



# *YOUNG PEOPLE: YOU ARE THE CHURCH OF TODAY*

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Resource 7 – Vocations



“God calls you to make definitive choices, and He has a plan for each of you: to discover that plan and to respond to your vocation is to move toward personal fulfilment.”

- Pope Francis

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*Scripture Passage: Jeremiah 29: 11-13*

*“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart.”*



## Video

### What's My Vocation?

Father Mike Schmitz

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJz9PbakIzY>



### Discussion Question:

What are you 'called' to do TODAY/RIGHT NOW? What is your immediate mission?

## Prayer – Prayer of Trust by Thomas Merton

My Lord God,  
I have no idea where I am going.  
I do not see the road ahead of me.  
I cannot know for certain where it will end.  
Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.  
But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.  
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.  
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.  
And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it.  
Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.  
I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

<http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/9647/a-prayer-of-trust>

## Prayer for Vocations by Pope Francis

LORD of the Harvest,  
BLESS young people with the gift of courage  
to respond to your call.  
Open their hearts to great ideals, to great things.

INSPIRE all of your disciples to mutual  
love and giving—  
for vocations blossom in the  
good soil of faithful people.

INSTILL those in religious life, parish  
ministries, and families with the confidence  
and grace to invite others to embrace  
the bold and noble path of a life  
consecrated to you.

UNITE us to Jesus through prayer and sacrament,  
so that we may cooperate  
with you in building your reign of mercy  
and truth, of justice and peace. Amen.

<https://vocationnetwork.org/en/articles/show/489-prayer-card-pope-francis-prayer-for-vocations>





# Prayer Patchwork

## CREATIVE PRAYER

### Need:

- Cardboard loom with threads for each person (make beforehand, see Appendix)
- Balls of yarn, different colours
- Knitting needles for each person
- Scissors
- Sticky tape
- Prayer focus – Bible, candle, cloth, Cross etc.
- Watch loom video before you start prayer to see instructions on how to make prayer patchwork: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWLly-Um7\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWLly-Um7_0)

**Opening Prayer:** Loving God, You created us in Your image and likeness, but You also continue to create beauty in and out of our lives, weaving it all in Your tapestry. Guide us and walk with us as we become the people You made us to be.

**Scripture:** Psalm 139:13-16

### Reflection and Activity:

*(As this is happening, have music in the background)*

- 1) In this prayer activity, we reflect on the guiding hand of God, weaving the events of our lives into something of beauty. We invite you to thread yarn in your needle, and begin to thread it into your loom. As you do so, reflect on your past; how has God been there through the ups and downs?

- 2) Take another colour yarn and thread this into your loom. As you do so, reflect on your present; what is God doing in your life right now? How is He guiding you through your current circumstances?
- 3) Take another colour yarn and thread this into your loom. Now dream of your future. Dream, plan and desire with God. What does He want for you?
- 4) Now look at your patchwork and reflect on the beauty that God is creating with your story. How is your past, present and future connected? We encourage you to keep praying with and working on your patchwork at home, reminding yourself of God's continual presence and guidance in your life.

### Closing Prayer:

Lord, You are the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. Thank You for being there with us in every step of our journey. Help us to trust You as You lead us to Your perfect will. In Your name we pray, Amen.

# *Intro To Activities: Recognising, Interpreting and Choosing*

Making decisions is a part of our lives, whether they are big or small. Sometimes they are big life decisions, like choosing our vocation (or answering a calling from God). To help us to make these decisions, Pope Francis talks about the 'gift of discernment' in the preparatory document for the upcoming Synod on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment. He says that discernment is made up of three actions (we will be breaking open these actions in this resource):

## ***Recognising***

Recognising concerns how the things that happen in our lives, the people we meet, and the words we hear or read affect our interior life; how our desires, feelings and emotions are expressed.

In this stage of discernment, we look out for our desires, passions, circumstances, feelings and emotions. God's Word and silence is important here to help us recognise what we are experiencing.

## ***Interpreting***

The next step is interpreting and trying to understand what the Spirit is calling us to do, through what the Spirit is stirring up in our hearts. This stage is very sensitive and requires patience, vigilance and an honest confrontation, seeking a way to make the most of our gifts and possibilities.

We talk to God about what we have recognised within ourselves and the needs of the world, and so dialogue with Him is important in this stage. It will also help to have an experienced, Spirit-lead person (like a spiritual director) to help make these things clearer for us.

## ***Choosing***

A choice cannot remain trapped in our own minds but is called to be translated into action, to take flesh, to embark on a path. It is incredibly important, therefore, to "go out", even if we are afraid of making a mistake, because it is only in making a decision and taking action that we gain clarity about what God is calling us to do and the true desires of our hearts.

We can't recognise and interpret forever; we must decide and take a step, trusting that God will lead us to His perfect plan. Therefore, action is important here!



# *What do I do? (Recognising)*

## ICEBREAKER

### **Need:**

- 1) Stupid games! See Appendix 2 for list of games that you can use.

### **Activity:**

- 1) Pick 2 or 3 games to play from the list in the appendix. Have 2 or 3 other leaders know the rules of the game beforehand, and tell them that they will be trying to give hints discreetly to those who aren't able to figure out the rules.
- 2) Gather everyone in one place. Have one leader tell the group that you are playing some games, and to join in, people have to figure out the rules. This leader can then begin to lead the first game.
- 3) Some people will figure out the rules (in this case, let them play), while others might not. Have the other leaders who know the rules give hints to those who can't figure the games out.

### **Debrief:**

- 1) How did you find the games? Were the rules easy to figure out?
- 2) Who figured out the rules? What did it feel like knowing the game and playing along? Did you help the others figure out the rules?
- 3) What about those that didn't know the rules? How did you feel?
- 4) Did anyone notice the leaders giving hints?
- 5) How do you think this relates to vocations?
- 6) In the Synod document, Pope Francis outlined three different steps for discernment; recognising, interpreting and choosing. Which of these do you think we were tapping into today? (Recognising)
- 7) From the documents: "Above all, 'recognising' concerns how life's happenings, the people one meets and the words one hears or reads affect the interior life, namely the various 'desires, feelings and emotions'". To discern God's plan for us, we have to recognise aspects of life that affect us, and how these affect us. In the game, recognising the rule helped us play the game; in life, recognising our desires, passions, abilities and dreams help us to uncover God's plan for us.
- 8) What was your strategy in figuring out the rules? For us, recognising requires intense listening and silence!



# Who do I listen to? (Interpreting)

## ACTIVITY

### Need:

- 1) Headphones (ideally noise-cancelling)
- 2) Cellphone/anything that headphones can plug into and play music
- 3) List of sayings (see Appendix 3)

### Activity

- 1) Gather the group. Pick two volunteers from the group to sit in the front.
- 2) One person is given a saying from the list in the appendix, and the other person is given the headphones and cellphone. The first person must whisper this saying to their partner, who will try to guess what the saying is while listening to music. The music must be loud enough that they can't hear what their partner is whispering. (see video below:)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEP49ffqLDE>



- 3) Repeat the activity with different people at the front of the room.

### Debrief

*For this debrief, have the youth journal their answers to these questions. Have them share their answers afterwards if they are willing to share.*

- 1) Within society, what people do you listen to, and why?
- 2) Within the Church, what people do you listen to, and why?
- 3) Who do you listen to in your own life? Are there people who you should be listening to or would like to approach, to help you with your spiritual life and discernment?
- 4) Like the loud music in our headphones, sometimes we are distracted in our lives, hindering us from listening to good advice and to God's promptings and calls. What are some distractions you need to let go of, in order to listen to God better?
- 5) We hear what we are trained to hear, and so to listen to God, we must learn what God's voice sounds like. How can we do this? What are some steps you can take in your life to develop this conversation with God?
- 6) Like the person saying the phrases, we have people listening to us. Who might be listening to you, maybe without you knowing? Who do you influence?



# Where do I go? (Choosing)

## ACTIVITY

### Need:

- 1) 36 paper squares set up like a grid
- 2) 3 cones
- 3) Piece of paper with grid on it (for planners)  
(see Appendix 4 for set up)

### Activity:

- 1) Split the group up into pairs. One person in each pair will be the 'walker', while the other person will be the 'planner'.
- 2) Ask the walkers to share 3 of their dreams to their planner (e.g. a job they want, a place they want to travel to, etc.). The three cones will correspond to their three dreams.
- 3) Have the walkers go into another room, while the planners stay in the room with the paper grid. The planner will choose one cone as their walker's "destination" and plan the route that the walker will take to get to their destination (they can write on papers to remember the route). The steps that the route takes can only go forward, left or right – not diagonally.
- 4) The walkers will come back into the room and one at a time work together with their planner to get to their destination. The rules for the walkers are as follows:

- a) They begin by standing on the 'start' point.
- b) They can only take one step at a time; forward, right or left.
- c) If they take the right step (according to their planner's planned route) their planner says "Yes" and they can take another step. However, if they take the wrong step their planner says "No" and they have to go back to the previous step and try a different direction.
- d) This continues until they reach their destination through the route that has been planned for them.

- 5) Once all the walkers have finished, the pair can switch roles and start again.

### Debrief:

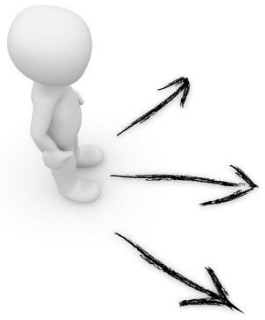
- How did you feel as a walker? How did it feel not knowing where you were supposed to go? How did it feel when the answer was yes/no?

(Refer to Introduction page).

### Reflection/journaling questions:

- What are the things in my life hindering me from making a decision?
- What am I afraid of?
- How can I trust God more with my life and the decisions I have to make?
- What is one step I can take forward?





# Ignatian Decision Making

## TOOL | part 1

The Ignatian framework for decision making gives us guidelines on how to make good decisions from our discernment, and to make sure that God is in the centre of the process!

### 1. Identify the decision to be made

It should be *practical* (about doing or not doing something), *real* (that there is a decision to be made), a decision you have a *right* to make, and one that you can get *necessary information* from.  
*e.g.. Should I find a job in the holidays?*

### 2. Write the decision as a proposal

State it as a *positive, concrete* and *specific* choice, in the way God seems to be drawing you. It can be in the form of:

X vs. non-X; *I will find a job in the holidays*

X vs. Y; *I will find a job in the holidays or travel overseas*

### 3. Pray!

Pray to be open to God's will and freedom from anything that will hinder you from answering this question: *which choice will give most glory to God and express my own deepest, most authentic self?*

### 4. Gather all necessary information

Find out all the relevant specifics relating to the choice: *Who? What? Where? When? Why? How much?* Talk to everyone who will be affected by the decision, and discuss it with someone who is sensitive to Christian values, like a mentor, somebody who accompanies you, priest, or even a youth leader!

### 5. Pray (again!)

In light of the information you've got, pray again for openness to God's will. New feelings and desires may be stirred up, so pray that they don't hinder you from answering the question in step 3.

### 6. Make a pros and cons list

Begin with a short prayer and ask God to be with you as you make your list, and ask Him to for the grace to see things how He sees them. List the advantages and disadvantages of each choice and list as many reasons (don't judge the reasons yet!)



# Ignatian Decision Making

## TOOL | part 2

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### 7. Evaluate advantages and disadvantages

Have a look to see which advantages and disadvantages seem to be coming from the Holy Spirit, and which ones don't. What are your motives and values with each pro/con? Pray as you go. Which reasons are the most important and why? Again, try to answer the question from step 3. You can take time on this step.

### 8. Observe your desires and will while reflecting on advantages and disadvantages

The Holy Spirit will influence your desires during this process. Pray for light about this and see if your will focuses on one of the alternatives. If it doesn't, repeat step 3 and ask God for freedom to choose God's will.

### 9. Ask God to give you feelings of consolation about the preferred choice

Ask God for feelings of *joy, enthusiasm, faith, hope, confidence, peace etc.* about the preferred option.

### 10. Trust in God and make your decision... even when you're not certain about it!

### 11. Confirm the decision

Live with the decision for a while to see whether your thoughts, desires and feelings continue to support it. If not, re-do the process and gather the new information needed.

# There's something about Mary

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## The Angelus

The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,  
R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.  
(*Hail Mary...*)

Behold the handmaid of the Lord.  
R. Be it done unto me according to Your Word.  
(*Hail Mary...*)

And the Word was made flesh,  
R. And dwelt among us.  
(*Hail Mary...*)

Let us pray:  
Pour forth, we beseech You, O Lord,  
Your Grace into our hearts;  
that as we have known the incarnation of Christ,  
your Son by the message of an angel,  
so by His passion and cross  
We may be brought to the glory of His Resurrection.  
Through the same Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.



Mary was only about 14 years old when the angel Gabriel appeared to her and told her that she would give birth to the Son of God. Although she was unsure how it could happen she trusted in God and gave Him her 'yes' – the 'yes' which brought Jesus to us.

We will be faced with a lot of decisions in our lives and God may call us to certain things. It is natural for us to be afraid of what we are uncertain of but we are called to trust God with our whole lives.

When we give say 'yes' to God – like Mary did – we allow Him to work in our lives and in that way we allow the Word of God, Jesus, to dwell among us.

# Vocations | Finding your place in the world

## Going to the next level



### Learn more:

Universal call and specific vocations

138. Every Christian has the duty to bear witness to the Gospel by his/her own life. But God walks a special path with each person. Some he sends as lay people, so that they might build up the kingdom of God by their family and occupation in the midst of the world...others He entrusts with the pastoral ministry; they are to govern, teach and sanctify His people [873] (Source: YouCat).

### Going deeper: Preparatory Document for Synod: Faith, Discernment, Vocation:

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_20170113\\_documento-preparatorio-xv\\_en.html#FAITH\\_DISCERNMENT\\_VOCATION](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20170113_documento-preparatorio-xv_en.html#FAITH_DISCERNMENT_VOCATION)

[bracket numbers refer to Catechism of the Catholic Church]



### Do more:

“Collaborative and co-responsible ministry, is not for its own sake but for mission. It is the uniting of many gifts for the sake of the mission of Christ. We will support this Plan by offering formation for clergy and laity together.” [Source: *Fit for Mission* Pastoral Plan]

For you (or your faith group) to do:

- What are your gifts that you can share with others in your mission? List these down.
- How can you use your gifts to collaborate with others for the mission of Christ? Get involved with another group, project or organisation and offer your gifts to help!



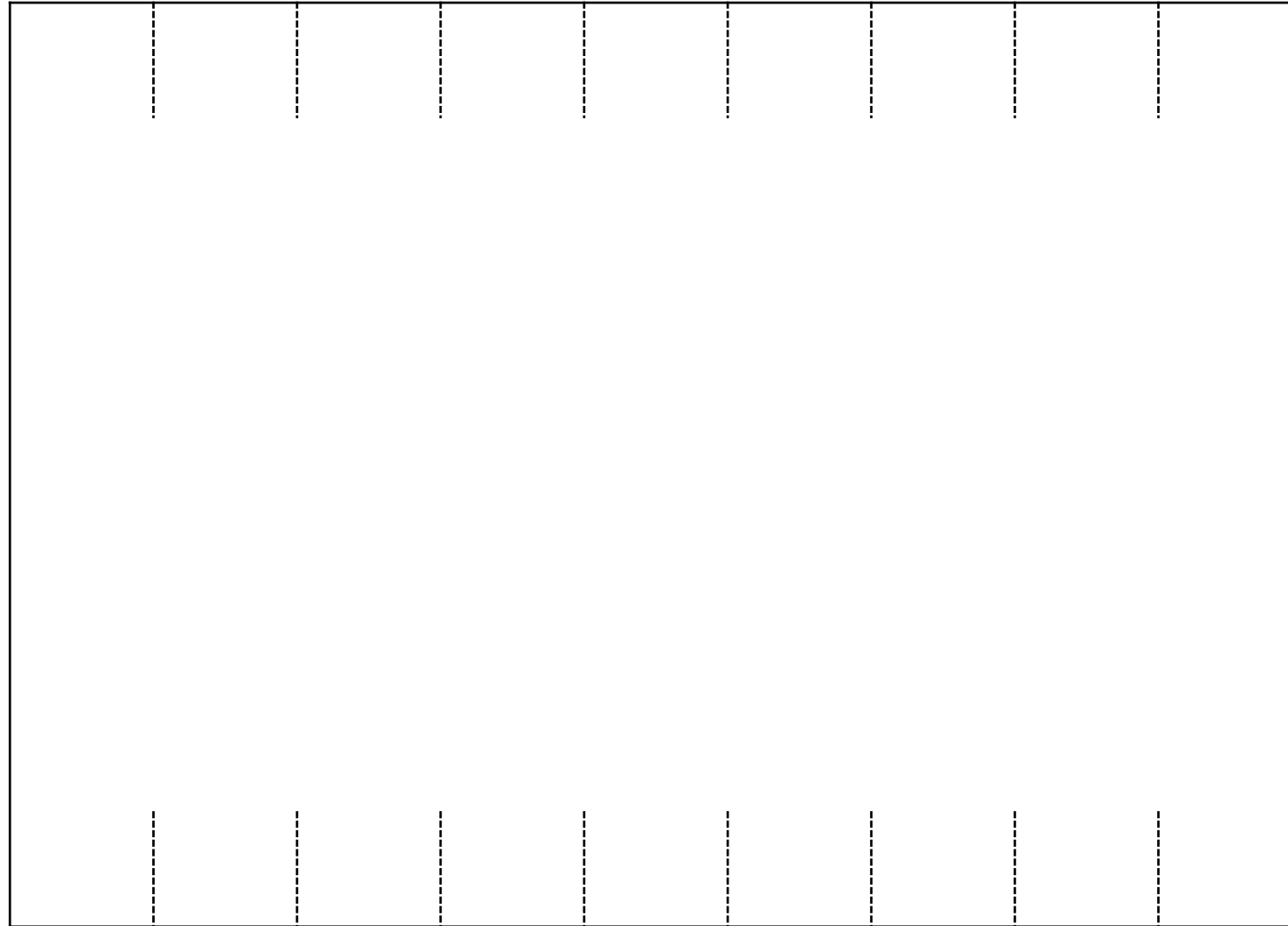
### Live more:

**As a group can you plan and implement one activity that speaks to ONE of the following:**

- Our universal call to holiness.
  - Research people who are living out their Christianity in their every-day life, like sports people, musicians, doctors etc. Create a project with your group to showcase these people and to encourage others to find their place in the world through Christ.
- Our personal vocation.
  - Organise a session with your parish priest and/or a married couple to talk about their different vocations. How did they discern and know what God's plan was for them? How do they live His plan out today?



## Appendix 1 | Creative Prayer - Cardboard Loom



## Appendix 2 | Icebreaker – Possible games to play

### 1. The Stupid Game

Instructions: Each person chooses something to take with them on a trip.

Rule: The person can take the item only if they say “um” while asking the question. E.g. “Um, can I take this cup?”, “Can I um take this pencil?”

### 2. Crossing the River

Instructions: Each person chooses something to take with them when they cross the river.

Rule: The person can only take the item if a part of their body is crossed. E.g. arms crossed, legs crossed, fingers crossed, eyes crossed, etc.

### 3. How many angels?

Instructions: The leader does random hand motions in the air and once they’re finished asks the group “How many angels did you see?”

Rule: However many times the leader blinks while they’re moving their hands is the number of angels.

### 4. I like \_\_\_\_ but I don’t like \_\_\_\_

Instructions: Each person takes a turn saying one thing they like and one thing they don’t like. The leader decides if this is correct.

Rule: Like things must have a double letter, don’t like things must not. E.g. “I like speeches but I don’t like public speaking.” “I like battles but I don’t like fights.”

### 5. Did the dog bite?

Instructions: The leader repeats the phrase “Did the dog bite?” as many times as they like.

Rule: The answer is yes if the leader said the word ‘listen’ before saying the phrase. Otherwise the answer is no. E.g. “Okay listen everyone: Did the dog bite?”

### 6. Triangles


Instruction: The leader points to three objects, saying “There’s a triangle between this, this and this. Whose triangle is it?”

Rule: The triangle belongs to the first person who talks.

## Appendix 3 | Activity 1 – Ideas of phrases/sayings to use

- God is good!
- The Mighty One has done great things for me
- Don't be a couch potato
- Jesus loves me
- We can change the world
- Come Holy Spirit!
- Use your voice
- Do not be afraid
- Fit for mission
- Young people, you are the Church of today!
- Count your blessings
- Peace be with you
- Hail Mary, full of grace

Appendix 4 | Activity 2 – Grid

					
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