



Talking to Young People About Vocation

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN INFLUENTIAL ADULT



You may ask, what role do I have in guiding someone to the important vocation of church work? Why would the young people in my church care what I think?

Set Apart to Serve learned from extensive research that words of encouragement from influential adults were among the most important factors that influenced current LCMS pastors and other church workers on the path to their vocations.

Small moments — like telling a young person that you think they should consider serving as a church worker — can help them think and pray about their vocation. A conversation that starts as simply as, “Have you ever considered becoming a pastor?” or, “You are

great with our young people — I think you would be great teacher at one of our LCMS schools,” could be the encouragement that God works through to lead them toward church work.

You play an important role in the future of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. You have the opportunity to encourage and develop those in your congregation toward a church work vocation. This guide will help you talk to young people about the path to serving Christ through a sacred and joyful vocation.

WHEN SHOULD I START? NOW!

Young people begin thinking about what they want to be when they grow up almost as soon as they have the words to talk about it. Conversations about vocation can occur in different ways:

- › Pray with them as they ponder their future.
- › Listen to them.
- › Look for opportunities to encourage them.
- › Educate them about God’s blessings to each of us and our neighbors through our vocations.
- › Share with them how God works through church workers to bring the Gospel to people.
- › Be honest about and explain the importance of the necessary training for church work vocations.

- › Explain the path to becoming a church worker.
- › Give them opportunities to observe a church worker in their daily roles.

PROVIDE ENCOURAGEMENT BY INITIATING CONVERSATIONS

You don’t have to schedule a time to start a conversation about a young person’s future. Pray for opportunities and then try it.

Listen for natural opportunities to steer the conversation toward vocation.

- › When they have a difficult homework assignment, point out how learning helps us understand God’s creation and how we live in His creation with one another.

Set Apart to Serve (SAS), a major initiative of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), seeks to create an intentional culture of church worker formation and recruitment in every LCMS congregation, school and entity. *SAS* supports adults as they encourage youth to live a life in the Word of God and to consider serving in a full-time church work vocation. Visit lcms.org/sas to learn more. Contact us at SetApart2Serve@lcms.org with any questions or comments.

- When they express interest in certain careers or jobs, point out that God calls us into vocations and provides us the means to serve well in those vocations.
- Encourage them to find ways to honor God and serve others in their daily life. Explain how this is also true of church work vocations.
- When they face challenges, remind them to trust in Christ and to seek His will, doing all things in faith. Encourage them to do everything they do in thanksgiving and trust, seeking to live in Christ at all times and in all ways.

Respect differing thoughts and feelings.

Not all youth think about becoming church workers. Many may be reluctant to think about the path towards church work. It is important to listen to what a young person is saying about church work, including their fears or concerns. They may think it's too hard or doesn't align with their desired career path. Take these concerns seriously, and help them understand that God both calls us into vocations and provides the means through which we serve Him and our neighbor within those vocations. While we may worry about career and income, our Lord reminds us to seek first the kingdom and to pray for daily bread. We trust the Lord to provide for us as we serve Him and our neighbor in our vocations.

REFER TO THE “Suggestions for Overcoming Objections” sections in the conversation guides.



Don't force the conversation.

It may not be easy or even proper to bring up church work in every situation or to every person. If the time doesn't feel right, don't force the issue. As your conversations continue about many topics outside of church work, you will find that there will be moments that feel right to start that discussion.

WHAT ELSE YOU CAN DO

While conversations with youth are a vital part of encouraging the next generation of church workers, there are other things you can do to encourage them towards a church work vocation. Consider the following:

REVIEW THE “Ways to Transition to Vocation” sections in the conversation guides for conversation transition ideas.



Pray about how to proceed.

Pray for God's guidance and wisdom as you discuss vocation with young people.

- Pray for the young people you talk to.
- Pray with them.
- Encourage them to pray about their vocation.
- As they learn the catechism, point out that Luther's explanation of the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer (“give us this day our daily bread”) lists the many ways that God provides for His people, and that one way He does this is through our vocations.

Model appreciation for church workers.

Young people see how influential adults — parents and congregation members — treat and talk about the church workers in their life. Model appreciation by thanking God for His servants in your congregation and by reminding your youth that God works through these servants to bring His Word into your life. Include pastors, Lutheran school teachers and other church workers in your family prayers.



Teach them to value and respect work — especially church work.

Model a good attitude about your vocation and demonstrate that you value church work by regularly participating and serving in your local congregation. Encourage teens to attend and serve too. Remind them that God has given us work and that He provides for people through vocation.

Emphasize peer relationships and explore how peer experiences can shape vocation.

Attending the Divine Service each Sunday and serving with other Lutheran teens can have a big impact on how young people think about their vocation and how they will serve God and others. Make sure to encourage your youth to explore experiences outside of your local congregation — within their circuit, district or the Synod (i.e., Higher Things, Lutheran camps, the Youth Gathering, Vocatio, Christ Academy).

YOU ARE VITAL TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF CHURCH WORKERS

You have the opportunity to help with the development of the next generation of church workers. *Set Apart to Serve* is about forming, identifying and encouraging people to consider full-time church work. God provides the church with those whose vocation it is to serve full time in the church or in a Lutheran school. They will tell the Good News of Jesus Christ to our children and grandchildren for generations to come.



***“Pray earnestly to the Lord
of the harvest to send out
laborers into his harvest”***

(MATT. 9:38)