

Discovering God's Call

Greetings!

Each one of us has a unique call from God, our vocation. But how can people figure out what God is asking of them? How can they determine their work in the world?

These are difficult questions without straightforward answers. We know, however, that it is helpful to study how God has acted in history so that we might see how God is acting now. We find the love story between God and human beings in the Bible. Following the daily readings from the Lectionary, or the Gospel reading by itself, and asking the simple question, "What stood out for you?" can be a way to discern God's voice. Different elements strike us at different points in our lives. The Lectionary helps us to return to the same words with new eyes.

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Reflecting on the Scriptures is a great way to listen to God's voice; another is to spend time reflecting on who we are. Teaching children to think about their particular gifts, joys, and challenges is a valuable way to reflect on vocation. Giving them authentic compliments, rather than superficial ones, highlights their gifts. Pointing out when something captivates them is another indicator. We have all seen a small child, totally absorbed by something, often something unexpected. As children grow older, those things that continue to captivate them offer clues about who they are and what God is calling them to do.

Have you ever looked at something going on in the world and felt profound sadness or outrage? Perhaps you have thought, "This is not how the world should work." This reaction, especially when strong, as it is apt to be with adolescents, presents the possibility of the world as a place of perfect justice, where "the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat" (Isaiah 11:6).

It is good to observe those reactions as they occur. If you do not want to wait to discover what provokes such a reaction, ask children and teenagers what they would do if they won the



By pointing out the things that captivate a child, parents help them find out how God is calling them.

lottery. Nearly all of them have a problem that they would solve. They feel passionately about these problems, and sometimes have even thought about what steps are needed to resolve them. Coaching children (and adults) to see this response as a gift and a call is key to finding their work in the world.

Each of us is invited to collaborate with God to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world. The *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, a document of the Second Vatican Council, calls this the universal call to holiness. While it is not always easy to discern what God is asking of us, doing so enables us to find lives of joy, meaning, and holiness. What better gift can we provide to our families than to teach them to live in this way?