

CALLED

The Sacrament of Holy Orders LIFE NIGHT OUTLINE

Goal for the Life Night

The goal for this night is to help teens understand the role and effects of Holy Orders for bishops, priests and deacons. This night will also give teens practical tools to discern their own vocation. Finally, this night will give the teens an opportunity to affirm and appreciate the priests and deacons in the parish.

Life Night at a Glance

It is very important that your parish priest(s) and deacon(s) are present this night. Be sure to invite them to come to Life Night well in advance. The night begins with a game that will help the teens get to know the priests a little better. The game will lead into a teaching on the Sacrament of Holy Orders. During the break the guys and girls will split up into different groups. The girls will discuss the universal priesthood given to us in Baptism. The guys will discuss the sacramental priesthood. At the end of the discussion, the teens will have an opportunity to write an affirmation letter to the priests or deacons thanking them for their service. The Send will give the teens who are discerning a vocation to the priesthood or religious life an opportunity to be prayed over by the priests and in return the teens will then pray over the priests of the parish for strength and renewal.

Environment

The environment for this night is very simple yet subtle. Hang floor-length black sheets across the whole front of the meeting room. Down the center drape one white cloth stripe. The idea is to make the environment look like an enormous priest collar. Have a large cross and a few chairs or stools for the priests to sit on. There will also need to be another meeting space that can be used during the girls/guys sessions.

GATHER *15 Minutes*

Welcome and Introductions (5 min)

The youth minister gathers the group together and welcomes everyone to the Life Night. He/she introduces any teens at Life Night for the first time.

Know Your Clergy Game (10 min)

(Disclaimer – you will need at least two priests and/or deacons from your parish for this game, but if you can get more – even better!)

The youth minister should ask for four volunteers (one from each class). Give each contestant some sort of noisemaker—bell, whistle, kazoo, etc. Explain that many of us don't know much about the priests and deacons who serve us but it's time we learned a little bit about them. The youth minister should read a fact about one of the priests or deacons without giving his name. The first teen to guess the correct priest or deacon will get a point. Have a Core member record the points. Make sure the facts span the priest's whole life. For example: "This person's favorite TV show is *Lost*" or "in high school, this person was a star pitcher on the baseball team." If possible, try to discover some really interesting and funny facts about the priests that the teens will relate to. If time allows, have the priest tell a story corresponding with the fact. After 10-12 facts, award the teen with the most correct answers a prize.

PROCLAIM *12 Minutes*

The Party: Episode 7 (2 min)

This semester features a reoccurring video series called "The Party." Each Life Night of this semester features a new episode in which a teen hosts a party and the guests are personifications of the seven sacraments. These short videos are designed to introduce the teaching for each Life Night in the semester. In Episode 7, the sixth guest, Preston (representing Holy Orders), arrives. The person giving the talk can point out the following ways that he represents the sacrament:

CATECHISM REFERENCES:

- # 1536-1600
- # 1119
- # 1461
- # 900
- # 875-876

SCRIPTURES:

- Matthew 16:18
- Matthew 28:18-20
- John 20:21-22
- Hebrews 5:10

- The name "Preston" – stands for Priest – Old English for "priest town"
- Laying down at the door – those receiving Holy Orders lay prostrate
- Wearing apron and came to serve– priesthood is a role of service
- Jesse hands him bread to pass out – The priest brings us the Eucharist
- Preston goes through how often he "sees" each sacrament

The Party: Episode 7 can be found on Video Support 5

Teaching (10 min)

The purpose of this teaching is to help the teens better understand Holy Orders and how this sacrament impacts the life of the Church. It should also address some of the common questions about the sacrament (i.e. celibacy, male-only, etc.). If possible, see if a priest or deacon from the parish can give this teaching.

Teaching can be found on pages 87-90.

BREAK 35 Minutes

Guy/Girl Rap Sessions (35 min)

Break the group up into guys and girls rap sessions. The goal of these rap sessions is to discuss the priesthood as it applies to each gender and give the teens an opportunity to ask questions. The girls will discuss their call to the universal priesthood and the guys will discuss their call to the sacramental priesthood. If possible, have at least one priest at each rap session. Begin each group in prayer thanking God for the gift of the sacrament.

GIRLS

1. Universal Priesthood

Start the session with an introduction similar to this. Be sure to adapt as necessary for your group.

Many girls feel like a night on Holy Orders doesn't really apply to us since we cannot be priests. Well, I have good news for you! The priesthood does apply to us as women. Through our Baptism we are anointed PRIEST, prophet, and king. Each and every baptized Christian, man and woman, is called to what is known as the universal priesthood. The universal priesthood is like the

sacramental priesthood in the sense that we are called to offer sacrifices and serve others in our vocation as women in our everyday life. Our universal priesthood serves the Church in just as powerful a way as the sacramental priesthood. We as women have a very unique gift to offer the Church. As women we have an example of service and sacrifice in Mary. She models for us surrender and dedication to God in the way she followed her son faithfully and brought others to him. We too are called to be a witness of faith and bring those to God through our prayers, love and witness.

2. Discussion Questions

Use the following questions to start a discussion. If possible, have a priest or deacon available to answer any questions from the girls.

- What are some things that we as a part of the universal priesthood can offer as a sacrifice to serve the Church?
- If someone asked you, how would explain why women can't be priests in the Catholic Church?
- What questions do you have about the Sacrament of Holy Orders?
- How can we better serve and lift up those who serve the Church in the ordained priesthood?

3. Affirmation Letters

Too often the service and sacrifice of our priests goes unnoticed or unappreciated. End the large group by having all the girls write a letter of affirmation to the parish priests thanking them for their yes to God's call in their life and for the ways they serve the parish. Give the letters to the priests at the end of the night.

GUYS

1. Sacramental Priesthood

Start the session with an introduction similar to this. Be sure to adapt as necessary for your group.

For many guys, the topic of priesthood is scary. We say or think things like "What if God is calling me to this?" "I don't really want to be a priest." "I like girls too much to be a priest." "Priesthood is for holy people." We start to make up our minds without knowing what the vocation is really about.

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2. Priest Witness

Invite one of your priests to give a witness on his journey of becoming a priest. Be sure to have him include some of the struggles and obstacles as well as how he knew that God desired him to be a priest. Have him share how the Lord is moving in his priesthood now. Allow time at the end for the priest to answer questions from the guys.

3. Discussion Questions

Use the following questions to start a discussion:

- What are some tasks a priest gets to do that a man called to the married life or single life does not?
- How would you answer someone who asked why priest cannot get married in the Catholic Church?
- What are some of your reservations about the possibility of God calling you to the priesthood?
- How can you be more open to God's calling for your life?

4. Affirmation Letters

Too often the service and sacrifice of our priests goes unnoticed or unappreciated. End the large group by having all the guys write a letter of affirmation to the parish priests thanking them for their yes to God's call in their life and for the ways they serve the parish. Give the letters to the priests at the end of the night.

SEND 15 Minutes

Recap (5 min)

The youth minister should recap the night and explain that we are never too young to discern God's calling in our lives. Prayer is essential to vocation. We need prayer to help guide us in our discernment as well as in our vocation. It is through prayer that we will find strength to embrace the vocation God has planned for us. One of the oldest ways of calling upon the Holy Spirit is the laying on of hands. This ancient action is used in both the Sacrament of Holy Orders and Confirmation. Through the line of apostolic succession we receive the same Holy Spirit that came down upon the apostles at Pentecost. It is the Holy Spirit that will guide us in our discernment of God's will and plan for our lives.

Praying over Teens and Clergy (10 min)

Invite all the teens who are discerning a religious vocation, whether a religious sister, brother, priesthood or diaconate to come forward. Be aware that there might only be two or three teens come forward. Be sure to thank them for their openness to the calling of the Spirit in their lives. Have one of the priests lead a prayer over these teens. Ask all the other teens to extend their hands to pray with the priest. The prayer should ask for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit as a guide in the teen's discernment. After those teens are prayed over, the youth minister should ask all the priests and deacons to come forward. Invite one or two teens to write a prayer for the priests and deacons of the parish. The prayer should ask for a strengthening of their vocation and thanksgiving for answering God's call to the priesthood. Have all the teens extend their hands one more time and the selected teens to pray over the priests. Close the night with the Hail Mary and Ave Maria.

Community Connection

- Make sure to invite all the priests and deacons in your parish to be a part of this Life Night well in advance.
- Invite a religious sister or a woman who is discerning the religious life to share during the girls session.
- If your priest cannot stay for the guy's breakout, invite a seminarian from the diocese to share with the guys.

Making It Work

- If you only have one priest at your parish and/or Life Night, have the Gather game be a true or false question game.
- If there is not enough time for the teens to write an affirmation letter for the priests and deacons, challenge the teens to write one at home and bring it in next week.
- Work with the teens to plan a "clergy appreciation party." This is a great way to create connections between the teens and the clergy of the parish. Let the teens take the lead in the planning of this event.
- Follow up with any teens who came forward during the Send. Encourage them to pray and connect with a priest or nun to answer any questions about discernment.

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What it is:

If you’ve been to Mass, you’ve probably noticed the gentleman in the front. He’s there for a reason. He was called by the Lord, probably a long time ago, to serve the Church in a way unlike anyone else can on this earth. He is the priest—a member of the clergy. Someone who walks in the footsteps of a continuous line of men that dates all the way back to the first century when Christ our Lord instituted the ecclesial fraternity of the Holy Priesthood. His calling in life—his *vocation*—is to receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

The priesthood and diaconate were instituted, as all sacraments were, by Christ. At the end of His time with his apostles, “Jesus approached and said to them, ‘All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.’” This command from the Lord was specially given to this group of believers because they were to become the first bishops of the Church. Their work in the world became instrumental in the early Church as customs were established through observing the teachings of Christ that would later develop into the sacred Tradition with which we are familiar today.

Holy Orders is a sacrament but also a vocation—an intrinsic calling by the Lord to follow and to serve in a special and complete way. As Christ washed the feet of the apostles at the Last Supper, so to does the clergy assume the role of Christ in service to the Church, even to the point that they are literally acting in the person of Christ (*in persona Christi*).

The idea of having a mediator between man and God is not new. We read about priests in the Old Testament. There was even an entire tribe of families in which the men were born into the role of serving the other Hebrew tribes as the temple priests. They were responsible for making the sacrificial offerings to the Lord and conducting other liturgical services.

The role of the temple priest was fulfilled in Christ and in His sacrifice on the cross in which He serves as both the man (the priest) making the offering on behalf of the people of God and as the actual sacrifice. When our parish priests celebrate the sacraments, they are

Note to the Presenter:

In each of the sacramental teachings, we will attempt to cover the sacraments in three broad topics (what it is, how it is done, how it is lived). How you choose to make these come to life is dependent on the night and on the people you have doing the teaching. This might be a semester that you choose to have teens take a part of the teaching each night. This will allow them to educate themselves (which is great!) and be creative. Perhaps they create a video teaching, perhaps it is done within a skit... let your imagination run with it!

Matthew 28:18-20

CCC 876
CCC 875

CCC 1539

CCC 1544



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performing a service in the place of Christ, as His representative in the sacrament as Christ is the One High Priest.

How it's done:

To become a priest or deacon, you must be **ordained**. Ordination is a process that is the meat of the sacrament. It essentially is the sacrament. When Jesus sent out the apostles to evangelize the world, He “said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”

John 20:21-22

The Holy Spirit truly changes the soul of the man becoming a priest. It is the same sort of intrinsic change that takes place during Baptism and Confirmation—it leaves an indelible mark on the soul. Once a man is a priest; he will always be a priest. This is called a supernatural vocation because it forgoes the natural vocation of a person to find a spouse and raise a family.

**CCC 1581
CCC 1582**

During the ceremony (which is held during a Mass), the bishop lays hands upon the man who is to become ordained and says the words of ordination. At this moment the Holy Spirit seals the heart of the man and he is ordained either to the fraternity of bishops, the holy priesthood or the diaconate. For the ordination of bishops and priests, holy oil is also used.

**CCC 1558
CCC 1575
CCC 1561**

Deacons have always helped the Church throughout her existence. They have been specially ordained men who assist the priests in their pastoral responsibilities. They are not, however, the same as a priest. They are not able to hear confessions, anoint the sick, or celebrate the Mass. They can baptize, preside over weddings, and assist in the Mass. Deacons can also be married. They are ordained into the ministry of the priest, not into the ontological fraternity.

CCC 1569

The requirements to receive Holy Orders are simple. One must be a baptized male. The man must agree to live in celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom of God and a member of the Roman Catholic Church.

CCC 1578

It is also important that a man is formally educated in the ways of the Church. Just as in any other job, you would require some bit of vocational training before you began to work. So to are men educated in seminaries for many years before their ordination.

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Men must also want to enter into a life-long commitment to prayer and service for the sake of the Church. This requires an able mind and body in order to effectively live out the vocation. Men don't receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders because they merely desire it; God must call them to the sacrament. It is the grace of the Holy Spirit that enables a man to live a life in service to the Church and sustain him through his journey.

CCC 1578

How it's lived:

According to the nature of the Sacrament, Holy Orders must be lived. The life of a priest is one of service, as all Christians should embrace. However, the life of a priest is unique. He is enfolded in the apostolic lineage of the Church—acting as a “servant leader” in the person of Christ for all the Church to witness and from whom the Church benefits.

CCC 1547

Certain ordinations are lived differently. The roles and responsibilities have already been mentioned for priests and deacons. Bishops are unique. They are more representative of the apostles. They govern the Church and are at the highest seats of Church hierarchy under the papacy. Bishops receive the fullness of the sacrament.

CCC 1521
CCC 1522

Why can't women be priests?

Christ is the Bridegroom to the Church's Bride in the great marriage feast of the Kingdom (Matthew 25:1-13). Gender has, in Christ's teaching, a real meaning and is not simply an accident of nature. And He ought to know, since He designed the human person and made us a participant in the mystery of male and femaleness. And so every Mass is a local marriage feast of the Lamb whereby we enter into the self-sacrificial love of that cosmic Bridegroom for his Bride.

And that brings us back to the question of symbols. For as with water in baptism and wine in Eucharist, it is not that a man is superior to a woman in being "matter" for the priesthood. It is that man is a fitting symbol of the Bridegroom and woman is not. The priest is an “alter Christus” -another Christ - to the Bride in the mystery of the Mass. He does not primarily just preach or pastor. He signifies.

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Ordination is a gift. It's a sacrament, and like all sacraments, it does what it symbolizes and symbolizes what it does. Symbols therefore matter-particularly those that Christ himself has instituted-and the Church has no power to alter such symbols. Christ and the apostles revealed what the "matter" of ordination should be just as they revealed what the matter of Baptism and Eucharist should be. The Church merely obeys.

Why can't priests be married?

A priest's job is essentially to be a priest; he has to be Christ whenever he is called upon. In the same way a mother never has a "day off" from being a mom, priests are always "on call." Yes, it is true that they have days where they are not responsible for the day-to-day work of the parish, especially in parishes where there are several priests. There may be days full of meetings and special liturgies, but unlike a traditional, 8 to 5 job, a priest is always a priest. His vocation is complete, just as the vocation to be someone's husband or wife is complete in and of itself.

Imagine if a priest was married and "off the clock," so to speak. Where would his vocation lie? If someone needed confession, but he was sitting down to dinner with his wife and children, where would his duty lie? If a priest's wife were in labor in hospital, but someone in another section of the hospital was dying and in need of Anointing of the Sick, to whom does he owe his time and fidelity? The sacrifice to the Church is all encompassing, as a husband to his wife and wife to her husband. The priest represents Christ to the members of the Church, the bride of Christ. The priest takes on the life in supreme imitation of the bridegroom. This is the meaning of his vocation.

Only priests can celebrate Mass and only priests can absolve sin, both by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the name of Jesus, by the power of God the Father. This special grace is given for the sake of the Bride of Christ, that they may one day go to heaven. This is a very unique and amazing role in the plan of salvation.

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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 _____

Know Your Clergy Game _____

Girls Rap Session _____

Guys Rap Session _____

Prayer Over Teens/Clergy _____

Two Weeks Prior to Life Night:

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

Create a list of needed supplies and materials. Assign a person to collect and purchase 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 _____

Priests/Deacons for Game:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Priest Witness _____

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.

E-mail the entire Core team an overview of the night.

Day of the Life Night:

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

Set up audio and video. Test the video clips to make sure both picture and sound work.

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.

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 | 2 Timothy 1:6-7 |
| Acts 6:1-7 | Mark 10:45 |
| John 20:22-23 | Luke 22:27 |
| 1 Timothy 4:14 | |

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

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The Vocation of Holy Orders

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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.

