



*Congregations help
every young person...*

**LIVE OUT THEIR
UNIQUE VOCATION**

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Adolescence is a time when young people are discovering their identity and planning for what life may bring. They are seeking significant relationships, and to impact their community. In this time of searching, vocation plays an important role in applying their faith and finding their God-given gifts and skills. Vocation helps to locate their unique roles in their communities and understand the satisfaction and joy in the Christian life.

Vocation describes more than a job, but encompasses every way that God uses His people as His hands and feet. God sends His people to serve the world trusting the Holy Spirit will work through them to open ears and hearts to receive the Gospel. Youth have vocations in their home, church, community, school, the workplace and beyond. As they grow, they take on new opportunities that can make a significant impact by fulfilling new duties in these realms. God uses their ordinary work to accomplish great things, even on the smallest of scales. As they develop new areas of vocation and move toward adulthood, opportunity for impact only grows.

Vocation teaches us that God uses the mundane, the grand, and everything in between to serve His purpose and plan. All roles matter and all show the love of God to every neighbor in need. As youth begin to understand the needs of the world, they can become overwhelmed. The teaching and living out of vocation can help youth to discover gifts and build confidence, but most importantly to see any contribution they make as an act and gift from God.

Vocation is not lived out alone, but in community. It encourages young people to interact across age gaps, with believers and non-believers alike. The relationships built through vocation help them to meet those who

don't know Jesus with His saving grace and love. Using their skills and gifts for their neighbor gives opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus in word and deed. Roles in life allow for young people to build relationships with those not their age and learn from their wisdom. They build relationships with teachers, coaches, pastors, bosses, friends' parents, etc. In these relationships they can display warmth, challenge, and grace as shown to them by their congregation.

Most Christian denominations, including The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, face a shortage of clergy and trained church workers in the coming decades. As church workers retire, a great leadership void will occur at the local, regional, and national levels and in special areas of ministry (e.g. military chaplains). This void will negatively affect the mission of the Church and spiritual care of God's people. Healthy congregations can be incubators for future church workers by providing support, encouragement, and foundational training to youth. They can be positive examples to young people who are watching by treating pastors and church workers well and displaying a healthy conflict and care. The home congregation has a wonderful opportunity to open the conversation about a life of service in the Church and point youth to the process for forming future workers.

The Lutheran understanding of vocation and the priesthood of all believers can be powerful for teens and young adults. As Generation Z moves through school and into the workforce, data is showing that they value their academic and work achievements, hobbies and activities as key pieces of their identity. God can use the healthy desire of these young people for action to spread the Gospel and help reflect God's love in their everyday lives. ■

Vocation

The term literally means “calling.” Every Christian is called to unique roles or tasks through which God care for His creation. These are usually described by areas, like church, home, work, and community.