



# RELIGIOUS LIFE

*“The seed sown on rich soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.”  
-Mark 4:20*

## ACTIVITY

### HANGMAN WITH NAMES OF RELIGIOUS ORDERS



*Saint Dominic founded the Dominican Order.*

A religious order is a group of consecrated people who follow Jesus Christ through the pattern that their founder set. Many of them are named after their founders, who have become saints.

Let's see if you can come up with the names of some religious orders. On the board, play hangman with the names of religious orders. Ask your teacher for a list of names.



in the religious life, others in marriage, and still others as a single person. God will lead us to the kind of life where we will become the best version of ourselves.

## ESTABLISHING THE CONCEPTS

### GOD THE GARDENER

Have you ever seen a beautiful yard with flowers and plants that always seem vibrant? It takes a good gardener to make a yard like that. A good gardener knows a lot about the different needs of plants. He knows how much sun they need, what kind of temperatures they can withstand, when the seeds need to be planted, and how much water they need. A good gardener is attentive to the different kinds of soil that plants need—some need loose soil, others can't have it too acidic, some are sensitive to bugs, others need the wind. There are hundreds of variations, and a good gardener not only knows about those things but also takes special care to create the right conditions for the plant to blossom.

God is a good gardener. He knows our individual needs. Each of us will blossom well given different circumstances. Just as some plants do well in the shade and others do well in sun, some people thrive

Just as every flower does not look the same, each of us will not have the same gifts and talents. A person who is single may develop the gift of being a close and faithful friend, whereas a married person may become very nurturing. These gifts that God develops within us are charisms. Usually a married or single person does not formally identify their own charisms, but religious orders do. Each order (an order consists of consecrated religious men or women who follow their founder's example) has distinct charisms based on their founder's way of following Christ. For example, Dominicans have the charism

of preaching, Benedictines have the charism of stability, and Jesuits have the charism of contemplation in action. All these charisms are gifts of the Holy Spirit used for the good of others. God would probably not lead a person who has a very hard time focusing on reading to the Dominican order with the charism of study since he knows the way in which that person will bloom best.

*“Just as some plants do well in the shade and others do well in sun, some people thrive in the religious life, others in marriage.”*



## ESTABLISHING THE CONCEPTS

### ST. MACARIUS AND THE GRAPES



This is a story about a group of monks who lived in the fourth century. They lived spread out in the desert, each in his own little house. It seems that God led these people to the right vocation because, as you will see in this story, they have virtues that help them live the religious life.

Excerpted from the book *The Saints and Our Children*, by Mary Reed Newland:

One time St. Macarius was given a bunch of fresh grapes. He thanked the donor of the gift, and when the latter had gone carried the grapes to a neighboring monk who was ill. That monk thanked St. Macarius and when he was gone, carried the grapes to a neighbor who, as soon as that monk was gone, carried the grapes to his neighbor, and this continued. Late that same evening St. Macarius saw a monk coming to his hut bearing him his bunch of grapes, and “gave thanks that he had seen in the brethren such abstinence and such loving-kindness.”

#### Be Curious

- Why didn't anyone take the grapes for himself?
- The charism of generosity and self-control was present in that religious community. What charisms do you see in the community of your school?
- Explain in your own words how God is like a gardener.

## EXPLORATION

### VOCATION INTERVIEW

Watch the “Imagine Sisters Movement,” which can be found at [www.vocationlessons.com](http://www.vocationlessons.com).

Now get your imaginations ready! What if you felt God calling you to become a religious brother or sister? Now imagine you actually join a religious order in your 20s. Write your imaginary “vocation story” in 2-3 paragraphs.



Your story should include:

- When you first felt attracted to religious life.
- What happened that made you actually apply to join an order.
- How your family and friends reacted when you told them.
- The work that you do. It can be teaching, serving the poor, working in a hospital, being a missionary, etc. (One real-life religious brother helped ex-convicts in Honduras to remove their gang tattoos so they could have a more normal life after prison!)
- How happy you feel doing this work within the order.

Get ready to tell your “vocation story” out loud, in front of the class. One student can pretend to be a reporter for the diocesan newspaper who is writing an article about you.



## REFLECTIVE PRAYER

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### LITANY OF THE SAINTS

**Lord, have mercy.** Lord, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.** Christ, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.** Lord, have mercy.

**Christ, hear us.** Christ, graciously hear us.

**God the Father of heaven,** have mercy on us.

**God the Son, Redeemer of the world,** have mercy on us.

**God the Holy Spirit,** have mercy on us.

**Holy Trinity, One God,** have mercy on us.

**Holy Mary,** pray for us.

**Holy Mother of God,** pray for us.

**Holy Virgin of Virgins,** pray for us.

**St. Michael, leader of the heavenly host,** pray for us.

**St. Gabriel, messenger of the divine plan,** pray for us.

**St. Raphael, companion for the journey,** pray for us.

**All you holy angels and archangels,** pray for us.

**St. Joseph, protector of the Holy Church,** pray for us.

**St. John Vianney, patron of priests,** pray for us.

**St. Aloysius Gonzaga, patron of youth,** pray for us.

**St. Alphonsus Liguori, patron of vocations,** pray for us.

**St. Charles Borromeo, patron of seminarians,** pray for us.

**St. John Berchmans, patron of altar servers,** pray for us.

**St. Maria Goretti, patron of teenagers,** pray for us.

(students can say the name of a saint), pray for us

**All you holy men and women of God,** pray for us.



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## VOCAL PRAYER

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### THE ANGELUS

Leader: The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary

All: and she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary...

Leader: Behold the handmaid of the Lord

All: be it done unto me according to Thy word.

Hail Mary . . .

Leader: And the Word was made Flesh

All: and dwelt among us.

Hail Mary . . .

Leader: Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God,

All: that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Leader: Let us pray:

All: Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord,

Thy grace into our hearts;

that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ, Thy Son,

was made known by the message of an angel,

may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Christ Our Lord.

Amen.