

Vocation Workshop

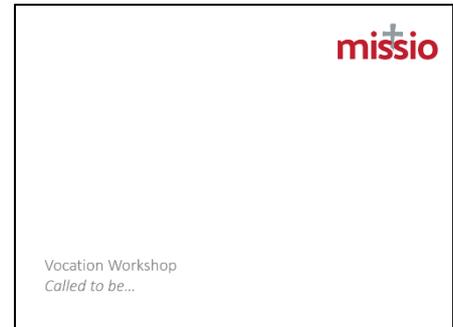
Called to be - A Missionary Priest



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

The 4th Sunday of Easter is known as Good Shepherd Sunday or Vocations Sunday. It is a day set aside by the Church throughout the world to encourage people to consider and pray for their own vocation and support others as they discover theirs.

But what does vocation mean?

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 THREE

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.

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

SLIDE FOUR

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.

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, sent by God, just as some of us may be.

Missio, the Pope's own charity for overseas mission, supports the training and work of thousands of missionaries who dedicate their lives to serving people living with poverty and injustice.



SLIDE FIVE

Fr Henry is a missionary priest in Malawi, one of the poorest countries in the world. Missio supported his training to become a priest and continues to support Fr Henry's work.

On the slide you can see Fr Henry alongside some of the boys who stay at the Pirimiti Boarding House, a centre he established with Missio's help. All the boys at Pirimiti House, come from families who were struggling to cope.



At Pirimiti, the boys receive an education, healthcare, healthy meals, are cared for, and kept safe.

Extension task – Watch a short film about the Pirimiti Boarding House at missio.org.uk/films/

Fr Henry was around the boys' age when he felt called by God to become a priest. Although some in his family tried to dissuade him, he felt in his heart that God wanted him to serve people as Jesus did. He realised this meant doing all he could to ensure that everyone has 'life to the full'.

To fulfil his calling and with the help of Missio, Fr Henry trains community leaders and travels hundreds of miles to celebrate Mass and share the sacraments in remote villages.

Fr Henry and Missio appreciate that 'life to the full' means more than providing practical needs, although these are very important and with Missio, Fr Henry helps address these.

In places where there is no state healthcare, education or benefits, belonging to a supportive community such as the Church can help people cope practically, emotionally and spiritually.

Extension task – 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, the safety of home? Was it perhaps belief in God and prayer?

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.'

In response to this call and remembering that our voice matters, 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.



Conclude the workshop 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.

