

To enter into this time of prayer, we first need to make ourselves comfortable. Leave enough space around you so that nothing distracts you. [Pause] Now close your eyes and let yourself grow still. [Pause] Now take a few moments to pay attention to your breath. [Pause] Can you feel your breath make your chest rise and fall? [Pause] Take a slow, deep breath in [Pause], hold [Pause], then slowly and silently exhale. [Pause] Again, take another slow, deep breath in [Pause], hold [Pause], and silently exhale. [Pause, and repeat as necessary]

Lead the Meditation

In your imagination, put on your favorite shoes, ones that you can walk in comfortably. Then walk out the front door of your home and get ready to go on a walking tour of your own neighborhood. Picture all of the details in your mind. What is it you see? Houses? Apartment buildings? A school? A park? Stores? Notice any tall buildings? What about trees and flowers? Look all around for everything familiar. [Pause]

Now that you have a picture of your neighborhood, imagine yourself there. What time of day is it? [Pause] Find a place to sit and watch all that's going on. [Pause] Perhaps you are so attentive to what's happening around you that you didn't even notice that Jesus joined you. Before he even has a chance to greet you, you start telling him what you've been observing. Perhaps you've been noticing a variety of cars and other vehicles racing down the street. Or maybe it's the people — adults and children — going to work or school or shopping. Whatever it is, share it with Jesus. [Pause]

Jesus asks you if you know where all of these people are going. Do you? [Pause] Maybe you laugh and say that Jesus is the one that knows what people are thinking and feeling. Or maybe you take a lucky guess and say the adults are probably going to work. There are lots of different kinds of jobs, and lots of different kinds of people.

Jesus wants to know if people ever ask you what you want to do when you grow up. Tell Jesus what it's like for you when you're asked that question. [Pause] Do you get upset because you don't know yet what you want to do? Or are you happy to tell them because for as long as you can remember, you've known what you wanted to do as an adult? [Pause] Tell Jesus what you think you'd like to do later in life. If you're not sure, tell him that too. He can help you begin to figure it out. [Pause]

Jesus reminds you that the job you do is only one part of who you will be when you grow up. The bigger question is how you will live your life and what your vocation is. How you choose to live your life is your vocation, your own special calling from God, your own individual path to holiness. [Pause] God calls each person to a special vocation as a single person or a married person, as a priest or as a member of a religious community. Your vocation—and everyone has one—is God's precious gift to you. It is the way that will bring the greatest satisfaction and most joy to your life. This is an awful lot to take in, isn't it? Maybe you want a few moments to think about it. [Pause]

Jesus wants you to feel assured that you don't have to know at this time in your life what your vocation is. It's God's call. We all become aware of it at different times. It's like an urging from God's heart to yours to live in a certain way. Trusting that urging and following it is what will make you truly happy in life. [Pause] God's call? Married or single? Priest or religious? Maybe it's too soon yet for you to be sure. You know that you certainly don't have to choose now, but it's a good time to start thinking about what God might be calling you to. [Pause] One way to begin is to think about what you're already good at. What are your special talents? What are your special gifts? Since these are God-given, they can help you to know what way of life is best for you. Take some more time to think. [Pause]

Jesus has been sitting quietly with you as you've been reflecting on these questions. Perhaps he reminds you that prayer will also help you discover the best path in life for you. The more you ask God to help you know your vocation in life, the more open you will be to what God might be calling you to. Perhaps you remind Jesus that you just prayed a Prayer for Vocations. Maybe you and Jesus can pray it together again now. As you pray silently, think about the meaning of the words for you.

*God, my Creator, my Provider,
as I struggle to see the right way in life,
help my heart find guidance in your love.*

Jesus stops here for a moment. He was your age once, and knows what it's like. He knows that sometimes as you get busy about the things that are important in your life, you might think that you can do it alone. He may ask you to think for a minute about where in your life you most need God's help. [Pause] Then you continue the prayer.

Help my mind reflect the depth of your wisdom.

Jesus stops again, so you sense this line must be important. You may hear Jesus say that you know that God is all-wise, but sometimes it's easy to think that life should be different than it is, that you should have different talents, more opportunities, maybe even an easier time of things. Maybe he suggests that you ask the Holy Spirit for the help you need when it's hard to sort things out. [Pause] Then continue praying.

Help my hands create peace.

Help my feet support hope. [Pause]

Again Jesus stops. Perhaps you heard the two words—*peace* and *hope*. Spend a minute and share with Jesus about these two words. [Pause] If you'd like, ask God for what you need to be a peacemaker. [Pause] Then continue praying.

Strengthen my love for you,

as I grow strong in your love for me.

Amen.

Knowing that it will soon be time to end your visit, Jesus asks you one more question. He wants to know if you'd like to go with him for a few minutes to be with God the Father. You know that God will help you, guide you, whenever you come to him. [Pause]

And now for the best part! You and Jesus sit quietly together, heart-to-heart with God our Father. [Pause] Let yourself be loved by God. [Pause] Feel the great love God has for you. [Pause] With an open heart, just rest silently in God's presence. [Long pause] Listen for anything God might have to share with you. [Pause]

You sense that it is getting to be time to go. You know you can return here whenever you like. You thank God for this visit and for the special vocation that you are called to, even though you may not know exactly what it is yet. [Pause] Then you and Jesus return to your neighborhood and walk back toward home. [Pause]

Gradually bring yourself back to the room. [Pause] When you're ready, open your eyes. [Pause] Stretch if you'd like. [Pause] Look around. [Pause] See the rest of your group. We're all back now.

Conclude the Meditation

Close the time of meditation with an appropriate prayer (such as *Glory Be to the Father*) or a sung refrain (such as *Alléluia*) that the children already know. You may wish to add easy-to-learn gestures.

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