

## Vocation Talk: High School 1 - High School (Grades 9-12)

**PLEASE NOTE:** you do not have to memorize or read from this script; you should feel free to put it in your own words, and, if desired, to add your own personal examples and stories. The latter might best be accomplished by reflecting on the Top Ten List that is included near the end of this talk and taking two or three of the items listed therein and connecting them to events or experiences in your life.

**PLEASE ALSO NOTE:** to go along with this talk, the following videos from the preceding chapter, 'Video Resources on Religious Vocations for Different Ages,' may be used: **From Pro Soccer to the Priesthood: The Witness of Fr. Chase Hilgenbrinck OR World Youth Day Talk: Discovering Your Vocation.**

Let's talk a little bit about discerning God's will in our lives. Easy topic, right? After all, we're only talking about the rest of our lives...our mission in life...nothing too important, right?

Well, in all seriousness, it actually IS a really important topic. And it's not necessarily an easy topic, either. But I want to give you some tips that I think can make discerning His will a little less challenging, perhaps.

OK. Before we begin, let's quickly review what a vocation actually is. You started learning about this back in grade school. Remember?

So, what is a vocation? God created each of us for a particular purpose. He gave each one of us a unique mission for our lives. We believe that God wants us to be happy—and, by following His will for our individual lives, we will experience real happiness. Think of your vocation as an invitation from God to take the best path for your life. Your vocation comes from God. You receive it at baptism.

And—you'll also remember that there are four vocations: single life...married life...religious life...and priesthood.

There's your 30,000-foot-level review. Before I go on, I want to make sure—does anyone have any questions about what we've just reviewed about vocations? [WAIT FOR QUESTIONS; THEN:]

So...how many of you know what a Top Ten List is? Raise your hand if you know. [WAIT; INTERACT WITH THE STUDENTS FOR A MINUTE OR

SO...THEN:] Right! You see these lists all over the Internet. ‘Top Ten NBA Point Guards of All Time.’ ‘Top Ten Dumb Things Boys Say On First Dates.’ ‘Top Ten Apps for the iPhone.’ All that—and more. They’re familiar to all of us.

Well, with the help of some friends of the diocese, I decided to make my own list. I’m going to call it my ‘Top Ten List for Young Adult Discernment.’ Now, I don’t need a drum-roll for this. (Sorry.) It’s not intended to be humorous—but it is intended to make it easier for you to discern your vocation. Don’t worry about writing this down; I will hand out copies when I’m done. For now, please listen closely.

First of all: think of Jesus as being the model for all decision making! Remember what he says in the Gospel of Luke: “Father...not my will—but yours be done.” When you seek God’s perfect will for you and your life, you will experience life to the fullest!

I know in this day and age it’s really tempting to bury yourself in your smartphone or tablet or laptop and just want to be in your own world...I get that; that happens to me, too...but it is very, very important that you stay in touch with the real world—with reality and with what’s going on in your life. Pay attention to the gifts and talents you have been given. Remember: talents are things that God gives us and we then develop, and our gifts are gifts of grace which come from God. Think of how you use those gifts and talents to make a positive difference—to help other people.

Don’t walk the path alone. Seek advice from people you know and trust and love. People you know are wise—who have experience. Do not be afraid to ask for help along the way! Talk to friends, family, trusted advisors, teachers, priests or religious. Tell them of your thoughts and feelings—and your plans and ideas, too. Ask for their perspective. Listen to them.

Listen very carefully to what your mind, your heart, and your intuition tell you. Ensure that all three of these things are part of your final discernment.

Find your passion in life. Know your limits, but remember to follow your gifts and your talents.

Remember along the way that you’re only human! You will make mistakes. Let go of missed opportunities. Life is a journey. Learn to accept the choices you’ve made—good or bad. Be willing to move forward from where you are.

Don't rush. Do not act hastily—but, at the same time, don't let your decision-making process drag on forever, either. It's a good idea to break down your decision-making process into steps that you can manage on a realistic timetable.

NO MATTER WHAT...do not make a major life decision when you are in the middle of a crisis! The reason you do not want to do this is that your ability to make sound decisions tends to get impaired in crises. You will tend to lose perspective. (Important aside: these situations are when it's extremely critical for you to have trusted advisors around...like we discussed in number 3 a minute ago. They will provide the perspective that you're lacking during crises.)

Once you're at the point where you have to make a decision, you must choose! Accept the risks of your choice—and let go. Being unable to make a decision will lead to a life that is not fruitful. And, oftentimes, if you don't make a decision, someone else will make it for you.

Finally: remember that before you were even born, God had a plan for you. Only in following God will you truly be happy. Pray for guidance from God.

OK. I know that was a lot of information to digest in one sitting. I'm going to give you the handout now that I was mentioning a little bit ago. It has the entire Top Ten List on it. Keep it with you. Make copies of it so you don't lose it. Consult it often as you go down the path of discerning your vocation. And remember that God is always with you as you walk that path.

Thank you so much for your attention today. Before we conclude—are there any questions? [FIELD QUESTIONS AS THEY ARISE] Also, I want to leave you with this: if you ever have any questions about vocations or want to talk to someone about where you think God might be calling you, please feel free to talk to me or any priest or deacon or religious.

Now, if you'd please bow your heads and join me in a closing prayer:

“Lord, my God and my loving Father, you have made me to know you, to love you, to serve you, and thereby to find and to fulfill my deepest longings. I know that you are in all things, and that every path can lead me to you.

But of them all, there is one especially by which you want me to come to you. Since I will do what you want of me, I pray you, send your Holy Spirit to

me: into my mind, to show me what you want of me; into my heart, to give me the determination to do it, and to do it with all my love, with all my mind, and with all of my strength right to the end. Jesus, I trust in you. Amen.”

*\*Materials used in this talk for high school vocations were adapted in part from ‘Lessons and Activities for Vocational Awareness’ by the Office of Priestly Vocations of the Archdiocese of Detroit.*