

VOCATION AWARENESS LESSON

GRADE FIVE

SAINT ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY: FOUNDER, CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

Patron Saint of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM)

Objective: As the patron saint of the IHM Sisters, students will gain an understanding of a vocation to the consecrated life.

Materials: Story of Saint Alphonsus Liguori & Church template (provided), art supplies

Instructional Focus:

- I. Correlating the Religion Curriculum Guidelines for the Sacraments at the Service of Communion (pp. 31-35) with the following vocabulary from the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, students will listen to the following age appropriate definitions for:
 - Vocation- the call each person receives from God; everyone has been called to holiness and eternal life, especially in Baptism. Each person can also be called more specifically to the priesthood or religious life; to the married life; and to the single life.
 - Priest- a baptized man ordained through Holy Orders who with the bishop exercise the pastoral mission of the Church. They serve God's people in the work of sanctification by their preaching, teaching and offering the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist and the forgiving of sins. (A priest may be ordained as a diocesan priest or as a member of a religious community.)
 - Holy Orders- the sacrament in which a bishop ordains a man to be conformed to Jesus Christ by grace, to service

and leadership in the Church. A man can be ordained as a deacon, priest or bishop.

- Religious or Consecrated Life- a permanent state in life into which certain men or women freely commit themselves to a life of special service to Christ, marked by the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Explain to students that through the Sacrament of Baptism, they are called to a life of holiness. Discuss how a fifth grader can live out this call to holiness. Lead students to identify and reflect upon their individual God given gifts to be used in service of God's people. Pair students who write a prayer for their vocation and then share with class.

II. Students will read and discuss the story of Saint Alphonsus Liguori. The teacher will highlight Saint Alphonsus as the patron of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In pairs, the students will write an acrostic poem on the name, Saint Alphonsus Liguori.

III. In cooperative groups students will create a jigsaw puzzle of their God given gifts to be used in the service of the Church.

- use the Church template provided
- draw lines to create and then cut puzzle pieces (one piece for each group member)
- distribute to each student who will design and decorate
- assemble jigsaw puzzle with finished pieces.

The teacher will explain the importance of each puzzle piece, noting how each person's contribution of their gifts is necessary for the Church's life and holiness.

Resources for Lesson and Story of Saint Alphonsus Liguori:

Hoever, Rev. Hugo S.O.Cist., PhD. Lives of the Saints. New York, N.Y. 1989: p. 318-320

IHM Congregation History <http://ihmnew.marywood.edu/2.OurHistory/2IHMSt.AlphonsusLiguori.html>

Glavich, S. Mary Kathleen, S.N.D., and other Sisters of Notre Dame, Chardon. Saints Kit. Chicago, Illinois, 1994: card #99

<http://www.americancatholic.org/features/saints/saint.aspx?id=1094>

Saint Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787)

Alphonsus was born into a wealthy family of Naples on September 27, 1696. Alphonsus did not attend school but was tutored during his young years. He was an artist, a poet, a musician and brilliant student. Due to his high intelligence, Alphonsus was able to study law at a young age and became a lawyer at age 16. He practiced law until age 27. Alphonsus gave up a career in law due to corruption he found in the courts of Naples. He began studying for the priesthood and was ordained in 1726. He and several other young men who joined him, were especially dedicated to serving the very poor and those most neglected.

Alphonsus founded a religious order of priests and brothers, known as the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (Redemptorists). These men taught and preached in rural areas and in the city slums. Alphonsus was appointed bishop about the year 1756. He served as bishop of the Diocese of St. Agatha until 1775 when he retired due to age and illness. Throughout his life as priest and bishop Alphonsus wrote many sermons, books, and articles to encourage devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. All his works stressed Christ's love for us.

Alphonsus was deeply devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He was known for his friendliness, kindness and quiet humor. His last years were characterized by illness, pain, misunderstanding, and some failure. Through it all, he remained strong in knowing God was with him. He never lost his faith and hope.

Saint Alphonsus is the patron saint of vocations and theologians. He was greatly appreciated for his simplicity and kindness when giving homilies and when hearing confessions. One of his great sayings is: "Enlarge your heart. We are dealing with a God who is full of love." Saint Alphonsus died a happy death on August 1, 1787 at age 90. In 1871 Alphonsus was declared a Doctor of the Church. We celebrate his feast day on August 1.

The Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary claim St. Alphonsus as the patron of their order. This community of consecrated women embraces his legacy and traditions as they passionately participate in the redemptive mission of Jesus Christ through the apostolates of teaching and outreach to the poor.

