

Help Each Young Person Live Out Their Unique Vocation



- Youth understand their role as Christ's hands and feet in their church, home, community, and other areas of vocation.
- Youth reach out to their neighbor in word and deed to love and share the Good News of Jesus.
- Youth serve and lead in their congregation and community.
- Youth seek to be warm, challenging, and grace-filled to their community and peers.
- Youth are encouraged to pursue church work vocations as it fits their gifts and skills.

What am I here on earth to do? How will I know if I've found success? What do I want my life to look like after high school? Adolescence is a time when these big questions emerge. Youth explore identity, build significant relationships, and begin to see how they can impact their community. They also begin to set priorities and long-term goals. In this time of searching, vocation plays an important role in applying their faith and finding their God-given gifts and skills.

Vocation is a term that literally means "calling." God calls His Baptized children to love Him and serve their neighbor. Every Christian is called to unique roles or tasks through which God cares for His creation. More than just our work, vocation encompasses all the ways youth are Christ's hands and feet in their home, church, community, school, workplace, and beyond. As parents and supportive adults, we live out critical roles in a young person's life. In our youth ministry, how we teach vocation can help youth discover gifts and build confidence, but most importantly to see any contribution they make as an act and gift from God.

Vocation helps young people to orient themselves to the unique places God has gifted them to serve.

It helps young people understand their roles, responsibilities, and relationships in their church, home, community and other areas of vocation. God uses our ordinary work to accomplish great things, even on the smallest of scales. Young people develop new areas of vocation as they move toward adulthood. The Holy Spirit can use them for great impact and develop in them the satisfaction and joy in the Christian life.

In living out their vocation, youth reach out to their neighbor in word and deed to love and share the Good News of Jesus. As youth begin to understand the needs of the world, they can become overwhelmed. Vocation centers them in where God has placed them and empowers them to live the Gospel out with passion and excellence. It gives them a lens to see their daily activity as a place for God to work powerfully. Faith is not just for Sunday morning, but for Tuesday afternoon. Christian adults can model faithfully live out their vocations every day in their sphere of influence.

Opportunities to serve and lead can be an important tool for building confidence and developing skills all while knowing God is at work in and through them. God sends His people to serve the world in word and deed, trusting the Holy Spirit will work through them to open ears and hearts to receive the Gospel.

Teaching vocation helps to calm nerves about future roles and focuses on the here and now. Vocation is not lived out alone, but in congregation and community. All kinds of service and leadership should be encouraged to point people back to the Gospel.

Youth seek to be warm, challenging, and grace-filled to their community and peers. Over time, young people will experience a variety of vocational roles as opportunities and relationships develop and change. In each stage, God continues to call them to share the Gospel and sends the Holy Spirit to make a significant impact through their unique roles.

Vocation encourages young people to interact across age, belief system, ability levels, and experiences.

In these relationships they can share God's grace and forgiveness while navigating conflicts and disagreements with truth in love. As you teach vocation, you will find students who may have the gifts and temperament for church work. Healthy youth ministry encourages youth to pursue church work vocations as it fits their gifts and skills. Healthy congregations can be incubators for future church workers by providing support, encouragement, and foundational training to youth.

The Lutheran understanding of vocation and the priesthood of all believers can be powerful for teens and young adults. Young people are seeking to know what faith in action looks like. Vocation helps to prioritize their time, gifts and talents. It encourages discipline and excellence while keeping the focus on the Gospel of Jesus. God can use the healthy desire of these young people for action to spread the His Good News and love in their everyday lives.

Discussion Questions

For Individuals

- What are your vocations? How does God use you in daily life to love others and share the Gospel?
- How can understanding and identifying vocational roles help you and the youth you know to live out their faith in everyday life?
- Who do you know that might make a good future church worker? How can you encourage them to consider that vocation?

For Youth Ministry Teams

- How does your youth ministry recognize and train young people in using their specific gifts in service as they grow in maturity and ability?
- Are young people trained to understand how serving well in their current vocation (son, daughter, student, musician, athlete, employee, etc.) is a way to serve other in Jesus' name and bring glory to God?
- Are young people trained to understand how their current vocations translate into future vocations and service in the world?

For Congregational Leadership

- How can teaching and living out vocation help create intergenerational connections in the congregation?
- How does your congregation recognize and celebrate God-given gifts in individual members of His family?
- Are young people encouraged to see how both mundane and extraordinary service are done in honor to God and service to our neighbor?
- How can the congregation encourage youth to consider church work as a future vocation?