

NATIONAL VOCATION AWARENESS WEEK

TITLE: CHICAGO'S PRIESTS BRING CHRIST TO A BROKEN WORLD. DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO JOIN THEM?

TARGET GROUP: MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

OBJECTIVES:

- To assist students in their understanding of vocation especially to the priesthood.
- To provide an exposure to aspects of the life of Chicago priests.
- To invite students to seriously consider the question: How might God be asking me to respond to a vocation?

GOALS: At the end of the lessons “students will be able to” (SWAT),

- Identify different vocations – priesthood, religious life, married life, single life.
- Distinguish between a vocation to the priesthood and a professional career.
- Name three (3) steps that a person should take in discerning a vocation to the priesthood.

METHOD: See the **Video** and engage in a **Conversation** about the video.

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PART I

TITLE: BRINGING CHRIST TO A BROKEN WORLD. (25-30 minutes)

Begin the session with prayer

INSTRUCTOR:

- Welcomes the class and introduces the subject. “We live in a beautiful world. A world filled with the wonder of nature, creation, advances in science and technology. This world also faces a lot of challenges and difficulties. As Christians, God gives us a mission to bring Christ into a “broken world.” We will see a short video about how priests respond to this mission to bring Christ in a “broken world.”
- After showing the video, invite the students to address the question of a “broken world”. What do you understand by the phrase “broken world?” Give examples of “brokenness” in the world. The world is not some far off land, like Iraq, Afghanistan or Africa. It could mean our city, neighborhood, school or home.
- The list may include: homelessness, hunger, violence, greed, abuse, hatred, unemployment, poverty, murder, loneliness, drugs, people feel lost, promiscuity...
- The Scriptures describe this “brokenness” as SIN. Sin is anything that does not lead to the flourishing of God’s creation. God’s answer to sin was Jesus Christ. Through his teaching, miracles, life, death and resurrection Jesus Christ gave the world a chance to be healed and made whole.
- How do any of the above affect you directly or indirectly? Draw up different lists under the headings, DIRECT EFFECTS AND INDIRECT EFFECTS, of a broken world.
- What can be done to heal a “broken world?”

Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta: “It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.”

Conclude the session by showing the video, “CHICAGO CATHOLIC PRIEST – OUR STORY”.

- Priests respond to the call of God to participate in the mission of Christ. This is called a VOCATION.
- Priests are called to be like Jesus Christ who was sent by God into a “broken world” to bring healing and wholeness.
- Priesthood is a way of life, which makes it more than just a “job.” People can retire from jobs, but priestly ministry is for life. Just like parents never stop being parents, priests are fathers for life.

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PART II

TITLE: VOCATION (25-30 minutes)

Begin the session with prayer.

Cardinal John Neumann: “God has a specific task assigned to each one of us in this world. No one else can do the task assigned to you by God except you.”

According to the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults,
“Vocation is the term given to **the call to each person from God;**

Everyone has been called to holiness and eternal life, especially in Baptism. Each person can also be called more specifically to the priesthood or to the religious life, to married life, and to single life, as well as to a particular profession or service.” (Appendix A: Glossary, p. 531)

INSTRUCTOR:

Introduce this lesson by saying...

“In our last lesson we discussed different ways that the beautiful world God created is broken. We also saw videos of how priests respond in a direct way to the call of God to bring Christ to a broken world.”

“Let us watch the stories of 2 priests of the Archdiocese of Chicago, and then we will have a conversation” (Choose two of the priest’s videos to show to the class).

- Fr. Dan Brandt—Chaplain, Chicago Police Department
- Fr. Matt O’Donnell—Pastor, St. Columbanus (Chicago)
- Fr. Tom Boharic—Associate Pastor, St. Agnes of Bohemia (Chicago)
- Fr. Benedykt Pazdan—Pastor, St. Bernadette (Evergreen Park)

Invite students to comment on what they saw.

- a) What touched you about their story?
- b) Was there a particular thing that caught your attention?
- c) Did you learn anything new about the priesthood?

EXAMPLE:

Fr. Dan Brandt said he preached a homily on the scripture of Luke 10:27: He said in reply, “You shall love the Lord, your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” This is how he has chosen to respond to the call to love God and neighbor as a priest. How is God calling you to love your neighbor?

CONCLUSION:

The only way to be fulfilled and happy in this life is to do God’s will by responding to his call.

- God calls us first to have a relationship with him. Recall the scripture from Luke 10:27: “Love the Lord, your God with ALL your heart, being, strength, mind...”
- Second, we express this love for God by our “love for neighbor.”

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PART III

TITLE: HOW DOES SOMEONE BECOME A PRIEST? (25-30 minutes)

Begin the session with prayer.

Read the following scripture from Luke 10:2:

Jesus said to them, “The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.”

INSTRUCTOR:

In our last two lessons, we learned about:

- The “broken world” we live in – city, neighborhood, school, family, home or the conditions that stop us from flourishing as God intends us to (loneliness, poverty, unemployment, hunger, violence, war)
- Vocation: that Priests respond to the call of God to do something about the “broken world.”

In this final lesson, we will watch other videos about the process of becoming a priest. This is called the **discernment process**. Vocation is a lifelong conversation with God. The important question to ask is: God, who are you calling me to be?

Let us see the video on a story of a Priest and a Bishop.

- Bishop Alberto Rojas—Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago
- Fr. Tom Byrne—Associate Pastor, St. Michael (Orland Park)

Invite students to comment on what they saw.

- a) What touched you about their story?
- b) Was there a particular thing that caught your attention?
- c) Did you learn anything new about the priesthood?

CONCLUSION:

Let us watch the final video: “**How does someone become a priest?**”

INSTRUCTOR:

- Ask students to write down 3 steps that someone can take to “check out” if God might be calling them to the Priesthood. Discuss these briefly. (Expect some of these responses: Talk to a parent or priest about what you might be sensing, join a discernment group, pray, read Scripture, help others by bringing Christ to a broken world)
- Do the priests in the videos we’ve watched seem happy? Do you think that people are happiest when they are following God’s will for their life?
- Pray to God for the wisdom to discover the gifts He has blessed you with and how He is calling use them to make the world a better place. Never be afraid to respond to the call to “bring Christ to a broken world.”