



1

The 9 Keys Objective

In this presentation you will learn about the nine principles for effective vocation ministry. This overview material comes as the fruit of many years of vocations experience from members of NCDVD. Time spent implementing these principles will improve the efficacy of your ministry.

2

Consider this...

- Name three things you hope to gain over the next few days.
- Identify two challenges you face as you begin your new ministry.
- Name two of your gifts/strengths/abilities which will serve you well in vocation ministry.

3

Outcomes

At the end of this presentation, you will have a deeper appreciation for:

- The leadership of your **Bishop**.
- The primacy of **prayer**.
- The importance of **ongoing formation**.
- The importance of **your presbyterate** in vocation ministry.

4

The 9 Keys

1. The Bishop
2. Integration
3. Prayer
4. Adequate Resources
5. Formation & Training
6. Invitation
7. Events
8. The Ministry
9. Funding

5

Key #1: The Bishop

The Diocesan Bishop is personally involved in vocation efforts.

PPF: #32

The first responsibility for the pastoral work of promoting priestly vocations lies with the *Bishop*, who is called to be the first to exercise this responsibility, even though he can and must call upon many others to cooperate with him (PDV, 41). However, he shares his responsibility, the pastoral task of promoting priestly vocations remains his task for which he must continue to offer supervision and direct involvement.

6

Key #1: The Bishop

- Know the mind of your Bishop.
- Know the leadership style of your Bishop.
- Work to your Bishop's strengths.
- Know the key people on whom the Bishop relies.
- Examples of Episcopal involvement.

7

Key #2: Integration

The priority of vocation efforts is integrated into all aspects of diocesan life.

PPF: #17

The priesthood, along with the word of God and the sacramental signs which it serves, belongs to the constitutive elements of the Church. The ministry of the priest is entirely on behalf of the Church: it aims at promoting the exercise of the common priesthood of the entire people of God (*Pastores dabo vobis*, 16).

8

Key #2: Integration

Identify the major offices directly connected to vocations:

- Finance
- Communications
- Clergy
- Youth and Young Adult
- Evangelization
- Catechesis
- Archbishop
- Divine Worship

9

Key #2: Integration

- Meet with the directors of these offices.
- Foster good collaboration with win-win outcomes.
- Share praise.
- Examples of Integrated Vocation Efforts.

10

Key #3: Prayer

The faithful of the diocese are actively praying for priestly vocations before the Blessed Sacrament.

PPF: #33

Potential candidates for the priesthood must be in prayerful dialogue with God and with the Church in the discernment of their vocation. The linkage of this divine and ecclesial dialogue is especially important because "in the present context there is ... a certain tendency to view the bond between human beings and God in an individualistic and self-centered way, as if God's call reached the individual by a direct route, without in any way passing through the community" (PDV, 37).

11

Key #3: Prayer

- Identify prayer allies.
- Solicit prayers for vocations.
- Produce and distribute prayer resources: prayer cards, booklets, posters, devotionals, etc.
- Ideas for prayer opportunities.

12

Vianney Vocations

The mission of Vianney Vocations is to renew the Church by inspiring a new generation of priests and religious. They offer the highest – quality vocations resources for dioceses, religious orders, parishes, and schools.

<https://vianneyvocations.com>

13

Vocation Ministry

It is designed to inspire parishes to get involved in vocation work, to help new ministries start strong by providing a clear guide to the nuts and bolts of the ministry, and to reinvigorate long-standing committees with fresh ideas that attract new workers to God's vineyard.

<https://vocationministry.com>

14

Serra Club

Serra USA was formed in 1935. It happened when a small group of lay people in Seattle decided to form an organization to promote and foster vocations to the priesthood and consecrated religious life.

<https://serraus.org>

<https://www.serrainternational.org>

15

Key #4: Adequate Resources

A Vocation Director, preferably full-time, has adequate time and human resources to fulfill the needs of the diocese for vocation ministry.

PPF: #32

A diocesan vocation director may manage the diocesan process of the admission of candidates, serve as a liaison between the diocesan bishop and the seminary, and link the seminarian-candidates to the diocese and presbyterate through the placement of interns. He collaborates with the bishop, with the presbyterate, with the diocesan vocation commission if one is in place, and with the seminary.

16

Key #4: Adequate Resources

Are **YOU** as vocation director living
a healthy balanced life?

17

Key #4: Adequate Resources

Assessment Questions to discuss:

- Full-Time Ministry?
- Top Priority?
- Other Duties?
- Natural Connection?
- Necessary Time?
- Necessary Support?

18

Key #5: Formation & Training

The Vocation Director has the proper formation and training.

PPF: #369

The fact is that God continues to call and send forth, revealing his saving plan in the historical development of the priest's life and the life of the Church and of society. It is in this perspective that the meaning of ongoing formation emerges. Permanent formation is necessary in order to discern and follow this constant call or will of God (PDV, 70).

19

Key #5: Formation & Training

The Vocation Director should be grounded in his own vocation:

- Spiritual
- Intellectual
- Human
- Pastoral

20

Key #5: Formation & Training

1. Church Documents: [See Handout #2](#)
2. NCDVD:
 - www.ncdvd.org; www.diocesanpriest.com
3. Institute for Priestly Formation (IPF): **NCDVD Winter Retreat**
 - www.priestlyformation.org
4. Seminary Formation Council:
 - <https://seminaryformation.org>

21

Key #6: Invitation

The presbyterate actively invites specific individuals to consider a vocation to the priesthood.

PPF: #32

The Bishop can rely above all on the cooperation of his presbyterate. All its *priests* are united to him and share his responsibility in seeking and fostering priestly vocations (PDV, 41). They do this by inviting men to consider the priesthood as a possible vocation. Often it is the example of a priest's fervent charity which the Lord uses to sow and to bring to fruition a young man's heart the seed of a priestly calling.

22

Key #6: Invitation

The presbyterate actively invites specific individuals to consider a vocation to the priesthood.

- At the parish level: priests promote vocations and invite men to consider a vocation.
- Priests promote diocesan vocation events.
- Priests mentor and encourage seminarians and newly ordained.

23

Lend Your Own Voice to Christ

Fact #1: The main reason young people do not consider the priesthood is because they have never been personally asked.

Fact #2: Men first consider the priesthood because a priest encouraged them to consider it.

Fact #3: The great majority of priests do not encourage men to consider a vocation to the priesthood.

24

Called By Name – SerraSpark.org

The *Called By Name* program helps dioceses identify potential vocations by asking members of parishes to recommend men and women they believe may have a call to the priesthood, diaconate, or religious life, as well as the qualities to live out that vocation.

<https://serraspark.org/>

25

Newman Connection

Newman Connection is focused on strengthening today's Catholic young adults in the faith during their college years. They serve as an umbrella of support to the country's Catholic campus ministries.

<http://www.newmanconnection.com.org/>

26

Key #7: Events

Local, experiential discernment opportunities are available for your candidates.

PPF: #34

Pastores dabo vobis offers these criteria as a basis for admission to the seminary program: "a right intention, ... a sufficiently broad knowledge of the doctrine of the faith, some introduction to the methods of prayer, and behavior in conformity with Christian tradition. They should also have attitudes proper to their regions, through which they can express their effort to find God and the faith" (no. 62).

27

Key #7: Events

- Nature of diocese (rural, urban, etc...) may influence type of events.
- What are your particular strengths and weaknesses?
- Know your budget.

28

Quo Vadis Days

Quo Vadis Days is a camp for young Catholic men to learn more about the priesthood, to deepen their faith, and to better discern God's call in their lives. It was started in the Jubilee Year of 2000 as a response to the Holy Father's request that the Church begin "The New Evangelization".

https://youtu.be/B6_j2xpepgo (Diocese of Spokane, WA)

29

Andrew Dinners

Andrew Dinners provide young men the opportunity for prayer, conversation and discussion about vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life.

<https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/vocation-directors/project-andrew-miriam-dinner>

30

Melchizedek Project

The Melchizedek Project is a nationwide initiative to form small discernment groups that provide information and support for young men as they discern a vocation to the Catholic priesthood.

The discernment groups use Fr. Brett Brannen's book "To Save A Thousand Souls: A Guide for Discerning a Vocation to Diocesan Priesthood."

<https://melchizedekproject.com>

31

Discernment Retreats

Provide opportunities for young men to come away together with the Lord in silence and solitude to listen to the Lord.

- Archbishop's Discernment Retreat
- Highschool Discernment Retreat
- Come and See Discernment Retreat at the Seminary
- Discernment Retreat for College aged students

32

Key #8: The Ministry

The diocesan vocation process of discernment, application, formation, and evaluation is clearly defined and articulated.

PPF: #40

Although this process aims primarily at determining the fitness of an applicant for a seminary program, once an applicant is admitted to a seminary program, the results of the process contribute to the seminarian's personal agenda for priestly formation. Specifically, the observations and conclusions that emerge from the admissions process should serve as a significant resource for the seminarian's formation within the seminary.

33

Key #8: The Ministry

Why have a clearly defined process?

- Communication
- Continuity
- Comprehension
- Assessment

34

Elements of Process

The vocations process should include the following elements:

- Education & Promotion
- Discernment
- Application
- Formation
- Evaluation

35

Elements of Process

Periodically the process should be reviewed by the key participants in the vocations process:

- Bishop
- Vocation Director
- Diocesan Seminarian Review Board/Committee

36

Sample Process

The process from discernment to acceptance should be deliberate and follow a general patterning of:

- Inquiry
- Prospect
- Candidate
- Application

See Handout #3

37

Sample Process

Inquiry: A name comes to the Vocation Director

- Immediate follow-up.
- Respond as soon as possible to the inquiry and schedule an opportunity to meet and continue the conversation.
- Create a record in the "Candidate" database.
- Begin to pray for him daily.

38

Sample Process

Prospect: The individual is considered a potential candidate

- Learn more about the candidate over coffee, lunch, etc.
- Assess "Does this man show the general skills/disposition?"
- Screen for any serious obstacles/impediments.
- Provide resources, opportunities, and information to learn and discern: To Save a Thousand Souls, Is Jesus Calling You...
- There is **no pressure** at this stage, invitation only.
- Invite to retreats and discernment events.

39

Sample Process

Candidate: The individual is starting to show signs of action

- Questions – from the individual and the Vocation Director.
- Serious interest, evident lifestyle, learning, willing to grow.
- Working on any concrete recommendations mentioned by the Vocation Director: daily prayer, spiritual direction, etc.
- Role shifts to more of guidance and direction, especially with needed areas of healing and overcoming fears.
- An invitation to begin the application process is initiated.

40

Sample Process

Application Checklist
See Handout #4

Sample Vocation Process
See Handout #3

41

Key #9: Funding

Sufficient funding exists for the total cost of a vocation program.

PPF: #32

The whole Church through prayer, active cooperation, and the witness of living full Christian lives takes responsibility for vocations (PDV, 41).

42

Key #9: Funding

- The work of Vocation Offices is diverse.
- Much of the work of the Vocation Director is not apparent to others.
- Vocation Offices budgets vary widely from diocese to diocese.
- Establishing an adequate budget may require a substantial amount of work.
- Collaborate with other offices in the Chancery.

43

Key #9: Funding

1. Annual Seminarian Appeal
2. A Giving Society
3. Endowment for Seminary Education
4. Laboure Society: www.rescuevocations.org

44



SAMPLE APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

NCDVD.ORG

45

Documents on NCDVD.org

- 9Keys_0_PowerPoint.pdf
- 9Keys_1_Notes.pdf
- 9Keys_2_ChurchDocuments.pdf
- 9Keys_3_SampleProcess.pdf
- 9Keys_4_ApplicationChecklist.pdf
- 9Keys_5_Assessment.pdf
- 1-PreApplication_Interview Questions.pdf
- 2-Preliminary Application_Fillable.pdf
- 3-Application Process.pdf

46

Documents on NCDVD.org

- 4-Application Checklist.pdf
- 5-SCA_5.0_Fillable.pdf
- 6-SCA_5.0_Fillable_Medical.pdf
- 7-SCA_5.0_Fillable_References.pdf
- 8-Autobiography Instructions.pdf
- 9-Impediments Definitions.pdf
- 10-Impediments Declaration.pdf
- 11-Summer Supervisor Evaluation.pdf
- 12-Pastoral Activities for Summer Intern.pdf
- 13-Summer Expectations Worksheet.pdf

47

Vocation Office Assessment

During the break use the 9 Keys to assess the effectiveness of your office and programs.

[See Handout #5](#)

48



THE 9 KEYS
TO VOCATION MINISTRY
INSTITUTE FOR DIOCESAN VOCATION PERSONNEL