. Examples include:

- Some people are hard to be kind to.
- It is easier to follow the crowd.
- We want to do other things than take time for prayer, Mass, and service to others.
- We do not want to offend our friends who do not believe in God.
- When we do not know what God's will is for us, it is confusing.
- We are selfish and think of ourselves first.
- We lack courage and strength.

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Lesson Outline, Continued:

Discussion & Gospel Connection Continued

Say: Today, we are going to read a parable that will teach us an important lesson about doing God's will. We will read the passage together, and then brainstorm the lessons and themes of this story. So, open your bibles to Luke's Gospel. Is that a New or Old Testament story?

New Testament.

Say: Next, turn to 10:25. Who remembers what those numbers mean?

The first number is the chapter, and the second number is the verse.

Say: OK, let's find chapter 10, verse 25. Who will volunteer to read aloud? The rest will read along silently.

Read the story of the Good Samaritan (NAB Luke 10:25-37). Consider dividing the reading by paragraph.

Say: There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" He said in reply, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." He replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live."

But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.'

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Lesson Outline, Continued:

Discussion & Gospel Connection Continued

“Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers’ victim?” He answered, “The one who treated him with mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.” (Luke 10:25-37)

Say: *There are many lessons and themes from this parable. What are some of them?*

Invite a student to record the responses on a piece of chart paper, having written “The Good Samaritan” at the top. Responses include:

- We are called to help others.
- Everyone in need is our neighbor.
- Don’t judge a person by their appearance or religion.
- We need to respond to our call to help others and do what is right.
- We need to hear God’s voice in our life.
- We should put others’ needs before our own.
- Do unto others as we would have them do unto us.
- Love our neighbor.
- Seeing is hearing.

The last lesson is one the students might not see themselves. It might be necessary to contribute that lesson yourself as something you see in the story.

Say: *The Good Samaritan “hears” God’s call to help the wounded man because he “sees” him differently. In the passage from Luke’s Gospel, the priest and the Levite just “see” the man, but the Good Samaritan, Jesus tells us, is “moved with compassion at the sight.” So Jesus changes the verb regarding how they saw the man to make a point that the Good Samaritan saw something the others did not see. He saw with God’s eyes. That is what it means for him to have been moved with compassion at the sight, because God is similarly moved with compassion at seeing those in need.*

Invite the students to offer their thoughts, observations, or questions about this lesson or idea.

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Lesson Outline, Continued:

Discussion & Gospel Connection Continued

Ask them if they have ever had a similar experience of seeing with God's eyes, of being moved with compassion at the sight of something that made it instantly clear to them what they had to do. To prompt them, give an example from your own life.

Say: *As we said at the start of the lesson, it can be hard at times to hear God's voice in our lives. But sometimes we need to listen less with our ears and more with our eyes. If we can start to see the world as God does, then we will often be able to "hear" – that is to know – what God is asking of us.*

Say: *This seems to have been the case with Jesus too. The Gospels do not often record Jesus hearing an audible voice, but several times before Jesus acts we are told he was "moved with compassion at the sight." And so we know that for Jesus, He often knew exactly what His Father was asking Him to do because He saw the world as His Father saw it.*

Closing Assessment (10-15 min)

Instruct the students that they are now going to invent a scenario similar to the one in the story of the Good Samaritan. The scenario will include someone who is in need. Some people will see but not help; others will be moved with compassion at the sight and help.

They will write their scenario, explaining what has happened, at the top of one side of a sheet of paper. Then, on the same side of the piece of paper, they will write "Seeing" and draw a picture of those who only see the person and what they do. Then on the back side of the paper, they will write "Moved with Compassion at the Sight" and draw a picture of those who are moved with compassion at the sight of those in need and what they do to help.

Students might need help imagining a scenario. Some possible examples to share with them:

- A student who trips in the hallway and drops all his/her books

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Closing Assessment Continued

- A homeless person begging on the street
- A classmate who is struggling with homework
- An elderly person trying to load groceries into a car
- A sibling who is falling behind on his/her chores

Time permitting, have the students share their scenarios with a partner or a small group, or have some volunteers share their scenarios with the whole class.

Emphasize after each story the lesson that seeing is often hearing when it comes to knowing God's will in our lives.

Closing Prayer (1 min)

Say: Heavenly Father, we want to be like the Good Samaritan. We want not just to see people who are in need, but we want to be moved with compassion at the sight so that we can see them as our neighbor and love them. Help us hear Your call to us by beginning more and more to see the world as You see it. Amen.

Sixth Grade: Lesson Four

God's Invitation through Scripture

Lesson Objective: Students will be able to pray Scripture through the Ignation Visualization Technique and Lectio Divina to come to know God more fully.

Lesson Assessment: Students will journal and reflect on their experience in using the two new Scripture reflection techniques we study today.

Lesson Materials:

- Copies of praying with Scripture handout for each student
- Bibles for each student
- Audio/visual equipment (optional)

As today's lesson focuses on praying with Scripture, consider taking your class to the chapel or church for the lesson.

Given the length of the lesson, you might want to consider splitting the lesson into two, or three days. Teaching one technique each day and then leaving the students independent work for another day.

Lesson Outline:

Opening Prayer (2 min)

Say: O Lord, You have given us Your Word for light to shine upon our path. Grant us the grace to meditate on that Word, and to follow its teaching, that we may find in it the light that shines more and more until the perfect day. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer from St. Jerome

Review of Previous Lessons (3 min)

Say: We have discussed our call to live God's will in our life, to be open to God's call to help others, and to live the vocation He intends for us either through the committed single life, married life, religious life, or priesthood. Who can share something we learned about the saintly models we studied, or the parable of the Good Samaritan?

Field different answers from the students. Be sure to include that seeing is hearing.

Instruction (30 min)

Say: Today, we will focus on two great ways for us to continue to draw important lessons and meaning from Scripture, and also to let those Scripture passages stay with us throughout the days, weeks, and months ahead.

Say: We know that Scripture is God's Word, and we want to listen to His voice, connect with Him as much as we can, and find the most meaning we can in our experiences by shining the light of Scripture on them.

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Lesson Outline, Continued:

Instruction Continued

Say: Today, as I just said, we will learn two ways to read and reflect on Scripture. We will learn about each of them and then try each of them.

Say: The first way of praying with Scripture is often called the Ignatian Visualization Technique. It is called Ignatian after Saint Ignatius of Loyola because he was the one who taught it and popularized it. It is called visualization because it invites us to use our imaginations to visualize scenes from Scripture as we pray with them.

Distribute the handout on praying with Scripture to the students. Guide them through the steps of the Ignatian Visualization Technique:

- 1) Read the scripture in a very focused way.
- 2) Use all 5 senses to connect and imagine the scene, seeing the people, hearing the words, observing the actions, etc.
- 3) Try to enter into the scene personally. Sometimes we are eye-witnesses to the scene; other times we take the place of one of the characters in the scene.
- 4) Pay attention to what we imagine, think and feel as being part of the scene and ask what God might be inviting us to do through our prayer.

Ask the students if they have any questions, letting them know that they are going to try this technique of praying with Scripture in a moment.

Instruct the students that you will now read aloud the story of the healing of the paralytic from the Gospel of Mark (NAB Mark 2:1-12). The first time you read the story they are simply to listen very attentively to it. Be sure to read slowly.

Say: When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it became known that he was at home. Many gathered together so that there was no longer room for them, not even around the door, and he preached the word to them.

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Instruction Continued

They came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. Unable to get near Jesus because of the crowd, they opened up the roof above him. After they had broken through, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Child, your sins are forgiven."

Now some of the scribes were sitting there asking themselves "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming. Who but God alone can forgive sins?" Jesus immediately knew in his mind what they were thinking to themselves, so he said, "Why are you thinking such things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, pick up your mat and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth"— he said to the paralytic, "I say to you, rise, pick up your mat, and go home." He rose, picked up his mat at once, and went away in the sight of everyone. They were all astounded and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this." (Mark 2:1-12)

Pause for a moment in silence. Then tell the students to start imagining the scene with all five of their senses, trying to place themselves in the scene as if they were there. Then tell them you will start to read the story again, slowly, and ask them to try to imagine themselves there as best as they can. Let them know that you will leave some silent time when you finish reading so they can keep imagining themselves in the scene with Jesus.

After reading the passage a second time, give the students time in silence. After an appropriate amount of time, invite the students to share their feelings and experiences. Assure them that there is no right or wrong answer. The question is what the scripture inspired them to experience through their imaginations. Maybe they felt something or heard something. Maybe they really identified with one character. Explain to them that reflecting on these things will help them deepen their prayer.

Ask them if they have any questions before moving on to the second technique.

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Instruction Continued

Say: The second way of praying with Scripture that we will learn is called “Lectio Divina” which is Latin for “divine reading.” This way of praying with Scripture is very old, going back to some of the earliest Christians. They were known as the “Desert Fathers and Mothers” because they went into the desert to have more time for prayer with God. This is how many of them would pray with Scripture. Many monks and nuns still pray this way today.

Guide them through the steps of Lectio Divina, which are also on the same handout:

- 1) What does the text say? – This step is known as *lectio* or *reading*.
- 2) What does the text say to me? How does this speak just to me in me life? – This step is known as *meditatio* or *meditation*.
- 3) What do I want to say to God about this text? Express our feelings to God. - This step is known as *oratio* or *prayer*.
- 4) What does this text make me want to do or act in a particular way in your life?- This step is known as *contemplatio* or *contemplation*.

Ask the students if they have any questions, letting them know that they are going to try this technique of praying with Scripture in a moment.

Instruct the students that you will now read aloud Jesus’s teaching about being salt and light for the world (NAB Matthew 5:13-16). The first time you read the story they are simply to listen very attentively to it, having in mind the question: What does the text say? This is the step of *lectio* or *reading*. Be sure to read slowly.

Say: *You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden.*

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Lesson Outline, Continued:

Instruction Continued

Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father. (Matthew 5:13-16)

When you are done reading, repeat the question (letting the students know to simply answer in their hearts): What does this text say?

In this, and in all the steps, if you find it will be helpful for your students, share your own experiences as you pray with the passage.

After giving them a few moments in silence, tell them you will now read the passage again and this time they are to do meditatio or meditation, asking the questions as they listen: What does the text say to me? How does this speak just to me in me life? Again, be sure to read slowly.

When you are done reading, repeat the questions (letting the students know to simply answer in their hearts): What does the text say to me? How does this speak just to me in me life?

After giving them a few moments in silence, tell them you will now read the passage a third time and this time they are to do oratio or prayer, expressing their own thoughts and feelings to God as they listen to the passage. Again, be sure to read slowly.

When you are done reading, encourage the students again to express their own thoughts and feelings to God in response to what the passage says.

After giving them a few moments in silence, tell them you will now read the passage a fourth time and this time they are to do contemplatio or contemplation, reflecting on the question: How does this text move me to become more like Jesus Christ in my thoughts and actions? Again, be sure to read slowly.

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Lesson Outline, Continued:

Instruction Continued

When you are done reading, invite the students again to reflect on the question: How does this text move me to become more like Jesus Christ in my thoughts and actions?

After giving them a few additional moments of silence, invite the students to share their experiences of praying with the passage using Lectio Divina. Assure them that there is no right or wrong answer.

Discussion (3-5 min)

Say: *We just learned two different ways of praying with Scripture. What is similar about these two ways of praying and what is different about them?*

Answers could include:

Similarities:

- Both are ways of praying with Scripture.
- Both are ways of having Scripture speak to us personally.
- Both ask us how the Scripture moves us to action today.

Differences:

- Ignatian Visualization uses the creative or imaginative side of our minds more, where as Lectio Divina uses the thinking side of our minds more.
 - One of the two fits me and my personality more.
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Independent Work (15 min)

Instruct the students they will now have time on their own to practice one of these two prayer techniques. They can pick which of the two they want to try again.

Have them turn in their Bibles to Matthew 20:1-16, which is the story of the workers in the vineyard. Ask them to journal about their thoughts and feelings during the prayer. Invite the students to quietly raise their hands if they have a question so you can help them personally.

Consider using future class prayer time to allow the students to practice again one of these ways of praying with Scripture.

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Closing Prayer

Say: *Dear Lord, help us grow closer to You as we try to use these techniques in our daily life, as individuals and as a sixth grade class and prayer community. We pray in Your name that through our conscious efforts, we may grow closer to You through prayer and Scripture. Glory be Amen.*

Ignatian Visualization/ Contemplation Technique:

- ✝ With each of these steps, read the Scripture slowly and attentively.
- ✝ Use all 5 senses to connect and imagine the scene: seeing the people, hearing the words, observing the actions, etc.
- ✝ Try to enter into the scene personally. Sometimes you are an eye-witness to the scene; other times you take the place of one of the characters in the scene.
- ✝ Pay attention to what you imagine, think, and feel as being part of the scene and ask what God might be inviting you to do through your prayer.

Lectio Divina:

- ✝ With each of these steps, read the Scripture slowly and attentively.
- ✝ What does the text say? – This step is known as lectio or reading.
- ✝ What does the text say to you? How does this speak just to you in your life? – This step is known as meditatio or meditation.
- ✝ What do you want to say to God about this text? Express your feelings to God. – This step is known as oratio or prayer.
- ✝ How does this text move you to become more like Jesus Christ in your thoughts and actions? – This step is known as contemplatio or contemplation.

Sixth Grade: Lesson Five

Seek and Recognize God

Lesson Objective: Students will be able to present a method to aid them in making decisions with God on a daily basis.

Lesson Assessment: Students will complete a daily examen of their lives and relate how it can help them make better decisions with God.

Lesson Materials:

- Chalk/markers
- Pencils
- Students' chart paper from Lesson 1
- Copies of the daily examen handout for each student
- Students' prayer journals or blank paper
- Audio equipment and music CD (optional)

Lesson Outline:

Opening Prayer (1-2 min)

Say: Dear God, in Scripture, You speak of your Word as a lamp that lights the way for our feet. We ask that today Your Word shine its light on our lives so we can see better how You are with us and at work in our lives. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Review of Previous Lessons (3 min)

Say: In our most recent lesson, we learned two ways of praying with Scripture. What were those two ways of praying with Scripture, and what were their steps?

Assist the students as necessary to outline the two techniques on the board.

Ignatian Visualization Technique:

- 1) Read the scripture in a very focused way.
- 2) Use all 5 senses to connect and imagine the scene, seeing the people, hearing the words, observing the actions, etc.
- 3) Try to enter into the scene personally.
- 4) Pay attention to what we imagine, think, and feel and ask what God might be inviting us to do through our prayer.

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Review of Previous Lesson Continued

Lectio Divina:

- 1) Lectio or reading.
 - 2) Meditatio or meditation.
 - 3) Oratio or prayer.
 - 4) Contemplatio or contemplation.
-

A daily examen is similar to but different than an examination of conscience. In an examination of conscience, usually done in preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the focus is moral, searching for occasions of sin. The examen has a spiritual focus, seeking a broader review of our lives to find God's presence and our response (or lack of response) to it.

Discussion and Prayer (10-12 min)

Introduce the students to the practice of a daily examen.

Say: *Very early in the life of the Church, Christians realized that it was important to review their spiritual lives each day if they wanted to remain faithful in following the Lord. Out of this desire to walk more closely with the Lord and to do His will grew a practice of prayer that today is often called a daily examen.*

Say: *The word "examen" probably reminds us of "examinations." Especially here at school, that can be a scary word. It can make it seem like this prayer is a test. But in this case, "examen" means less of a "test" and more of a "review." We are reviewing our days in a special way – in the light of the Holy Spirit.*

Say: *We are seeking to recognize and be aware of what is of God and from God and what is not of God and not from God in our lives. When we pray a daily examen, we are seeking to identify where we saw God and where we did not see God. That way we can better recognize God and His presence and action in our lives in the future and then respond to it more!*

Say: *The heart of the daily examen is reviewing our day, like it was a movie playing in our minds.*

Distribute to the students the handout outlining the steps of the daily examen, and then walk them through each step. Provide, to the extent possible, examples from your own days.

- 1) Reflect on the events of the day.

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Discussion and Prayer Continued

- 2) *Recognize* the ways in which God was present and calling us during the day.
 - 3) *Rejoice* in the moments in which we did recognize God's presence and action during the day.
 - 4) *Repent* of the moments in which we did not recognize God's presence and action during the day.
 - 5) *Recommit* in prayer to look for God's presence and action in our lives.
-

Independent Work (20 min)

Instruct the students that they are now going to practice doing the daily examen, going through the five steps as outlined on the sheet.

Ask the students to "journal" or record on a piece of paper what they do in each of the steps. Let them know that this is not a necessary part of practicing a daily examen, but it can be helpful as we can go back and look at what we wrote down.

It would be good to provide quiet reflective/religious/classical music in the background. Let the students know that if they have a question they can quietly raise their hand for help.

Give the students enough time to complete their examens.

Say: *Again, the purpose of the daily examen is to help us follow the Lord more faithfully in our daily lives and the many decisions we have to make. It is to help us make better decisions because we can come to see more clearly where God is present in our lives, and where we tend to forget about His presence.*

Say: *What are some of the decisions we have to make in life?*

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Independent Work Continued

Facilitate the class in making a list of decisions that the students face. Responses could include:

- each day (ex: how to treat others, how to speak, what to eat, how hard to work, interactions with family, prayer, etc.)
- each school year (ex. grades, behavior, activities to be involved in, leadership, prayer, ect.)
- in our future as high schoolers
- in our future immediately after high school
- in our future as adults
- in our faith journey to know God and make God known

Say: *Doing a daily examen can help us in making these decisions because as we learned earlier: seeing is hearing. The more we are able to see God's presence in our lives and then respond to it, the more we will in a sense "hear" what God is asking us to do, what is the right decision to make. The daily examen is particularly helpful with the little choices and decisions we have to make each and every day.*

On the same piece of paper, invite the students to write down two daily decisions they have been struggling with recently. Invite them to review the examen they completed earlier and see if anything from it relates to these two daily decisions. If they do not see any direct connections, invite them to reflect on these questions: When I am faced with this decision, where do I see God? Where do I not see God? What does this tell me about what I am perhaps supposed to do?

As this exercise could be difficult for the students, try to provide an example or two from your own life in which examining or reviewing your life helped you see where you were not seeing God in some decisions you were struggling with.

(Continued ...)

Consider doing the daily examen as part of your class prayer time in the coming weeks so the students can become more familiar and comfortable with it.

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Independent Work Continued

Give the students time to try the exercise, assisting those who ask for help.

Ask the students what they thought about the daily examen and if it could be helpful for them. If they express that they are struggling to grasp this idea, let them know that this form of prayer can take some time to learn and form connections. Encourage them to keep practicing it because we all want to make better decisions as we continue to face more and more decisions in our lives.

Closing Prayer (1-2 min)

Say: God, we thank You for starting to shine more light on our lives so we can better follow You and make good choices. Continue to help us see Your presence with us more and more. For all you have already given to us, we say, Glory be Amen.

DAILY EXAMEN:

Reflect - On the events of the day.

Recognize - The ways in which God was present to you, and the ways in which He called to you during your day.

Rejoice - In the moments in which you did recognize God's presence and action during your day.

Repent - Of the moments in which you did not recognize God's presence and action during your day.

Recommit - In prayer to look for God's presence and action in your life.

Seventh Grade: Lesson One

Make our Joy Complete

Lesson Objective: Students will be able to describe how each vocation offers opportunities to love God, to make God loved, and to experience joy.

Lesson Assessment: Students will use the lives of the saints to complete a three-column chart, describing how each of the four vocations provides opportunities to love God, to make God loved, and to experience joy.

Lesson Materials:

- Copies of saintly models' biographies (so each student has one of the five)
- Copies of the saintly model activity page for each student
- Large chart paper
- Pencils

The word "vocation" comes from the Latin word "vocare" meaning "to call." Our vocations are the unique mission God has for us – a mission that no one else in this world can fulfill but us. We are to become the saints we were made to be. For more on the meaning of vocation, see "A Vision of Vocation" included in the curriculum.

Lesson Outline:

Opening Prayer (1-2 min)

Say: Heavenly Father, Your Son Jesus promised us that He would make our joy complete. Help us to see today how our vocations help our joy truly become complete. Give us, through our saintly models, the courage to say yes to what You ask of us, just as they did. Amen.

Assessing Prior Knowledge (3-4 min)

Say: We are going to return to the saintly models that we have been studying to help us understand our vocations. What is the definition of a vocation?

Accept responses from the students, building to the following definition: **A vocation is the particular way God calls someone to come to know, love, and serve Him and make Him known, loved, and served.**

Say: How are the holy men and women that we have learned about examples for us? What were their vocations?

- Priesthood – Fr. Patrick Peyton, C.S.C.
- Religious life – Saint André Bessette
- Religious life – Saint Teresa of Calcutta
- Committed single life – Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati
- Married life – Blessed Louis and Zélie Martin

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Instruction (10-12 min)

Say: *In our opening prayer today, we recalled that Jesus said that He wanted our joy to be complete. What is joy?*

Students' responses might initially center around being happy. Encourage them to go deeper and see if they can distinguish between happiness and joy. Answers could include that joy is deeper, that it is less fleeting, that it comes from God whereas happiness comes from ourselves.

Say: *How do we find joy?*

Field different responses from the students.

Say: *Let's see what Jesus meant when He said that He wanted our joy to be complete. This passage comes from the Gospel of John, and it is before the Last Supper, so it is just before Jesus laid down His life for us on the Cross. Here is what He said (NAB John 15:9-17).*

Say: *By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.*

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another. (John 15:9-17)

Say: *So what is it that Jesus teaches us in order to lead us to complete joy in our lives?*

Let the students respond. The short answer should be love.

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Instruction Continued

Say: *All of us here have experienced love. There are people we love, and people who love us. What are some of the unique joys that come with loving?*

Accept different responses from the students.

Say: *This is why our vocations are such a big part of finding joy, true joy, in our lives because it is through our vocations that God is inviting us to love more deeply!*

For additional information on the saintly models, see the supplemental materials on them included in the curriculum.

Saintly Model Connection & Paired Work (10-15 min)

Say: *Today, then, let us look at some of the ways that our vocations can lead us to truer and more complete joy because they allow us to love more deeply and more broadly.*

Distribute the saintly models activity page with the three-column chart: “Love God,” “Make God Loved,” and “Experience Joy.” Ask the students to work in pairs with another student who has the same assigned saintly model.

Say: *Based on your saintly model’s story, record on the chart how the vocation your saint lived:*

- 1) *shows love for God*
- 2) *makes God loved*
- 3) *experiences joy*

Say: *You will then come back to the rest of the class and share what you have learned about that vocation.*

Depending on your class’s ability, model several answers for one of the vocations.

Group Work (10 min)

On the piece of chart paper, make a three-column chart that matches the students’ handout. Presenting one vocation at a time, invite the students to share how each vocation provides opportunities to love God, to make God loved, and to experience joy. Note that for religious life, there will be responses that come both from those who read the biography of St. André Bessette and that of St. Teresa of Calcutta.

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Group Work Continued (10 min)

Select a student recorder to record the answers on the chart, and instruct the students to complete their own activity pages at the same time.

Emphasize through this lesson that our greatest joys in life come from loving, and it is our vocations that allow us to love the most deeply and the most broadly in our lives.

Say: *It is through calling us to our vocations in life that Jesus fulfills His promise to us to make our joy complete!*

Closing Prayer (1-2 min)

Say: *Jesus, we thank You for both teaching us and showing us how our joy might be complete. With You, we now pray to our Father in heaven so that we may do His will and find His joy. And so together, we pray, Our Father Amen.*

LOVE GOD

**MAKE GOD
LOVED**

**EXPERIENCE
JOY**

*Father Patrick
Peyton, CSC*

*Saints Louis &
Zélie Martin*

*Blessed Pier
Giorgio Frassati*

*Saint Teresa
of Calcutta*

*Saint André
Bessette*

Seventh Grade: Lesson Two

The Greatest Gift

Lesson Objective: Students will be able to relate the definition of love as the gift of self to real-life examples.

Lesson Assessment: Students will write a two-to three-paragraph newspaper article about someone who gives of himself or herself in order to love.

Lesson Materials:

- Student journals
- Blank paper
- Pencils
- Coloring supplies
- Bible

Lesson Outline:

Opening Prayer (1-2 min)

Say: Dear God, inspired by You, St. Paul said that love is the greatest gift. Today help us learn more about love, the greatest of all gifts, so that we may give this gift to others and also receive it in our own lives. To do so, we ask the help and intercession of our Mother Mary as we pray, Hail Mary Amen.

Scripture Reflection (7-10 min)

Say: We have heard that a big part of our vocations – and our joy – is loving God and making God loved by others. Part of loving God, however, is also loving others. Jesus made that clear by connecting together the commandments to love God and to love neighbor. Today, we are going to reflect on that love of others, which is a gift that has God as its source and very being. To do that, we are going to read again part of the passage from John's Gospel that we read in our last lesson.

Invite one of the students to read John 15:12-17 (NAB). Inform the other students to listen carefully as they will be journaling their reactions to and thoughts on the words of Jesus. In particular, ask them to reflect on what Jesus tells us that love is.

Say: This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing.

(Continued...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Scripture Reflection Continued

I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another. (John 15:12-17)

Give the students several minutes to write their reactions in their journals or on a piece of paper.

Discussion (5-7 min)

Say: *What is Jesus telling us that love is in this passage?*

The students' first response might be: "to lay down one's life for one's friends." Guide the students to the understanding that in a broader sense Jesus is telling us that love is the gift of ourselves to others for their good.

Say: *Why is the gift of ourselves the greatest love? What makes it a greater love than giving another gift to someone?*

The students' responses might vary, but they should center on the truth that the greatest thing we have and so the greatest thing we can give is our own lives. There is nothing more unique or more precious. As a result, there is nothing more precious or unique to receive.

Say: *We know that Jesus did exactly what He said. He loved His disciples, and us, with the greatest love. On the cross, He laid down His life for us. That is how much Jesus loved us, and as we know, we are called to do the same. Our vocations are really about how we are going to give ourselves to others, how we are going to love them and thus love God too. There is nothing greater we can do than that.*

Say: *Again, that does not mean that we literally die for others – though we might be called to do that. Hopefully we will be ready like Jesus and many of the saints who have gone before us. We all must give our lives in service of others and their good, because that is where our fulfillment and our joy ultimately will be found.*

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Independent Work (15-20 min)

Instruct the students that they will now write a two-to three-paragraph newspaper story on someone who gives himself or herself in order to love. They can base their article on a true story, which is the preference, or they can make one up if they cannot recall a true story at this time. The key part of the story is that the person gives or sacrifices of themselves to love someone else.

When completed, invite volunteers to share their articles with the rest of the class.

Closing Prayer (1--2 min)

Say: *Dear Jesus, there truly is no greater love than to lay down our lives for others. Thank You for laying down Your life for us on the cross. May we draw strength from Your sacrifice for us so that we may have the strength and the courage in our lives to do the same for others. We ask for this grace as we pray the prayer that You taught us, Our Father Amen.*

Seventh Grade: Lesson Three

Tree of Love

Lesson Objective: Students will be able to explain how we strive to love, through our vocations, because God first loved us.

Lesson Assessment: Students will create a tree diagram of God's love to display how God's love allows for each of us, through our vocations, to love more deeply.

Lesson Materials:

- Copies of the biography of Saints Louis and Zélie Martin for each student
- Copies of the roots of love activity page for each student
- Copies of the tree of love activity page for each student
- Pencils
- Coloring supplies

Lesson Outline:

Opening Prayer (3-5 min)

Explain to the students that today they will be reflecting on some of the people who have passed on love to them in their lives, and so for today's opening prayer they will offer petitions for people they love or who might be in need of love at this time. Open with the Sign of the Cross and then invite them to say their petitions out loud, if they are willing. Conclude with an Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.

Review of Previous Lessons (2-3 min)

Say: *In our last lesson we talked about the fullest or the greatest form of love. What is this "no greater love?"*

Accept responses from the students, guiding them to the answer that love ultimately is the gift of self, and it is the greatest gift because we have nothing greater to give than our own lives.

Instruction & Sainly Model Connection (10-15 min)

Say: *We have heard throughout the Bible, and we hear it through the lives of the saints just how much God loves us. Psalm 139 even tells us that God loved us from the moment He knit us together in our mother's womb. We also know that, through our call to a vocation, we are called to love. We cannot love truly and purely unless we acknowledge the source of our love, and why we love in the first place. Today, we will look at how love, rooted in God who is Love, results in the ability for others to love.*

(Continued...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Instruction & Sainly Model Connection Continued

Distribute copies of the biography of Saints Louis and Zélie Martin. Instruct the students to focus their listening on where love is rooted and present in the story. To assist them in their analysis, pass out the roots of life activity page as well.

Say: *At the top level, where it says “Source of Love,” write “God.” In the middle level where it says “Receiver of Love, Giver of Love,” write “Saints Louis and Zélie Martin.” Then at the lower level where it says “Receiver of Love,” write “The Martin’s Children.” As we listen to the story, be thinking about how love is passed on from God to Louis and Zélie, and then from them to their children. We will fill that in after reading the story.*

Read the biography of Saints Louis and Zélie Martin together as a class using volunteers. When completed, ask the students to complete the activity page.

Class Discussion (5-7 min)

Guide the students in a discussion using the biography and activity page to explore how the rooting of the Martins’ love in God is what allowed them to love their children so well. Some questions to consider asking:

- How was God the root of love for Saints Zélie and Louis Martin?
- What did they do to allow God’s love to fill their hearts so that they could love their children?
- How did they then pass that love on to their children?

Individual Work (10-12 min)

Instruct the students that they will now draw a tree of love of their own lives. Distribute the tree of love activity page. Instruct them that God’s name goes at the roots. They are then to place their name at the branches.

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Individual Work Continued

Say: On your own, fill in a name or names in the trunk of the person or persons who most pass on God's love to you. Then, on the leaves, fill in the names of the people that you pass God's love on to in your lives. You can put many different people on the leaves if you want. Then fill in the ways that the love of God gets passed on at each stage. You may also color or decorate the tree as you work on it.

After completing their trees of love, invite students to share their trees with each other in pairs or small groups. Then have a few volunteers share their trees with the whole class. Emphasize to the students that these trees remind us that we love others because we have first been loved by others, but ultimately by God.

Say: St. John says in the Bible, "We love because He first loved us" (NAB 1 John 4:19). St. John was referring to God, because as St. John also said in the Bible, "God is love" (NAB 1 John 4:16). So we love, again, because God who is Love first loved us. And to share that love with us, He first loved others, like our parents, grandparents, teachers, priests, older siblings, and others who passed that love on to us. And, now, especially in our vocations, it is our turn to pass that love on to others.

Closing Prayer (1-2 min)

Say: God, You are Love, and we thank You for loving us. We thank You for loving those who passed Your love on to us so that we could believe that You love us. Now, through the intercession of the saints, help us to pass Your love on to others. We want Your love to grow in our world. Amen.

ROOT OF LOVE

Source of Love: _____

How is love given?

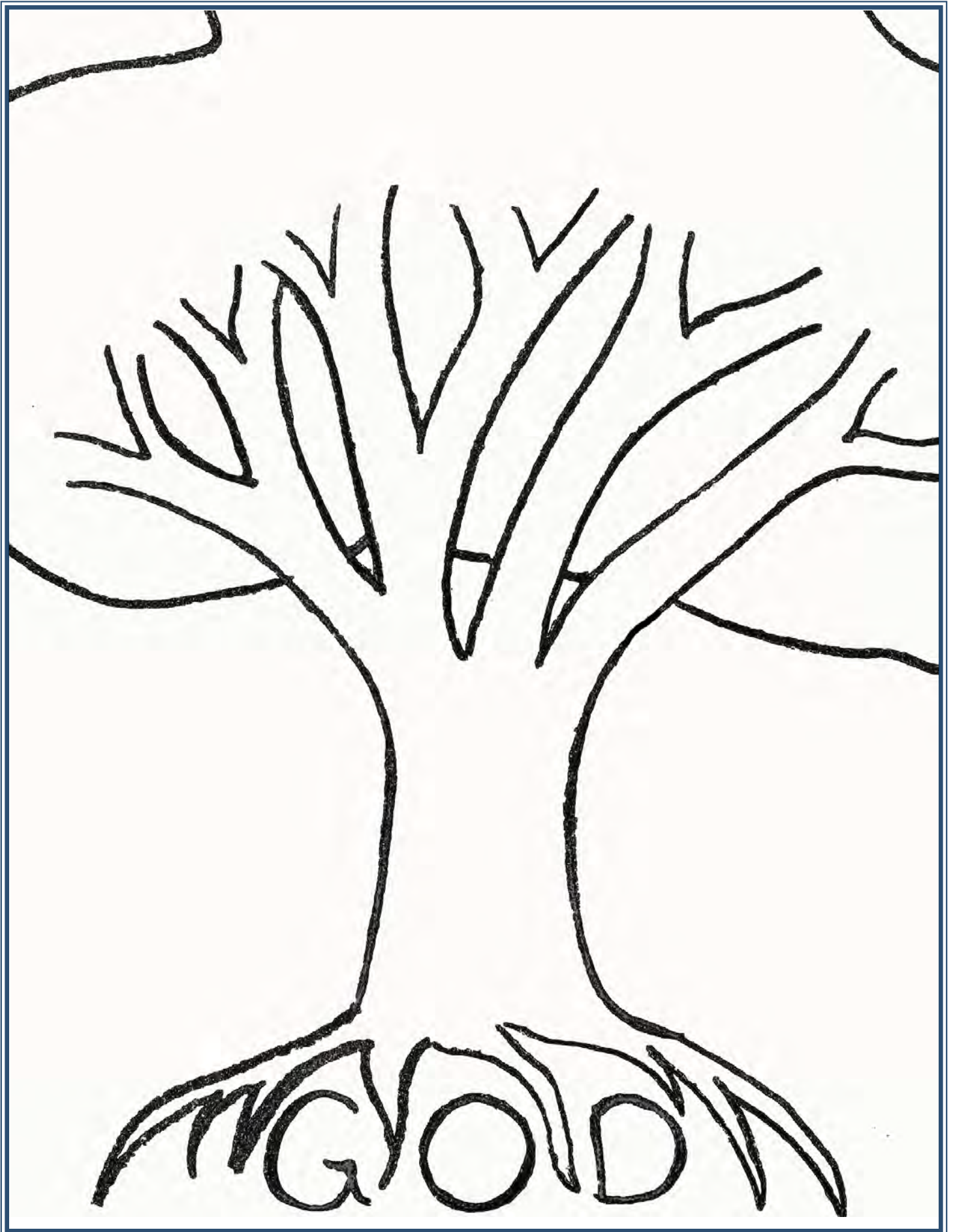
**Reciever of Love,
Giver of Love:** _____

How is love given?

How is love received?

Receiver of Love: _____

How is love received?



Seventh Grade: Lesson Four

Serve Him by Serving Others

Lesson Objective: Students will be able to articulate how both strengths and weaknesses can be used to love God.

Lesson Assessment: Students will write a biography of a fictional character from their reading/language arts class, identifying the character's strengths and weaknesses and explaining both can be used by the character to love God and others.

Lesson Materials:

- Student journals
- Pencils
- Blank paper

Lesson Outline:

Opening Prayer (2 min)

Consider writing the prayer on the overhead or board for students to join in praying it:

Say: *Lord Jesus Christ, take all my freedom, my memory, my understanding, and my will. All that I have and cherish You have given me. I surrender it all to be guided by Your will. Your grace and Your love are wealth enough for me. Give me these, Lord Jesus, I ask for nothing more. Amen.*

From St. Ignatius of Loyola

Student Reflection (6-8 min)

Say: *We have read a lot about the lives of holy men and women to help us understand vocation and love. Now I want us to try and do the same through other characters you have read about in literature. What has been one of your favorite books or stories that you have read so far this year? Who is your favorite character from that book? Why? What were some strengths of that character that helped him or her to love others or help others? What were some weaknesses of that character that presented challenges in loving or helping others?*

Say: *Take some time now to write about one of these characters and their strengths and weaknesses in your journal.*

Students will complete the guided reflection in their journals.

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Instruction (10-15 min)

Say: Often we think that only our strengths can be used to love others. We often think that our weaknesses only get in the way of loving others. Yet, St. Paul challenges us in the Bible to think differently because of the cross of Jesus. Listen to what St. Paul wrote (NAB 2 Corinthians 12:5-10).

Say: About myself I will not boast, except about my weaknesses. Although if I should wish to boast, I would not be foolish, for I would be telling the truth. But I refrain, so that no one may think more of me than what he sees in me or hears from me because of the abundance of the revelations. Therefore, that I might not become too elated, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an angel of Satan, to beat me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I begged the Lord about this, that it might leave me, but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me. Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:5-10).

Repeat again the words of St. Paul that "power is made perfect in weakness" and that "when I am weak, then I am strong." Write them on the board. Ask the students if they can think of any examples of how that might be the case.

It might be necessary to give the students some help, assisting them in seeing how their weaknesses make them more concerned and caring for others in need and also more open to depend on God. Try to prompt them using an example from your own life or from the lives of the saints they have studied. For example, St. André Bessette's sickness as a child gave him a special heart for others who were sick and God used that to work miracles in the lives of others. Give the students time to let this idea sink in.

Say: St. Paul taught that when we are weak, then we are strong. Besides perhaps his own life experiences, what would have led St. Paul to say something that runs so contrary to what we naturally think?

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Instruction Continued

Students' responses may vary, but try to lead them to answer the cross of Jesus. The cross of Jesus was the moment of ultimate weakness, but it became the great gift of God's love to us and our salvation.

Say: *Isn't this good news? Very good news? If we give our weaknesses to Christ, He can turn them into strengths? This is great news! It means we can use both our strengths and our weaknesses in Christ to love others!*

Individual & Paired Work (15-20 min)

Instruct the students that their assignment will relate to the characters they reflected on earlier in their journal. On a new sheet of paper, they should write a 2-paragraph biography of the character, focusing on the character's strengths and weaknesses. This should be an original composition and not a copy of what they wrote in their journals.

Then in a 1-paragraph conclusion they should describe how this character can use both his or her strengths but especially his or her weaknesses to love God and others. Encourage the students to focus on how this character can be strong when he or she is weak, having their weaknesses become sources of power for them in serving others.

When they are finished, have the students share their biographies with a partner. Emphasize again that, in Christ, our weaknesses too can be used to love God and love others.

Closing Prayer

Say: *Heavenly Father, we thank You for the wisdom of St. Paul which helps us see that Your power is made perfect in our weaknesses. Thank You for being strong when we are weak, so that our weaknesses can become ways that we can love others and love You better. The holy men and women who have gone before us have done this, so help us follow in their steps, as we pray, Glory be Amen.*

Seventh Grade: Lesson Five

Love without Counting the Cost

Lesson Objective: Students will be able to analyze the costs and benefits of sacrifice and relate it to the idea that, in the end, we are called to “love without counting the cost.”

Lesson Assessment: Students will make a pro/con list for a “living saint” and then, in a two-paragraph reflection, discuss how the sacrifice of love outweighs the costs.

Lesson Materials:

- Extra copies of saintly models’ biographies
- Student journals
- Pencils
- Blank paper

Lesson Outline:

Opening Prayer (2 min)

Consider writing the prayer (known as the Anima Christi) on the overhead or board for students to join in praying it:

Say: *Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O Good Jesus, hear me.
Within Your wounds, hide me.
Separated from You let me never be.
From the malignant enemy defend me,
That I may praise You in the company of Your
saints for all eternity.
Amen.*

Introduction (3-4 min)

Say: *St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, tells us that we are: “to give, and not to count the cost, to fight, and not to heed the wounds, to toil, and not to seek for rest, to labor, and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do thy will.” Why would St. Ignatius pray in this way?*

Field different responses from the students, but build to the answer that this is what Jesus did for us. Try to connect their responses with the previous lesson of loving being the gift of our own lives.

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Introduction Continued

Say: Yes, that is exactly what Jesus did for us. He gave without counting the cost; He fought for us – and even died for us – not heeding His wounds. He did not seek rest or reward, but labored for us so that we might know how much God loves us.

Say: This is what all the saints who have gone before us have done too, in imitation of Jesus. And, it is what the holy men and women who are alive in our world today are doing right now. And we are called to do the same. We are called, through our individual vocations, to sacrifice for love.

Say: Today, we will look at some of the sacrifices made to love God and to make God loved.

Reflection & Discussion (15-20 min)

Say: This year, as in other years, we have been looking at some specific holy men and women who model for us the four particular vocations of married life, committed single life, religious life, and holy orders or priesthood. You know them well now. They are: Blessed Louis and Zélie Martin, Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, St. Teresa of Calcutta, Saint André Bessette, and Fr. Patrick Peyton, C.S.C.

Say: I want you to pick one of the five, and reflect on the sacrifices they made to follow God the way that they did. Record your reflections in your journal.

Instruct students that they can refer to their notes from previous exercises as well as to the saintly models' biographies. It might be good to have a couple of extra copies on hand, just in case they want to write about a different model than the one they have previously explored. Remind them to focus on the sacrifices that were made specifically to love.

Say: Archbishop Fulton Sheen, whose cause for canonization is currently being investigated, said the following about sacrifice: "Sacrifice does not mean 'giving up' something, as if there were a loss; rather, it is an exchange: an exchange of lower values for higher joys." Isn't that a beautiful quote?

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Reflection & Discussion Continued

Say: Remember that earlier, we said that our greatest joy comes from loving, and we also said that loving is giving ourselves to others as a gift. If we connect those points, we see that it is through sacrifice that we will come to our greatest joys ... because of love!

Say: Archbishop Sheen is right that in sacrificing we do not give something to lose it; rather we exchanging things of lower value – like our own selfish wants or desires – to find higher joys in loving others. As you reflect on the sacrifices that holy men and women made to love, also write down the joys they experienced as a result of their sacrifices.

After a few minutes, invite volunteers to share some of their reflections with the class.

Individual Work (10 min)

Instruct the students that they will now select a “living saint,” that is a person they know who is alive today who is a holy person. This is a person who knows, loves, and serves God in his or her life, and makes God known, loved, and served by others.

With this person in mind, students will make a list of gifts and challenges (or pro’s and con’s) for the person’s vocation. For example, for a married couple a challenge could be remaining faithful both in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, while a gift could be having one special person to share life with.

For a priest, a challenge could be having no wife and family, while a gift could be being closer to the Church as one’s family.

After completing this list, they are to write at least a two-paragraph reflection about how the sacrifice of love the person makes, and the joys that come with it, “outweigh” the costs.

Depending on the time in class, invite the students to share in pairs or in groups what they have written. Have at least a few volunteers present to the whole class.

(Continued ...)



Lesson Outline, Continued:

**Individual Work
Continued**

Emphasize at the end that while it is important to weigh pro's and con's in any decision, we also want to remain open and willing to do what Jesus asks us to do in love, while not counting the cost. This is where our true joy will be found.

Closing Prayer

Say: *Dear God, You so love the world that You did not count the cost, You sent Your only Son that those who believe in Him might not perish, but might have eternal life. In imitation of Jesus, help us be able to discern well the decisions we make, but also grant us the faith in the end not to count the cost when You are calling us to give our lives in love. Amen.*

Eighth Grade: Lesson One

Shine Through Us

Lesson Objective: Students will be able to define “vocation” and give several examples of how Jesus’ life was a life of service.

Lesson Assessment: Through Gospel passages, students will identify how Jesus served the people both spiritually and physically.

Lesson Materials:

- Student journals
- Copies of the Jesus’ example of service activity page for each student
- Bibles
(at least enough for students to be in groups of 3-4)
- Pencils

Lesson Outline:

Opening Prayer (2-3 min)

Consider writing the prayer (which was a favorite of St. Teresa of Calcutta) on the overhead or board for students to join in praying it:

Say: *Dear Jesus, help me to spread Your fragrance everywhere I go.
Flood my soul with Your spirit and life.
Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly,
That my life may only be a radiance of Yours.*

*Shine through me, and be so in me
That every soul I come in contact with
May feel Your presence in my soul.
Let them look up and see no longer me, but only
Jesus!*

*Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as You
shine,
So to shine as to be a light to others;
The light, O Jesus will be all from You;
none of it will be mine;
It will be You, shining on others through me.*

*Let me thus praise You the way You love best, by
shining on those around me.
Let me preach You without preaching,
not by words but by my example,
By the catching force, the sympathetic influence
of what I do,
The evident fullness of the love my heart bears to
You. Amen.*

From Blessed John Henry Newman

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Introduction (6-8 min)

In their journal or on a sheet of paper, ask students to spend 2-3 minutes writing on the following topic:

Say: *Think of a parent, grandparent, teacher, priest, or other adult who loves you very much and has helped or served you in your life. Please list in bullet points specific ways that this person has supported you in service.*

On the whiteboard, make two columns and title them “Physical support” and “Emotional/Spiritual support.” Ask students to share some of the things they wrote down in their journals. Invite a student recorder to write their responses in the appropriate column on the board. Have the student recorder elicit feedback from the class to know in which column to write the response.

The word “vocation” comes from the Latin word “vocare” meaning “to call.” Our vocations are the unique mission God has for us – a mission that no one else in this world can fulfill but us. We are to become the saints we were made to be. For more on the meaning of vocation, see “A Vision of Vocation” included in the curriculum.

Assessment of Prior Knowledge (2-3 min)

Say: *We are beginning our series of lessons this year about vocations. To review, when we hear the word “vocation,” we might immediately think about priests or about consecrated religious like sisters or brothers. But does anyone remember what the word “vocation” actually means?*

Work with the students’ responses to the following definition: **A vocation is the particular way God calls someone to come to know, love, and serve Him and make Him known, loved, and served.**

Can anyone give examples of other vocations besides the religious life or priesthood?

Married life and committed single life.

Instruction (3-4 min)

Say: *The primary aspect of any vocation has to do with who we are and how we are in relationships with others. Vocations that are tied to relationships are the vocations of married life, committed single life, religious life, and priesthood. This is the core of God’s call to us: It is at the very center of our being. Will we relate to others and the world as a married person? As a priest? As a religious brother or religious sister? As a committed single person?*

(Continued ...)

For more on these vocations, see the Vocations Grid included in the curriculum.

A wider connection could be drawn here to the seven corporal and spiritual works of mercy, which are a part of the Church's tradition.

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Instruction Continued

Say: You may have heard people talking about vocation when they are talking about their jobs. Teachers often say, "Teaching is my vocation." God does call us to do certain jobs that use our gifts to help the world, but this is not the main aspect of vocation. It is not our core vocation. Our job is what we do in this world, whereas the decision to enter the religious life or to be married or to remain single/celebrate or become a priest is who we are. God's call to us helps us to see who we truly are – and the vocations of married life, committed single life, and religious life help us to know and love God on earth.

Pause and ask the students if they have any questions. See if they can put in their own words this distinction between who we are and what we do. It might be helpful to even write that on the board.

Say: Our first lesson this year is about what ties all of these vocations together: the call to service. Whatever our vocation, we are called to serve God by serving others. Service has two major components. We are called to serve those around us spiritually and emotionally by loving them, forgiving them, teaching them, and supporting them. We are called to serve those around us physically by taking care of their physical needs such as food, health, and home.

Group Work or Pair Work (15-20 min)

Say: Now we are going to examine some examples from the Gospels of Jesus' life of service. As you and your group read through each Gospel story, note the ways that Jesus serves and supports others in both a spiritual way and a physical way.

Distribute the Jesus' example of service activity pages. Divide the students into small groups or pairs. It is OK to have multiple groups or pairs with the same Gospel story. Make sure each group has a Bible. Assist the groups as needed.

Discussion (15 min)

Invite the students to share what they learned from each Gospel passage, going passage by passage. Responses could include the following:

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Discussion Continued

The Beatitudes: Jesus served a large crowd who had come to listen to Him. Jesus physically taught the people what was of true value and how to find true blessing in life. Jesus served them spiritually by revealing God's love and presence to those who were in need. A more complex answer could be that Jesus revealed the difference between how the world sees itself and how God sees the world.

The Stoning of the Adulteress: Jesus served a woman who was shunned from society. Jesus physically saved her from her would-be executioners. Jesus served her spiritually by forgiving her and helping her find a pathway to a better life. Jesus gave her dignity along with her physical life. A more complex answer could be that Jesus served the Pharisees, his "enemies," by teaching them humility.

The Healing of the Paralyzed Man: Jesus served a stranger who was brought to Him in a bizarre way. Jesus ministered to him spiritually first by forgiving his sins and rewarding his faith. Then Jesus physically healed his paralysis. Again, a more complex answer could be that Jesus spiritually serves the doubters in the crowd by teaching them that He is the Savior.

The Multiplication of Loaves and Fishes: Jesus serves a large crowd of followers, strangers who need Him, by physically relieving their hunger. He ministers to them spiritually by preaching to them for as long as they need.

The Washing of the Feet: Jesus serves His closest friends – almost like His family – and He serves even Judas, His betrayer. He serves them physically by carefully washing their tired and dusty feet. This work is extremely humble. Jesus ministers to them spiritually by teaching them to be true, humble leaders.

Say: *Let's return to your journal question from earlier. Look at how your priests, family members, and teachers have served you. Jesus served His disciples, His followers, strangers, those who were rejected and cast out, and even His enemies while He was on earth.*

(Continued ...)



Lesson Outline, Continued:

**Discussion
Continued**

Say: *In our vocations, we are called to lives of service to God and those around us – our closest family and friends, strangers, the oppressed, the lost, our enemies, people we might not get along with, everyone.*

Closing Prayer

Say: *For our closing prayer today, we are just going to take a few minutes in silence. I want everyone to think of someone he or she can serve this week either spiritually or physically, whether that be a family member, friend, enemy, or stranger. Ask Jesus to help you serve that person as He would. Then after a few moments of silence you can pray on our own, we will close with a Glory Be.*

Jesus' Examples of Service

Directions: Read each of the Gospel stories below. Then fill in the table associated with each story. It is possible to fit several answers in the table if Jesus is ministering to multiple people in the story.

Jesus Gives the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3-16)

What individual or group is Jesus serving and what is His relationship to him/her/them?	
How is Jesus ministering to the spiritual or emotional needs of that person/group?	
How is Jesus serving the physical needs of that person/group?	

Jesus Washes the Feet of His Disciples (John 13:1-17)

What individual or group is Jesus serving and what is His relationship to him/her/them?	
How is Jesus ministering to the spiritual or emotional needs of that person/group?	
How is Jesus serving the physical needs of that person/group?	

The Multiplication of the Loaves and the Fishes (Matthew 14:13-21)

What individual or group is Jesus serving and what is His relationship to him/her/them?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
How is Jesus ministering to the spiritual or emotional needs of that person/group?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
How is Jesus serving the physical needs of that person/group?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

The Healing of the Paralytic Lowered Through the Roof (Mark 2:1-12)

What individual or group is Jesus serving and what is His relationship to him/her/them?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
How is Jesus ministering to the spiritual or emotional needs of that person/group?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
How is Jesus serving the physical needs of that person/group?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

The Saving of the Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8:3-11)

What individual or group is Jesus serving and what is His relationship to him/her/them?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
How is Jesus ministering to the spiritual or emotional needs of that person/group?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
How is Jesus serving the physical needs of that person/group?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Eighth Grade: Lesson Two & Three

Christ has no Body but Yours

Lesson Objective: Students will be able to list ways in which each of the four vocations can serve God and each other in unique ways.

Lesson Assessment: Students will be able to complete a chart explaining how each of the four vocations uniquely knows, loves, and serves God, and comes to make God known, loved, and served.

Lesson Materials:

- Copies of the vocations chart activity page for each student
- Copies of the saintly models chart activity page for each student
- Copies of the saintly models' biographies for each student
- Pencils

Lesson Outline: Day One of Two

Opening Prayer (2 min)

Consider writing the prayer on the overhead projector or board for students to join in praying it:

Say: *Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
compassion into this world,
Yours are the feet with which He walks
to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses
all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
compassion into this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*

From St. Teresa of Avila

Review of Previous Lessons (4 min)

Ask the following questions in rapid-fire fashion to review the material from the previous lesson. Refer to it for any answers in doubt.

- What is a vocation?
- What are the four particular vocations?
- Who are we called to serve?
- And in what ways are we called to serve them?
- What are some examples of when Jesus served people in the Gospels?

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Instruction & Discussion (7-10 min)

Say: *In all vocations we are called to serve. The four particular vocations are the ones rooted in relationships with others and with God. We just named these four particular vocations: married life, committed single life, religious life, and priesthood. Today we will be examining how each vocation knows, loves, and serves God and how each vocation makes God known, loved, and served by others.*

Say: *Before we do that, let's brainstorm ways in which all people of any vocation can know, love, and serve God.*

Distribute the vocations chart activity page to the students, and begin by answering the questions at the top that refer to all vocations generally. Answers could include:

- o **Know God:** attending and participating in Mass (daily and/or Sunday), reading the Bible and praying, making Christian friendships or faith-filled friendships with those around them
- o **Love God:** Spending time in prayer with God, growing in the spiritual life, following the commandments, giving generously to the Church with time/talent/treasure
- o **Serve God:** Making sacrifices for others, doing ministry to the Church, listening to those around us when they need us
- o **Making God known:** talking about God to co-workers and family, supporting family and friends in faith journeys
- o **Making God loved:** Taking others to Church with us and inviting others to pray with us
- o **Making God served:** Inspiring others to serve through our lives of service

Say: *Now we are going to move into the stories of the five saintly models we have been studying who exemplify the four vocations.*

(Continued ...)

For more on these vocations, see the Vocations Grid included in the curriculum.

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Instruction & Discussion Continued

Say: *The first is Saint Teresa of Calcutta, who is an example of religious life. Similiar to her is Saint André Bessette, who is also an example of religious life. He was a brother of the Congregation of Holy Cross. The next is Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, who is an example of committed single life. The next is Fr. Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., who is an example of priesthood. He was a priest of the Congregation of Holy Cross. The next two, Blessed Louis and Zélie Martin, are examples of the vocation of married life.*

Group Work (15 min)

Now divide students into 5 groups and give each group a copy of the saints activity page along with a copy of the biography of one of the saintly models. Each group is assigned to one of the 5 models. The groups will read together the biography of their assigned saintly model. Then, on the chart that accompanies the activity page, the group will work together to fill in how that particular person was able to make God known, loved, and served.

At this point, they are only to fill in their particular model. They will fill in the others in the next lesson when they hear from their classmates.

Closing Prayer

Say: *Heavenly Father, we thank You for the witness of the holy men and women throughout the centuries. We thank You for how they teach us the many ways we can follow Your Son Jesus in our lives. Through their witness and intercession, continue to guide us to our vocations in service of You and our neighbor. Amen.*

Lesson Outline: Day Two of Two

Lesson Materials:

- Copies of the vocations chart activity page for each student
- Copies of the saintly models chart activity page for each student
- Copies of the saintly models' biographies for each student
- Pencils

Opening Prayer (2 min)

Consider writing the prayer on the overhead projector or board for students to join in praying it:

Say: *Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
compassion into this world,
Yours are the feet with which He walks
to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses
all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
compassion into this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*

St. Teresa of Avila

Review of Previous Lessons (2-3 min)

Say: *You will now have 2-3 minutes to review the chart you completed during our last lesson about the saint assigned to your group. When the time is up, you will be presenting your saint and your chart to your classmates.*

Allow groups to work for 2-3 minutes on their chart.

Group Work (15-20 min)

Have the students divide and form new groups in which each saint is represented by one of them. In these new groups, each student will serve as the "expert" for his or her saint, teaching the rest of the group what he or she learned about the saint. Together then, learning from each other, the students will complete the worksheet.

An alternative would be to have each group come and make a presentation in front of the whole class.

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Discussion (15 min)

Say: Now that you've learned about how each saint specifically knew, loved, and served God, let's process these together and discuss how each vocation can know, love, and serve God uniquely. What we just learned about these saints will help us a lot as they were models in living out their vocations.

Listen for the students' ideas and write them on the board in a chart that is similar to the vocations grid activity page they received yesterday. Instruct the students to be completing that activity page during the discussion.

Say: Notice that the people in each vocation are able to relate to God and to people in different ways because of their particular vocation. One other interesting thing to note: Do you remember how on the first day we said that a more minor aspect of vocation had to do with our job, or what we do? Notice how all these saints have different "jobs."

Say: Each vocation provides opportunities for various types of work. A priest can run a parish or do social work or be a professor or be a lawyer or work in a medical field, among many others. So can a religious brother or religious sister. A married or single person can do any of these jobs as well. Once we are clear about **who we are**, the possibilities for **what we do** with our gifts are endless!

Closing Prayer (3-5 min)

Say: For our closing prayer, I want you to listen to these words from Saint Teresa of Calcutta, and then join me in prayer:

Say: People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies. Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway.

See the vocations grid in the curriculum as an aid in this exercise.

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Closing Prayer Continued

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten. Do good anyway.

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. Give your best anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.

Pause in silence for a few moments.

Say: *Lord, help us to live this way, like Saint Teresa of Calcutta and the other saints lived. Help us to live that our lives are between us and You, so that we may shine Your light and Your love on our world. Amen.*

How the Saints Know, Serve, and Love God

Directions: Read the mini-biography of the saint to which you've been assigned. Answer the questions for the saint you have been assigned. As you listen to the presentations from your classmates, fill in the questions for the other saints.

Make a chart with these questions across the top, and the names of our five vocation models along the side.

1. This saint is an example of which vocation?
2. How did this saint learn about God or know God?
3. How did this saint grow closer to God over time or love God?
4. In what particular ways did this saint serve God by serving others?
5. In what ways did this saint make other people know, love, or serve God?

How Each of the Vocations Knows, Serves and Loves God

What are some ways that anyone, regardless of vocation, can:

- a. Know God: _____
- b. Love God: _____
- c. Serve God: _____
- d. Help others to know, love, or serve God (in other words, “make God known, loved, and served”): _____

Who is Serving	How can they uniquely know God? <i>In what special ways can they see or recognize God?</i>	How can they uniquely love God? <i>In what special way can they show their love for Christ and the Church?</i>	How can they uniquely serve God? <i>What special service can they provide to God or others?</i>	Who can they uniquely serve? <i>Who can they serve that other people in other vocations might not be able to serve as well?</i>	How can they uniquely help others know, love, and serve God? <i>In what special ways can they help others along their path of serving God?</i>
Married People					
Single People					
Priests					
Religious Brothers & Religious Sisters					

Eighth Grade: Lesson Four

Serve Him by Serving Others

Lesson Objective: Students will be able to recognize their own gifts, talents, and skills and be able to explain how they could be used to make God known, loved, and served.

Lesson Assessment: Students will be able to complete an activity page naming some of their own gifts, talents, and skills, as well as how they might use them more in service of God.

Lesson Materials:

- Copies of the gifts and talents activity page for each student
- Pencils
- Beads of various colors separated into bowls (optional)
- Large signs indicating what each color represents (optional)
- A length of string bracelet-length for each student (optional)
- A ziploc bag for each student (optional)
- Soft music (optional)

Lesson Outline:

Opening Prayer (3-4 min)

Inform the students for the opening prayer they will listen to a passage from the Prophet Jeremiah about his vocation (NAB Jeremiah 1:4-10). Ask them to listen attentively and then make their own prayer to God in silence in response to the reading. Either read the reading yourself or ask for a student volunteer.

Say: *The word of the LORD came to me:
Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
before you were born I dedicated you,
a prophet to the nations I appointed you.
“Ah, Lord GOD!” I said,
“I do not know how to speak. I am too young!”
But the LORD answered me,
Do not say, “I am too young.”
To whomever I send you, you shall go;
whatever I command you, you shall speak.
Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you—
oracle of the LORD.
Then the LORD extended his hand and touched
my mouth, saying to me,
See, I place my words in your mouth!
Today I appoint you over nations and
over kingdoms,
To uproot and to tear down,
to destroy and to demolish,
to build and to plant. (Jeremiah 1:4-10)*

Allow for a few moments of silence, and then say together a Glory Be.

See the vocations grid in the curriculum as an aid in this exercise.

For additional information on the saintly models, see the supplemental materials on them included in the curriculum.

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Review of Previous Lessons (3 min)

Say: What are some unique ways that religious brothers and religious sisters can serve God? What are some unique ways that a husband and wife can make God loved and served? What are some unique ways that a priest can make God known and served? A committed single person?

Instruction (7-8 min)

Say: In the previous lessons, we learned about how God calls us to different vocations of service. Today we are going to think about how God calls us to use our individual gifts and talents to make Him known, loved, and served. God has gifted each of us with wonderful talents and characteristics that He wants us to use to show our love for Him.

Say: Think about St. André Bessette. He was uneducated but had a humble, loving heart. He was a doorkeeper and porter who was comforting to the sick and mourners. He was able to pray to St. Joseph for their healing.

Say: Now think about Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati. What gifts or talents did he have?

Allow students to answer. Answers should include: great unselfishness, devotion to the Blessed Mother and the Holy Eucharist, education, love of the outdoors, youth, and energy.

Say: He used his love of the outdoors to lead his friends on fun excursions, where he led them in the praying of the Rosary and in talking about Christ. He used his courage to serve those who were poor and in need.

Say: Now think about Fr. Patrick Peyton, C.S.C.. What gifts or talents did he have, and how did he use them to love, know, and serve the Lord?

Allow students to answer. Answers could include: a strong family, love for the Virgin Mother, health, power of persuasion, understanding of the media, and humble beginnings.

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Instruction Continued

Say: All of these people had God-given skills and talents that they were able to share with the world. Sometimes they weren't gifts that other people thought were particularly important. They maybe even were seen as weaknesses in the world's eyes, but in God's love they could become sources of His power. Fr. Peyton was a janitor. St. André was a doorkeeper. Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati was very young and energetic. God called on each of them to use the gifts they had been given and the skills they had developed to serve Him and to serve others.

Consider asking the class to answer the same questions regarding St. Teresa of Calcutta and Blessed Louis and Zélie Martin.

Say: Today we will be examining the skills and talents that YOU have – that you see in yourself and that others see in you. Our first exercise will focus on the gifts that others see in you.

As alternative activity, if assembling materials for the bracelet is not possible, move desks to the perimeter of the room and have each student walk around with a lined (decorated, if you wish) sheet of paper that has his or her name on the top and a clipboard or a notebook. Make sure each student also carries a list of the qualities from which you'd like them to choose (see examples 1-9). In silence, and with soft music playing, have students move around the room, WRITING on each student's piece of paper what his or her gifts/qualities are. At the end, the student will have a sheet of paper that lists his/her qualities in the eyes of his/her peers.

Group Work (15 min)

This exercise requires several materials: 1) a length of string, bracelet length, for each student, 2) a small Ziploc bag for each student, 3) several colors of beads separated out into different bowls placed around the room. Above each bowl place a sign indicating what that color bead stands for. It may be a good idea to move desks to the perimeter of the room to leave an open space in the middle. Consider putting on some soft music.

The goal of this exercise is to allow students to show each other what skills or gifts the other has in a silent and meaningful way. Each bead color indicates a virtue or a gift. You can make up your own virtues or gifts based on the class, but here are some ideas:

1. **Blue:** You are a peacemaker. You can keep me from arguing or being unkind.
2. **Red:** You can cheer me up by making me laugh or giving a kind word.

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Group Work Continued

3. **Yellow:** You are unselfish. You always think of others before yourself.
4. **Purple:** You are very forgiving.
5. **Orange:** You are very creative.
6. **Pink:** You are very well-organized.
7. **White:** You are very welcoming and friendly.
8. **Black:** You are a good listener. I always know I can talk to you when I'm upset.
9. **Green:** You are very smart. You read and write well.

Instruct the students that for approximately 15 minutes, they will move throughout the room in silence. Silence is key. They will each give one bead to the other students to indicate what gifts they think the other has. When a student is given a bead, he or she puts it into his or her bag and will later string all the beads together to make a bracelet.

At first, it might feel awkward to do the exercise in silence, but it actually removes awkward acceptance of compliments and allows for a truer sense of joy in each other's gifts. The teacher should also participate if possible, as well as keep an eye out to make sure that no one is left out. Each student should give a bead to all of his or her classmates.

Individual Work (8-10 min)

Distribute the gifts and talents worksheet to the students.

Say: *Now return to your desk with your baggie and look at the activity page that I am passing out to you. It asks you to identify what some of your skills and talents are, and then it asks how you might use those skills and talents to serve God and others. Please sit in silence to reflect on this activity page. Keep in mind some of the gifts and talents that your fellow students pointed out to you in the beads they gave you.*

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Share (7-10 min)

Invite the students to share with a partner what they wrote. Depending on the time available, have them switch partners and repeat the sharing. If desired, a few volunteers can be solicited to share with the rest of the class.

Close by restating how God blesses us with gifts and talents so that we might serve Him by serving others. Reiterate that knowing our gifts and talents will help us not only to listen to God about **who we are** but will help us do God's will with regards to **what we do**.

Closing Prayer

Instruct the students that for the closing prayer today, the class will simply take some time in silent meditation to thank God for the gifts that He has given them.

Your Gifts and Talents

Answer each of the questions below:

1. Look at your beaded bracelet. Notice how many beads of each color you received. What gifts did your classmates most see in you? List them below.

2. Think about what skills you have, or what you are good at and like to do. These could be at school or outside of school; they could be hobbies or pastimes. Write them down below.

3. Think about the positive personal characteristics you especially possess. Write them down below.

4. Looking at the three lists above, fill in the chart below. You do not need to fill in every box.

Here are some ways that I can use my gifts to serve God and others...

At Home	At Mass	At School	With Classmates or Family	With the Less Fortunate

Eighth Grade: Lesson Five

Finding Our Vocation – Courage to Say Yes

Lesson Objective: Students will be able to list the ways that we can be open to God’s vocational call to us.

Lesson Assessment: Students will be able to evaluate the status of their own vocational discernment.

Lesson Materials:

- Copies of the answering God’s call activity page for each student
- Bibles
- Soft/instrumental music
- Pencils

As an alternative, pray a meditative decade of the rosary.

Lesson Outline:

Opening Prayer (5 min)

Let the students know that for today’s opening prayer they will do some meditation. Darken the room, and have the students sit up straight, putting their feet flat on the floor and putting their hands either in their laps or on the desk. Let them know that this posture helps facilitate their breathing.

Ask students to take one deep breath in and quietly let it out. Do this again. On the third time, tell students, “let your eyes close.” Begin playing soft, instrumental music. Instruct them to keep breathing slowly and quietly.

Let them breathe quietly for a while, urging them to clear their heads and concentrate on the words you will say next. Then say these words: “Here I am, O God, I come to do your will.” Say them very slowly, with pauses of several seconds between each word and then longer pauses between the repetition of the phrase. Lengthen the pauses with each repetition.

Then, as the song is concluding, ask them to take one deep breath in and quietly let it out. Do this three times, and on the third time say, “Let your eyes open. Amen.”

Review of Previous Lessons (3 min.)

Say: *Can someone give me the definition of a vocation?* Field the students’ responses, working to the definition that it is a **call from God to know, love, and serve God, and to make God known, loved, and served by others ... through who we are and what we do.**

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Review of Previous Lessons Continued

Say: *Who are we called to serve?*

The students' responses should include God and others. Elicit from them a response as to exactly who those others are, including our "enemies" and those less fortunate than we are.

Say: *What are the four vocations?*

Religious life, married life, committed single life, and priesthood.

Say: *Why has God given us our specific gifts and talents?*

Field different responses from the students, but be sure that they include that those gifts are to help us serve God, making Him known, loved, and served.

Individual Work (7-8 min)

Distribute to the students the answering God's call activity page.

Say: *On this activity page, you will see three passages from Scripture. Look them up in your Bibles and read them. Then write your answer to the question, "What do they all have in common?"*

Give students approximately 5 minutes to read the short passages and answer the first question. Then ask the students to share their ideas.

Answers should include: In each passage, God is speaking to people. In each passage, people are also told what to do. In one, we are told to "do whatever Jesus tells us." In another, we are told to listen to [Jesus]. In another, we are told not to harden our hearts against His word.

Say: *God is always speaking to us to help us find our way and to fulfill His dream for us. God is always calling us to our vocation. Here God and Mary speak to us through the Bible, saying: "Don't harden your hearts," "Listen to Jesus," and "Do whatever Jesus tells you."*

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Individual Work Continued

As a class, answer the second question, “What does it mean to harden our hearts?” Answers could include: being selfish, doing only what we want to do, not listening to others, and not listening to God.

Pair or Group Work (25 min)

Divide the students into pairs or small groups to complete the rest of the questions on the activity page.

Once the students have completed the activity page, invite volunteers to share their responses to the questions. Answers could include:

1. Some fears we could have about different vocations are: not being able to have children; feeling lonely without a wife or husband; feeling overwhelmed by having to take care of a family; feeling afraid of letting someone else into my life as a husband or wife; feeling afraid that problems I’ve had with my parents/ family will happen again if I get married; and feeling scared of the vows of obedience, poverty, or chastity.

Say: *God loves us and cares for us. Even though we may fear what the future brings, God knows and wants what is best for us. God will lead us to a path that will bring us joy. We have seen this in the lives of the saintly models we have studied! We do not always know what is best for us, but God does, and so we must trust that God will take care of us, and we must be open to what He is saying to us.*

2. Ways that we can listen to God are: reading and reflecting on the Bible; taking time out for retreats or silent meditation; going to a Holy Hour; spending time in nature; taking time each day to pray; praying during Mass; listening to others when they tell us what our gifts are; reading the lives of the saints; and asking questions of people we look up to as spiritual role models.

Say: *God is always speaking to us, but we are not always listening. God wants us to spend time with Him so that we can know what He wants of us.*

(Continued ...)

Lesson Outline, Continued:

Pair or Group Work Continued

Say: In order to do that, we must take time to pray and spend time in silence so that we have the space and time to hear God. God is leading us – we need only listen to Him! We also saw this in the lives of holy men and women. They took time to listen to God. They also worked to see the world through God’s eyes because seeing in that way often allowed them to “hear” what God was asking of them. We want to do the same!

3. Ways that we can “do as God tells us” are: receiving the Sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation; trying to grow in our faith; continuing to increase our prayer lives; serving others, living the best lives we can; getting more involved in Church; and finding ways to grow in our faith like reading books.

Say: Everyone is different, and so each of us finds our vocation at different moments of our lives. We often make mistakes and are confused about God’s plan for us. However, as we are waiting to know with certainty what God wants of us, we can continue to live lives that we know God would want right now: lives of sacrament, of service, and of prayer. That is how the holy men and women started on their own road to holiness! It is through living a life like this, and through keeping our hearts open to hearing God’s word, that we will find true and profound happiness in the vocation that God calls us to.

Closing Prayer (2-3 min)

Say: We also want to keep praying that we find our vocation and have the courage to say yes to God, just like Mary and all the saints did before us. We want to find our vocation because that is how we will best love God and others, but it is also how we will find our own greatest joy! And the best person to pray with in trying to discern our vocation is Mary, as she is the Mother of all vocations. She always leads us faithfully to her Son, so we will pray to end this lesson by asking her to intercede for us in finding our vocation.

Say the Hail Mary together as a class.

Say: And what was Mary’s last lesson to us in Scripture? What was that lesson?

Do whatever Jesus tells you.

Answering God's Call

Directions: Read the following three passages from the Bible and answer the following questions.

Passage #1: Psalm 95:6-9 ("If today you hear God's voice, harden not your heart")

Passage #2: Mark 9:2-8 ("This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.")

Passage #3: John 2:1-5 ("Do whatever he tells you.")

1. What do these three passages have in common? (There are at least two answers for this question.)
2. What do you think "hardening your heart" means?
3. What are some fears that might make us not want to listen to God if God were trying to tell us that He wanted us to have the life of a:
 - a. Married person:
 - b. Committed single person:
 - c. Religious brother or religious sister:
 - d. Priest:
4. It's hard to listen to somebody who isn't necessarily speaking out loud to us. What are some ways that we can listen to God in our everyday lives?
5. The passages above remind us that we are to do whatever Jesus tells us. Sometimes we don't know what Jesus is asking us to do long term. In the meantime, while we're trying to keep our hearts open and listen to what God is trying to invite us to do, how should we act? In other words, what are some ways that we can live the way Jesus would like us to right now?