

# VOCATION WORKSHOP

An SCM Workshop

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

This SCM workshop aims to help us explore our understanding of vocation in its broadest sense. It's just a starting point and we hope it sparks many ideas and conversations.

You will need the accompanying resource sheet with info on vocation and some small sheets of paper and pens for the 'response' section. You should also think about having some tea and cake (the ultimate ice breaker) and a big smile—enjoy!

## INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

Welcome people and explain that the workshop will help us explore the idea of vocation, and what we are called to do or be.

Go around the group and state your name, and what you wanted to do as a job when you were young (e.g. Train driver, Vet, etc...) and why.

Then get everyone on their feet and ask them to mime what job they'd like to do now. Without talking ask people to get into groups (or pairs if it's taking too long) with people who they think are miming similar jobs. This should get people mixing and hopefully laughing too!

## ASK THE QUESTION(S) (10-15 MINUTES)

Ask the group this question: what do you think of when people (in general) say vocation and when Christians say vocation? Get some participants to answer aloud.

Next, take a few minutes to explain what vocation is using the following definitions:

“Vocation doesn't just happen, once and for all, at a fixed date.... It happens from birth to death; and what we usually call vocation is only a name for the moment of crisis within the unbroken process.”

Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury

Vocation is about the idea of doing a Job, often used to mean the Job to which you are suited, and is often closely linked to calling; which is the idea of God calling you to do a Job or task. This can be anything, a lifetime task, or a two minute thing.

“Vocation is about the whole of life – not just about ‘being a vicar’. Traditionally, the word has been used to describe a calling to the ‘religious life’, but the Christian understanding is that God calls everybody to respond to him and to become fully the person he created them to be.”

The following definitions should open up space for discussion. End this section by discussing the following question: do you think all people are called by God to do God’s work?

## EXPLORE THE ISSUE(S) (30 MINUTES)

This game is great way to explore different issues and get everyone in the group involved and giving opinions, including those who prefer not to talk much. One end of the room is ‘strongly disagree’ and the other ‘strongly agree’, and ‘don’t mind or not sure’ is in the middle. The leader reads out a statement, like those on the other side of the sheet. Participants then stand wherever on the spectrum their opinion lies. Usually there is quite a variation (sometimes a polarisation!) of views. Ask people standing at different points to explain why they chose that position. This offers everyone a chance to hear different views, they may even want to move further up or down the spectrum!

Statements for the sheep game (if time is limited just pick a few of these)

- God calls us to do one single task in our lives.
- It is possible to avoid your calling without ending up like Jonah (leader needs to be familiar with story of Jonah and explain a bit)
- Vocation is just about career choice.
- The only way to feel really fulfilled is to respond to God’s call.
- God calls everyone to do his work.
- Who you are is part of your vocation.

## INVITE THE RESPONSE (15 MINUTES)

We all have gifts (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4) and your call or vocation will use your gifts. These gifts are not limited to those listed, your gifts are anything you are good at. To consider gifts read Exodus 4:10-11.

Split into small groups (3s or 2s). Ask everyone to think of people they admire; acquaintances, famous people, fictional characters, historical characters, anyone. Then make a list of what they admire about them, their qualities and what they do, be quite specific. Explain that these are pointers; a list of things that you might have in you. Discuss these qualities in the small groups, one person at a time, explaining why you admire them and with the others pointing out whether or not they agree you have the gift(s) which you admire.

Next, still in small groups ask people to think back over the last few months or weeks to a time when they were doing something which made them feel particularly fulfilled or energised. Have they felt any occasions when they were doing what they felt they were called to do? Ask them to

make a short list of these things. (If you really cannot think of anything imagine you have only one year to live, what will you do with your remaining active months?)

## CLOSING THE SESSION (5 MINUTES)

Round off the workshop by sharing examples of fulfilling work with the larger group as a whole. Ask them if they had thought of this as their vocation before. You may like to end with a minute of quiet for people to contemplate their own experience of vocation and thoughts for the future.

## FUTURE DISCUSSIONS AND MORE RESOURCES

If your group is interested in exploring this theme further, then you could try some of these topics for further discussions or invite a speaker. Get in touch with the SCM office if you need any help or resources ([scm@movement.org.uk](mailto:scm@movement.org.uk)).

- *Have a Bible study or series of studies on 'being called' – try Abraham (Genesis 12), Moses (Exodus 3), Samuel (1 Samuel 3:1-10), Mary (Luke 1: 26-28), or the Disciples (Luke 5:1-11)*
- *Invite someone to speak about their own sense of calling e.g. a chaplain, someone from your church with an interesting role or profession, someone who works at your university or college*
- *A relaxed social evening sharing the gifts of your group – each person comes with something simple that they can teach others in 10 minutes.*
- *Have an evening on the life and vocation of a famous figure like John Wesley, William Wilberforce or Dorothy Day.*
- *[www.embody.co.uk](http://www.embody.co.uk) resources around purpose, creativity and spirituality.*
- *<http://www.loyolahall.f2s.com/> Loyolla Hall Jesuit Spirituality Centre runs individually guided retreats for young people (17-35) wanting quiet and space to explore vocation, including workshops on prayer and decision making.*
- *[www.callwaiting.org.uk](http://www.callwaiting.org.uk) Part of the Church of England's work to encourage young Christians aged 13-30 to think about vocation and in particular, ordained ministry. A bit limited in the sense of exploring vocation in a broad sense but helpful website (not just for Anglicans) as it explores 'What is vocation?' and has a reading list.*
- *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical by Shane Claiborne*
- *Called or Collared?: An Alternative Approach to Vocation by Francis Dewar*
- *Vocation: Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land by Stephen Platten*
- *The Calling: British film about a young woman joining a convent, a closed order of Benedictines, despite opposition from her family.*
- *Into Great Silence: Almost silent documentary tracks the daily lives of Carthusian monks living at the Chartreuse Monastery in the French Alps. This film is 3 hours long! Might work best on a retreat / weekend away.*