PARISH VOCATION MINISTRY IDEAS
PLANTING SEEDS FOR TOMORROW'S VOCATIONS

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Parts in yellow may be ideal starter activities for parishes.

The digital version of this document can be found on **https://www.ArchLou.org/Serra**

A) **Serra breaks down its resources/tools into four categories:**
   1) Awareness Tools – to make people aware of our vocation needs, especially the shortage of priests.
   2) Prayer Tools – various ways to pray for vocations.
   3) Affirmation Tools – to affirm and thank priests, deacons, sisters, brothers, and seminarians.
   4) Invitation/Encouragement Tools – for encouraging those who might be good candidates for religious vocations.

B) **Serra Promotion And Resource Kit (S.P.A.R.K.**, started in 2019**)** – tools **https://SerraSPARK.org/tools/**
   1) Adopt A Seminarian – for Serrans to adopt, affirm, encourage and stay in touch with seminarians
   2) Called By Name – for submitting youth names to the Vocation Office
   3) Altar Server Awards
   4) Traveling Chalice/Crucifix Program for the Parish
   5) Focus 11 – recognizing that surveys find the youth who are most receptive to discussions of vocations are 11-year-olds (usually 6th graders) and students in the 11th grade (high school juniors)
   6) Visits to Seminaries and Convents
   7) Homebound Vocations Ministry
   8) Rosary Before Ordination
   9) Discernment Retreats – helping young people in the discernment process
   10) Parish Vocation Ministry – helping parishes promote vocations
   11) Priesthood Sunday
   12) Rosaries for Vocations
   13) Parish Vocations Prayer
   14) The 31 Club – getting parishioners to each take a day of the month that they will specifically pray for vocations
       To make your own parish poster, see **https://serraspark.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/31-Club-Sign-up-11x17-1.pdf**
   15) Quo Vadis - summer camps for young Catholic men, who learn more about the priesthood, deepen their faith, and discern God's call. Staffed by priests and members of the diocese, Quo Vadis Days have been highly successful in sparking vocations.
   16) Social Media
   17) Organizing School Visits by Seminarians and Religious
   18) School Traveling Crucifix Program
   19) Maintaining Parish Vocation Ministry

20) Holy Hours for Vocations
21) School Vocation Talks
22) Video Resources
23) St. Andrew Dinners (for young men) and Miriam Dinners (for young women)
24) Newman Ministries – keeping new college freshmen in touch with their faith
25) Master of Ceremonies / Master Server - takes the young man from the role of observer, to being on the altar "shoulder to shoulder" with the priest. raising more mature and experienced young men to positions of greater responsibility. Gives the priest a unique opportunity to share the joy of his vocation with young men; by leading them in formation and helping them during the time in their lives when discernment of their vocation is central.
26) The Melchizedek Project - a great tool for Vocations Directors to help young men during this discernment process
27) Avow - A Discernment Program for Women - described as a book club and a prayer group, all rolled into one. Small-group discussion, study, and prayer as a means of mutual support for women who want to make the journey of discernment together.
28) Diocesan Women's Discernment House - One of the most immersive vocational-discernment experiences currently in existence, the diocesan women's discernment house is a Catholic household experience exclusively for women who are interested in discerning their vocation while living in community.
29) Annual Vocations Events
30) Vocation Awareness Contests
31) FOCUS Campus Ministries

C) **S.P.A.R.K. Videos**
1) **https://serraspark.org/videos/**
2) This website has a number of short videos – many under five or 10 minutes long.
3) It tells you which ones are appropriate for grade school, high school, and older youth.
4) It also notes which are best for young women vs. young men.
5) Some are presentation by diocesan priests, and some are by religious order men and women.

D) **"7 Greats" - The Seven most popular SPARK tools** can be found at **https://serraspark.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/7-Great-PRODUCTION-2023-reduced.pdf**

E) **IGNITE Workshops**
1) The name 'IGNITE' was chosen because it is all about using the S.P.A.R.K. Program - **https://serraspark.org/**.
2) Dr. Anne Roat, President of USA Council, spoke (October, 2022, at our Indianapolis Regional gathering) about the IGNITE Workshops, which teach parish volunteers how to start and maintain **Parish Vocation Ministries (PVMs**, sometimes call Parish Vocation Committees).
3) These workshops are *not* to create more work for priests, but to get lay people to lead PVMs in the parish. The workshops help the lay person plan, by learning how to write a mission statement and do strategic planning. We need to have a Serra club member be a

mentor to each parish in our Archdiocese which establishes a PVM. As of September 2023, there were about 140 parishes across the country that had attended these workshops.

4) Dr. Anne Roat noted some of the things they've learned since starting the IGNITE Workshops across the country. First, don't expect pastors to find time to help, because they are simply too busy already. Second, deacons are very helpful. Third, mentors must continue with follow up calls. Fourth, the local director of vocations must be supportive in order for these PVMs to work.
5) Reason the Tools are not *all* printed in one book
   a) Website links and videos don't work in paper versions.
   b) The USA Council wanted everyone to have easy access to it for free.
   c) It cuts down on printing costs.
6) Content of an IGNITE workshop:
   a) It is ideal if attendees represent 5 to 15 parishes.
   b) The 31 SPARK tools – in 4 categories of Awareness, Prayer, Affirmation, and Invitation/Encouragement – are explained to the audience.
   c) Eventually, after the workshop, each parish which has completed the workshop is paired with a mentor.
   d) The workshop attendees developing strategic plans, mission statements and objectives for their parishes – customized to each parish.
   e) They do strategic planning for parishes, recognizing the unique nature of each parish – size of parish, number of volunteers, affiliation with a religious order, whether they have a school, a youth group, number of deacons who might be able to help out, etc.

F) **More detailed Parish Vocation Ministry ideas**

1) Typical functions of parish vocations committees include, but are not limited to:
   a) Educating the parish with pertinent information on vocations;
   b) Promoting prayers for vocations;
   c) Encouraging parishioners to come up with names of parishioners who could be good candidates for the priesthood, diaconate, or religious life; and
   d) Being supportive of all priests, deacons, sisters, brothers, seminarians, and postulants.
2) Article from National Catholic Register on Parish Vocation Committees **https://www.ncregister.com/blog/vocational-key-to-ongoing-eucharistic-revival**
3) The book "Hundredfold, A Guide to Parish Vocation Ministry" is worth the cost ($18) to help the parish. **https://www.vocationministry.com/shop/hundredfold-book/**
4) The book "The Harvest: A Guide to Vocation Ministry in Education" by Rhonda Gruenwald, of **https://vocationministry.com/shop/the-harvest-a-guide-to-vocation-ministry-in-education/**, can be helpful in promoting vocations in our parish schools.
5) Parishioners should consider
   a) Joining the local St. Serra Club (see **https://joinserra.org/**),
   b) At least attending some Serra Club meetings, or
   c) Getting on our newsletter mailing list (currently going to about 2,400 people).
6) Some of the many ways to pray for Vocations
   a) Mass
   b) Eucharistic Adoration and Holy Hours for Vocations – Archdiocese of Louisville: **https://www.archlou.org/parishes/eucharistic-adoration/** is our diocesan schedule.

c) Rosary
d) Reading Scriptures, as well as articles and books about the Scriptures
e) Other spiritual reading - reading the writings of the saints, mystics, encyclicals by the Popes, Vatican II documents, etc. – thousands of documents. You can get summaries of many Church documents through **https://www.magisterium.com/**.
f) Reading the Lives of the Saints
g) Other standard Catholic prayers
h) Tape a vocation prayer into parish hymnals if they doesn't already have a vocation prayer.

7) Develop a poster (with pictures) of all the priests, deacons, brothers and sisters (or at least those still alive) who have come from your parish.
   a) It helps instill pride in the parish.
   b) Saint Louis Bertrand Parish in Louisville has one of these posted in their vestibule.
8) Mount in the back of church the annual poster prepared by the diocese showing all of our current seminarians.
9) New Year's resolutions regarding vocations – see the article on page 7 of **https://www.archlou.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/20240101-SERRA-NEWSLETTER-condensed.pdf**
10) Celebrate seven important dates pertaining to vocations
   a) **World Day for Consecrated Life** (WDCL) – The Sunday coincident with or immediately following February 2 (the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord). In 2026 this is expected to be celebrated in parishes around Sunday, 2/2/26. "Consecrated" are all men religious and women religious who have taken vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.
   b) **National Catholic Sisters Week** (NCSW) – Celebrated March 8 to 14 each year, regardless of the day of the week on which March 8 falls. This was just created in the last few years. It's part of Women's History Month. It starts on March 8, which is also International Women's Day.
   c) **Religious Brothers Day** – May 1 each year.
   d) **World Day of Prayer for Vocations** (WDPV) - Usually observed on "Good Shephard Sunday" the fourth Sunday of the Easter season (i.e., the third Sunday *after* Easter). In 2026 this is Sunday, 4/26/26.
   e) **Priesthood Sunday** - The last Sunday of September each year. In 2026, this is Sunday, 9/27/26.
   f) **Deacon Sunday** – The second Sunday of October each year. The next one is Sunday, 10/11/26.
   g) **National Vocation Awareness Week** (NVAW) The week beginning on the first Sunday in November each year. In 2026, this is the week beginning on Sunday, 11/1/25.
11) Encourage your school's participation in the annual Vocation Poster and Essay Contests, sponsored by the Archdiocese of Louisville's Vocation Office and the St. Serra Club of Louisville.
12) VocationMinistry.com is a non-profit organization that can be of help.
   a) **www.VocationMinistry.com**

b) Four Phases of Parish Vocation Ministry – **https://www.vocationministry.com/parish-resource/parish/**
   i) Activity Resources
   ii) Establishing a Presence
c) Offers a lot of free online ideas and materials about organizing Parish Vocation Ministries.
d) Also sells many items to be used to promote vocations.

13) Vianney Vocations – another organization assisting to promote vocations.
a) **https://vianneyvocations.com/**
b) Mainly selling services and materials to be used to promote vocations.
c) The Archdiocese of Louisville Vocation Office uses them a lot.

14) State of Priestly Vocations in the United States (2025 - 26 pages)
a) **https://www.vocationministry.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/SOPV-2025-Final-1.pdf**
b) Includes a lot of national statistics on priests, ordinations, seminarians, etc.

15) Analysis of U.S. Diocesan data from 2015 to 2021 – ranking of dioceses on health of their vocation statistics
a) **https://files.constantcontact.com/915e2faa701/bf204fc1-afd6-484e-848b-b7df4e1a3c41.pdf?rdr=true**
b) Three of the 13 healthiest dioceses are in Kentucky – the dioceses of Louisville, Covington, and Lexington - based on the factors chosen by Vocation Ministry.

16) Creating a culture of vocations (11/27/24 article – Diocese of Harrisburg, PA) **https://www.catholicwitness.org/new-initiative-sparks-a-culture-of-vocations-in-support-of-those-answering-gods-call/**

17) A good "Serra Meets" video by the Executive Director of the NCDVD can be found at **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANx6x0ETN6k.** Our newsletter summary is at **https://www.archlou.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/20210801-SERRA-NEWSLETTER-REVISED.pdf** (page 4 of 8).

G) **Rules of thumb**

1) "Eighty percent of priests now come from the 20% of parishes that have an active Parish Vocation Ministry."
2) Sister Sarah Yungwirth, formerly with the Archdiocesan Vocation Office, told us that generally a young person needs to be told about seven times, that he or she should consider a vocation, before taking it seriously.
3) Father Mike Pratt, a very experienced Vocation Director for the Diocese of Tulsa, OK, recommended (in a March, 2023 Serra Meets presentation) that the following youth (both men and women) should be approached about considering a vocation – people who meet all of the following criteria:
   a) Attending Mass regularly
   b) Unmarried
   c) Ages 16 to 35
   d) Not obviously unfit due to some other issues – like being an ex-con, or a raging alcoholic, or having bipolar disorder, etc.

4) In the November, 2022 "Serra Meets" presentation, we were told that on average, if there are 10 young men in the discernment pipeline, one will become a seminarian this year. So, with 100 in the pipeline, you could have 10 new seminarians in a year's time.
5) Surveys show that young people most interested in discussing vocations are 11-year-olds (usually 6th grade) and those in the 11th grade. (Thus, the SPARK Tool called FOCUS 11.)
6) Being approached by a priest carries a lot more weight with a young man than being approached by a lay person.
7) Fr. Paul Hoesing, President and Rector of Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, said in a 10/8/22 "Serra Meets" presentation that seminaries are not looking for men who want to hide from women or families. He said that if a young man ends up not comfortable around women, or would not make a good husband or father, then he may not be a good fit for the priesthood.
8) "Surveys indicate that only 30 percent of priests actively invite men to consider the priesthood." (From page 28 of Vocation Ministry's 2023 "State of Priestly Vocations")
9) Across the country, in any given year, about a third of all dioceses will have a new Vocation Director.
10) Per 2023 studies, about 42% of young people are blocked from pursuing their vocations due to having outstanding college loans.
    Organizations that can help:
    a) The Labouré Society **https://rescuevocations.org/**
    b) Fund for Vocations **https://fundforvocations.org/**
    c) National Fund for Catholic Religious Vocations **https://www.vocationfund.org/**
    d) Mater Ecclesiae Fund for Vocations, National Catholic Community Foundation **https://nccfcommunity.org/mater-ecclesiae-fund-for-vocations/**

H) **Archdiocese of Louisville**
1) Vocation Office (502) 636-0296, Maloney Center, 1200 S. Shelby Street, 40203 **https://www.archlou.org/services-directory/archdiocesan-agencies-facilities/vocation-office/**
    a) Director of Vocations – **Fr. Matt Millay**
    b) Director of Seminarians – **Fr. Steven Reeves**
    c) Associate Director – **Todd Popson**
    d) Secretary - **Alex Rodenburg**
    e) Archdiocesan Vocations – **www.archlouvocations.org**
2) Our Louisville Archdiocesan Seminarians **https://www.archlouvocations.org/who-we-are/the-next-generation**
3) Directory of all our Archdiocesan priests and deacons **https://www.archlou.org/about-the-archdiocese/archdiocesan-clergy-priests-and-deacons/**
4) Directory of all priests, working or living in our Archdiocese, who are from religious orders or other dioceses. **https://www.archlou.org/religiousother-clergy-serving-in-the-archdiocese/**
5) Louisville Archdiocesan YouTube Channel **https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=archdiocese+of+louisville**
6) Directory of different men's orders serving in our Archdiocese

https://www.archlou.org/religious-orders-of-men-serving-in-the-archdiocese/

7) Directory of different women's orders serving in our Archdiocese https://www.archlou.org/religious-order-of-women-serving-in-the-archdiocese/
8) Archdiocesan Directory (2025-26), containing lists of all religious orders in our archdiocese, as well as our clergy and seminarians – https://www.archlou.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025-2026-Directory.pdf

I) **Saint Serra Club of Louisville**

1) Website – www.ArchLou.org/Serra - includes history, officers, documents (membership dues and terms, brochure, what we do, application, Friends of Serra), upcoming events, last 12 monthly newsletters, plus a number of vocation-related links.
2) Facebook page - https://www.facebook.com/serralouisville
3) New member orientation
   a) Video (34 minutes) – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvJhZmxOLmE
   b) Handout that goes with that video – Serra-NMO-Sept2026.pptx
   c) Brief 4-minute video on the life of St. Junipero Serra https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=dm1bvfn72wg&feature=youtu.be
   d) Serra International YouTube Channel - https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuqwHOHDw5ZCgkFbmeQBkHA/videos

J) **Books and other materials**

1) For priests – about promoting vocations
   a) "Five Conversations About the Priesthood: A simple way for busy priests to help men discern" by Fr Mike Pratt – packed with ideas, yet only 36 pages, which can be read in 35 minutes https://vianneyvocations.com/product/five-conversations/
   b) Invitation Coin – ideally for priests to give to young men encouraging them to consider the priesthood – https://vianneyvocations.com/product/serra-challenge-coin/
2) For promoting vocations to young women – Invitation Coin for Women https://vianneyvocations.com/product/serra-invitation-coin-women/
3) For discerning men
   a) "To Save A Thousand Souls: A Guide for Discerning a Vocation to Diocesan Priesthood" by Fr. Brett Brannen - https://gopriest.com/
   b) "Priests for the Third Millennium" (2000) by Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan –334 pages, available various places online.
   c) "Lord, Teach Us to Pray: A Guide to the Spiritual Life and Christian Discipleship" by Fr. Jeffrey Kirby
   d) "The Book of Courage" by Matthew Kelly - a collection of quotes on Courage
   e) "Seven Story Mountain" by Thomas Merton
   f) "Is Jesus Calling You to Be a Catholic Priest?" a $3.50 booklet at https://vianneyvocations.com/product/is-jesus-calling-you-to-be-a-catholic-priest/

g) USCCB recommended reading for men discerning a religious vocation **https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/discerning-men/recommended-reading**
h) "Power Priests" by Greg Hendry at **https://fromheavenbooks.com/shop/ols/products/power-priests-2023**
i) "Discernment 180 for Men" – by Fr. Greg Gerhart **https://vianneyvocations.com/product/d180/**
j) "He Leadeth Me" by Fr. Walter Cixzek, SJ – available many places online
k) "A Priest Forever" by Fr. Benedict Groeschel – available many places online
l) "On the Priesthood: Classic And Contemporary Texts" by Bishop Fulton Sheen – available many places online

4) For discerning women
a) USCCB recommended reading for women discerning a religious vocation **https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/discerning-women/recommended-reading**
b) "Discerning Religious Life" – by Mother Clare Matthiass, CFR **https://vianneyvocations.com/product/discerning-religious-life/**
c) "Seven Story Mountain" by Thomas Merton
d) "The Book of Courage" by Matthew Kelly - a collection of quotes on Courage
e) "Power Sisters: 12 Ordinary Women Who Accepted An Extraordinary Call" by Greg Hendry at **https://www.amazon.com.au/Power-Sisters-Ordinary-Accepted-Extraordinary-ebook/dp/B0CSGRWCVB**
f) "Discernment 180 for Women" – by Fr. Greg Gerhart **https://vianneyvocations.com/product/discernment-180-for-women-by-fr-greg-gerhart/**

5) For those accompanying young men in discernment – "Art of Accompaniment" – a $3.50 booklet at **https://vianneyvocations.com/product/art-of-accompaniment/**

K) **Quotes and Scripture verses**

1) "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so, ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest." – Luke 10:2
2) "If we don't pray for vocations, then we don't really want them." - Cardinal O'Brien
3) "Vocations aren't the result of planning, but an encounter with God that changes your life." - Pope Francis
4) "You will know your vocation by the joy that it brings you." - Dorothy Day
5) "The world looks to the priest, because it looks to Jesus! No one can see Christ; but everyone sees the priest, and through him they wish to catch a glimpse of the Lord! Immense is the grandeur of the Lord! Immense is the grandeur and dignity of the priest!" – Pope St. John Paul II
6) "Everybody has a vocation; and vocation ministry is about helping others to discern their gifts, to make decisions about how to develop and express those gifts and to do so in ways that they know to be true to themselves." - Br. Julian McDonald, CFC

7) "Our Lady accompanies us also in making this definitive choice, the choice of a vocation, because she accompanied her son on his vocational path, which was so difficult, so painful. She accompanies us always." - Pope Francis

L) **Helping parents of vocation discerners**

1) **"Vocation Mythbusters for Parents,"** by Vianney Vocations - **https://vianneyvocations.com/product/vocation-mythbusters-for-parents/** ($23 for 50 brochures)
2) **"A Priest in the Family A Guide for Parents Whose Sons are Considering Priesthood,"** by Fr. Brett Brannen - **https://www.amazon.com/Priest-Family-Parents-Considering-Priesthood/dp/0989621227**
3) **"Seven Ways Families Can Foster Vocations,"** by Vianney Vocations - **https://vianneyvocations.com/product/7-ways-families-can-foster-vocations/** ($24 for 50 brochures)
4) **Parents of Vocations –** website: **www.ParentsOfVocations.com**

M) **Other important links**

1) USA Council (USAC) of Serra International - **https://serraus.org/**
2) Serra International (SI) – **https://www.serrainternational.org/**
3) SI YouTube Channel - **https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuqwHOHDw5ZCgkFbmeQBkHA/videos**
4) Serra Meets – **https://serraus.org/serra-meets/**
5) Serra Magazine - **https://www.serrainternational.org/magazine** (including archives)
6) Club Resources (including Officer Manuals) – **https://serraus.org/club-resources/**
7) SPARK - **https://SerraSPARK.org/** and **https://SerraSPARK.org/tools/**
8) Vocation General Intercessions – year-round, English, Cycle B **https://www.vocationministry.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/Parish-Vocation-General-Intercessions-for-Cycle-B-2026-FINAL.pdf**
9) Vocation Bulletin Blurbs – year-round, English, Cycle B **https://www.vocationministry.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/Bulletin-Blurbs-for-Cycle-B-2026-FINAL.pdf**
10) Nine-day Novena to St. Serra **https://files.constantcontact.com/c2cd08cd001/ad652f18-7f62-4cce-96fd-b3273e66cfa0.pdf?rdr=true**
11) National Council of Diocesan Vocation Directors - **https://www.ncdvd.org/**
12) Glossary of Vocation Terms - **https://vocationnetwork.org/en/articles/show/642-define-your-terms**