

CAN'T YOU HEAR ME?

ON THE OBSTACLES PREVENTING US

FROM HEARING GOD'S CALL AND VOCATION

Intent of this Exercise

- ✓ *To become aware that God is continually calling us.*
- ✓ *To realize that it is not easy to hear God's voice.*
- ✓ *To discover what are the main obstacles preventing us from hearing God's voice*
- ✓ *To learn how to overcome those obstacles.*

Uses of these Notes:

- Sermons, catechesis and talks on vocation.
- Vocational Discussion groups, Recollections, Camps, Workshop and Retreats.

Target – Audience:

- Mostly, adolescents and youth. Age group 12 to 20

Requirements:

- Writing materials for all.
- Two big handkerchiefs for blindfolding.
- Blackboard.
- If you intend having some activities (crf. Step 5 below), get the materials ready.

Introductory Session:

- Welcoming the participants.
- Introducing each other.
- Singing of hymns.
- Opening prayer.

Group Dynamics Game: “Can’t you hear me?”

Explain the rules of the game to the participants, then play it.

- * Four volunteers will be asked.
- * They will form two pairs.
- * In each pair, one will be the caller and the other the called.
- * The called, will be told to leave the room and be blindfolded.
- * The callers will remain in the room with all the rest.
- * After short while, the “called”, already blindfolded, will be brought back in.
- * The “callers” will call them aloud by their names.
- * The “called” will try to meet and find their callers only by the sound of their voices
- * In the meantime, all the participants will prevent the “Called” from hearing the voice of their “Callers” by making all sorts of noises, shouting, yells, screaming, banging, clapping, etc.
- * When the “Called” finally find their “Callers”, or if after a prudential time they can not identify them”, the game is called off.

Personal Work:

Answer in writing to the following questions:

1. Was it easy for the “Called” to hear the voice of their “Callers”? Why?
2. What had they to do to be able to hear the voice of their “Callers”? (*Expected answers: Attention, concentration, willingness to hear, patience, perseverance, etc.*)
3. What can this game mean in the area of our relationship with God? Is God calling? Whom? When? How? Why?
4. Is it easy to hear God’s call? Why?
5. What are the voices or hindrances preventing us from hearing the voice of God calling us to undertake a special job or vocation in life? Name as many as you can think of.
6. In what ways can we overcome them and hear the voice of God? Mention as many ways you can think of.

General Group Work. Sharing, Discussion

Sharing their Replies and Discussion.

- Ask the participants to share their replies.
- You or anyone else write on the board the main ideas shared by the group. Write, in a list form, the many obstacles preventing us from hearing God’s voice. Comment on them. Discuss them. *The list may look like this.*
 - * Friends - Companions – boyfriends, girl - friends.
 - * Home opposition.
 - * Pleasures of the world.
 - * A life of ease and comfort.
 - * Foreign jobs
 - * Sex and marriage.
 - * Bad habits.
 - * Money and possessions.
 - * Fears.
 - * Loss of liberty.
 - * Lack of generosity.
 - * Attraction for worldly careers,
 - * Etc. Etc.

Sharing of Personal Experiences.. (Optional)

If they are prepared for, invite the participants to share on:

- Some “personal life experiences” when they found it hard to hear God’s voice,
- What were the main obstacles and hindrances they found to listen to the voice of God?
- What remedies did they try to overcome them?

Shared Group Prayer: The Word of God:

- Bible reading.
- Give copies of the N.T. to all

Ask them to attentively and slowly read the passage of the “The Rich Young Man” (Mk 10:17-25)

- **Bible Meditation:**
Ponder on these questions:
What happened to this young man? Why?
Are we not a bit like that rich young man? How? When?
Do you think that Jesus is happy with your responses to his continuous call you. Why?
- **Prayer of Petition:**
Ask him to make you generous enough to always listen to his call, whatever
Give time for personal silent prayer.
- **Shared Prayer:**
Invite them to pray aloud or one another that they may follow Jesus calling them.
- **Closing Prayer:**
Recite and paraphrase the Prayer of Generosity of St. Ignatius.

Prayer for Generosity

Dear Lord, Teach us to be generous,
Teach us to serve you as you deserve;
To give and not to count the cost,
To fight and not to heed the wounds,
To toil and not to seek for rest,
To labor and not to ask for any reward
Save that of knowing we do your will.

APPENDIX; Activities (Optional)

Note for the Moderator:

- ✓ Time being available, you may hold some activities.
- ✓ Activities are very useful to drive home to the participants the main learning and insights of the day.
- ✓ Best time for activities is the afternoon hours.
- ✓ Give ample time to the participants to prepare their activities.
- ✓ Encourage creativity and originality.

Preparation of an Activity Role-plays:

- ✓ Write on the board a list of obstacles we all find in life preventing us from hearing God’s voice. Capitalize on the answers given by the participants
- ✓ The list may be somewhat like this. (*You may also add your own.*)
 - * Friends - Companions – boyfriends, girl - friends.
 - * Home opposition.
 - * Pleasures of the world.
 - * A life of ease and comfort.
 - * Bad habits.

- * Money and possessions.
- * Fears.
- * Lack of generosity.
- * Attraction for worldly careers, etc.
- ✓ Divide the participants into small groups of 6 to 8 each.
- ✓ Each small group will pick one of the obstacles, and based on it they will prepare a “Role-play” to illustrate the point in questions: for instance a boy losing his vocation because of parental opposition; a girl missing a chance of leading a life of service because of her boy-friend, etc. Let each group invent a plot for their role-play.
- ✓ Give them time to prepare it.

Presentation of the Role-plays:

- ✓ When the groups are ready, each group will present its play to the house.
- ✓ After each play, the moderator will invite the group members to offer their observations, reactions and comments. (*The important point is not the dramatic value of the role-play but its moral and symbolic message*)
- ✓ The moderator may take that opportunity to further clarifying his point, and, even more, to “motivate” the participants to be very alert to God’s voice, and generous to follow his call.