

Sacraments at the Service of Communion

Core Activity

Discerning the Call to Servant Leadership

1. Ask the students to take out three blank sheets of paper and a pen or a pencil. Tell the students that you will be leading them in an exercise about their calling from God. Instruct them to write on one sheet of paper their first thoughts or impulses that will complete the following statement: "I, Jesus the Christ, am calling you to . . ." Explain that they may describe their feelings about God's calling for their lives. Mention that they may also have questions about their calling, and ask them to write questions they have for God in that regard. Allow them time to both think and write.

2. Explain that this activity focuses on the call to ordained ministry and married life, and looks at the ways Catholics can serve others through those vocations. Note that servant leadership is a helpful image to use when considering the important roles that ordained ministers and married people play.

3. Give a general explanation of what the term *servant leader* means. Brainstorm with the class the characteristics of servant leadership, noting their responses. Examples of characteristics are compassion, humility, care for poor and disadvantaged people, and a willingness to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.

4. Have the students write on their second blank sheet of paper the characteristics of servant leadership that they see in themselves.

5. Conduct a presentation on the Sacraments at the Service of Communion. Use key phrases from the brainstorming in step 3 and points taken from pages 241–246 of *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth, Third Edition (CFH)*.

6. Divide the class into groups. Distribute the handout "The Vows of Marriage" (Document #: TX003196) to the members of half of the groups and the handout "The Vows of Ordination" (Document #: TX003197) to the members of the other groups. Ask each group to do the following things:

- Read the ritual text on your handout.
- Using the text as your source, answer the following questions as a group:



- Who is being called to be the servant leader?
- Whom do married people or ordained people serve?
- What specific characteristics of servant leadership are needed for someone to be married or ordained?
- What is the role of God's grace in the priestly life or in married life?

Ask a student in each group to record the group's responses.

7. Invite representatives from the groups to share with the class the groups' ritual texts and responses to the discussion questions. Post their responses on the board.

8. Direct the students to look at their personal responses to and questions about the statement "I, Jesus Christ, am calling you to . . . ," and their lists of the characteristics of servant leadership that they see in themselves. Encourage them to review the work the class has done on servant leadership, marriage, and ordination. Ask them to write, on their third sheet of blank paper, two or three questions they want to ask someone about how that person chose to respond to a call from Jesus to be ordained or married. Encourage them to share their questions outside the class with someone who is ordained or married.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Liturgy and the Sacraments* manual.)

Core Activity Extension

An Interview

Ask the students to interview a priest or a married person about how that individual experienced the call to be ordained or married. As a part of the assignment, have your students indicate any ways the interview helped them understand their own vocations.

Note: Permanent deacons may be interviewed as married persons because marriage is their primary vocation. An interview about ordination should be reserved for a priest or a bishop.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Liturgy and the Sacraments* manual.)

Additional Activities

Celibacy and Chastity

1. Provide a brief explanation of the terms *celibacy* and *chastity* and the difference between them.

2. Give the students the following instructions, in your own words: "I am going to read a number of statements. You are to decide whether you agree, disagree, or are undecided about each statement."

Read the first of the following statements listed in italics. Then ask your students to indicate their responses to the statement. Elicit feedback about why the students chose as they did. Use the follow-up questions listed under each statement for further discussion.

- *I cannot imagine taking a vow of celibacy.*
 - Why did you respond as you did?
 - How does taking a vow of celibacy help someone focus on serving God better?
- *Chastity is a good ideal in marriage.*
 - Why is it a good ideal?
 - Where in movies, television, or real life do you find examples of people living chastely in their marriages? living unchastely in their marriages?
- *Chastity is hard to live up to.*
 - What makes chastity difficult to live up to as an ideal?
 - Where do the pressures come from that threaten chastity in marriage?

3. Conclude by using material from the *CFH* to summarize the Church teachings on celibacy (in the third paragraph on p. 244) and chastity (on pp. 325–327).

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Liturgy and the Sacraments* manual.)

Marital Love

1. Ask the students to name "hot" couples from television, movies, or the record industry. Try to establish a Top 10 list of such couples, and record that list in the center of the board or on newsprint, leaving plenty of room to add more lists to the right and left.

2. Lead a brainstorming session on the characteristics of love. List all the responses on the board on newsprint, to the right of the list from step 1.

3. Divide the class into five small groups. Give a Bible to each group, and assign each group a different one of the following readings:

- Song of Sol. 2:8–10,14,16; 8:6–7
- Tob. 7:9–15
- Matt. 5:1–12
- Rom. 8:31–35,37–39
- Col. 3:12–17

Explain that each small group should identify characteristics of Christian marital love that are illustrated in the Scripture passage it has been assigned.

4. Invite one person from each small group to come forward, give a brief summary of the group's reading, and share the characteristics of Christian marital love that the group identified. List those characteristics on the board or on newsprint, to the right of the characteristics noted in step 2.

5. Prompt the students to identify married couples they know who are examples of each of the characteristics of Christian marital love that the groups named in step 4. List their responses on the board or on newsprint, to the left of the list of hot couples compiled in step 1. Compare the two lists of married couples by discussing questions like these:

- What characteristics do the lists have in common?
- What characteristics are unique to Christian marital love?
- Why are the lists different?
- Was it easier to find examples of married couples for the first list or for the second list? What does that say about the challenge of Christian marital love?

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Liturgy and the Sacraments* manual.)

(The material labeled *TC: Liturgy and the Sacraments* is adapted from *Total Catechesis: Catechetical Sessions on Liturgy and the Sacraments*, by Therese Brown, Laurie Delgatto, Mary Shrader, and Christine Schmertz Navarro, in the Total Catechesis series [Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2004]. Copyright © 2004 by Saint Mary's Press. All rights reserved.)