

NEW LIFE! @ SAINT PETER

MODULE #3: CONNECTIONS

Vocation

The Spirituality of Everyday Life

+ Lesson #1 +

Breaking the Ice

10 minutes

At the start of each lesson, we'll spend a few minutes sharing with one another.
After all, we're all on this spiritual journey together!

1. Share with the rest of the group your answers to the following questions:
 - a. When you were a child, what did you want to be "when you grew up"? Have you realized that dream? Why or why not?
 - b. What do you do for a living? Do you enjoy it?
 - c. At this phase in your life, if you could have any job in the world, what would it be?

Discussion Questions

45 minutes

The following discussion questions are intended to give some focus to our lesson for today. Use the space provided to write down any thoughts that you find interesting or want to remember! But don't worry too much about "getting the right answer" or "filling in all the blanks." What's important is that you think about what's being said!

1. How would you say that most people view their jobs? Why do you suppose that is?

2. Would you say that people today look at “work” – or any other part of “ordinary life” – as spiritual? What place for God is there in ordinary life?

3. Read Psalm 145:8-9,15-16 (p.524). What do those verses say about God’s involvement in daily life?

4. Despite what that passage says, our own personal experience tells us that we do not literally see God’s hand providing us our “food in due season.” Instead, God chooses to hide Himself behind various “vocations,” using ordinary people like you and me to provide for the needs of others. Describe how God might hide behind the following vocations in order to provide for the needs of His creatures:

Marriage

Government

Vocation: where God places us in ordinary, everyday life to love and serve our neighbors on His behalf

Farming

5. In each of these cases, as is true with all vocations, the primary purpose for their existence is to love and serve our neighbors. Read Matthew 22:34-39 (p.828). How important is loving your neighbor, according to Jesus?

Dig Deeper:
 The following passages also contain this “summary” of the Law: Mark 12:28-34 (p.848-49), Romans 13:8-10 (p.948), Galatians 5:13-15 (p.975), and James 2:8-11 (p.1012).
 What else do they tell us about serving our neighbors?

6. When speaking of the importance of loving your neighbor, Martin Luther went as far as to say that *any good work done for God and not for your neighbor is "no good work"*! In fact, he would also say that, in order to be considered "good," a work must, above all else, help someone. Read **1 John 3:17 (p.1022)**. What does this verse have to say about helping others? How does that support Luther's bold statements?

7. Our vocations, then, are the places where God has placed us in life to serve our neighbors. Rather than something we choose, it is given to us by God. God prepares us to fulfill our vocation with the unique talents and skills He creates within us. What are some of your unique talents and skills?

8. Everyone has multiple vocations – one for each relationship in which that person exists – parent, child, boss, employer, friend, and so forth. God places us in each vocation to serve those with whom we are in relationship. Write down as many of your vocations as you can.

9. Look back at your answers to the previous two questions. Can you match any of your unique talents and skills with any of your vocations? Looking at those places where things match up, how would you describe your attitude towards those particular vocations?

10. In the same way that a healthy, happy attitude towards certain vocations indicates that you are "living in" or "fulfilling" that particular vocation, having a negative attitude or entertaining such thoughts as "I hate my job" may be signs that you are not living in your proper vocation. What factors might cause someone to pursue a vocation to which God has not called them? What should you do if you find yourself in a vocation for which you have no interest or skill?

Taking It Home

15 minutes

The following questions and prayer are intended to be food for thought. We'll spend a few minutes reflecting on them in class, but I encourage you to return to them again during the coming week, especially taking a few seconds to use the prayer at the end.

1. How do you approach your various vocations? Do you resent or do you enjoy your responsibilities at work or at home? What about the things you've been asked to do at church?
2. Dissatisfaction with any of your various vocations can indicate one of two things: (1) You are not serving in your proper vocation, or (2) You are failing to live up to the calling God has given you! What changes can you make in the way you think, speak, and act that might influence how you view your vocations?
3. Use the following prayer throughout the next week:

Heavenly Father,

Your continued love and care for Your creation is truly amazing! That You could possibly know the desires and needs of every living thing is beyond my ability to comprehend. Yet, nonetheless, I praise You for how You continue to provide for all of my needs, as well as the needs of those I love.

I ask that You would empower me to fulfill all of the vocations You have given me, so that I might be a worthy servant of all those with whom You have put me in relationship. Make me a fitting servant of Your love, that I might truly love and serve my neighbors, according to Your will, and that I might fully enjoy the life which You have designed especially for me!

In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen.

Sneak Peak

Next week, we will take a closer look at the unique skills and interests God has given you and how you can use those "vocational" gifts in service to others at Saint Peter. If you want to get a head start, take a look at Paul's illustration of how all of us, as members of Christ's body, the church, work together, in [1 Corinthians 12:12-26 \(p.959\)](#).

NEW LIFE! @ SAINT PETER

MODULE #3: CONNECTIONS

Service in the Body!

+ Lesson #2 +

Breaking the Ice

10 minutes

At the start of each lesson, we'll spend a few minutes sharing with one another and answering any lingering questions from last week. If something isn't clear, please ask!

1. Think about places and ways you have served as a volunteer, in churches or schools or community organizations.
 - a. Did you enjoy your volunteer experience?
 - b. Why or why not?

Review from Last Week

1. Last week, we talked about our many vocations and how God works through them. Think about what you did in your vocations during the past week. What did God do through your vocations this week?

Discussion Questions

45 minutes

The following discussion questions are intended to give some focus to our lesson for today. Use the space provided to write down any thoughts that you find interesting or want to remember! But don't worry too much about "getting the right answer" or "filling in all the blanks." What's important is that you think about what's being said!

1. Last week we said God has given you unique talents and skills for your vocation. Read **1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (p.959)** and notice the variety of gifts mentioned.
 - a. Who gives each of us our gifts? (v. 11)

- b. For what purpose? (v. 7)
2. One of your primary vocations is being an active member of your church. In **1 Corinthians 12:12-14** (p.959), Paul is talking about all of us in the church.
 - a. Paul compares the church to what?
 - b. How are they alike?
3. Read **1 Corinthians 12: 15-20** (p.959). What might a church member say that would be like a foot saying, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body"?
4. Read **1 Corinthians 12: 21-26** (p.959). What might a church member say that would be like an eye saying to the hand, "I don't need you"?
5. Read **1 Corinthians 12: 27** (p.959). This is Paul's main point. What do you think of Paul's comparison of the church to a human body? Is it helpful or confusing?
6. In many churches, it seems that about 20% of the people are doing virtually all the work. What would that be like in a human body?
7. Each part of our body is perfectly designed, or shaped, for its purpose. Each of us is uniquely shaped by God for our vocations, including our vocation in our church. Read **Ephesians 2:10** (p.976). You are God's work of art, created for the specific tasks of service God has in mind for you. How might this truth affect what you do each day?
8. Let's look at some of the ways God has shaped you. In addition to making notes for yourself here, please complete "Sharing Your Gifts" at the end of this study guide as we go. You will

turn this in to help us get to know you. We'll use the Sharing Your Gifts page when you meet with me or a Ministry Guide to talk about specific ways you can be part of the body of Christ at St. Peter.

a) In several places, **1 Corinthians 12-14** (p.959-60), **Romans 12:3-8** (p.948), **Ephesians 4:11-16** (p.977-78), the Bible talks about gifts that the Holy Spirit gives, as He chooses, to each believer. The gifts mentioned are listed below. They are illustrative, not complete, and include both supernatural and ordinary gifts. Circle ones that you think the Spirit might have given you. (I can give you definitions of these gifts if you are interested.)

wisdom	knowledge	faith	gifts of healing
prophecy	discernment	teaching	working of miracles
administration	giving	servicing	speaking in tongues
helping	encouraging	leadership	doing acts of mercy
evangelist	hospitality	shepherding	

b) Our "heart" is also a gift from God. Each of us feel our hearts touched by certain needs, issues, concerns or people-groups, things which we care about deeply and which are different from one person to another. (Examples: the homeless, immigrants, the environment, children, etc.)

a. What needs or causes touch your heart?

b. What people-groups do you particularly like to work with?

c) God has given each of us many, many abilities.

a. Which abilities do you especially enjoy using? (Examples: photography, computers, cooking, cleaning, writing, organizing, etc.)

b. What specialized abilities do you have?

d) Your personality is also a gift from God that plays a role in what you enjoy doing and what you dislike doing. Circle one item in each of these pairs which you think best describes you:

I prefer... to work alone	or	to work on a team
routine tasks	or	a variety of tasks
being creative	or	being technical
being a leader	or	being a follower
being "up front"	or	being "behind the scenes"

d) Your education, formal and informal, and all your life experiences, pleasant and unpleasant, also can be used by God to serve others through your vocations. (Examples: teacher training, technology classes, certifications you've earned, even life tragedies that you've survived.)

a. What educational trainings or experiences that you have might be useful in serving others?

b. What life experiences?

9. There are changes in our vocations over time. My vocation as daughter has changed as my parents have aged. We also have choices in our vocations. Shall I take that job offer? Shall I go back to school? Should we move? Shall we put the kids on this sports team? You will need to make choices in your vocation in the church, too, and you will see things change in your serving at church. It is healthy to regularly think through what we're doing at church and prayerfully to ask God: Are you calling me to serve more, to serve less, or to serve in a particular way: to help fill a need, to join a particular ministry, to change from one ministry to another, or to cut back due to increasing responsibilities elsewhere?

It can be hard to make those choices, and to find the place to serve that fits you, especially in a big church and especially when you're new.

We have some ways to help you find your fit!

a) First, anyone can join a volunteer ministry at any time. Simply talk to the contact person. The weekly announcements and monthly newsletter are good sources of information on current needs. Also, keep an eye on the church website. Click on the "Volunteer" link to find another link to a list of all our volunteer ministries. Full job descriptions are available there for most of those ministries.

b) Many of the ministries have "first serve" opportunities—a way you can "try it on for size" without first making a commitment.

- c) All our new members meet with me or a Ministry Guide. These are friendly, no-pressure visits to help you find a volunteer ministry that matches your gifts, interests, abilities and schedule.
- d) At least once a year we offer a six-week Bible class on Sunday mornings to help individuals discover their gifts and consider how God might be calling them to serve.
- e) I am available to help if you have questions or comments, or wish assistance. I work at church on Tuesdays and Thursdays (847-259-4114 x157; kkogler@stpeter-ah.org) and can also be reached at home (847-934-7112; karen.kogler@sbcglobal.net).

Taking It Home

15 minutes

The following questions and prayer are intended to be food for thought. We'll spend a few minutes reflecting on them in class, but I encourage you to return to them again during the coming week, especially taking a few seconds to use the prayer at the end.

1. Do you generally think of volunteering at church as something fun and rewarding, or something difficult or boring? Why do you think some people enjoy their volunteering, and others don't?
2. If you could do anything at all to serve your Lord in the church, what might it be?
3. Use the following prayer throughout the next week:

Heavenly Father,

I am your workmanship. You created me to love you, and to love and serve my neighbor through my vocations.

Help me use your many gifts wisely, especially my time and talents, in service in my family, employment, church and community.

In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen.

Celebrate!

This brings us to the end of "Connections," the third module of the *New Life! @ Saint Peter* program. It also serves as the final step in becoming officially *connected* to life and ministry at Saint Peter. However, our hope and prayer is that it is only the beginning of our mutual adventure serving God and others together in this congregation.

Sharing Your Gifts

Name _____

Help us get to know you. Write down some of the gifts God has given you that you are willing to use in service here at St. Peter. We will talk about this in more detail when you meet with Karen Kogler or a Ministry Guide.

"Spiritual Gifts"

wisdom	knowledge	faith	gifts of healing
prophecy	discernment	teaching	working of miracles
administration	giving	serving	speaking in tongues
helping	encouraging	leadership	doing acts of mercy
evangelist	hospitality	shepherding	

"Heart"

What needs or causes touch your heart?

What people-groups do you particularly like to work with?

Abilities

What regular or special tasks do you especially enjoy using?

What specialized abilities do you have?

Personality

Circle one item in each of these pairs which you think best describes you:

I prefer...	to work alone	or	to work on a team
	routine tasks	or	a variety of tasks
	being creative	or	being technical
	being a leader	or	being a follower
	being "up front"	or	being "behind the scenes"

Education and Experience:

Which of your educational trainings or experiences might be useful in serving others?

Which of your life experiences?