

BreakThru

From Catechism to *Christ*

VOCATION & PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

LEARNING EVENT MAKE-UP

INTRODUCTION TO VOCATION

This week, we are learning about a big word: vocation. So, what is vocation anyway? The dictionary defines vocation like this:

Vo·ca·tion

Noun: **vocation**; plural noun: **vocations**

a strong feeling of suitability for a particular career or occupation

Often determined by

- How much money I can make
- How impressive it sounds
- How much schooling I'm need
- What I'm interested in
- How it helps other people
- Where I want to live
- What I have to wear
- How fun it will be
- Whether I can be famous

The word vocation comes from the Latin *vocatio*, which means a calling. It's not a job; it's your whole life! There is a spectrum on which to understand the word vocation, so let's take a look real quick.

Spiritual

At one time, the idea of a God-given vocation was a purely religious thing. Vocations included calls to the priesthood or taking the vows of monks or nuns. The only work worthy of the name was the holy stuff.

Lutherans like to stand between these two, understanding that all work—paid or unpaid, noble or humble—is blessed and given by God for the help of the helpless and thee care of all creation.

Secular

Nowadays, most people understand the word to mean somebody's job or career. We use the word calling, but it's seldom connected to a call from God.

If you had to choose—right now—what you want to do for the rest of your life, what would you pick? When have you felt like you actually do have to decide right now?



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Luther and the reformers radically redefined the term vocation. Rather than seeing it as a calling that select people receive to live lives set apart for special spiritual purposes, the reformers insisted that all people are called to live their lives in service to God and neighbor through various social, familial, church, and economic roles.

These days, Luther's understanding of vocation stands out in relation to high-pressure decisions about career paths. If you have not yet felt the pressure to figure out what you want to do with your life, you likely will soon. The Lutheran theological tradition offers an alternative to the pressures and presuppositions of a typical career discernment process. Key differences include the following:

- Vocation is not something we decide on for ourselves. It is a calling to service we receive from God and neighbor. We begin to live out a vocation not only after receiving proper education, training, and credentials, but from the moment of our baptism.
- At any moment a person can have various vocations, and while some may remain consistent throughout life, some change. For example, a student's calling to care for creation will span her entire life. But her vocation as a student will someday transform into a vocation to serve others in her job.
- Where certain careers tend to be seen by society as more valuable and are therefore more respected and/or higher paid, Luther's understanding of vocation means anything that serves a larger body or purpose is equally valuable.
- Finally, Luther's understanding of vocation is not exclusively for Christians; all people are called to lives of service in this world.

Do you believe God has something specific for you to do in this world? Why or why not? If so, what do you think it might be?

The Latin root of the word vocation, voca, means voice. Your vocation is God's voice and calling on your life. How does a vocation differ from a job?

What are three things you love to do? How might each of these sources of joy be used to touch a need in the world?

CATECHISM ENCOUNTER

Read Luther's explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed in the Small Catechism (Lutheran Handbook p. 205 or below):

The Third Article: On Being Made Holy

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

What is this?

Answer: I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy, and kept me in the true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one common, true faith. Daily in this Christian church the Holy Spirit abundantly forgives all sins—mine and those of all believers. On the last day the Holy Spirit will raise me and all the dead and will give to me and all believers in Christ eternal life. This is most certainly true.

What does the Holy Spirit have to do with helping you find and claim your calling or vocation?

BIBLE TIME: 1 CORINTHIANS 2:4-11

Open up your Bibles and read **1 Corinthians 2:4-11** together. Use the questions below to unpack the scripture text together with your parent.

What do you like in this passage? What makes you feel comfortable?

What do you not like in this passage? What makes you uncomfortable, angry, or confused?

What questions do you have about what is going on in this passage?

How can you apply this passage to living out your faith in your daily life?

VOCATION INTERVIEWS

Select three adults that you know to interview about vocation. Only one of these adults may be your parent. It is strongly encouraged that these be adults who you see living out their faith in daily life, and that they serve in different career fields (ex. Teacher, doctor, stay-at-home mom or dad, lawyer, pastor, etc.).

Use a separate sheet of paper to record the responses from each interview.

Interview Questions:

- Name
- What is your job?
- How do you live and love like Jesus on a daily basis?
- How do you live your faith at work?
- When is it hard to be a person of faith?
- How did you figure out what you're called to do?