

“REAL BROTHERS. REAL STORIES. A REAL DIFFERENCE”
A Guide for Classroom Instruction and Small Group Presentations

The Real Lesson Plan



- Opening Prayer – based upon Hebrews 2:10-13
*God –
In your infinite love and compassion
You gave us your Son, Jesus, as our brother.
Despite our flaws and failures,
Jesus was never ashamed
To claim us as part of his family.
Help us to embrace all of humanity
As our family.
Help us to meet others as equals.
Help us to build prayerful communities.
Help us to be people who live life
with passion and compassion.*

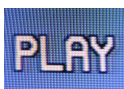
*In a special way, bless those
Who have consecrated their lives
As Marist Brothers.
May their loving example inspire others
To be prayerful witnesses of brotherhood
To those in need. Amen.*



- Begin with a review of the universal call to holiness for all Christians
 - we are all unique and gifted; we each have a story to tell
 - as baptized Christians we are called to use our gifts and talents for the benefit of others; we are called to make a difference
 - we make our gifts available to others through our jobs and our lifestyle (e.g., married life, single life, priesthood, religious life)
 - our task is to look at what God is calling us to do with our gifts so that we can write our life story
 - what people do and how they live their lives are two aspects of vocation
 - today we will look at a group of men who have chosen education as their career and religious life as their lifestyle – The Marist Brothers



- Have students (individually or in a small group) brainstorm their perceptions of religious life, in general, and the Marist Brothers, in particular. This task can also be accomplished by having the students make a list of words that come to mind when they hear the terms “religious life” and “The Marist Brothers.” Surface a few of these perceptions or words in the large group.



- Introduce the Marist Brothers DVD. Have the students look for evidence to support or refute their perceptions as they watch the DVD.



- Have the students spend a few moments journaling in response to the video. Some possible topics for journaling:
 - Describe what you saw and heard in the video. In what ways do you identify with what you saw and heard?
 - As a result of watching the video, what is your understanding of what it means to be Marist and what it means to be a Marist Brother today?
 - Reflect on how you have been affected by the Marist Brothers or the Marist mission.
 - Which brother's story did you identify with and why?



- Spend some time debriefing the video. Briefly share your own thoughts, reactions or insights. Reinforce that a Marist Brother's life is more than his work in school but involves living in a community and leading a life of prayer.



- Have the students engage in small group discussion based upon the video. Suggested questions:
 - Bro. Al Rivera tells us, "Part of being a Marist Brother today is really being open to journeying and talking with young people about how God is present in their lives." Why do you think that this is an important service to the Church?
 - Bro. Charles Imbergamo says that "the thing that distinguishes the Marist Brothers is our sense of community ..., the sense of support..." What do you see as the advantages of being part of a community?
 - According to Bro. Steve Schlitte, "What it means to be a Marist Brother...today, it means three things – to be men of prayer, men of service and men of community." What do these aspects mean to you – a life of prayer, a life of community and a life of ministry?
 - Bro. Todd created an adventure-based retreat program with the hope that young people would "get a sense of God in the everyday" and "see God in each other." How might the Marist Brothers respond to the needs of today's youth in creative ways like Marcellin Champagnat did? How might you respond creatively in the future?
 - According to Bro. John Klein, "...A life choice that really has depth and meaning is one that you grow into – that you have the challenges; you have the high points – the low points – the wonderful opportunities of affirmation – but it's the choices that makes you really come to terms with who you are, what your call is, what the meaning of life is all about." How do the choices we make now determine our future direction? How might someone "grow into" the lifestyle of a Marist Brother?
 - Bro. Rene Roy speaks about his time in Rwanda as "having a long lasting effect" not only on the students he taught but on himself, as well. Bro. John speaks about the young people evangelizing the

brothers. In what ways do you see brotherhood as a lifestyle that is fulfilling more than a lifestyle of sacrifice?

- Bro. John Klein says, "I've had one of the happiest lives that anybody could possibly want." How do you see the life of a brother as a happy one?



- Wrap up the lesson by inviting the students to share any pertinent insights from their discussion. In addition, encourage the students to revisit their list of perceptions about religious life and the Marist Brothers. Have the students share with the large group the perceptions that changed or that were confirmed by the video and the small group discussions.



- Suggested follow-up questions:
 - What characteristics are necessary in order to be a Marist Brother? What gifts should a man possess in order to pursue the life of a Marist Brother?
 - Is the life of a Marist Brother worth exploring or worth encouraging someone to explore? Why or why not?
 - How did you see the vision of Marcellin Champagnat being lived out in the brothers' in the video?



- Suggested follow-up activities:
 - Conduct and videotape an interview with a local Marist Brother or another religious. Look for similarities and differences in what you saw and heard
 - Visit the web site to get further information about these brothers
 - Conduct a web site "scavenger hunt" having students find information such as admissions requirements for the Marist Brothers, Marist spirituality, etc.
 - Create an advertisement for the Marist Brothers
 - Write a newspaper article highlighting some aspect of the Marist Brothers' lifestyle.
 - In song, poetry, art, or dance have the students tell the story of their own faith journey

Notes and Reflections:

Nb. The Marist Brothers DVD can be shown as part of a series of lessons on the various ways baptized Christians can respond to their call. Below are several suggested resources for assisting in teaching about vocations.

St. Mary's Press (www.smp.org) offers helpful print material and an instructor's guide through their "Vocations Series: An Inside Look," which features married life, single life, priesthood, religious brothers and religious sisters. The guide for leaders offers ideas for reflection and discussion about vocation related themes, suggested role plays, case studies and suggestions for promoting a culture of vocations within a school.

The National Coalition for Church Vocations (www.nccv-vocations.org) offers a variety of videos that might be incorporated into vocation lessons.

- "You Can Make a Difference" – priesthood
- "The Call – Living a Life in Christ" – priesthood
- "Called to Serve as Priest" – priesthood
- "A Different Path" – religious sisters
- "Walking on Water: Nine Unique Stories of Common Call" – lay people, religious sisters and brothers, priesthood

In addition, NCCV offers print materials with lesson plans on Christian call and response:

- "Ready? Set... God." – covers giftedness, identifying interests and decision making
- "Out On A Limb" – the best of five years worth of lesson plans from National Vocation Awareness Week
- Yearly resources for the National Vocation Awareness Week

The United States Catholic Bishops Conference (www.usccb.org) has available a DVD entitled "Fishers of Men," a promotional video for the priesthood with an accompanying discussion guide. This video can be viewed on line.

Each of the branches of the Marist family offers information about their way of life through their web sites.

- www.maristsociety.org (Marist Fathers and Brothers)
- www.marists.org (Marist Sisters)
- www.maristmissionarysism.org (Marist Missionary Sisters) – includes a video
- www.maristbr.com (Marist Brothers)
- www.maristlaity.com

In addition, the web site for each branch offers information about lay associates, collaborators and partners.

Many other religious congregations have DVD's on their web site or videos that are available upon request. If your school has an historic connection to another religious congregation you might want to include a lesson focusing on them.