

TRUE LIFE | HOLY ORDERS

The Vocation of Holy Orders
LIFE NIGHT OUTLINE

Goal for the Life Night

This life night will help teens understand why Holy Orders is a vocation and how the vocation is lived out. This night will also give teens a chance to hear the real life discernment stories of priests and deacons. Finally, this night will give teen practical ways to discern their vocation.

Life Night at a Glance

Based on the MTV reality show, “True Life,” this Life Night seeks to get beyond the misconceptions and myths about the priesthood and diaconate. This Life Night will take some extra planning and coordination with the priests, deacons and seminarians in your community. The Life Night begins with a spoof of the MTV show focused on the life of your parish priest. The teaching gives an overview of Holy Orders as a unique and extraordinary calling from God. The Break gives the teens the opportunity to hear from the priests, deacons and seminarians and ask them questions about their journey and everyday life. Finally the Send will give the teens a chance to pray specifically for their bishop, priests and deacons as well as pray for all those discerning this call.

Environment

For the Life Night, create a sign or banner that looks like the MTV “True Life” logo. Surround that sign with pictures of popes, bishops, priests, and deacons celebrating the liturgy, praying over the sick, visiting with families and other pictures of service. Ask the pastor to borrow an older stole, chasuble and alb to hang in the room. Have a screen and projector at the front of the room. If possible, find a video of last year’s diocesan ordination and project it on the screen as teens enter.

GATHER *15 Minutes*

Welcome and Introductions (5 min)

The youth minister gathers the group together and welcomes everyone to the Life Night. The youth minister should welcome any new teens to the night. The visiting priests and deacons should also introduce themselves.

True Life | I am a Catholic Priest. (10 min)

Before the Life Night, create a short spoof video of the MTV show “True Life.” But instead of the morally questionable stories that MTV usually highlights, this episode will be on the true life of your parish priest. Within the video, address the misconceptions and myths about the priesthood and diaconate (i.e. priests are always in clerics, always at the Church, were born priests, etc.) Show a “day in the life” of your priest, both the extraordinary and the mundane. Involve teens, the priests and deacons from the parish in the creation of this video.

PROCLAIM *15 minutes*

Teaching (10 min)

This teaching is an overview of the Sacrament and Vocation of Holy Orders. If possible, have the pastor or another priest give this teaching.

The teaching outline can be found on pages 66-71.

“Priests: In Their Own Words” Video (5 min)

This video asks priests to share about their calling, the surprises of this vocation and suggestions for women considering the religious life. Use this as the transition into the Break.

“Priests: In Their Own Words” can be found on Video Support 8

BREAK *40 minutes*

Panel Discussion and Q&A (40 min)

Ideally this panel should be four men: your parish priest, a deacon, a seminarian and a man who discerned priesthood but was led to marriage instead. If all four are not available, any combination will do. Ask each of

CATECHISM REFERENCES:

1555-1561
1562-1568
1569-1571

SCRIPTURES:

Hebrews 5:1-10, 7:24, 9:11-28
Acts 6:1-7
John 20:22-23
1 Timothy 4:14
2 Timothy 1:6-7
Mark 10:45
Luke 22:27

them to give a short description of their journey into their vocation. Then invite the teens to ask them questions about their discernment, their day-to-day life, etc. A Core Member can facilitate this time of questions and answer, inviting teens to ask about any aspect of Holy Orders. Be sure to have some questions already prepared for the panel to answer in case the teens don't immediately have questions.

SEND 10 Minutes

Pray for Me, I'll Pray for You (10 min)

Move the group into the church or chapel for the Send of this Life Night. The youth minister should quickly recap the Life Night and thank the guests for joining them. Encourage the guys to remain open to the possibility of priesthood or diaconate. Encourage the girls to pray for and support the guys in their discernment.

Encourage the teens to pray and ask Jesus, who is the High Priest, to reveal His will for their lives and the courage to follow it. Have a musician sing, "Lay It Down" by Matt Maher. Following the song, ask one teen to lead a prayer for the bishop, priests and deacons of the community. Then have the priest lead a prayer and blessing over the teens, in particular those who might be called to this vocation.

Conclude by searching for one of the many vocations prayers available such as the one below or your own diocesan vocations prayer. Pray it together. Conclude with the Hail Mary and Ave Maria.

*God of my life,
I give you thanks and praise that I have life,
and that my life is filled with touches of your love.
You have given me a heart that wants to be happy,
and You have placed in me a desire to make a difference.
Quiet the fears and distractions of my heart long enough
for me to listen to the movement of Your Spirit,
to hear your gentle invitation.
Reveal to me the choices that will make me happy.
Help me to discover my identity.*

*Let me understand how best to use the gifts
You have so lovingly lavished upon me
in preparation for our journey together.
And give me the courage to choose You
as You have chosen me.
Lord, let me know myself and let me know You.
In this is my happiness.*

(Augustinian Vocations Prayer)

Making It Work

- *The Catholic Priest Today* is a DVD documentary that was sent out in the September 2009 Life Support Box. You can use this video (or parts of it) as either part of the Proclaim or part of the environment.
- If it is not possible to create a "True Life" video for this Life Night, consider doing a live version during the Gather.
- Be aware of how long the teens are sitting during this Life Night. Take time to have them stand or move if they are getting restless.
- If possible, collect potential questions from the teens in advance and give them to the panel so they know what to expect.

Community Connection

- In order to make this Life Night work, it is imperative that you ask the priests, deacons, seminarians to be involved well in advance.
- Send an email to parents after this Life Night, giving them the synopsis of the night as well as practical ideas on how to encourage and foster vocation discernment for their teens.
- Contact the vocations director for your diocese and gather information about any programs for men discerning the priesthood. If possible, have him come to the Life Night.

TRUE LIFE | HOLY ORDERS

The Vocation of Holy Orders

TEACHING

To the presenter: The teaching outlines given in this Curriculum Guide cover much more information than can be presented in a 10-minute talk. This is done on purpose. It is the role of presenter to be familiar with the topic and then prayerfully prepare the main points that will be presented to the teens. Use Scripture, Catechism and personal experience to convey the message.

I think that we have started to break down some of the misconceptions in the world today regarding the priesthood. Tonight, we want to talk about the reality that is the Sacrament of Holy Orders. This is a Sacrament that is probably more similar to Marriage than we think, probably nothing like we imagine, but everything that we hoped it could be. So hold on!

The priest is not simply the guy who wears black who gets to speak at the Mass. It is much deeper than that. The priest is an extension of the bishop, who is an extension of Christ. In fact, the priest is the "image of Christ" and even the "person of Christ" because he is supposed to preach the Gospel and serve the people of the Church.

One of the key ways that they do this is through the Mass, the "Divine Worship" which was instituted by Christ at the Last Supper. When Jesus gave the apostles the power to act in His image and His person, He established His ability to be with the Church for all time through the service of the priests and bishops.

In the beginning of the Church, after the Ascension, there was not a clear separation from the Jewish community for the followers of Christ. Christians were Jewish people who kept their Jewish faith in addition of the belief that Jesus Christ was the Messiah who had been promised to the Jews. They celebrated the Mass in their homes in small numbers of about 10 to 15 people.

The pastors and leaders of the early Church were the first bishops, or the apostles. They initially began in Jerusalem, but the Holy Spirit began to move in the Church and the apostles started preaching the Gospel and celebrating the Sacraments in other parts of the world. It became apparent that the bishops needed helpers. This was when they started to ordain priests.

Introduction: It is important that the transition of the introduction include a reference to the True Life video in the Gather section of the night. Without this reference, the teaching will seem disjointed, or out of place with the rest of the night.

CCC 1564
Lumen Gentium 28
Hebrews 5:1-10, 7:24, 9:11-28

Acts 6:1-7

TRUE LIFE | HOLY ORDERS

The Vocation of Holy Orders

TEACHING

Deacons were also ordained for preaching the Gospel and serving the material needs of the community. They dedicated themselves to "prayer and to the ministry of the word" so that they could serve while the bishops and priests continued to serve in the Sacramental sense.

If there was a key word for the Sacrament of Holy Orders, it would be *serve*. Essentially, all bishops, priests and deacons are serving in different ways! Let's get specific about how each of these degrees of Holy Orders serve the Church.

Let's start with the bishop. Since the beginning of the Church, the bishop has always been considered the successor or heir of the apostles. This is passed on through the "laying on of hands" as each bishop is given the "gift of the Spirit." Each bishop can trace back his ministry all the way to Christ and the apostles. That is pretty exciting when you think about it!

The bishop is considered the shepherd or the high priest of what is known as a "diocese" or an area of churches. He is responsible to God for teaching the Church and leading its members to holiness and sanctification. He is responsible for teaching the truth.

The "miter" or head piece that the bishop wears is symbolic of his office and the "crosier" or staff is symbolic of his role as the head shepherd. One of the reasons a bishop wears a ring is that the bishop is considered to be "married" to a particular diocese. Because the bishop sees the diocese or the Church as his spouse in the same way that Christ married the Church, he is called to sacrifice for the Church in the same way that Jesus did, giving his very life for her holiness.

Every bishop is a member of the "College of Bishops" which simply means he is called to ordain new bishops with other bishops. One bishop cannot ordain another, they must act together. In today's Church, the visible unity of the bishops is found in the Bishop of Rome, or the pope, so the pope is involved in the ordination of all bishops.

Acts 6:1-7

CCC 1555-1561, 861, 895, 1121, 877, 882, 833, 886, 1369

Acts 1:8, 2:4

John 20:22-23

1 Timothy 4:14

2 Timothy 1:6-7

Christus Dominus 2

Lumen Gentium 20-22, 26

Fidei Donum (Pius XII)

Sacrosanctum Concilium 41

TRUE LIFE | HOLY ORDERS

The Vocation of Holy Orders

TEACHING

There are some bishops who receive honorary titles. All bishops of archdioceses are usually referred to as an archbishop and certain bishops are elevated to the title of cardinal, which gives them the right to be able to participate in the conclave that elects the new Bishop of Rome. (Since the Bishop of Rome cannot elect himself, the College of Cardinals does so.)

Bishops administer all of the Sacraments and in the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church, the bishop is usually the one who confers the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The co-workers of the bishops are priests. It is not possible for the bishop of your diocese to be everywhere at once. So when you are at Mass and the priest is celebrating, the priest acting as an extension of the bishop.

Because the priest is acting on behalf of the bishop, the priest is able to act in *Persona Christi* or in the person of Christ. The priest is able to function when the bishop is not able to present. Just because the priest is a co-worker does not mean that they are limited or do not take part in the full role of the bishop. The priest is to take part in the full mission of preaching the Gospel everywhere and ministry of the sacraments in a pastoral way.

The priest serves in a special way in the local parish or with a particular Eucharistic Assembly. This is the best way that they serve as co-workers to the bishop in the person of Christ. They are able to proclaim the Gospel, offer sacrifice and prayer on behalf of the parish, celebrate the Mass and most importantly, offer themselves as the person of Christ as the "spotless victim" to the Father in each and every Eucharistic Prayer where the parish takes part in the Last Supper.

The focus of the priests is to confer the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick and in certain circumstances, the priest will confer Confirmation.

You might notice that Marriage is missing from that list. The Sacrament of Marriage is actually conferred by the spouses to each other, but in the Latin Church, the priest or deacon receives the public consent of the spouses in the name of the Church and gives the blessing of the Church to the Sacrament. The presence of the priest, deacon and the assembly of the people shows that the Marriage is a reality in the Church, and spiritually in the grace of God.

CCC 1562-1568, 1121, 611, 849, 1369, 2179, 1537

Acts 1:8

1 Corinthians 11:26

Hebrews 5:1-10, 7:24, 9:11-28

Lumen Gentium 28

Optatam Totius 20

Presbyterorum Ordinis 2, 8

TRUE LIFE | HOLY ORDERS

The Vocation of Holy Orders

TEACHING

Deacons are ordained by the bishop to serve the priests and the bishops. The deacons are especially meant to focus on the service of charity, helping in the pastoral care of the Church. The deacons help with the celebration of what is known as the "Divine Mysteries." They minister at Baptisms, help to distribute the Eucharist, proclaim the Gospel, preach homilies and may preside at funerals.

There are two types of deacons. The first is the one that we have probably heard the least about: the transitional deacon. They aren't deacons for very long! These deacons are on their way to being ordained a priest. They serve as deacons for six months to a year before ordination.

The second type of deacon is the type that we most commonly associate with the diaconate: the permanent deacon. These deacons are men, usually married, who are ordained deacons for life.

Now let's look at what it takes to prepare a man for the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

For his ministry, the bishop is prepared as a priest. The life of prayer and sacrifice prepares that priest to serve in the fullness of Holy Orders. This is because there is nothing that can prepare a man to serve as a successor to the apostles more than prayer and sacrifice.

There is also what is known as the "remote preparation for the priesthood." Far from an internet course on the priesthood, it involves a young man being shown the examples of parish priests and the encouragement of their families and the community as a whole. This allows the young man to prayerfully discern the will of God for them in their lives and to be open to answering that call.

This is all part of what leads up to formation at a seminary.

During his time in the seminary, the candidate for the priesthood studies philosophy and theology. This is part of the human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral development that they receive. All of this is meant to give the candidate every opportunity to allow the grace of Christ to work through them, to fulfill their potential as servants and shepherds.

Most seminarians spend time in a parish, living with priests and coming to understand what it means to be a priest.

CCC 1569-1571, 1256

Mark 10:45

Luke 22:27

Lumen Gentium 29, 41

Christus Dominus 15

Apostolicam Actuositatem 16

Sacrosanctum Concilium 35

Ad Gentes 16

CCC 1567, 1579, 1569-1571

TRUE LIFE | HOLY ORDERS

The Vocation of Holy Orders

TEACHING

Much like wedding vows, the promises of a priest involve elements that allow him to serve his spouse by giving his all to the Church.

The first of these promises is obedience to the bishop. This obedience means that they are willing to live a life of service to the bishop and to the Church. The bishop allows them to serve as an extension of himself so they must be obedient to his authority.

The second promise is the gift of celibacy. The priest renounces marriage for the sake of the Kingdom, choosing to embrace the heavenly marriage. This indicates what they are giving their lives for. Husbands are giving their lives for their wives and families, while priests give their lives for the Church.

Sometimes you may hear of priests who work for schools, religious orders or other institutions. These priests must also embrace vows, although especially in the case of religious communities, there may be more vows than what we have outlined here.

Although the length of preparation varies depending on the diocese, men who are preparing for the permanent diaconate spend several years in part-time preparation. This includes pastoral and intellectual preparation. They are trained in how to spiritually guide the people that they are going to be serving on behalf of the Bishop.

Now that we have discussed the preparation, let's look at how the sacrament is bestowed.

The essential element of all three of the degrees of Holy Orders is the laying on of hands by the bishop and the consecratory prayer. This prayer asks that God pour out the gifts of the Spirit needed for the candidate to perform the ministry to which they are being ordained.

When a man receives the Sacrament to become bishop, the Chrism oil is poured onto his head. He is then presented with the ring, the crosier and the miter: the signs of his office.

For the priest, the Chrism oil is used to anoint his hands, which will be used to consecrate the Eucharist. He is then clothed with the vestments of the priest and presented with the bread and the wine that are going to be consecrated.

CCC 1567, 1579, 1569-1571

CCC 1573-1574, 699, 1585, 1294, 796

TRUE LIFE | HOLY ORDERS

The Vocation of Holy Orders

TEACHING

When a deacon is ordained, they are clothed in the vestments and presented with the Book of the Gospels that they will proclaim. The deaconate candidates also recite the following, "believe what you read, teach what you believe, practice what you teach."

As with Baptism and Confirmation, Holy Orders is a permanent change in the spiritual character of the man receiving it. It isn't a change that can be taken away. The man may be forbidden to practice the ministry publicly, but they will always remain ordained through Holy Orders. It is ultimately Christ who is acting through the man. The truth is that when Christ changes the character of a man forever, that man becomes a servant of the Church and a servant of Christ, allowing Christ to use his body to be an instrument to the Church.

CCC 1581-1584, 1548, 1121, 1128, 1550
Lumen Gentium 21, 28-29
Presbyterorum Ordinis 2

TRUE LIFE | HOLY ORDERS

The Vocation of Holy Orders

CHECKLIST

Core Planning Team:

Date of Life Night:

One month prior to the Night:

Give copies of the Life Night to each of the members of the planning team. Each person should read the Scripture and Catechism references as well as review the planning guide before the brainstorming meeting.

Get the planning team together for a brainstorming meeting (this should last no longer than 1 hour). The team prays and discusses where the teens are in their faith journey in relation to this topic. Then using this planning guide as a starting point, the team adapts the Life Night to meet the needs of the teens and the parish. Create a detailed outline with any changes and/or adjustments.

Assign the person responsible for each part of the Life Night:

Environment _____

Introductions _____

True Life | I'm a Catholic Priest _____

Panel Discussion and Q & A _____

Pray for Me, I'll Pray for You _____

Two Weeks Prior to Life Night:

Turn in a detailed outline of the Life Night to the youth minister. Allow the youth minister to give feedback and make any necessary changes.

Create a list of needed supplies and materials. Assign a person to be responsible for collecting and/or purchasing the materials needed.

Decide the people that will be doing the following things. Make sure they have a copy of the script and/or teaching outline. Inform them of any practices and/or deadlines.

Teaching _____

Q&A Facilitator _____

Week of the Life Night:

Written outline of the teaching is given to the youth minister and practiced.

Run a dress rehearsal of the Life Night. Youth minister gives feedback.

Create environment and collect needed supplies.

Email entire Core team an overview of the night and small group questions.

Day of the Life Night:

Set up the environment. Make sure the room is clean and presentable.

Set up any audio and video needs. Test the video.

Walk the entire Core team through the Life Night. Make sure all transitions are ready and everyone knows their roles.

Pray! Pray for the teens attending the Night. Pray for God's will to be done through the night. Pray over those involved.

