

Workshop Notes

Vocation – Called to be...



SLIDE ONE – HOLDING SLIDE

LEADER'S NOTES

This presentation lasts up to 30 minutes. **We recommend you deliver the whole workshop but feel free to use the slides and script as time and circumstances allow. To reduce time, omit extension tasks.**



SLIDE TWO

In October 2018 a very special meeting of Bishops, priests and young people took place in Rome.

Pope Francis called this special meeting because he wanted the Church to listen carefully to young people as they spoke honestly about their life, faith, and vocation.

Pope Francis was clear that vocation should be one of the main topics discussed during this special meeting.

But what does vocation mean?



SLIDE THREE

Every word has an origin. The study of the origin of words is called etymology.

Vocation originates from the Latin words: [Click to reveal on screen](#)

Vox – meaning 'voice'

Vocare – meaning 'to call'

The Catholic Church understands vocation to be a person's entire life lived in response to God's voice, God's call.



Through the teachings of Jesus, we learn that God loves us so much that he always wants the best for us. Once we know that, we enter into a deeper relationship with God and grow in our desire to love and serve others.

As we are all unique individuals, God calls us to deliver this love in ways particular to our own talents, interests and motivations.

This is important as sometimes we link vocation with a job or profession we will 'do' as an adult. But vocation is far more than 'what we do'. It is closer to 'who we are' and it is not dependent on age or ability.

Extension task – For example, 'I am' a person who wants to help bring out the best in others. I may 'do' this through my role as the friend who always encourages, or as school team captain, or as reading mentor. What motivates us is not, for example, our ability to read well, but God's voice asking us to help others read well too. Over time, God's call to us to bring out the best in others may be fulfilled in different ways that also employ our talents.

Think about what motivates you? Is it making people happy? Is it helping others appreciate beauty? Is it baking cakes for people? Is it making a difference?

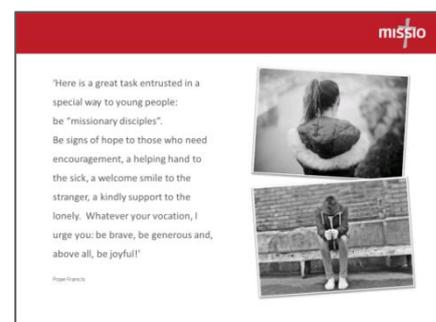
Consider, and perhaps talk about, the many ways your particular talents and interests enable you to respond to this call each day.

Slide image source - <http://maxpixel.freegreatpicture.com/static/photo/1x/Jesus-Merciful-Father-Good-Herdsman-1603691.jpg>

SLIDE FOUR

That we are all unique and valuable in God's eyes, also means that our voice, i.e. our opinion, matters.

Pope Francis reminds us that we are all missionaries of God's love, and so we have a responsibility to speak up for those who struggle to be heard such as the poor, the marginalised and the lonely.



Extension task – Ask your students if they can think of others who struggle to be heard. Answers could include: those lacking political freedoms, the elderly, the homeless. How can we ensure their voice is heard? What can we do to help?

We are to build with **those who struggle to be heard** God's kingdom on earth; a world of justice, mercy, and peace. This was the example set by Jesus, and one God calls us all to follow.

Speaking up for others and speaking out to make our community or world better is never easy, whatever our age. But to do so as a young person, demands courage and commitment.

The Bible is full of occasions in which God calls on young people to take up this challenge (e.g. David against Goliath, Joseph in Egypt, Our Lady). The following reading is taken from the book of Jeremiah. It recounts the young Jeremiah's nervousness at being called by God to be the Lord's prophet, or spokesperson. Listen carefully to God's response.

Read Scripture – you could ask a pupil to do this. *Click twice to reveal text on screen in sequence*

The word of the Lord came to me, saying,
'Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you;
And before you came out from your mother, I set you apart.'
I said, 'But Lord and Master I do not know how to speak, for I am too young.'

And the Lord said to me, 'Don't say "I am too young";
You are to go to all those to whom I send you,
And you are to speak to them as I direct you.
Do not be afraid before them, for I am with you to guide and protect.'
Jeremiah 1:4-8

Jeremiah lived in dangerous times. Many did not believe in God and ridiculed those who did. Unsurprisingly Jeremiah felt nervous. But he was strengthened by his faith and trusted in God's belief in him to speak out against the people's cruel practices.

Jeremiah went on to change the lives of many by staying close to God and following his call.

SLIDE FIVE

Today across the world there are young men and women, such as Jeremiah, who are called in a particular way to deliver God's love to others, often in dangerous situations and far from their homeland. They are called missionaries and are sent by God, just as Jeremiah was and as some of us may be.

This is Sr Sonia. She is a missionary sister in Lisanjala, a remote part of Malawi. Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world.

Sr Sonia is originally from Paraguay, a country in South America. After university she lived and worked in Paraguay's capital city, at a busy radio station. She was happy there, surrounded by friends and family, but felt that something was missing. Sr Sonia believed God was calling her to live a different life. After reflecting carefully on her vocation she decided to become a religious sister.



As a religious sister, Sonia was sent to Lisanjala. Once there she asked the people in the area what they needed. They told her a secondary school and a health clinic. With the help of the Catholic Church and Missio's supporters, Sr Sonia helped establish both.

Her life in Malawi isn't easy. But the thing that drives Sr Sonia is her motivation to serve God's people, as Jesus did. When times are tough she turns to one of her favourite passages in the Bible:

The Lord says, "I will teach you and guide you in the way you should live.

I will watch over you and be your guide. Psalm 32: 8

For Sr Sonia, the teaching and guidance referred to in this passage is found in Jesus example. Like him, she spends her life loving and serving others. As we have heard, she does this in practical ways, but also by helping people's faith to grow too.

Providing practical help like education and healthcare is vital, because God does not want people to suffer. Indeed God calls some as teachers or medics, so that others can flourish in mind and body. God might call others to uphold justice as police officers, or to create fairer societies as politicians, or support the elderly as care workers, or bring joy into the world as artists. In these and other vocations God calls us to reveal His love in the world.

Sharing God's love as priests and religious sisters is often seen as an unusual vocation, but like all those listed above it helps build a better world. All people need to know that they are loved, valued and have reason to hope - especially when life is difficult and unfair. Christian's belief in Jesus' resurrection, in human dignity and God's love for all, supports billions across the world.

Extension reflection – Think of a time when you have gone through difficulties, maybe the loss of a family member or a personal disappointment. What helped you to get by? Was it support of friends? Did belief in God and prayer help?

SLIDE SIX

Earlier we heard a reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah, written around 2,600 years ago. We heard how God called the young Jeremiah to deliver his message to an unequal and at times unloving world.

All these years later there is still unfairness and unhappiness. God calls us, like Jeremiah, to challenge this through our prayers, words and actions.

Pope Francis reminded us of this when in a speech to people your age he said:

'God is also calling you, he is looking at all the love you are able to offer.

With your plans and with your courage, roads open up that lead to a better, fairer, less cruel world.'



Let's finish our time together thinking of ways we can respond to God's call today.

Action one: Take time to reflect on your own vocation – who God is calling you to be. Think about your talents and interests and how you can use these to serve others and help build a better world.

Action two: The best way to hear God's call is to spend time alone with God in prayer and by reflecting on passages in the Bible, especially the Gospels. Through prayer and scripture God guides and strengthens us to become the people we were created to be.

Action three: Join Missio's efforts to build a better world by praying for our work and raising money to support projects in impoverished communities overseas (such as Sr Sonia's health clinic).

Conclude the assembly with a moment of silent reflection or with the prayer on the following slide. The prayer is adapted from 'The Mission of My Life' by Blessed John Henry Newman.

SLIDE SEVEN

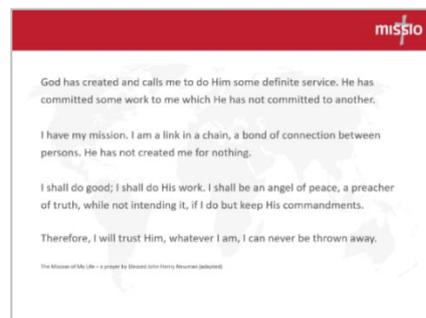
Click to reveal the verses in sequence

God has created and calls me to do Him some definite service.
He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another.

I have my mission. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for nothing.

I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth, while not intending it, if I do but keep His commandments.

Therefore, I will trust Him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away.



Mission Together, the children's branch of Missio, produced a short film about Sr Sonia and her work. It is available to view via Missio's website: <https://www.missio.org.uk/films>