



DISCERNMENT

“Why spend your money for what is not bread; your wages for what does not satisfy?” -Isaiah 55:2

OPENING ACTIVITY

QUESTION BALL

In silence toss a ball around the room. Every third person who catches it has to ask a rhetorical question that people ask themselves when figuring out what to do in life. For example: Should I take a foreign language this year? How should I wear my hair? Should I move to a new city when I grow up? What college should I go to?

ESTABLISHING THE CONCEPTS

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Launch into life by looking for a different set of answers

“If you don’t change direction, you’ll end up where you’re heading.” – Chinese proverb

Failure to Launch was the title of a popular movie a few years ago about a shiftless young man with no direction in life. The term “launch” in the movie’s title is used by psychologists to describe the period when a young person is trying to make a life for himself outside of the care of parents.

For many young people, there is often a time of “spiritual launching”—of making decisions about what to believe, what to value, and what to pursue in life. This is precisely the time to be asking God about one’s vocation.

Fr. Joe Hirsch, a priest in Wisconsin, says that during this launching period, it’s critical to ask the right questions: “The questions we ask determine the direction of our lives. If we ask the right questions, we’ll go one direction. Ask the wrong questions, and it’s likely we’ll go in the wrong direction.”

Many people have internalized these kinds of questions:

- How can I be more popular?
- How can I have the most fun?
- How can I make more money?
- What will make me feel good?
- How can I be most successful?

But the saints ask different questions. The greatest heroes and leaders ask questions like these:

- Who am I?
- Why was I created?
- Who is Jesus Christ?
- What is my purpose and mission in life?
- Where am I going? How do I get there?
- Who will I serve?
- How much of myself will I give?
- To what state in life is God calling me?



Fr. Hirsch points out that “100% of men in the seminary are asking the second set of questions, and so are 100% of men and women in the best marriages.” They are seeking answers to selfless questions, not selfish questions.

What kind of questions are you asking yourself? Try bringing your deepest questions to prayer, then listen to the Holy Spirit for answers. “Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” -Mt. 10:39

Be Curious

1. What are some general differences in the two kinds of questions mentioned in the article?
2. If the first set of questions are common ways of thinking, how can a person switch to thinking about the second set of questions?
3. How would life be better if you not only asked yourself the second set of questions, but also answered them by the way you lived?

OPTIONAL VIDEOS

Optional video: Rachel’s Story

Optional video: Nathan’s story

Videos can be found at www.vocationlessons.com





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EXPLORATION

BREAD OR WASTED WAGES?

First, each student writes one word on a separate piece of paper, using large letters. (Some students may need to write two words, depending on your class size.)

- football
- school
- dating
- reading
- complaining about little things
- attending Mass
- grocery shopping
- teen magazines
- shopping for a friend
- video games
- worrying about a test
- volunteering
- revenge
- eating dinner with your family
- praying

On the board, the teacher will have written “Bread” and “Wasted Wages.” Tape each piece of paper to the board. If it is satisfying and meaningful, tape it near “Bread.” The more satisfying you think the activity is for the human mind, body, and soul, the closer it should be to “Bread.” The less satisfying, the closer it should be to “Wasted Wages.”





REFLECTIVE PRAYER

ISAIAH 55:2-3, 8-12

Imagine this Psalm is a letter from God to you:

Why spend your money for what is not bread;
your wages for what does not satisfy?

Only listen to me, and you shall eat well,
you shall delight in rich fare.
Pay attention and come to me;
listen, that you may have life.

I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
the steadfast loyalty promised to David...

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways—oracle of the LORD.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways,
my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

Yet just as from the heavens
the rain and snow come down
And do not return there
till they have watered the earth,
making it fertile and fruitful,
Giving seed to the one who sows
and bread to the one who eats,

So shall my word be
that goes forth from my mouth;
It shall not return to me empty,
but shall do what pleases me,
achieving the end for which I sent it.

Yes, in joy you shall go forth,
in peace you shall be brought home.



VOCAL PRAYER

THE ANGELUS

Leader: The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary
All: and she conceived of the Holy Spirit.
Hail Mary...

Leader: Behold the handmaid of the Lord
All: be it done unto me according to Thy word.
Hail Mary . . .

Leader: And the Word was made Flesh
All: and dwelt among us.
Hail Mary . . .

Leader: Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God,
All: that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Leader: Let us pray:
All: Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord,
Thy grace into our hearts;
that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ, Thy Son,
was made known by the message of an angel,
may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His
Resurrection, through the same Christ Our Lord.
Amen.