

Orders Intergenerational Program

“Celebrating the Ordained Priesthood”

Note: This session has been adapted from an intergenerational learning session on ordination facilitated at St. John the Baptist Parish in Mankato, Minnesota. Thank you Mary Beth and Anne for sharing the session!

Learning Objectives

“Celebrating the Ordained Priesthood” guides learners of all ages to...

- develop a deeper understanding of the theology, symbols, and rituals of the Sacrament of Holy Orders (*know-what*)
- recognize the role and gift of the ordained priesthood in the church’s ministry (*know-why*)
- live their own baptismal calling in collaboration with the ordained priesthood (*know-how*)

Catechism Connections

1539-1600

Potential Uses

- Preparation program for the celebration of an ordination or anniversary of ordination
- Preparation program on the Sacrament of Holy Orders and its relationship to the Chrism mass and Holy Thursday
- Preparation program on the Sacrament of Holy Orders as part of a learning program to prepare for Vocation Sunday

Background Reading

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Washington, DC: USCC Publishing, 1997.

Hellwig, Monika K. *Sacraments of Vocation: Holy Orders and Matrimony* (Scripture from Scratch N0702). Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2002.

Richstatter, Thomas. *Sacraments of Holy Orders: Priesthood in Transition* (Catholic Update C0797) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.

Session Resources

Before the Session

For the Families and Children learning group ask the children to bring with them one of their favorite stuffed animals for the exploration of the Rite of Holy Orders. The stuffed animals will be used for a simulation of the Rite of Orders. Few people, especially children, have ever participated in or seen videos of an ordination. Hence, the rite will be explained by having a stuffed animal be the participant in a walk through of the rite.

Environment

Set-up an Orders prayer center (table) with the symbols of Ordination: Bible, cross or crucifix, stole, chasuble, *Rite of Ordination*, oil.

Note: The prayer center items can be placed there in the context of the opening prayer.

Home Kit

Home Activities at Generations of Faith Online



People of Faith—Generations Learning Together Magazines (Harcourt Religion)

- *Celebrating the Sacraments: Marriage* (Volume 4, number 5)

Catholic Update (St. Anthony Messenger Press)

- Hellwig, Monika K. *Sacraments of Vocation: Holy Orders and Matrimony*. Scripture from Scratch N0702
- Richstatter, Thomas. *Sacraments of Holy Orders: Priesthood in Transition*. Catholic Update C0797.

Prayer Resource

For additional prayer services consult:

Haas, David. *Increase Our Faith – Parish Prayer Services for Whole Community Catechesis*. (Three Volumes: Year A, B, C) Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2004, 2005, 2006.

Materials for the Session

Gathering

- Name tags
- Community building activities
- Cover the tables or place on the floor white butcher paper/table cloth paper and containers of crayons/markers, as well as handout “*Holy Orders Graffiti Activity*” with the instructions for the graffiti activity.

All Ages Opening Learning Experience

- Opening Prayer Service
- Bible
- Gather the following supplies for the prayer service:
 - Bible
 - Home Cross (Invite the symbol holder(s) for this symbol to bring theirs from home)
 - Food (Invite the symbol holder(s) to bring forth their favorite supper items i.e. loaf of bread, package of noodles, can of vegetables, etc. Have extra food supplies on hand in case the symbol holders forget to bring theirs.)
 - Lectionary
 - Chalice
 - Carafe of oil (It could be the chrism oil from the ambry if appropriate to use)
 - Chasuble

In-Depth Learning Experience

- *Rite of Holy Orders* Handout
- Supplies to walk through the rite:
 - Oil, Strips of white cloth to use as stoles for the stuffed animals, bibles
- Flipchart paper and markers are needed for the job description activity
- Power point or flip chart is needed to record the small group responses

Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application

Closing

- Closing Prayer Service

Session at a Glance

Part One: Gathering (15 minutes)

Part Two: All Ages Learning Experience (20 minutes)

Part Three: In-Depth Learning Experience (75-90 minutes)

- Age Group Format

Learning Plan

Exploring the Sacrament of Orders

Part Four: Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application (25 minutes)

Part 5. Closing Prayer Service (10 minutes)

Part 1

Gathering (5 minutes)

1. Registration and Hospitality

- Welcome people and ask them to sign in for the program.
- Ask people to make a nametag.
- Distribute the Home Kit for the session, including any handouts participants will need for the session. (You can also distribute handouts for the In-Depth Learning program at the beginning of the activity.)
- Invite people to share a meal; depending on time of day, the program may end with a meal instead.

Welcome

Welcome the participants to the program and introduce the theme of the session.

Holy Orders Graffiti Activity

As the participants gather, invite everyone to decorate their tables by writing words or drawing images that describe for them what they think priests and deacons do, what the role of a priest in the church is, what the role of a deacon in the church is, what symbols and images come to mind when they think of the ordained, and so on.

Instructions (Print and place in the center of each table): Use the markers/crayons provided and “graffiti” your table with the words or images that come to mind when you think about the Sacrament of Orders – the Catholic priesthood and diaconate. What do you think a priest is called to do? What do you think a deacon is called to do? What symbols and images come to mind when you think of the priesthood? What symbols and images come to mind as you think of deacons? What questions come to mind when you think of the ordained?

2. Group Formation

This learning session is organized according to the Age Group Format and participants need to be grouped in small groups in those age formats. Ask all members of the same family to sit together in the families with children learning group, partnering up with other families as needed to create groups of 8-10 people.

3. Opening Prayer Service

The Opening Prayer Service for this program on orders is incorporated into the all ages learning experience.

Part 2

All-Ages Learning Experience (15 minutes)

Preparation

Supplies and Set Up

The opening prayer involves volunteers bringing forth a variety of symbols. Invite the individuals or families bringing up the symbols to bring the item from home. Create a space in the center of the gathering or at the front for the items to be placed. For example, have a table with a tablecloth on it ready to receive the items.

Recruit a volunteer for each of the reading parts of the prayer service and recruit one or more “symbol holders” to hold up the symbol that goes with each reading.

Supplies:

- Bible
- home cross--invite the symbol holder(s) for this symbol to bring theirs from home
- food – invite the symbol holder(s) to bring forth their favorite supper items i.e. loaf of bread, package of noodles, can of vegetables, and so on. Have extra food supplies on hand in case the symbol holders forget to bring theirs.
- lectionary
- chalice
- carafe of oil – it could be the chrism oil from the ambry if appropriate to use.
- Chasuble
- stole

Prayer Service

Leader

Tonight we are studying the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

Holy Orders is the sacrament that calls men to the ordained priesthood or diaconate. But most people do not realize that, by our Baptism, we are all called to what is described as the Common priesthood. As the Universal Catechism says, “the whole community of believers is as such priestly. The faithful exercise their baptismal priesthood through their participation, each according to their own vocation, in Christ’s mission as priest, prophet, and king.” (#1546) The whole church is a priestly people. All of us through our baptism are called to be disciples, to carry on the mission and ministry of Jesus. Christ calls the common priesthood of the baptized to share in the spirit’s work of proclaiming the Good News to the world. The ordained priesthood begins with a celebration of the common priesthood.

We highlight our calling as a priestly people and celebrate the service of priests and deacons by bringing up some symbols of our lived faith. As each symbol is offered I invite you to pray in response,

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Reader One (Symbol holder holds the Bible high for all to see.)

We bring the Gospel: our call to the common priesthood requires that we live by the word of God. The Bible directs our lives and gives us God's word at any time. Priests and deacons are called to help us explore and understand God's word
(Place the bible in its assigned place.)

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Reader Two (Symbol holder lifts the home cross for all to see.)

We bring the home cross: this symbol of our faith hangs in our home as a sign of our commitment to God and our faith. The cross represents Jesus who died for all people, in forgiveness of sins. We remember to proclaim the Good News and live as people who see forgiveness as a path to new life. We celebrate the leadership of priests and deacons who call us to embrace the challenges of the Good News and to help all people know Jesus Christ.
(Place the cross in its assigned place.)

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Reader Three (Symbol holders lift food for all to see.)

We bring food: as we break bread together in the home, so we share in the communion of the domestic church. The sacrament of Eucharist is rooted in the Last Supper that Jesus shared with his disciples. We gather at the supper table to pray, share our lives and uphold each other.
(Place the food in its assigned place)

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Leader

The Ordained priesthood and diaconate are different from the common priesthood of all the baptized. They are callings, vocations, just like marriage, religious life, and single life are. Christ is the one true priest who calls the ordained to share in the Spirit's work of sanctifying the faithful. The ordained are called to help us on our journey of holiness so that we can go and help the world to be holy. As the Universal Catechism says, the "ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace of all Christians" (#1547). Through the grace of God and the support of community priests are called to be servants of God's people.

We highlight the priestly ministry by celebrating the symbols of their ministry. As each symbol is offered I invite you to pray in response,

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Reader Four (Symbol holder lifts the lectionary for all to see.)

The lectionary is a collection of readings assigned by the church for liturgical proclamation. A deacon is told at his ordination: "Receive the power of reading the Gospel in the church of God, both for the living and for the dead, in the name of the Lord."

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Reader Five (Symbol holder lifts the chalice for all to see)

The chalice is the cup that holds the consecrated blood of Christ at the Eucharist. It represents the cup used by Christ at the Last Supper. A priest is told at his ordination: "Know what you are doing, and imitate the mystery you celebrate: model your life on the mystery of the Lord's cross."

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Reader Six (Symbol holder lifts a carafe of oil for all to see.)

Holy Oil is a symbol of the many sacraments the ordained are called to celebrate with their communities. Holy oil is used in Baptism, Confirmation, Anointing of the Sick, and Holy Orders. A priest's hands are anointed with oil at his ordination because those hands will be used to offer sacrifice to God.

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Reader Seven (Symbol holder, perhaps the pastor, lifts a chasuble for all to see.)

The chasuble is given to the priest after his consecration at his ordination. It is the symbolic vestment of the priesthood. May all who wear it celebrate their call to servant leadership.

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Reader Eight (Symbol holder, perhaps the deacon, lifts a stole for all to see.)

The stole is another symbol for the ordained, and a Deacon wears one on the diagonal. May all who are entrusted with stoles as symbols of their calling to lead and break open the Word of God with their communities wear them with humility.

Leader

Father, send your Holy Spirit upon us as we explore together the Sacrament of Orders. Help us to listen, to learn, to journey with one another with respect and kindness. Help us to model Jesus, our priestly leader, in all that we do and are. Amen.

Part Three

In-Depth Learning Experience

Age Group Format

This format provides for two or three separate parallel learning programs. Though age groups are separated, each one is focusing on the same topic.

You might choose this format if you have:

- an adequate number of meeting spaces for the various groups to gather
- an adequate number of competent facilitators and catechists to work with each group
- a topic that is best explored through age-specific learning

Facilitation Tips for This Format

- Organize participants into three or more parallel learning groups: families with children (grades 1-5), adolescents (grades 6-12), and adults.
- If there are a large number of adolescents, divide them into two groups: middle school and high school.

Organize separate groups for young adults, adults, and older adults. Or you can give the adults their own choice for forming small groups.

- Direct the adolescents and adults into small groups. Give them all the handouts and learning materials needed for the learning experiences
- Guide the families with children into table groups of two or more families. Give each table all the handouts and learning materials necessary for the learning experiences.
- A facilitator guides all of the families through each learning experience, while catechists move from table to table assisting.

Age Group Format Outline

The In-Depth Learning Plan can be utilized for break-out groups of families with children, adolescents, and adults.

Families with Children

Learning Plan

1. Ordination Tour

Adolescent, Young Adult, and Adult

Learning Plan

1. Exploring the Sacrament of Holy Orders

Ordination Tour

Age Group: Families with Children

Preparation

Invite an adult to take on the role of the Bishop at each table and recruit a facilitator for each table to be the “commentator” to guide the learners through the rite. Participants will need copies of the handout “*The Rite of Ordination*”.

Gather the following supplies:

- Strip of white material for each stuffed animal, to serve as its stole
- Oil, paper, crayons and markers
- Create a Bishop’s hat for each person playing the role of bishop for their table group

Ordination Tour

1. [Facilitator spoken text] Begin the session by giving these instructions in your own words:

How many of you have ever attended the ordination of a priest or deacon? (Raise your hands) What do you remember most about that ordination? Gather some feedback and comments.

Today we are going to explore together the Sacrament of Holy Orders by pretending that the stuffed animal that you brought from home is going to be ordained as a priest. Your stuffed animal has studied a long time about Jesus and the church. The stuffed animal has prayed about his decision to become a priest and how he is ready to celebrate and to make a commitment to this way of life. Just like when people celebrate the sacrament of marriage to proclaim to the world how they will give witness to God’s love, so too a priest begins his priesthood by celebrating and proclaiming to the world God’s call to him.

The first thing I would like you to do is to share your stuffed animal’s name with everyone in your table group.

Children, I invite you to hold your stuffed animal and help them become ‘ordained as priests.’ The stuffed animals will be the candidate, the person called to be ordained a priest. One of the adults at each table group has been invited to be the Bishop and guide you through the ordination rite below.

1. Calling of the Candidate:

Facilitator: *The candidate (stuffed animal) is called forward :*

Bishop: *Let N. who is to be ordained priest please come forward.*

Facilitator: *The candidate answers present and goes to the bishop, before whom he makes a sign of reverence.*

Facilitator: Ordination to the priesthood is not simply a private decision made by the individual being ordained; it is a call by the Church, a vocation (from the Latin vocatio, "summons").

Facilitator: Presentation of the Candidate

When the candidate is in his place before the bishop, the priest designated by the bishop says: Most Reverend Father, holy mother church asks you to ordain this man, our brother, for service as priest.

Bishop:

Do you judge him to be worthy?

Facilitator: The Priest answers:

After inquiry among the people of Christ and upon recommendation of those concerned with his training, I testify that he has been found worthy.

Facilitator: The candidate being presented for ordination is often brought to the bishop by the formation director of the seminary (or religious community) who gives a brief testimony about the candidate's readiness for ordination. At this point in time one or two other people also give testimony to their and the community's belief of the candidate's readiness – for example, a parishioner from a parish that the candidate has served may speak, a family member or close friend may also speak. This ritual moment celebrates that God's call is confirmed through the wisdom of the community.

Facilitator: Election by the Bishop and Consent of the People

Bishop:

We rely on the help of the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ, and we choose this man, our brother, for priesthood in the presbyteral order.

Facilitator: All present say Thanks be to God or give their assent to the choice in some other way according to local custom. (Invite the participants to say Thanks be to God!)

Facilitator: After he is called forward, the candidate is officially chosen for the priesthood. As in all sacraments, the community is an essential aspect of the celebration and in the rite of ordination the community assents to candidate's response to God's call and through that assent also agrees to support him on his journey.

Facilitator (pause for a brief discussion):

- 1. Do you know of any other sacraments that call people by name as they are about to celebrate them? If yes, which ones?*
- 2. Why do you think people from the community give testimony about the priest's calling?*

2. The second and third movement of the rite of ordination is the homily and the examination of conscience:

Facilitator: *For step two, let's read together some key points of a homily that the bishop would share with the community.*

Read:

"It is true that God made all his people to be part of the common priesthood by Baptism. But Jesus Christ is our High Priest and he chose some of his followers to be priestly ministers in his name to serve others in a special way. Jesus was sent by God the Father and then he sent the apostles into the world. Through the priestly ministry, Jesus continues His work as Teacher, Priest, and Shepherd. Priests work together with the bishops and are called to serve all God's people."

I invite you to discuss the following questions:

What do you think the bishop is trying to tell us about ordination /sacrament of holy orders in this brief excerpt from his homily? If you were a bishop and giving a homily at a priest's ordination what important teachings would you want to share with him? (Allow the participants adequate time to respond to these questions.)

Facilitator: *After the homily is the examination of conscience:*

Bishop: *I invite you to respond "I will" for the candidate to each of the questions I will ask:*

Bishop: *"My son, we must proclaim your intentions before the people.*

Will you, with the help of the Holy Spirit, be a good worker in doing what God asks you to do?"

(Invite the children to respond for their stuffed animal.)

Candidate: *"I will."*

Bishop : *"Will you promise to celebrate the mysteries of Jesus Christ faithfully?"*

Candidate: *"Yes, I will."*

Bishop : *"Will you promise to teach the Gospel and the Catholic faith?"*

Candidate: *"Yes, I will."*

Bishop: *"As a priest, you must continue to grow close to Jesus Christ through prayer and service. Can you do this?"*

Candidate: *"With God's help, I can."*

Facilitator: *What things did your candidate to the priesthood just agree to do? (Visit each of the areas and invite the learners to generate how they see the priests from their area carrying out their commitments of : being a good worker, celebrating the mysteries of Jesus Christ (i.e. sacraments), teaching the Gospel and the Catholic faith, and prayer and service).*

Now that we have talked about the roles and responsibilities that a priest commits to, I would like you to use the paper and markers provided to create a poster inviting someone to consider being a

priest. What images, words, etc would be good to help someone thinking about the priesthood understand the vocation that they are applying for?

3. Promise of Obedience:

Facilitator: After the candidate agrees to all the things the Bishop, on behalf of the community asks him to do, the candidate pledges to give their obedience to the Bishop.

The candidate is invited to kneel before the Bishop (invite the children to have their stuffed animal kneel before the Bishop). The Bishop holds the candidate's hands and says:

Bishop: "Do you promise respect and obedience to me and my successors?"

(Invite the children to respond for their stuffed animal)

Candidate: "I do."

Facilitator: Let's spend some time thinking about respect and obedience. (Facilitate a conversation with the learners around these questions and fill in any gaps from their answers with some of the information on obedience and respect provided below.)

What is obedience? (Obedience is the submission of one's will and conduct to an authority – ultimately the authority is God. In the case of a diocesan bishop, a priest promises obedience to them, trusting that together they will pray about what needs to take place and that the priest will be obedient to, or listen to, the voice of God speaking through diocesan leadership. A priest cannot teach whatever he wants. He is obligated to teach the truths of the church. That means that he must put aside his personal feelings and opinions at times.)

As Catholic Christians we are also called to be obedient to the church. We are called to follow the Ten Commandments, to believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, to believe in the sacredness of human life, to live the gospels.

Can you name some ways that you practice obedience? (at home, school, at Grandma's house?)

Why is obedience important? (Obedience teaches us to bring our will into line with God's will, or someone else's. It helps us to think of others before ourselves).

The new priest promises both respect and obedience to the bishop.

What is respect? (Being respectful is an attitude of honoring people and caring about their rights. Being respectful is reflected in the courtesy with which we treat one another. Being respectful includes honoring rules and behaving in a way which makes life more peaceful and orderly.)

Can you name some ways that you practice respect?

*Who are we called to respect? There are different types of respect that we are called to practice:
Respect for all people as children of God
Respect for our elders as those who have lived longer and are wise, more experienced.*

Respect for leaders in our community.
Respect for those who are weak or ill.
Respect for God and all His Church.
Respect for Life.

4. Invitation to prayer:

Facilitator:

Do you know what a saint is? Do you ever pray to a saint for help?
When a priest is ordained or any sacrament is celebrated it is celebrated with the support and prayers of everyone in the community including saints who walked on this earth as disciples in times past. The fifth movement in the rite of ordination is the litany of the saints. A litany is a form of prayer in which a prayer petition is made and the community responds. In the litany of the saints prayed at a priest's ordination the community seeks the assistance of the saints to help the priest be the best priest that he can be.

Bishop: "My dear people, let us pray that the all-powerful Father may pour out the gifts of heaven on this servant of his, whom he has chosen to be a priest. Let us ask all the saints in heaven to pray for us."

(Tell the candidates/children what their response is as you move through the litany).

Bishop:

Candidate:

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
Holy Mary, Mother of God
Saint Michael
Holy angels of God
Saint Abraham and St. Sarah
Saint Isaac and St. Rebekah,
Saint John the Baptist,
Saint Joseph,
Saint Peter and Saint Paul
Saint Mary Magdalene
Saint Stephen,
Saint Agnes,
Saint Martin,
Saint Margaret,
Saint Catherine,
Saint Benedict,
Saint Francis,
Saint Clare,
Saint Dominic
Saint Theresa,
Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton,

Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy
pray for us
pray for us
pray for us
pray for us
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.
pray for us.

(Add the name of your parish) pray for us

Let us pray.

We praise you, O God, and we honor all your holy ones. We ask the help of those men and women who struggled against evil and stood firm, who loved one another, who worked for justice and peace, who healed the sick and fed the hungry.

Make us worthy to be called your saints.

We ask this through Christ our Lord,

Amen.

(The litany closing prayer here has been adapted from the rite of ordination).

5. Laying on of Hands:

Facilitator: One of the central actions when a priest or deacon is ordained is the laying on of the hands. The Candidate kneels before the Bishop. The bishop lays his hands on the Candidate's head in silence. This ancient gesture invokes the Holy Spirit.

The laying on of hands is a typical human sending and empowering ceremony. Parents lay hands on and embrace their children when they leave home, passing on the family heritage and tradition as it were. The religious symbol of the laying on the hands is the empowering gift of the Holy Spirit which comes from God through the community and the ordaining minister (bishop).

Bishop: with your hands extended over the candidate, say the prayer of Consecration:

"Almighty Father,

grant to this servant of yours the dignity of the priesthood.

Renew within him the Spirit of holiness. As a co-worker with the order of

Bishops may he be faithful to the ministry that he receives from you, Lord God,

And be to others a model of right conduct."

Investiture with Stole and Chasuble: Place a stole and chasuble on the newly ordained priest (stuffed animal).

6. Anointing of hands:

Facilitator: *The priest's hands are anointed as a sign of the holy work he will be about particularly in the celebration of Eucharist.*

Bishop: Use the oil provided to anoint the hands/paws of the candidate as you say:
"These hands will be used to celebrate the sacred mysteries. God the Father anointed our Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. May your hands remain pure so that you might serve His people and offer sacrifice to God."

7. Presentation of Gifts:

Facilitator: *The newly ordained priest receives a chalice and paten from the Bishop.*
Invite participants to draw and decorate a picture of a chalice and a paten (small plate) that holds the bread.

Then continue with the presentation of the chalice and paten to the candidate.

Bishop (presenting the chalice and paten to the candidate):

"These gifts are from Gods people and they will be used as offerings to God. With them you celebrate the mystery of the Eucharist. As a priest you are to know that you must imitate Jesus and model your life after Him."

The Bishop gives the newly ordained priest a Chalice and Paten. They can be very simple or beautifully decorated.

Facilitator: *Sign of Peace*

Lastly, the Bishop gives a sign of peace to the new priest with a handshake or hug.

Let's share a sign of peace with one another.

11. Conclusion

Take some time to discuss this experience with the participants. What did they like about it, what do they dislike? What questions do they have?

Answer any pertinent questions or invite the pastor in to field questions at this time.

Choose one of the activities below to conclude the tour of the rite of ordination:

1. Invite the local pastor/priest to informally talk with the learners about:
 - a. how they felt called to be a priest
 - b. what a priest does and their role in the community
 - c. how they, the children, may be called to be a priest or to serve the church in a leadership capacity (as obviously the girls are not called to the priesthood)

Invite the learners to write a list of questions “Everything I wanted to ask a Priest about but was too scared to ask that might be gathered and asked anonymously

2. Invite the learners to write a prayer or note of gratitude for the gifts of the priest who serves their community.
3. Invite the learners to write letters of support to local seminarians studying for the diocese.

Exploring the Sacrament of Orders

Age Group: Adolescent, Young Adult and Adult

Preparation

Copies of the handouts *The Rite of Holy Orders* (for group work) , and *Exploring the Sacrament of Orders*. Flip chart paper and markers.

Prepare a flip chart or PowerPoint slides to record the small group reporting for each ritual moment. For example:

Ritual Moment	Theology	Similarities	Questions

If possible, invite your pastor or another ordained person to share a video of their ordination for the opening activity.

Exploring the Sacrament of Orders

1. **Opening Comments/Video Possibility:** *How many of you have ever attended the ordination of a priest? What do you remember most about that ordination?* Gather some feedback and comments. Do not be surprised to discover that few people have attended an ordination celebration. If you know that few people have had the opportunity to attend an ordination, it is recommended that you invite your pastor or any neighboring parish pastor to share a video of his ordination (just show the actual Rite of Ordination, not the whole Eucharistic liturgy) with the group as you begin this learning session.
2. Continue the session by explaining in your own words: [spoken text] *One of the primary ways we can learn about the Rite of Ordination is to visit the rite itself and see what it has to say to us about what the sacrament of holy orders means. In small groups you will be invited to explore one section of the Rite of Ordination and using the worksheet provided explore:*
 - a. *what aspect of the theology of ordination the ritual moment high lights*
 - b. *how the ritual moment is similar to any of the other sacraments*
 - c. *what questions surface for you about that ritual moment*

When we re-gather as a large group you will be invited to share your learning with one another so please choose a reporter (s) from your group to do so.

Divide the learners into small groups, distribute the worksheets and provide guidance as needed.

3. Re-gather the groups and invite each to share their learning with the large group. Record/post their learning on the power point slide or flip chart prepared earlier.

4. After the sharing from the small groups summarize the theological points and add any that are missing, note the similarities to the other sacraments, and respond, if able, to any of the questions that were raised.
5. Invite the groups to now create a job description for a priest based on their learning about the theology of holy orders as celebrated in the rite. Give each group a piece of flip chart paper and invite them to note on it
 - a. What potential values, attitudes, and abilities are needed?
 - b. What are the potential job responsibilities of a parish priest, as rooted in the theology of ordination celebrated in the rite? What is a priest called to “do” from your understanding of the rite?
6. Pair two groups together to share their job descriptions with each other. Invite them to share their reactions to each other’s job descriptions – what did they like, what was different between the two, what are they now thinking about ordination?
7. Option: Invite your pastor or another priest to share their journey of priesthood with the learners. Invite them to share responses to the following or similar questions and after they have shared invite them to respond to questions from the learners.

How did you hear the call to become a priest? What is most important to you about your priesthood? What do you find most challenging about your vocation? What gifts are you most grateful for when you think about your vocation? What support do you most appreciate from your parish community?

8. As a large group brainstorm together how a community is called to support the priest that is called to serve them. Raise the question to the participants: How can you personally support the priests of this area? How can you personally encourage others (or nurture your own call) to respond to the call of serving the church through the priesthood?
9. Close by inviting the participants to write a prayer of thanksgiving for the many priests and bishops who have served your parish and diocese.

Part 4

Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application (20 minutes)

- Determine what each group will bring back to the large group or to a small intergenerational group to share as a result of their learning.
- Determine how each group will share their reports or projects so that they “teach” the other groups about the event and theme.

Divide the learners into intergenerational groupings and invite them to share with one another their learning on ordination – their want ad poster, their job descriptions, anything they learnt about the Catholic priesthood. Give them a copy of one of the prayers for vocation (or obtain your diocese’s prayer of vocation) to take home.

- Guide individuals and families in sharing what they learned through the program. They can be organized in family clusters, individual family units, and/or kindred groups (young adults, adults, older adults).
- Review the Home Kit for the event containing prayers, rituals, service projects, family enrichment, and learning activities.
- Review the reflection activities or strategies to use in conjunction with the event. Guide everyone in developing an individual or family action plan for living at home using the Home Kit.

Part 5

Closing Prayer Service

Close the evening with the following prayer:

Leader

We now close our prayer service in a prayer of blessing. Please respond “Amen” to each blessing:

May Christ bless us with courage to live our call to the common priesthood. Amen

May Christ bless us with humility to serve our brothers and sisters. Amen

May Christ bless us with men who respond in faith to serve our communities as priests and deacons. Amen.

May Christ bless us with openness to allow the Spirit of God to guide our life choices and those of our families and friends. Amen

May Christ bless us with wisdom to call forth the gifts of one another including nurturing the call to the ministerial priesthood. Amen

We close our prayer in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.