

6TH GRADE: PRIESTHOOD

OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVE: To be able to identify good characteristics needed for the priesthood.

MAIN CONCEPTS:

- There is a great need for priests in many countries today. There are nearly 4,000 Catholic parishes in the United States that do not have their own priest.
- Characteristics needed for the priesthood are: love of Jesus, virtue, service, people skills, intelligence, joy, and stability.
- Knowing your own character and temperament is helpful in finding your vocation and growing in holiness.

PLANNING DIRECTIONS:

Choose the components you wish to use given the time you have and the needs of your students.

INTRODUCTION

2 min

Summarize today's theme. Through these lessons we hope to become familiar with the vocations to which God calls people so that you will be able to follow his call always. Right now, you are in the single state of life, but someday God may call you to a particular vocation—marriage, priesthood, or religious life. Today's focus is on the priesthood.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us draw near to God during today's lesson. Read Matthew 9:35-38

Pray a simple prayer from the heart or: Lord, there are many who are troubled and who need you. Please inspire young men to consider the

PRIESTHOOD

"Jesus went around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness. At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest." - Matthew 9:35-38

ACTIVITY

THE GIFT OF THE PRIESTHOOD

Look closely at the photos and read the paragraphs. Then for each photo, ask:

1. What is happening in this photo?
2. How do you think the priest feels in this photo?
3. What could he be thinking?
4. How might the boys in these photos feel?
5. In your own words, why is the priesthood important?



Priests Celebrate Holy Mass

Every day, priests hold in their hands God's greatest gift to humanity: the Eucharist. This "sacrament of sacraments" feeds the souls of God's people and is a sacrifice for the salvation of the whole world!



Priests Preach the Gospel

The first duty of every priest is to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Son of God was born as a man, suffered, died, and rose again for our sake! Priests spend their lives proclaiming this life-changing message!



Priests Love All and Serve All

Priests pour themselves out for the people of God every day. There are tough days and incredibly beautiful days. With hearts full of love, priests serve the poor, visit the imprisoned, and counsel their parishioners. They bring Jesus to whomever they meet.

VOCATION LESSONS | 6th Grade: Priesthood

priesthood to bring the Gospel to the whole world. Help us today to be filled with yourself so that we can bring peace to others. Amen.

OPENING ACTIVITY

10 min

The Gift of the Priesthood

Lead students through examining the photos, reading the paragraphs, and answering the questions.

Traits of a Good Priest

1. Read the passage titled “Traits of a Good Priest.” (Or choose a few paragraphs.) Read individually, in small groups, or as a class.

2. Time permitting, watch the video clip titled, “A Day in the Life of a Priest,”

<http://vimeo.com/45573993>

3. Have the students discuss the reflection. Feel free to add questions of your own.

4. Quiz the students on the main concepts. Answer students’ questions. If it is helpful, refer to the Vocation Glossary, <http://www.vocationlessons.com/glossary/>

**PRIESTHOOD****ESTABLISHING THE CONCEPTS****TRAITS OF A GOOD PRIEST**

Excerpted from *To Save a Thousand Souls* by Fr. Brett A. Brannen.

1. Love for Jesus Christ

A good candidate for the priesthood strives to have a real, personal relationship with the Lord Jesus. This means talking with him, listening to him and trying to become like him. The Lord is the center of his life, or at least he strongly desires the Lord to be the center of his life. A man can't be a priest if he doesn't love Jesus.

2. Life of Service to Others

A man who is united to Jesus Christ in prayer will experience a desire for service that results in concrete charitable acts. Service springs naturally from prayer; it is a result of becoming more like Jesus.... Most of the candidates in our seminaries have spent time serving the poor. Some gave up significant periods of their lives to serve in intensive, full-time youth ministry programs. Others have taken mission trips or worked with Habitat for Humanity. In essence, they sacrificed themselves to bring Jesus Christ to others or to alleviate the suffering of others. If a man has no history of service at all, this is definitely a growth area for him. If a man sits at home all day and watches television or plays video games, he is probably not ready to begin seminary. A priest is called to serve others, not to be served.

**3. Good People Skills**

Good human formation is critical for today's priests. Because a diocesan priest takes care of people every day, he needs good people skills. He should have good conversation skills and be able to make friends easily. His personality should be hospitable. He should be approachable, even to total strangers. This is not to say that every priest must be a boisterous extrovert, but he must like people and like to be around them.... Your personality and your family are two important gifts God has given to you. God always gives the gifts you need to live the vocation to which you are called. Some men tend toward introversion and can still become excellent priests.

4. Above Average Intelligence

In most U.S. parishes, the majority of Catholic people sitting in the pews on Sunday have college degrees, and many have advanced degrees. No priest can assume he is the smartest or most educated person in the Church, nor can he assume that people will accept everything he says as law. If a priest is not able to speak intelligently about many subjects, he will not be respected when he mounts the pulpit to speak about Jesus Christ and how to live the Gospel in the modern world.

5. Joy and a Good Sense of Humor

Dealing with fallen human nature (our own and others') can be frustrating at times, so a priest must have a sense of humor. He needs to be able to laugh at himself and to be joyful in the Good News of Jesus Christ, even as he is dealing with the sad realities of sin and death. The human personality of the priest is very important because it is a bridge to Christ. Priests who never laugh and smile are not attractive to people and they are often deemed unapproachable.... I read once that the average adult

Discussion Questions

- Which of these traits are most essential for a priest?
- Which of these characteristics are most difficult to acquire? How can a person work on acquiring them?
- Choose one of the traits, then describe a scenario in which a priest would need to rely heavily on his strength in that particular area. For example, when would a priest need a good sense of humor? When would he need to rely on his intelligence?



PRIESTHOOD

laughs approximately seventeen times per day, but the average child laughs over two hundred times per day. I feel sure that this is at least one of the reasons why our Lord Jesus exhorted us to become like little children in order to enter the Kingdom of God... Blessed Julian of Norwich once wrote: "The greatest honor and glory you can give to almighty God, greater than all your sacrifices and offerings, is to live your life happily, joyfully, because of the knowledge of his love."

6. Self-discipline

Because a priest is an alter Christus (another Christ), people expect more from him. They expect him to be like Christ, and they have a right to that expectation. That is why Jesus calls and equips us to become priests in the first place... Self-mastery means that a priest has good impulse control, and he is able to control his anger and all of his emotions. He is in control of what he says and how he says it, conscious that people are very sensitive.... Self-discipline and self-mastery also indicate a man who is dependable. He is able to wake up on time, keep his scheduled appointments, and in general to do the things that are expected of him.

BE CURIOUS

1. Which of these traits are most essential for a priest?
2. Which of these characteristics are most difficult to acquire? How can a person work on acquiring them?
3. Choose one of the traits, then describe a scenario in which a priest would need to rely heavily on his strength in that particular area. For example, when would a priest need a good sense of humor? When would he need to rely on his intelligence?

EXPLORATION

15 min

Aristotle's Four Temperaments

Knowing yourself is very helpful in discerning your vocation. One aspect of knowing yourself is knowing your character strengths and weaknesses.

The philosopher Aristotle (and many others after him) identified four basic temperaments, or personality types.

Taking this temperament test may give you greater insight into yourselves and others so that you can build on your strengths and prayerfully address your weaknesses.

Notes:

1) Students may need help defining some words.



PRIESTHOOD

EXPLORATION

ARISTOTLE'S FOUR TEMPERAMENTS

Knowing yourself well is part of the path to holiness. People who know themselves well will more fully be able to discern their vocation.

Who you are and how you react to things has been shaped by your family, your culture, your upbringing, your choices, and by how God has made you. Each person has a basic temperament, which is the way that we are inclined to think, react, and find energy. Our actions are not predetermined by this temperament—we are free—but it does help us to know what our tendencies are. By identifying your temperament's strengths and weaknesses, you will know in what areas you need to grow. Your temperament is your natural state, but virtue comes when you choose to grow in the areas that are not natural to you.

1. Make a mark next to the words that describe you. If one of the words describes you really well, make two marks.

<input type="checkbox"/> Talkative	<input type="checkbox"/> Leader	<input type="checkbox"/> Organized	<input type="checkbox"/> Easy going
<input type="checkbox"/> Playful	<input type="checkbox"/> Adventurous	<input type="checkbox"/> Persistent	<input type="checkbox"/> Peaceful
<input type="checkbox"/> Refreshing	<input type="checkbox"/> Persuasive	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-sacrificing	<input type="checkbox"/> Agreeable
<input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic	<input type="checkbox"/> Strong-willed	<input type="checkbox"/> Considerate	<input type="checkbox"/> Composed
<input type="checkbox"/> Spontaneous	<input type="checkbox"/> Competitive	<input type="checkbox"/> Respectful	<input type="checkbox"/> Calm
<input type="checkbox"/> Optimistic	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-reliant	<input type="checkbox"/> Sensitive	<input type="checkbox"/> Patient
<input type="checkbox"/> Funny	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive	<input type="checkbox"/> Planner	<input type="checkbox"/> Steady
<input type="checkbox"/> Delightful	<input type="checkbox"/> Sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Scheduled	<input type="checkbox"/> Friendly
<input type="checkbox"/> Cheerful	<input type="checkbox"/> Energetic	<input type="checkbox"/> Orderly	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistent
<input type="checkbox"/> Inspiring	<input type="checkbox"/> Daring	<input type="checkbox"/> Faithful	<input type="checkbox"/> Inoffensive
<input type="checkbox"/> Socially graceful	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident	<input type="checkbox"/> Detailed	<input type="checkbox"/> Peace maker
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertaining	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent	<input type="checkbox"/> Deep thinker	<input type="checkbox"/> Tolerant
<input type="checkbox"/> Lively	<input type="checkbox"/> Go-getter	<input type="checkbox"/> Thoughtful	<input type="checkbox"/> Listener
<input type="checkbox"/> Charming	<input type="checkbox"/> Takes charge	<input type="checkbox"/> Loyal	<input type="checkbox"/> Contented
<input type="checkbox"/> Popular	<input type="checkbox"/> Fearless	<input type="checkbox"/> High standards	<input type="checkbox"/> Pleasant
<input type="checkbox"/> Bubbly	<input type="checkbox"/> Productive	<input type="checkbox"/> Responsible	<input type="checkbox"/> Balanced
_____	_____	_____	_____

2. Total the number of marks in each column. Read the descriptions on the next page to find your temperament.

2) For many 6th graders, this may be their first attempt at serious introspection. Help students to feel positive about their temperaments.

3) In the modern Western world, people tend to value choleric and sanguine temperaments, whereas a century ago, melancholic and phlegmatic temperaments were more valued. Interestingly, there are more saints who had melancholic temperaments than any other temperament.



PRIESTHOOD

SANGUINE

The first column of words describes a person who is sanguine. A sanguine person has a quick reaction to things and lets go of that reaction quickly. This person is very friendly and full of life. He/she likes to tell stories and is naturally cheerful. Some common weaknesses include: talkativeness, naivety, forgetfulness, and a tendency to exaggerate.

CHOLERIC

The second column of words describes a person who is choleric. A choleric person has a quick reaction to things and lets go of that reaction slowly. This person is driven and decisive. He/she likes to lead and is not afraid of arguments. Some common weaknesses include: arrogance, impatience, inflexibility, and rashness.

MELANCHOLIC

The third column of words describes a person who is melancholic. A melancholic person has a slow reaction to things and lets go of that reaction slowly. This person strives for perfection and can master talent well. He/she has a quiet sympathy for others and needs solitude. Some common weaknesses include: dwelling on the negative, easily becoming depressed, being overly meticulous, and a tendency to be critical.

PHLEGMATIC

The fourth column of words describes a person who is phlegmatic. A phlegmatic person has a slow reaction to things and lets go of that reaction quickly. This person is easy-going and unobtrusively funny. He/she is very gentle and does not like conflict. Some common weaknesses include: laziness, indecisiveness, being uninvolved, and being sarcastic.

Each person is unique, and rarely does one temperament fit a person exactly. More often, a person will have a dominant temperament and a secondary temperament, such as Sanguine-Choleric, or Phlegmatic-Melancholic.

Be careful not to value one person more than another based on their temperament. God makes all kinds of people, and the Church needs all kinds of people!

Some of the words listed above were adapted from Personality Plus by Florence Littauer.

REFLECTIVE PRAYER

7 min

The Harvest is Ready but Laborers are Few

1. Introduce the meditation:

Now is a prayerful time for you to internally interact with God. Feel free to close your eyes if you would like. The words you are about to hear are from Saint John Paul II, who travelled the world speaking to young people about their vocations.

2. Read aloud the words of Saint John Paul II in the student section.

3. Help the students to prayerfully reflect. Slowly speak out loud, pausing between lines:

- God, please show me the power of your love in my life.
- Jesus, how can I commit my whole life to you?
- How are you calling me to serve the Church and the world?
- If you are calling me to priesthood or religious life, please show me the way.
- Lord, let me know you so I can follow you.

VOCAL PRAYER

2 min

The Angelus

1. If you have not previously in another lesson, introduce the prayer.

Mary's "yes" to God can be our "yes" to following Him both today and later in our vocation.

2. Students pray the Angelus.



PRIESTHOOD

REFLECTIVE PRAYER

A CHALLENGE FROM ST. JOHN PAUL II

"I turn especially to you, boys and girls, who find yourselves at the decisive moment of choice. I would like to meet you one by one, call you by your name, talk to you heart-to-heart of things extremely important not only for yourself, but for the whole of humanity."

"I would like to ask each one of you: what are your plans? Have you ever thought of committing your existence totally to Christ? Do you think there can be anything greater than to bring Jesus to people and people to Jesus?"

"We are all searching for life's true meaning. We wonder and ask, Why? Why am I here? Why am I alive at all? What must I do? None of you is alone in asking these questions."

"Ask yourselves, young people, about the love of Christ. Acknowledge his voice resounding in the temple of your heart. Return his bright and penetrating gaze which opens the paths of your life to the horizons of the Church's mission."

"It is a difficult mission, today more than ever, to teach people about the truths of themselves, about their end, about their destiny, and to show faithful souls the unspeakable riches of the love of Christ."

"Do not be afraid of the radicalness of Christ's demands, because Jesus, who loved us first, is prepared to give himself to you, as well as asking of you. If he asks much from you, it is because he knows you can give much."

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

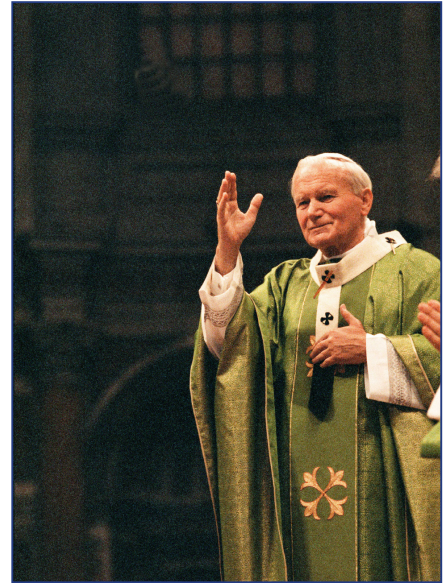
All: be it done unto me according to Thy word.

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.