

Called to Spiritual Fatherhood

Holy Priesthood

Grades 9-12: Lesson 3

Goal: Students will reflect on the significance of the vocation to the priesthood. They will identify the effects of the grace of Holy Orders, especially the priest's role in administering the sacraments.

Scripture: Mark 1:16-20

“As Jesus passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Catechism: YOUCAT # 249, 250

*What happens in Holy Orders? **The man who is ordained receives a gift of the Holy Spirit that gives him a sacred authority that is conferred upon him by Christ through the bishop. (CCC 1538)*** Being a priest does not mean just assuming an office or a ministry. Through Holy Orders a priest receives as a gift a definite power and a mission for his brothers and sisters in the faith.

How does the Church understand the sacrament of Holy Orders? A Catholic priest who administers the sacraments acts not on the basis of his own power or moral perfection, but rather “*in persona Christi*”. Through his ordination, the transforming, healing, saving power of Christ is grafted onto him. Because a priest has nothing of his own, he is above all a servant.

Lesson:

1. Read Mark 1:16-20 together. What did Jesus mean when He told his future apostles that he would make them ‘fishers of men?’
2. Watch: *I Will Follow* (10 min), *Heroic Priesthood* (12 min), and/or *Fishers of Men* (18 min)
 - a. Discussion Questions: In what ways do priests (in union with Christ) lay down their lives so that others may live? What are some of the activities that you saw priests doing in the video? Why do we need priests? Tell us about a priest who has positively impacted your life.
Sample answers: Priests lay down their lives by choosing a life a service of God's people. They choose not to marry in order to be totally devoted to Christ and to love as He loved. We need priests to bring us the sacraments and to teach us about God. Priests are 'fishers of men' in that they participate in Christ's mission of seeking souls for the Kingdom of God.
2. What are the similarities and differences between the vocation to marriage and the vocation to the Catholic priesthood?

- a. Similarities: Call to holiness, call to be loved and to give love, requires great sacrifice and commitment, etc.
 - b. Differences: Celibacy and no biological children, power to confer the sacraments, completely at the service of Christ, etc.
3. Watch: “*The Great John Paul on his Vocation*” (2 min) Review the life of John Paul II. Discuss his journey to the priesthood and the way he lived his life as a priest.
4. Reflect on St. John Paul II’s quote on the priesthood: “You can probably tell that I am deeply grateful to God for my vocation to the priesthood. Nothing means more to me or gives me greater joy than to celebrate Mass each day and to serve God's people in the Church. That has been true ever since the day of my ordination as a priest. Nothing has ever changed this, not even becoming Pope.” (*Los Angeles, USA, September 14, 1987*)
5. Homework/ A Step Beyond: Write a letter to a priest you know thanking him for saying ‘yes’ his vocation. Let him know that you are praying for him.
6. Prayer:

Vocation Prayer of Pope John Paul II

Lord Jesus,
as you once called the first disciples to make them fishers of men,
let your sweet invitation continue to resound: Come follow me!

Give young men and women the grace of responding quickly to your voice.
Support our bishops, priests, and consecrated people in their apostolic labor.
Grant perseverance to our seminarians
and to all those who are carrying out the ideal of a life totally consecrated to your service.
Awaken in our community a missionary eagerness.

Lord, send workers to your harvest
and do not allow humanity to be lost for the lack of pastors, missionaries, and people
dedicated to the cause of the Gospel.
Mary, Mother of the Church, the model of every vocation,
help us to say “yes” to the Lord who calls us to cooperate in the divine plan of salvation.
Amen.

<https://www.pnac.org/support-the-north-american-college/prayers-for-seminarians/>