

# St. Ann Vocations Ministry

# **Discerner's Packet**

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Updated

October 4, 2021



## Vocations Ministry Mission

**"The Vocation Ministry desires to encourage, celebrate, and aid in nurturing ALL vocations including those of the religious life, marriage, and the single life. We are building a community of those discerning and already practicing their vocations."**

## What is Discernment?

Discernment is the process of discovery through prayer, reflection, and discussion by which an individual learns how he or she is called to love and serve God.

## Steps of Discernment

### 1. Prayer / Sacraments

- Spend time in prayer daily, at least 10-15 minutes. A suggestion would be to begin by praying the Morning and Evening Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours.
- Visit your closest adoration chapel often and ask God to bring clarity to your vocation call.
- Lean on our Blessed Mother Mary, asking for her powerful intercession. Consider consecrating yourself to Jesus through the Blessed Virgin Mary.
- Make sure to frequent the sacraments as you conform your heart to look more like Christ's.
  - Frequent the Sacrament of the Eucharist (daily if possible)
  - Monthly Confession

Here are some prayers for you during this time:

#### **Prayer to Know One's Vocation**

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 with all my strength and love.

Jesus, I trust in you. Amen



### **Vocation Prayer for Discernment**

God, I know You love me and have great plans for me. But sometimes I am overwhelmed by the thought of my future. Show me how to walk forward one day at a time.

Open my heart to discover all the vocational choices by listening to you through others, exploring in action the possibilities of each choice, and reflecting on the peace that each choice brings. By this process may I hear your specific call to me in service of others for your great glory. Amen.

## **2. Fully Participate in the Life of the Church**

As a youth consider:

- Becoming an altar server, Lector, Greeter, Sacristan assistant
- Joining the Youth Group
- Participating in the Christmas pageant
- Assisting with catechesis as a peer teacher

As an adult consider:

- If you are not already, register at a parish.
- Participate in ministry at Church:
  - Extraordinary Ministry of Holy Communion, Ushers, Lectors, Greeters, Sacristan, Catechesis or Youth Ministry Leader, etc.
  - If you're a young adult, actively participate in a Young Adults' group.
- Help serve the community:
  - Serving at a homeless shelter, visiting nursing homes, volunteering at a food pantry, helping religious organizations.
- Contact a Priest and ask to follow along during his hospital or nursing home rounds to see what that's like.

### 3. Speak to Your Pastor or Trusted Priest/Sister

Share with your pastor that you are discerning. Being your shepherd, he wants to know and support you as part of his flock. He may have vital advice and wants to pray for you as you discern more fully. Also consider approaching a Religious Sister or Brother. It is important to have a supportive ear from someone who has discerned their religious vocation.

### 4. Find a Spiritual Director

Speak with your priest about finding a suitable spiritual director who can guide you through this process more deeply. Go to [www.spiritualdirection.com](http://www.spiritualdirection.com) for blogs, podcasts, videos and articles about finding, selecting, and initiating a spiritual direction relationship. You will also find a collection of articles about the process and expectations.

### 5. Discern the Married life

Date with a purpose:

- Dating is to determine if you are called to the marriage vocation and to find your spouse.
- If you are dating someone that you know will not be your spouse you owe it to them and yourself to graciously break off the dating relationship.

Speak with mentors:

- People who facilitate the Pre-Cana program
- Trained mentor couples for those preparing for marriage
- Married couples in the parish that exemplify the married vocation

### 6. Contact Vocation Director or Religious Order

Find an online directory of women's orders [here](#)

Visit your Diocesan Vocation [webpage](#)

### 7. Participate in Diocesan Vocation Programs

Speak with your Vocation Director to see what programs are offered in which you can take part. Many dioceses offer summer camps for middle school students and retreats for high school students. Participate in any discernment groups and retreats they may offer. If you are seriously discerning a call to diocesan priesthood, most dioceses offer Come and See weekends to stay at a seminary and see a day in the life of a seminarian in person.



## 8. Extended Stay with Order

To fully know whether an order is right for you, consider attending a discernment retreat with them, perhaps for a weekend or even a week. Such a retreat is a good way to test your vocation. You can get to know the order, its charism, and find whether God may be calling you to its way of life. Many communities hold retreats for groups for just this purpose. Or you may be able to visit them as an individual.

## 9. Apply to a Seminary / Religious Order

If you both think that you are on the path to a vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life, contact your diocesan office of vocation or the order to discuss your possible vocation further. They want to help you along this journey to being what God wants you to be. They will walk you through every step of the application process.

## Final Thoughts

Thank you for taking the time to discern, discover through prayer and time, your vocation. God only wants your ultimate happiness, so make sure to take the time to find out which vocation will bring you that kind of joy. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Mother's powerful intercession, you will receive the grace needed to continue this journey.

