

FOR ALL LITTLE FLOWERS GIRLS CLUB, BLUE KNIGHTS BOYS CLUB, LITTLE WOMEN HOSPITALITY PROGRAM AND OUR LADY'S HONOR GUARD PARTICIPANTS!

BY RACHEL WATKINS

Behold Children, Behold Christ programs celebrate “The Year of the Priest!”

It is truly fabulous that our Holy Father has given us such a wonderful year to celebrate! While many of us gained new knowledge of St. Paul and many graces from committing more time to studying his letters and life; the “Year of the Priest” seems much more approachable. I will admit that—having a brother who is a priest (currently serving as a military chaplain), as well as a son discerning the same vocation—I am more than a bit biased.

With this mandate from our Holy Father, we have created the following “bonus” activity. Not a virtue, but adding this to your program will certainly help the children grow in virtue as they discover the gift that the priesthood is to our faith and our families.

If you decide to take advantage of this, here is a new list of activities (there are 12 to choose from rather than the traditional 10 in honor of the 12 first priests/apostles), to complete it as you would any of the other virtues. Make a decision on what your member or group (based on age and ability as with all Behold Children, Behold Christ programs) can complete. The first three activities are * as it would be expected that all members would complete these.

Upon completion, you can receive a special recognition prayer card and a medal of St. John Vianney, the patron of the Year of the Priest, to commemorate your participation in this holy year. Also available at www.eccehomopress.com are award certificates, or if you prefer you can create something of your own.

THE YEAR OF PRIEST

Memory verse: “His mother said to the servants, ‘Do whatever He tells you.’” Jn. 2:5

1. *Memorize the verse above as a sign of your own respect and love for the priesthood. For while they are not perfect, they are Christ for us here on earth.
2. * Commit to saying the Prayer for the Priest as suggested by our bishops during this year to spiritually support all priests throughout the world. Perhaps you could add it to your family rosary, say it together after your Sunday Mass, or after dinner each evening. You can find the prayer at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website ([http://www.usccb.org/yearforpriests/pdf/Peoples%20Prayer%20for%20Priests%20\(English\).pdf](http://www.usccb.org/yearforpriests/pdf/Peoples%20Prayer%20for%20Priests%20(English).pdf))
3. *Send a letter of thanks to your parish priests thanking them for their commitment to your parish.
4. Contact your parish priest (or other priest you may know) and ask for permission to interview him. Ask him about his ‘job’ and what he does. Ask about his vocation and how it came about. What can you discover that you never knew about priests? After the interview, write up what you discovered in the form of a newspaper column and give it to the priest as a thank you. Or you could seek permission to create a display that could be exhibited at your parish. (This could be done as a group if desired with each member asking questions.)
5. Contact your diocesan vocation office or military chaplain’s offices (www.milarch.org). Inquire to see if there are any needs with which your group could assist them. Perhaps you could develop a pen pal program, a fundraiser, or collection of needed supplies. If nothing is available, create a spiritual bouquet and send it to the office (or seminary) requesting it be shared with those under their care.

6. Ask your parents about the priests who married them and performed sacraments such as Baptism or First Communion for your family. If possible, locate these priests and give them news of the family and how you are doing. Thank them for helping your family in their faith journey. If this is not possible, say a rosary in their honor and ask the Blessed Mother to grant them grace and fidelity.
7. Choose one of the many saint priests. Read their biography and share it with your group. Having an evening of discovery of the many priests who are also saints.
8. Priests give up a great deal of serve Christ and Christ alone. There have been priests who were once doctors, scientists, and great athletes. Some of these men were able to continue their work as priest while others gave everything up to follow Jesus. Investigate some of these extraordinary men, and create a display honoring their work. Perhaps there is one such man in your own parish or diocese?
9. There are many good movies that give tribute to the sacrifices and work of good priests (such as *The Scarlet and the Black* or *Boy's Town*). Have a movie night and watch one as a group. Consider inviting your parish priests to enjoy it with you.
10. Using Catholic apologetic material or books, explore the scripture verses that show the establishment of the priesthood in the Catholic Church. These include: Lk 16:24, 1 Cor. 4:15, Mt. 19:12, Jn. 20:22-23, Acts 19:18, Mt. 16:18, and Lk. 22:23. Create an apologist's brief in defense of the priesthood to give to all the members of your group.
11. Priests come from families just like yours. Praying for an increase in vocations and a generosity from many families is key. Many dioceses have Eucharistic adoration, contact those in charge and inquire if time could be dedicated to praying for vocations. Help them advertise this addition as a part of this year's celebration. In addition, make a commitment as a family to pray for vocations regularly during family prayer time.
12. Participate as a family or a group in one of the programs your own parish/diocese is doing to honor this year. Send a thank you to the organizers of the event afterwards and let them know you appreciate their service. OR Fulfill the necessary obligations to receive the indulgences attached to this holy year as prescribed. You can find the list of indulgences on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website at <http://www.usccb.org/yearforpriests/indulgences.shtml>.