

Promoting Vocations to the Diocesan Priesthood

Some Suggested Activities

See <http://www.vocationsboston.org/resources/disciples-in-mission> for details on how to get each activity organized and “off the ground”

Prayer:

Prayer of the Faithful at each Weekend and Daily Mass: See the Vocation Office web site for a listing of petitions to be used at weekend Masses. Some of these prayers will include prayers for all vocations in the Church, others will be specifically for vocations to the priesthood or consecrated life.

Vocation Cross/Chalice Program: This program entails passing from family to family or individual, a parish or collaborative vocation cross or chalice with accompanying prayer cards. The family or individual receives the cross or chalice at Mass or during religious education and passes it on to the next family or individual one week or month later. See the vocation office web site for prayer cards and how to order a vocation crucifix. This program allows a family to pray each day for priestly and religious vocations. A parish or collaborative may choose to use its own prayer card or crucifix.

"Let Them Know You Are Praying" Program: This program incorporates prayer and support for those in discernment, seminary and postulancy/novitiate. Note cards stating that the sender has spent an hour in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for the receivers' intentions are provided at the adoration chapel for those who participate. A listing of seminarians and others in discernment or formation may be provided at the chapel. An Archdiocesan Seminarian Poster may be posted for those who participate to select a person for whom to pray.

Holy Hour for Vocation: A parish or collaborative may choose to have a daily, weekly, monthly, or otherwise periodic holy hour with the specific intention of praying for priestly and religious vocations. See web site for a menu of worship aids to be used or edited for a holy hour for vocations. A parish or collaborative with longer periods of Eucharistic Adoration may choose to incorporate the “Let Them Know You Are Praying” program.

40 Hours for Vocations: Parishes or collaborative may want to organize a period of 40 hours of Eucharistic Adoration for the specific purpose of praying for all vocations in that parish or collaborative. A collaborative may wish to dedicate a particular chapel in a secure manner for the 40 hours devotion so as not to disturb the regular schedule of Masses and funerals at a parish.

Novena to St Patrick: Each parish or collaborative may choose to participate in this novena each year from March 9-17 by obtaining novena prayer cards (See web site) for use at daily and weekend Masses or for distribution to parishioners, religious education, confirmation students, or catholic schools. The novena ends at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross on March 17 each year. Details are available each year.

Pope John Paul II Vocation Monstrance: Each year the vocation office obtains this monstrance, commissioned and blessed by Pope John Paul II for the specific purpose of prayer for vocations to ordained ministry and consecrated life. Holy Hours of Eucharistic Adoration are made at dozens of parishes, schools and religious houses during the Novena of St Patrick (March 9-17). Parishes or collaborative may request use of the monstrance for this purpose or invite the vocation office to visit and celebrate a holy hour while praying for vocations.

Good Shepherd Sunday Prayers: Each year the Holy Father writes a letter on the occasion of the annual World Day of Prayer for Vocations, or Fourth Sunday of Easter each year. This address can be used as a basis for the pastoral team to encourage parishioners to pray for vocations to priesthood and religious life. The address, or excerpts, can be printed in the bulletin with accompanying vocation prayers.

Awareness:

Parish Weekend Preaching: Dedicate a particular weekend(s) to preaching about the importance of the priesthood and encouraging priestly vocations in a parish. Include the priests' personal story of how God called him. World Day of Prayer for Vocations, April 26, 2015 (Good Shepherd Sunday), Vocation Awareness Week, February 2, 2015, Priesthood Sunday, October 25, 2015 or another appropriate weekend can be used as a starting point to have a "Parish Vocation Week" that incorporates talks and witnesses by persons of all vocations, especially the priest during the homily of weekend Masses. A collaborative or parish may choose to dedicate a particular Sunday or the whole week and have times of gathering for the talks and witnesses to take place.

Religious Education: Incorporate the topic of vocations into each year of the curriculum (Lesson Plans can be found at <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/educators-and-youth-leaders/lesson-plans/>) and encourage regular discussion of vocational topics. Once a year, have a "Vocation Week" at religious education. This can include a visit from the priest, religious, deacon, seminarian or others to speak about these vocations. It can incorporate discussion about vocations to the priesthood and religious life in each classroom. Teachers may invite students to pray for particular persons in discernment or preparation and send them cards.

Confirmation Students: A "Vocation Night" consists of a visit from religious and priests or seminarians who each present on their own vocation story and invite students to ask questions. Collaboratives and parishes may want to use one of the outlines for a vocation night provided on the vocation office web site.

RCIA/Adult Education: Parishes and collaborative can incorporate the topic of vocational discernment (as a Christian and in a particular vocation) into the program and invite the priest, religious or deacon to present on the topic of their particular vocation at one of the RCIA sessions.

Baptismal Preparation Program: Each collaborative or parish can introduce the topic of vocation to the parents of the children to be baptized by speaking about the reality of each persons' call to holiness and particular vocation in life. Priestly and religious vocations are most effectively promoted by parents and families.

Inviting:

Annual Vocation Discernment Retreats: These retreats, typically during the first weekend of February include times of prayer, reflection, conferences, witness talks, quiet and socializing with other men considering or open to a vocation to the priesthood. The men on retreat also have the opportunity to visit Saint John Seminary or Pope Saint John XXIII National Seminary and meet seminarians and faculty.

St Andrew Dinners: These gatherings take place 3-4 times each academic year regionally at parishes and at St John Seminary for young men in high school who are open to learning more about seminary life. It includes a time of prayer with seminarians and the Cardinal, dinner and witness talks by seminarians and others about how God called them to priesthood.

Conversation with the Bishop during Confirmation Season: The annual parish or collaborative confirmation can be an opportunity for pastoral teams to select five or more young men to meet with the bishop and pastor or member of the pastoral team briefly before the Sacrament of Confirmation. Confirming bishops and pastors can coordinate timing and details of the meeting, and use the time to invite the young men to consider a vocation to the priesthood as well as share their own vocational story. Adaptations to the program can include regional meetings, organized in conjunction with the vocation office, by a vicariate or regional bishop at a time close to the confirmation.

Altar Server Appreciation Mass and Server Awards: This Mass, at the Cathedral each year in the month of October is an opportunity for youth altar servers to receive recognition of their dedication and prayerfulness in serving at the altar in their parish or school. Each server received a certificate of appreciation and gift from Cardinal O'Malley. Some servers are recognized in particular as recipients of the Blessed Pope John Paul II and Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta awards. All present are encouraged to discern their vocation well and consider priesthood and religious life.

Annual Seminarian Poster and prayer cards: Each year the Vocation Office publishes a seminarian poster and seminarian prayer cards to be used to visualize the vocation to priesthood and encourage prayer for priestly vocations.

Promoting Vocations to the Diocesan Priesthood

Some Best Practices

A suggested approach on how to incorporate Prayer, Awareness and Inviting

- **Creating a Collaborative Vocation Team:**

- Each parish in collaborative represented
- Members each work to promote diocesan priesthood in different sectors of parish life.
- Members can include:
 - Pastor and/or Parochial Vicar
 - Youth Minister
 - Pastoral Associate
 - Director of Religious Education
 - Youth and Young Adults
 - Others
- The collaborative may choose to *recruit specific people* or choose to *give a presentation* to the parish to invite people to join the team.
- Specific activities are determined by the Team and include Prayer, Awareness and Inviting.

- **What the Collaborative Vocation Team might do:**

Prayer: every day, every person, every home

1. *Vocation Cross/Vocation Chalice* Program in each parish
2. Weekday and Weekend *Prayers of the Faithful* at all Masses, all year.
3. Regular Collaborative-wide and/or Parish-wide *Pray for Vocation Events*:
 - Annual 40 Hours Devotion
 - Monthly Rosary for Vocations Evenings
 - Monthly Holy Hour for Vocations
 - Annual Novena to St Patrick
 - Ongoing “Let Them Know you are Praying” Program of seminarian support

Awareness: in the Church, in the classroom, in the home

1. *Religious Education Curriculum* for every year and into preparation for every sacrament.
2. Parish-wide awareness through *Annual Vocation Awareness Week Activities* or *Good Shepherd Sunday Vocation Weekend*
3. Ongoing *information sharing* through bulletin items, posters, prayer cards, brochures, etc from Vocation Office

Inviting: right question, right time, right way

1. *Annual Discernment Retreat*: Meet as a Team to surface the names of men to be invited. Forward on to vocation office each year.
2. *St Andrew Dinners*: participate in the dinner by bringing young men to one or more of the dinners each year.
3. *Personal invitation* from pastor or parochial vicar to men in the parish who he thinks may have a priestly vocation.