
Ideas for Parish Activities

NVAWeek provides an opportunity for the whole country to reflect on the Christian Vocation that arises from our common Baptism, and calls us to service in our part of the world. Why not make National Vocation Awareness Week (NVAW) two weeks instead of one. Listed below are some ideas to help you celebrate this important week.

The focus for parish liturgies/activities for the two Sundays of NVAW is as follows:

- **First Week:** The *general* Christian Vocation – EVERYBODY has a vocation!
Affirming the *specific* vocations of *marriage* and *single life*, and the ministry of married and single people
- **Second Week:** The *specific* vocations of *consecrated* (religious) and *ordained* life

Some tried & tested ideas that may be helpful for Parishes:

- Establish a committee to plan & oversee activities for this National Vocation Awareness Week.
- Encourage people to have a look at the Archdiocese of Omaha Vocations website:
www.archomaha.org/vocations.
- Inform people in advance about National Vocation Awareness Week – e.g. through bulletins/display boards
- Ensure that there is liaison between your parish and local school/s – perhaps organize a ‘joint National Vocation Awareness Week event’
- Arrange with schools for people to speak to children about the different vocations
- Organize a parish or regional vocations forum – which could include a panel of people representing different vocations
- Plan the two Sundays’ liturgies well in advance; arrange speakers for the Sunday Masses:
Check with Father.
- For (Week 1):
 - have a parish celebration that honors all the Christian Vocations
 - prepare a parish display about the married and single vocations, and ministries within your parish
- For (Week 2):
 - negotiate to have an *Open House* in your local presbytery, convent, monastery between certain hours
 - ask the priests/religious in your parish to help you to prepare a parish display about consecrated life and ordained ministry
- Provide *green ribbons* for parishioners to wear NVAW ... have the welcomers offer them to people as they enter the church ... create a ‘sea of green ribbons’ in your church! (Green is a symbol of hope and new life ... vocations awareness creates new life and energy in our parishes!)
- Encourage your parish community to pray regularly that your young people will seriously consider ALL the vocational options and thereby discern the vocation that will lead them to fullness of life
- Create vocations displays on your church/parish notice-boards

- Encourage young parishioners to become involved in parish activities
- Invite young people in your parish to consider religious life/priesthood as a life-choice
- Pray: each morning, pray for openness and courage that God might use you as a 'vehicle' for God's call to potential priests and religious. Pray for someone whom you know who might have this calling.
- If there is someone whom you believe has the gifts for such a vocation, tell him/her. Point out their specific qualities, and how you have seen them in action.
- Keep up permanent supplies of seminarian brochures in your kiosks or commons area.
- Affirm and support the priests and religious sisters/brothers in your parish. Let them know their commitment is valued
- Acknowledge the women and men from your parish who have already responded to the call to priesthood, diaconate and religious life. You may like to display their photos as part of your parish's National Vocation Awareness Week display. This might be a fun project.
- Set yourself a 'treasure-hunt' this week: in your home, your parish, among your friends start looking for young men and women whom God might be calling to be priests, brothers or sisters. Some qualities to look for:
 - **Faith:** words and actions that indicate a deep-down commitment to Christ and his Church, even if there is a lot of questioning and 'testing' going on.
 - **Idealism:** often expressed through initiatives which promote peace, justice, and striving for a better world.
 - **Searching for greater meaning** - an authentic questioning of current lifestyle (sometimes appearing as restlessness) ... looking for 'the more', and a desire to secure values which give shape and a meaningful direction to life.
 - **A 'people person'** - can be expressed in *both* an extroverted personality, or in a much quieter 'one-to-one' manner; and interest in other people; an ability to form genuine relationships.
 - **Leadership** - a capacity to draw others to oneself in a constructive organized way; an ability to make decisions and to take initiative.
 - **Strength of character** - integrity and a sense of responsibility for one's own actions and decisions. Able to handle the pressures and criticism that come from leadership.

Some reflection/discussion starters for Individuals and Groups:

- What *do* I do to help young people discern the specific call that God has for each of them as a result of their Baptism? ... What *could* I do?
- In what ways does our parish involve young people? How could this be further developed? How might I contribute to this?
- In what ways does our home, parish, school promote a '*vocations culture*'? How could it be further developed? How might I contribute to this?
- Do I encourage and talk with young adults, and convey to them my willingness to help them to find their place in the Church? (Remember Mary and Elizabeth? Age is no barrier! Young people need older 'wisdom figures' to walk with them!)

- What possibilities are there of offering vocational mentoring and discernment through our parish?
- How could I support those who are officially designated as 'vocations ministers' ? for their religious congregation or diocese?... and the groups and networks
- Are we comfortable with encouraging young people to consider the call to consecrated life and ordained ministry?
- Do we explicitly pray – at home, in schools, in our parish – for a flowering of all Christian Vocations, including those of consecrated life and ordained ministry?

Call the Office of Vocations at 402-558-3100 Ext. 241 with any questions or if you have any ideas of your own in which to promote vocations to the priesthood or religious life.