

What's Your Calling?

based on the *Independent Lens* film *The Calling*

[i] INDEPENDENT LENS 

[PBS.ORG/INDEPENDENTLENS/CALLING](https://pbs.org/independentlens/calling)

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calling

1. *a strong inner impulse toward a particular course of action especially when accompanied by conviction of divine influence*
2. *the vocation or profession in which one customarily engages*

-- Merriam-Webster

What's Your Calling? Educator Guide

Inspired by the PBS documentary series *The Calling* and the accompanying video archive on the What's Your Calling? website (<http://whatsyourcalling.org>), this educator guide is designed for young adults on the verge of making important life decisions, defining who they are, and determining how to achieve their hopes and dreams. Short film modules and highly customizable lesson plans allow educators or youth-group leaders to spark meaningful dialogue with teens and young adults and encourage them to develop a richer understanding of themselves and their possible futures. Some might be leaning toward a life in education, politics, or the arts, like those profiled on the [What's Your Calling? website](http://whatsyourcalling.org). Others might be considering a commitment to their faith or community service like the subjects in *The Calling*. Whatever paths students think they might follow, this educator guide will help to guide them with thought-provoking activities and discussions.

About the Film

The Calling is a PBS miniseries that follows the life-changing journeys of seven young Americans – Muslim, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish – as they prepare for leadership in their faith communities. Going behind the walls of seminaries and into the hearts of our country's future religious leaders, this compelling project provides a nuanced, deeply personal portrayal of faith in America and an intimate glimpse into what it takes to pursue one's passion. Produced by the Kindling Group, *The Calling* aired nationally on PBS's *Independent Lens* in 2010. The four-hour miniseries can be purchased at:

Shop PBS

<http://www.shoppbs.org/product/index.jsp?productId=10954681&cp=1378003.3343900&ab=CSpot1IndependentLens&parentPage=family#Details>

iTunes

<http://bit.ly/thecallingitunes>

About the Website

Through a growing series of interviews, videos, and articles, the [What's Your Calling? website](http://whatsyourcalling.org) uses the notion of a *calling* to explore all of the stuff that makes us human: our values, our passions, our doubts, and our hopes. Profiling individuals from diverse backgrounds – including professional snowboarders, jazz musicians, tugboat captains, academics, improvisers, Muay Thai fighters, religious leaders, social workers, environmental activists, and toy inventors – the [What's Your Calling? website](http://whatsyourcalling.org) shares what people have been called to do with their lives and how they hope to change the world. Students will find inspiration in the diverse voices and stories. Find the website at <http://whatsyourcalling.org>.

Encourage students to continue the engagement with the subject matter beyond the classroom by going onto the What's Your Calling? Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/whatsyourcalling>) or visiting <http://itvs.org/educators>.

How to Use This Guide

These highly customizable materials are intended for use in a range of settings, including secular high schools and colleges, faith-based and interfaith groups, theological schools, and community service organizations that serve youth. Activities are aligned to national education standards, including the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy, the National Council for the Social Studies' standards in religious studies and civic engagement, and available standards for faith-based education.

Depending on your students, the modules and lessons can be used to encourage reflection and dialogue around the following topics:

- Notions of a calling; what it means – and feels like – to be called to pursue a career or vocation, whether secular or religious
- Qualities of leadership
- The relationship between leadership and values and/or service
- What it means to lead a life of faith in modern society
- Commonalities and differences among the faiths featured in the film

Audience

Grades 7-12, College

Subjects

Social Studies, Sociology, Language Arts, World Religions, Comparative Religion, Interfaith Dialogue, Leadership Development, Theology/Divinity Programs

Lesson One: What Is a Calling?

How does someone determine what he or she is “meant” to do? This lesson examines the factors that motivate individuals as they make choices that will affect their lives, careers, and relationships. Discussion of the film modules will act as a springboard for students to explore their own values and decision-making processes.

Lesson Two: Facing Challenges

This lesson encourages students to consider the challenges inherent in committing to a calling or life purpose. The film modules will help students identify potential issues that are unique to individual circumstances, as well as those that are universal to anyone undertaking a difficult, long-term task. Activities will guide students to think about the challenges they may face as they pursue their future goals.

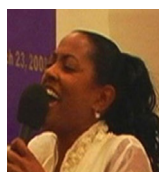
Lesson Three: Leadership and Values

This lesson encourages students to think about the qualities of an effective leader. Discussion of the film modules will help students to understand the connections between values and leadership style – and to consider their own leadership potential.

Individuals Featured in *The Calling* Educator Guide



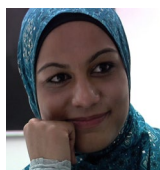
Rob Pene, a dynamic young man with many interests and talents, came to the U.S. mainland from his native American Samoa on a baseball scholarship. Unsuccessful in his major-league tryouts, Pene decides to do God's work through an urban ministry. He develops a passion for mentoring young people and uses pop culture to spread the Gospel. Performing original Christian rap at churches, schools, festivals, and prisons, Pene gains experience and inspiration to continue along the path of ministry. He enrolls in a master's program at the evangelical Graduate School of Theology at Azusa Pacific University and takes a job as a youth minister at a Presbyterian church in Redondo Beach, California. Bringing his unique “street cred” to the suburbs, Pene draws parallels between the life and times of Jesus and of people in today's inner-city Los Angeles. The sudden death of his father, a highly regarded Samoan chief, challenges Pene's commitment to his chosen path. He feels called to take up his father's mantle and questions God's justice in taking his father at such a young age. Faced with the responsibility of ministry and the weight of supporting his family, Pene decides to become a teacher, which provides a better income and enables him to continue service as a “pastor” – to his students.



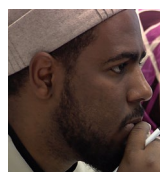
Jeneen Robinson, an African American single mother, is a newly ordained minister in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. During her final year of study at Fuller Theological Seminary, she balances the responsibilities of parenting, schoolwork, and creating an original preaching style. A year later, with finances tight and no church assignment of her own, Robinson changes jobs to work under a new pastor who promises to mentor her more aggressively. But this new mentor questions her commitment to pastoring and her engagement with the congregation. Does the combination of dire financial straits and frustration with church authority provoke Robinson to give up ministry, or will she rise to the occasion and get her own church?

Individuals Featured in *The Calling*

Educator Guide (cont.)



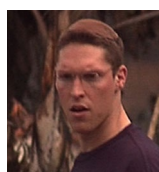
Tahera Ahmad is a strong, highly intelligent young woman from a traditional Pakistani-American family. A coach and mentor for Muslims in high school, she plays sports wearing *hijab*, or a modest Muslim style of dress, and she's unfazed by post-9/11 comments coming from students in the locker room. Ahmad's filming begins after she has completed five years of studying Islamic law in a *madrassa* (Islamic academy), and she is about to enter the Islamic Chaplaincy Program at Hartford Seminary. Hoping to find practical applications for her knowledge, she welcomes the fresh, questioning approach to interpretations within Islam, and she enjoys the multifaith campus, where she has challenging interactions with Muslim, Christian, and Jewish students. Ahmad's brief tenure as the Islamic chaplain at Mount Holyoke College tests her self-confidence, when her programs are poorly attended. She is further humbled during her travels to Egypt, where studying at great Muslim academies reminds her how little she knows.



Bilal Ansari is an African American father of three and a student in the Islamic Chaplaincy Program at Hartford Seminary. He works tirelessly in the Connecticut prison system, where inmates are converting to Islam all the time, but where he is also the victim of a hate crime perpetrated by his co-workers. On top of this, Ansari teaches at Hartford's African American mosques and acts as an intermediary between immigrant Muslim and African American Muslim communities. As his obligations and success grow, his family life suffers and his wife leaves him, taking their three children. Ansari also struggles with financial hardship, caused by what he sees as the community's lack of support for emerging leaders. In need of time to reflect, he travels to Syria to the tomb of his namesake, Bilal, a freed slave and early convert to Islam. He comes home with a renewed commitment to work toward increasing understanding of Islam in America and serves his community by teaching a new generation of chaplains.



Steven Gamez is a good-humored Tejano (Texan-Mexican). Born and raised on San Antonio's rough West Side, Gamez dreams of returning to his neighborhood and serving the poor. He attends Assumption Seminary in San Antonio, where he studies to become a Catholic priest. Although he feels called to the priesthood, his doubts cause him to leave the seminary several times. He grapples with making a commitment to lifelong celibacy and with taking vows that require his submission to the Church hierarchy. These issues complicate his demanding last year of seminary, which includes classes in preaching, parish internships, and a stint as a hospital chaplain, where he helps families at both ends of the life cycle. He finds acceptance in his calling, and after being ordained a priest, he declares, "I love women, but I love God more." As Gamez enters the professional world, he settles into his new role as minister and counselor, and he comes to terms with his new identity as a priest.



Shmuly Yanklowitz is an intellectual rabbinical student at New York City's Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School – and a passionate activist. A Modern Orthodox Jew, he feels compelled to break boundaries – to resist becoming an old-style rabbi stuck within the walls of the synagogue. In fact, it's challenging for him to sit for five or six hours studying Jewish law, the mainstay of his rabbinic studies. Yanklowitz finds it far more fulfilling to engage in social justice work. He joins fellow students in providing disaster relief after wildfires in California, protesting for a free Tibet, and organizing a boycott of the nation's largest kosher meat producer, which was raided for providing deplorable working conditions for its undocumented immigrant employees. Yanklowitz and a friend form Uri L'Tzedek, a social justice organization that challenges Modern Orthodox Jews to live to a higher moral standard. Their first act is the promotion of an ethical seal certifying kosher restaurants that protect workers' rights. Although he recognizes that his ambition outruns his capacity for accomplishing his goals, Yanklowitz feels that "God has put me in the role of a rabbi for a reason," and he continues to follow his calling.

LESSON ONE: WHAT IS A CALLING?

OVERVIEW

Audience

High School (9-12 grade), Community College, Youth Development Organizations

Time

90 minutes or two 50 minutes class periods, plus assignments

Subject Areas

Women's Studies, Social Studies, Global Studies, Media Studies, English Language Arts, Education Studies

"It's the repetition of affirmations that leads to belief. And once that belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen."

Muhammad Ali

Purpose of the Lesson

How does someone determine what he or she is "meant" to do? This lesson examines the factors that motivate individuals as they make choices that will affect their lives, careers, and relationships. Discussion of the film modules from the documentary *The Calling* and the [What's Your Calling? website](#) will act as a springboard for students to explore their own values and decision-making processes. This lesson will

- define the word *calling* – starting with its roots, or etymology;
- introduce students to the notion of recognizing and pursuing a calling;
- provide examples of successful role models who are pursuing diverse types of callings;
- encourage students to visualize their own calling and what it will take to pursue it.

Materials

Depending on the activities and assignments you choose, you may need any of the following materials:

- *The Calling* educational DVD and an LCD projector or DVD player
- Computers, laptops, or tablets with internet access
- "L1 Handout: Religions in *The Calling*"
- "L1 Worksheet: Describe Your Future"
- Pens and writing paper
- Audio or video recording devices

PRESCREENING DISCUSSION

Defining a Calling

Explain to students that they are going to watch film clips from the PBS documentary *The Calling* and/or the [What's Your Calling? website](#). Discuss the following questions with students:

1. What is a *calling*? Have a student write the different definitions on the board and have the class come up with an agreed-upon definition for the word *calling*. For example: a life purpose, something one is driven to do, or a passion (see the "Introduction" section for Merriam-Webster definitions).
2. Do you believe that everyone has a calling?
3. Do you think it's important that a calling involves service?
4. Describe someone you know who has found and is pursuing his or her calling.

LESSON ONE: WHAT IS A CALLING?

VIEWING THE FILM MODULES: EXAMPLES OF A CALLING

Preview the following film modules before your class and choose three that best fit your student audience and learning objectives. Ask students to take notes while watching the videos and pay particular attention to what motivates each of the subjects toward their calling.

THE CALLING DOCUMENTARY

Film modules are streaming online at <http://itvs.org/educators> and <http://www.pbslearningmedia.org>.

Steven Gamez

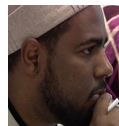


Steven Gamez is a good-humored Tejano (Texan-Mexican). Born and raised on San Antonio's rough West Side, Gamez dreams of returning to his neighborhood and serving the poor. He attends Assumption Seminary in San Antonio, where he studies to become a Catholic priest.

Discussion Questions

1. Gamez says that in his faith: "Each of us will have a cross to bear in our lives, no matter what it is. And some of us will have more than others."
What does this statement mean and how do you think this understanding helps him to accept his calling? How does it reconcile his feelings about his father's death, guide him in counseling the parents about their young son's death, and give him strength to maintain his commitment to his calling?
2. After meeting with a family in crisis, Gamez says, "We're not just called to administer sacraments. We're called to be a part of people's lives."
How does this philosophy manifest itself in the way Gamez does his job?

Bilal Ansari



Bilal Ansari is an African American father of three and a student in the Islamic Chaplaincy Program at Hartford Seminary. He works tirelessly in the Connecticut prison system, where inmates often convert to Islam, but where he is also the victim of a hate crime perpetrated by some of his co-workers.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is Ansari focusing his calling on raising awareness of Islam in America? To what extent should Ansari change the way he practices because of the new pressures and stereotypes created after 9/11? Should he be expected to make any changes?
2. How does Ansari's identification with his historic namesake affect his transformation – and how does it strengthen his commitment to his calling? Do you have a namesake or a person who helps keep you on track with your ideals?

For additional context and glossary terms regarding the religions represented in the film clips, distribute "L1 Handout: Religions in *The Calling*."

LESSON ONE: WHAT IS A CALLING?

VIEWING THE FILM MODULES: EXAMPLES OF A CALLING (cont.)

WHAT'S YOUR CALLING?
WEBSITE VIDEO CLIPS

Introduction

<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/intro>

The Calling Screening at Auburn Theological Seminary



In December 2010, Auburn Theological Seminary hosted a screening of *The Calling* in New York City with co-sponsors Active Voice, the Beatitudes Society, the Hartley Film Foundation, and the Kindling Group. Before the screening, the hosts asked audience members: "What do you think of when you hear the word *calling*?"

<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/what-do-you-think-of-the-word-calling>

Asad Jafri – Director of Arts and Culture, Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN)



Asad Jafri, aka DJ Man-o-Wax, describes his decision to postpone school with just one semester left in order to follow his passion as a multidisciplinary artist.

<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/what-if-everyone-pursued-their-dreams>

Jan Tiura – Photographer; Mountaineer; Tugboat Captain



Jan Tiura shares her fascination with sailing and photography and her journey towards becoming the first woman tugboat captain on San Francisco Bay.

<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/can-you-combine-two-callings>

Neil Stratton – Co-founder and owner, Carver Skateboards



Neil Stratton ran a successful furniture company for over ten years. Then, one day, he decided that he'd rather make skateboards with his friend.

<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/when-do-you-risk-what-already-works-for-something-better>

Paul D. Miller (DJ Spooky) – Composer; Multimedia Artist; Writer; Founder of Vanuatu Pacifica Foundation



Paul D. Miller, aka DJ Spooky, That Subliminal Kid, talks about the Starbucks of the mind, finding patterns, and the relationship between music and information. He is a composer, multimedia artist, and writer.

<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/how-does-technology-help-you-play-with-ideas>

LESSON ONE: WHAT IS A CALLING?

VIEWING THE FILM MODULES: EXAMPLES OF A CALLING (cont.)

WHAT'S YOUR CALLING? WEBSITE VIDEO CLIPS (CONT.)

Britt Bravo – Blogger, *Have Fun, Do Good*



Britt Bravo is a blogger, podcaster, and social media coach who believes using social media should be fun. She loves to help people find and express their calling and writes about identifying your calling by finding what you feel compelled to do.

Essay only. This entry contains no video content.

<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/what-are-you-compelled-to-do>

Ehon Chan – Blogger, *EhonChan.com*



Ehon Chan is a researcher, thinker, teacher, and change agent living in the Brisbane area in Australia. He discovered his calling after his friend's death. He writes about how he learned to live when he learned to die and his belief that not everyone has a calling, but everyone has their own personal reasons for living the way they live their life.

Essay only. This entry contains no video content.

<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/you-learn-to-live-when-you-learn-to-die>

Discussion Questions

1. What did the subjects in the film clips feel or experience that led them to believe that they had found their calling?
2. What are some of the commonalities in the stories of the subjects? What are the most striking differences?
3. Can someone have a calling that is not connected to a faith? If yes, give some examples.

LESSON ONE: WHAT IS A CALLING?

POSTSCREENING ACTIVITY: IMAGINING YOUR FUTURE

This activity encourages students to visualize a future in which they have fulfilling work and provides guidelines for them to map out the practical steps necessary to achieve what they have envisioned.

PREPARATION

Prepare the classroom in advance by drawing blinds or shades as needed to create a restful environment, where bright lights and outdoor activities will not be distracting.

When students arrive, tell them that you are going to do an activity where they will visualize their future. Explain that visualization is forming mental images – and that visualizing a dream can be an empowering step toward realizing it.

Ask students to remove all books and papers from their desks or tables and sit in a comfortable position. Turn out or dim the lights in the classroom. Observe students and continue to the next section when they have followed the instructions and appear relaxed and comfortable. Move slowly through the steps below in order to allow students ample time to process and remember the images and information they are seeing.



Creating a Safe Space

Please note that this activity may invite a broad range of responses and it is important that students feel safe sharing what they experienced with the class without fear of judgment or criticism. Before starting with the visualization, you can facilitate the creation of a safe space for students by helping them set up a *community contract* or agreement that clearly defines rules or expectations for participation. Students can establish their own guidelines as a group or you can present them with the sample contract below. Make sure to have them affirm their agreement with each guideline. As you go through the list, invite students to discuss or amend any parts of the contract before continuing. Here is a sample community contract:

- Listen with respect. Try to understand what someone is saying before rushing to judgment.
- Make comments using “I” statements.
- If you do not feel safe making a comment or asking a question, write the thought down.
- If someone says an idea or question that helps your own learning, say “Thank you.”
- If someone says something that hurts or offends you, do not attack the person. Acknowledge that the comment – not the person – hurt your feelings and explain why.
- Put-downs are never okay.
- If you don’t understand something, ask a question.
- Think with your head and your heart.
- Share talking time – provide room for others to speak.
- Do not interrupt others while they are speaking.
- Write down thoughts, in a journal or notebook, if you don’t have time to say them during our time together.

LESSON ONE: WHAT IS A CALLING?

POSTSCREENING ACTIVITY: IMAGINING YOUR FUTURE (cont.)

SCRIPT

1. Close your eyes.
2. Count 10 long, deep breaths. This will help you relax and clear your mind of other things, so you will be able to focus.
3. Imagine you are waking up in the morning 10 years from now, where you are living the life you want to live.
4. When you first open your eyes, what is the first image you see? What is the first sensation you feel? What is the room like?
5. Get up, and as you start your morning routine, try to notice as many details as possible. What do you do first? Do you have family? Pets? Are you in a house? Apartment? What is it like? What are your surroundings? Urban? Rural? Suburban?
6. Now you are going to work. How do you get there? Bicycle? Car or truck? Public transportation? Imagine the process of getting there and what you see along the way. If you work at home, do you go to a special room in the house?
7. You have arrived at work. What kind of building is it? A school? A garden? A corporation or office? A mosque, church, or synagogue? As you walk inside, greet your co-workers.
8. Start moving through your workday. What do you do? Do you help others? Cook? Create art or music? Sit at a computer? Work in a hospital or clinic? How often do you interact with others – either clients or co-workers or both?
9. As you go through your entire day of work, what does it feel like to be there? How do you feel about the work you are doing?
10. Finish your workday and leave your work environment.
11. Move through your evening until you return home and prepare for sleep. Imagine how you feel at the end of your day.

RETURNING TO NOW

1. Have students slowly return back through time to the present.
2. Tell the students to open their eyes when they are ready.
3. Distribute “L1 Worksheet: Describe Your Future.” Take 10-15 minutes to have students answer the questions and note as many details, images, and feelings as they can remember.

SHARING

1. Ask students to share what they discovered. Hear from as many people as possible, while the images are fresh in their minds.
2. Ask if anyone saw something unexpected or surprising.

DISCUSSION

1. Ask students how many found themselves doing things that included serving others.
2. What relationship did they notice between their vision and pursuing a calling?

LESSON ONE: WHAT IS A CALLING?

ASSIGNMENTS

Select one or more of the following assignments to complete:

STUDENT PEER INTERVIEWS

Break the class into pairs and have students interview each other using the following prompts. If your school or organization has a video camera available, set up interview times and take turns. If not, use whatever tools are available, such as a smartphone, MP3 player, or tablet. If you would like to submit your students' interviews to the [What's Your Calling? website](#), email classroom@itvs.org for more information.

Interview Prompts

1. Say your first name and age.
2. What activities make you happiest when you are doing them?
3. Is there one activity that you might consider as a future calling – or career? Explain.
4. What influenced your choice and/or what is it about this activity that draws you to it?
5. How do your teachers, friends, and/or family feel about you doing that with your life?
6. What will you have to do to accomplish it? (School, training, skills, commitment, etc.)
7. Will any of your current behaviors or activities have to change? Explain.
8. Do you know anyone doing this for his or her work? (See the "Interview a Mentor" activity in Lesson Two)
9. Face the camera directly and say aloud:
 - a. My name is _____ and my calling is _____.
 - b. My calling is _____.
 - c. What is *your* calling?

NONFICTION READING: MUHAMMAD ALI

Ask students to read an excerpt from or the entirety of Muhammad Ali's 2004 autobiography *The Soul of a Butterfly: Reflections on Life's Journey* (http://books.google.com/books/about/The_Soul_of_a_Butterfly.html?id=h6G-Cy5c0GgC). Have them respond to the following questions as a written assignment or as a class discussion.

Questions

1. What are the central ideas of the text?
2. What is the author's point of view?
3. What evidence does the author use to support his point of view?
4. What events or experiences contributed to the author's reasons for writing the text?
5. Why was Muhammad Ali such a significant historical figure?

LESSON ONE: WHAT IS A CALLING?

ASSIGNMENTS (cont.)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES RESEARCH PAPER

This assignment is best paired with the film modules from *The Calling* documentary. Ask students to choose two religions represented in the clips and compare and contrast them in a research paper. Some elements they can include are

1. the history of each religion and the major events in its formation;
2. geography of the religions and the number of followers in the world;
3. characteristics, rituals, and beliefs of the religions;
4. institutions and hierarchical structures in the religions;
5. issues of conflict or cooperation between the two;
6. how the religions influence people today.

ALL-CLASS COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT: PART ONE

This assignment requires several blocks of time over a period of one month or more. Parts Two and Three of the project are described in Lessons Two and Three, respectively, of this guide.

Assignment Steps

1. Have students form small groups to come up with an idea for something the class can do to improve the school or the community where the school is located. This might be reducing the school's carbon footprint; offering tutoring services to children in lower grades or other neighborhoods; instituting a recycling or healthy-snack program; collecting blankets or food for a homeless shelter; helping young people in another country with a health, education, or resource issue; etc.
2. Have each team choose a representative to present its idea to the whole class.
3. Have the class vote to select one idea.



LESSON TWO: FACING CHALLENGES

OVERVIEW

Audience

Grades 7-12, College

Time

One to two 50-minute class periods, plus assignments

Subject Areas

Social Studies, Sociology, Language Arts, World Religions, Comparative Religion, Interfaith Dialogue, Leadership Development, Theology/Divinity Programs

“Our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and to face the challenge of change.”

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Purpose of the Lesson

This lesson encourages students to consider the challenges inherent in committing to a calling or life purpose. The film modules from the documentary *The Calling* and the [What's Your Calling? website](#) will help students identify potential challenges unique to individual circumstances as well as those that are universal to anyone undertaking a difficult, long-term task. Students will think about what challenges they may face as they pursue their future goals. This lesson will:

- Introduce students to the notion that one will face both anticipated and unanticipated obstacles in the process of accomplishing important goals.
- Help students to map out the steps they need to take, including challenges they might encounter, on the path to realizing their goals.
- Provide students with an opportunity to interview someone they admire and establish a mentoring relationship.

Materials

Depending on the activities and assignments you choose, you may need any of the following materials:

- *The Calling* educational DVD and an LCD projector or DVD player
- Computers, laptops, or tablets with internet access
- “L2 Handout: Interview a Mentor”
- “L2 Worksheet: A Life-Changing Challenge”
- Pens and writing paper
- Video or audio recorder

PRESCREENING DISCUSSION

What Is a Challenge?

Explain to students that they are going to watch film clips from the PBS documentary *The Calling* and/or the [What's Your Calling? website](#). While watching the clips, students will have to pick out challenges that each individual interviewed has faced while pursuing a calling. Discuss the following questions with students:

1. What is a *challenge*? Establish a common definition for the word *challenge* and write it on the board. For example: an obstacle that stands in the way of realizing a goal.
2. What are examples of challenges someone might face when pursuing a calling?
3. Are all challenges unexpected? Do you think it's possible to anticipate some challenges and develop a plan for them before they happen?

LESSON TWO: FACING CHALLENGES

VIEWING THE FILM MODULES: ANTICIPATING CHALLENGES

Preview the following film modules before your class and choose three that best fit your student audience and learning objectives. Ask students to take notes while watching the videos and pay particular attention to the challenges encountered by each of the individuals.

THE CALLING DOCUMENTARY

Film modules are streaming online at <http://itvs.org/educators> and <http://www.pbslearningmedia.org>.

Rob Pene



Rob Pene was born in American Samoa and came to the United States on a baseball scholarship. Unsuccessful in his major-league tryouts, he pursues his passion through an urban ministry. He also writes and performs Christian rap. The sudden death of his father challenges Pene's commitment to his chosen path.

Discussion Questions

1. Pene talks about feeling a distance from parts of his own identity in his urban ministry work. How does he come to terms with it? Have you ever had a similar experience? If so, what did you do about it?
2. After Pene's father dies, he feels conflicted about continuing his religious training. Why do you think he feels this conflict? Have you experienced having your own personal circumstances affect what you are doing or what you want to do for your work or education?

Jeneen Robinson



Jeneen Robinson is an African American single mother, as well as a newly ordained minister in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. During her final year of study at Fuller Theological Seminary, she balances the responsibilities of parenting, schoolwork, and creating an original preaching style.

Discussion Questions

1. How does each of the following issues challenge Robinson as she pursues her calling? How do these challenges strengthen her character and her ministry?
 - a. Demands of her faith (training, restrictions, etc.)?
 - b. Personal situation? Family?
 - c. Personality?
 - d. Gender?
 - e. Ethnicity or Culture?
2. Do you have challenges that make it more difficult for you to accomplish your goals? If so, how can those difficulties help to make you stronger?

LESSON TWO: FACING CHALLENGES

VIEWING THE FILM MODULES: ANTICIPATING CHALLENGES (cont.)

WHAT'S YOUR CALLING? WEBSITE VIDEO CLIPS

Eboo Patel – Founder and president, Interfaith Youth Core



Eboo Patel shares an experience of failure from his high school days, explaining how it motivates him to promote interfaith cooperation today.
<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/have-experiences-of-failure-helped-to-shape-your-calling>

Raufa Sherry Tuell – Learning Arabic “A Convert’s Journey into Islam”



Raufa was born in the U.S. and raised Southern Baptist. As an adult, Raufa became involved in Sufism, eventually converting to Islam. She talks about her journey into Islam and her struggles with learning Arabic and connecting with other members in her community.
<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/can-language-limit-your-ability-to-follow-your-heart>

Sandra Rhodes Duncan – Owner, Duplain W. Rhodes Funeral Home



Sandra Rhodes Duncan is the owner of one of the oldest mortuaries run by African-Americans in New Orleans. She talks about damages that the funeral home suffered during Hurricane Katrina and how the business and the community have come back in the years since.
<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/during-bad-times-how-do-you-help-people-see-the-good>

Master Kenya Prach – Founder and owner, Kenya Muay Thai Academy



A native Cambodian, Kenya Prach began serious martial arts training at a very young age before the Khmer Rouge takeover forced him to flee to Thailand. He tells his story of survival and becoming a teacher, founder and owner of Kenya Muay Thai Academy.
<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/how-do-you-foster-a-good-heart>

Demetrio Maguigad – Musician; Media Producer



Demetrio Maguigad shares his story of surviving childhood trauma with the help of community. He works with Community Media Workshop, is the co-founder and radio host of Chicago is the World, and is a musician with the Filipino cultural collective Bagwis.
<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/how-do-we-find-meaning-in-tragedy>

Mark Horvath – Founder, invisiblepeople.tv



Mark Horvath explains how he uses social media to raise awareness about homelessness and poverty in America. Armed with a website (invisiblepeople.tv), Twitter account, and a camera, Mark's on a mission to give "a face and a voice to homelessness."
<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/if-not-you-who>

LESSON TWO: FACING CHALLENGES

VIEWING THE FILM MODULES: ANTICIPATING CHALLENGES (cont.)

WHAT'S YOUR CALLING?
WEBSITE VIDEO CLIPS (CONT.)

Discussion Questions

1. What are the principal challenges facing each of the subjects in the film clips?
2. What role does each of the following play in determining what challenges each of the subjects faces?
 - a. Relationships?
 - b. Personality?
 - c. Gender?
 - d. Ethnicity or Culture?
 - e. Faith or Religion?
 - f. Sexual Identification?
 - g. Class or Economic Status?
3. What resources do the subjects draw on to overcome their challenges? For example: mentors, skills, scholarships, etc.

LESSON TWO: FACING CHALLENGES

POSTSCREENING ACTIVITY: MAPPING YOUR PATH

Explain to students that this part of the activity will guide them in mapping out the practical steps they need to follow in order to pursue their calling – or to realize the future that they imagined in the visualization. Read the instructions below and ask students to make notes so they can complete the activity independently, either in class or at home. (Ideally, students will have access to computers, so they can research as needed to obtain as much information as possible.) Before they begin, ask students to consider not only the study and training, but also the requirements on their personal lives, such as moving away from home, finding a job to support their studies, etc.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Illustrate your journey to the life you envisioned in the first part of this activity, starting where you are now (A) and ending where you want to be in 5 (or 10 if you are in high school) years (B).
2. Your map can take whatever form works best for you: a ladder, train track, timeline, roadmap, etc.
3. Note all of the major steps you need to accomplish in order to get from A to B. Include as many details as possible: dates of future events, schools, teachers, buildings, family, locations, jobs, etc.
4. Be creative and daring with your dreams and drawings – and be as practical as you can with the steps you need to take. It can be long (butcher paper) or short (a series of index cards), two- or three-dimensional (think props, paints, collages, pages from school brochures, photos of people who have inspired you to start the journey and people you hope to meet along your path, and illustrations of your future self, for example).
5. Keep the visualization and your map in a safe place. When you look at them 5 or 10 years from now, you might be surprised – or you might not!

Encourage students to share their maps with the class or in small groups.

Discussion

1. Discuss the relationship between *career* and *calling* on the different paths students followed. Talk about how the two might or might not seem mutually exclusive.
2. Ask students who chose business-oriented careers to share some of the challenges they would face.
3. How are the challenges different for those who chose paths involving service?
4. How will the different challenges affect the outcome of their journey?

LESSON TWO: FACING CHALLENGES

ASSIGNMENTS

Select one or more of the following assignments:

INTERVIEW A MENTOR

Establishing a relationship with a mentor can prepare students for a time when they need support in overcoming a challenge. To prepare for this assignment, first discuss the meaning of the word *mentor*. For example: a role model or confidant, someone who you know that can offer advice or guidance when facing challenges, a person you trust and look up to who has had experiences you can learn from.

Ask students if any of them have a mentor or know someone they would like to have as a mentor. Explain that this activity will provide them with an opportunity to interview someone who is doing work that they admire. Distribute “L2 Handout: Interview a Mentor.”

As an extension, students can submit their interviews to the [What's Your Calling? website](#). Email classroom@itvs.org for more information.

A LIFE-CHANGING CHALLENGE

“I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles overcome while trying to succeed.”

Booker T. Washington

For this activity, students will present an oral or written report about a challenging experience that affected them in deep and lasting ways. It might be something they chose to do, such as a marathon or a difficult course of study, or something they did not expect, such as an illness or injury. Perhaps they overcame a challenge and learned something important from the experience. Or perhaps they did not succeed and they learned something equally important but entirely different. Students can also write about something that happened to a family member or close friend, where they were profoundly affected by the experience.

Please note that this activity may trigger sensitive or traumatic memories. Before students share their stories, please refer to the “Creating a Safe Space” exercise in Lesson One, so there is a clear understanding of the expectations for participation.

Assignment Steps

1. Distribute “L2 Worksheet: A Life-Changing Challenge.”
2. Ask students if any of them have faced a challenge in their lives that affected them deeply and taught them something about themselves.
3. Invite students to share briefly.
4. Explain that this activity will enable students to share important lessons they have learned about themselves – and to learn important lessons from others.
5. This can be a written or oral presentation – but students should take time to reflect upon the lesson(s) they learned that will be valuable for them in the future and helpful to share with others.
6. Ask students to consider whether their personal challenge was similar to any of the ones encountered by the subjects in the video clips.
7. Often, a challenge – such as an illness or accident – can cause individuals to reflect and reconsider their life’s path. Ask students how the challenge they described influenced their growth and/or future decisions about what they want to do with their lives.

LESSON TWO: FACING CHALLENGES

ASSIGNMENTS (cont.)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES RESEARCH

Have students research the steps to ordination in one of the faiths represented in *The Calling* or a faith that is not in the film, such as Buddhism or a different sect of Judaism or Christianity.

If students are in a clerical program, have them research a different faith and report on the differences in the programs – including the most notable challenges in each. Students can share their findings with the class and discuss similarities and differences.

NONFICTION READING: REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Ask students to read and analyze an excerpt from or the entirety of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html). Have them respond to the following questions as a written assignment or as a class discussion. As an extension activity, have students find another testament to overcoming an obstacle by a contemporary or historical figure whose work or cause they admire.

Questions

1. To whom is the letter addressed? Why does King write this particular letter – when he normally does not respond to criticism?
2. Summarize King's central ideas in the text.
3. What evidence does King offer to support his point of view?
4. How does King explain why, in his position as a religious leader, he took the actions that landed him in jail?
5. Summarize the sequence of events that led to King's incarceration.
6. What positive social and political outcomes were precipitated by King's incarceration and his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"?

ALL-CLASS COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT: PART TWO

In Part One described in Lesson One, students selected a cause or issue they would like to address as a class. Now students need to develop their plan that will drive their community service work. Ask students to form small groups and have them select one of the following three tasks to complete for their action plan:

1. Define the problem. An important part of developing a community service plan is understanding the problem and helping others to understand it as well. Ask students to write one sentence that summarizes the problem they are trying to address. Then ask them to research three statistics, stories, or facts that show evidence of that problem.
2. Write a mission statement and a vision statement. Explain that a mission statement is a sentence that explains what the group will do to address the problem students have identified. A vision statement is a sentence or set of sentences that explains how you envision a world in which the problem has been solved. This is the vision students are working toward with their project; the mission statement explains how they will get there.
3. Brainstorm three plans of action for the project. Will students recruit 10 volunteers to participate in garbage cleanup? Will they present in front of the school board? Will they write a letter to the editor or create a Public Service Announcement (PSA)?

Once students have completed their small-group work, ask one student from each group to present their completed tasks to the large group. Allow others to give input, make edits, and build upon the small-group work. Finally, ask students to vote on one of the three plans of action to take on as a class. Remind them that they should choose an activity that they think will most effectively address the problem and achieve the vision statement. If your class is larger, students can choose to take on more than one activity.

LESSON THREE: LEADERSHIP AND VALUES

OVERVIEW

Audience

Grades 7-12, College

Time

One to two 50-minute class periods,
plus assignments

Subject Areas

Social Studies, Sociology, Language
Arts, World Religions, Comparative
Religion, Interfaith Dialogue, Leadership
Development, Theology/Divinity Programs

“I am always more
interested in what I
am about to do than
in what I have already
done.”

Rachel Carson

Purpose of the Lesson

This lesson encourages students to think about the qualities of an effective leader and the relationship between leadership and values. Discussion of the film modules from the documentary *The Calling* and the [What's Your Calling? website](#) will provide opportunities for students to:

- Evaluate the qualities of an effective leader.
- Examine how values are related to leadership.
- Consider their own leadership qualities and aspirations.
- Undertake a leadership role in a project.
- Conduct peer evaluations of student projects in terms of accomplishment and leadership.

Materials

Depending on the activities and assignments you choose, you may need any of the following materials:

- *The Calling* educational DVD and an LCD projector or DVD player
- Computers, laptops, or tablets with internet access
- “L3 Worksheet: Defining Core Values”
- “L3 Worksheet: Guided by Values”
- Pens and writing paper

PRESCREENING DISCUSSION

What Is a Leader?

Explain to students that the film clips they are about to see are from the PBS documentary *The Calling* and/or the [What's Your Calling? website](#) and feature three people who are in the process of refining their values and stepping into leadership roles. Discuss the following questions with students:

1. What is a leader?
2. Think of someone you know whom you consider to be a leader. What makes him or her a leader? What values does he or she represent as a leader?
3. Do you consider yourself a leader? Why or why not?
4. Have you ever been in a leadership role? If so, describe what it was like. What led to you taking that role? Did it relate to a value that was important to you?

LESSON THREE: LEADERSHIP AND VALUES

VIEWING THE FILM MODULES: ROLE MODELS

Preview the following film modules and video clips before your class and choose three that best fit your student audience and learning objectives. Ask students to take notes while watching the videos and pay particular attention to the leadership styles of each of the subjects.

THE CALLING DOCUMENTARY

Film modules are streaming online at <http://itvs.org/educators> and <http://www.pbslearningmedia.org>.

Tahera Ahmad



Tahera Ahmad is an outspoken young woman from a traditional Pakistani-American family. She is a coach and mentor for Muslims in high school while studying to be an Islamic chaplain. A trip to Egypt takes her out into the world for the first time, where she reflects on being a leader.

Discussion Questions

1. Ahmad says: "I feel such a huge responsibility knowing that I'm this potential leader and knowing that I'm someone who people look up to, and yet, I'm just this small person. I have so much to learn." What does this statement tell you about Ahmad as a person? As a future leader? How will these feelings influence her leadership style?
2. At another point in the film, Ahmad says, "In these past two years, I've learned to have more compassion for others – and for myself." Why is compassion an important quality for a leader to have? What are some other qualities that Ahmad shows in the way she works with others; for example, when she speaks to the women in the last scene?

Shmuly Yanklowitz



Shmuly Yanklowitz is an intellectual rabbinical student at New York City's Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School – and a passionate activist. A Modern Orthodox Jew, he feels compelled to break boundaries – to resist becoming an old-style rabbi stuck within the walls of the synagogue.

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss what Yanklowitz means when he says: "Prayer is how we live. We live in prayer, and so, I really believe Martin Luther King when he says he prayed with his feet." What iconic leaders have inspired you when thinking about your calling?
2. For Yanklowitz, it's important to be "breaking boundaries" in terms of what a rabbi does. He does not separate his role as a rabbi from his identity as an activist. How would you describe the connection between Yanklowitz's values as an activist and his values as a religious leader? How does the importance he places on social justice define his leadership style?

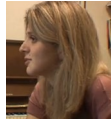
For additional context and glossary terms regarding the religions represented in the film clips, distribute "L1 Handout: Religions in *The Calling*."

LESSON THREE: LEADERSHIP AND VALUES

VIEWING THE FILM MODULES: ROLE MODELS (cont.)

WHAT'S YOUR CALLING? WEBSITE VIDEO CLIPS

Jill Perlman – Rabbinical Student



Jill Perlman talks about giving her first sermon and her decision to become a rabbi after growing up in an interfaith household. As Jill pursues her calling, she struggles with questions about acceptance and identity.

<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/who-determines-your-identity>

Donn Teske – Farmer



Go to college, or take over the family farm?

Donn Teske is a farmer in Kansas. He talks about family, legacy, home, and his decision to take over the family farm instead of going to college.

<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/what-do-you-hope-to-leave-for-the-next-generation>

Kevin Coval – Poet; Co-founder, Louder Than a Bomb



Poet Kevin Coval talks about the importance of understanding where you come from and how it impacts your life. He co-founded the Chicago youth poetry festival, Louder Than a Bomb.

<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/where-do-you-come-from-how-does-that-shape-your-story>

Joshua Stanton – Blogger, *Tikkun Daily* and *The Huffington Post*; Co-founder, *Journal of Inter-Religious Dialogue* and Religious Freedom USA



Joshua Stanton talks about his journey to finding his calling. He believes everyone has a calling, an internal feeling of hope, aspiration, or excitement about an idea.

<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/how-did-you-realize-what-you-want-to-do-in-life>

Ronit Avni – Filmmaker; Human Rights Advocate



Ronit Avni turns a lens on nonviolence in Israel-Palestine. She talks about her work in fusing human rights work with filmmaking to advance a social change agenda and the importance of shedding light on important stories that the world can learn from.

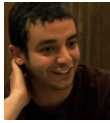
<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/what-do-you-do-when-your-backyard-is-burning>

LESSON THREE: LEADERSHIP AND VALUES

VIEWING THE FILM MODULES: ROLE MODELS (cont.)

WHAT'S YOUR CALLING? WEBSITE VIDEO CLIPS (CONT.)

Moustafa Moustafa – Founder, United 2 Heal



Moustafa Moustafa is the founder of United 2 Heal, an interfaith humanitarian organization that collects and redistributes surplus medical supplies to hospitals in need around the world. He explains how collaborations between diverse groups can lead to great accomplishments in the service to others.

<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/how-can-diversity-strengthen-service>

Ethan Austin – Co-founder, GiveForward Inc.



Ethan Austin writes about his journey towards discovering his calling. He co-founded GiveForward, a company that helps people who are fighting cancer and other illnesses, pay their medical bills.

Essay only. This entry contains no video content.

<http://whatsyourcalling.org/campaign/how-would-you-like-to-be-remembered>

Discussion Questions

1. What ideas or beliefs are important to each individual interviewed? How do they affect his or her leadership style?
2. What activities that the subjects engage in are part of their role as leader? What activities or ideas are not specific to this role?
3. Which leadership style do you feel is most like your own or that of other leaders you know and admire?

LESSON THREE: LEADERSHIP AND VALUES

POSTSCREENING ACTIVITY: DEFINING CORE VALUES

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask students to help you create a working definition of *core value*. Here is an example: A core value is a defining principle that guides a person's internal conduct as well as his or her relationship with the external world.
2. Tell the class they are going to make some decisions about what is important to them as individuals and as a class. Distribute "L3 Worksheet: Defining Core Values" to each student and provide small sheets of paper, scotch tape, and markers (thick enough so that the text is legible at a short distance). Complete the worksheet as indicated.
3. Help your students learn to apply their values to imagined situations. Distribute "L3 Worksheet: Guided by Values" and allow your students time to consider how they would respond in each situation. Then facilitate a group discussion by sharing their responses.

ASSIGNMENTS

Select one or more of the following assignments to complete:

STUDENTS AS LEADERS WITH A CALLING

Ask students to think of a project they want to accomplish that aligns with their core values – something they can accomplish on their own or by leading others – a calling.

It might be simple, such as vowing never to buy another small plastic bottle of water (and encouraging friends and family to follow suit), or they might decide on a longer-term commitment, such as teaching at their congregation's religious school or volunteering as a tutor in an underserved community.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA)

Ask students to choose an issue they'd like to change and create a PSA about it. PSAs can be in the form of a web commercial, magazine ad, or podcast. They should clearly explain the problem and why individuals should get involved to make a difference.

NONFICTION READING: RACHEL CARSON

Ask students to read the article "From Calm Leadership, Lasting Change" in *The New York Times* by Nancy F. Koehn about Rachel Carson's seminal work *Silent Spring*: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/28/business/rachel-carsons-lessons-50-years-after-silent-spring.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

After reading, students should complete the following questions. As an extension, have students read *Silent Spring* and answer the same questions.

Questions

1. What are the central ideas of the text?
2. What is the author's point of view?
3. What evidence does the author use to support her point of view?
4. What personal and professional challenges did Carson face? How did they influence her growth, values, and/or leadership?
5. What events or experiences contributed to the author's reasons for writing the text?
6. What is the historical significance of *Silent Spring*?

LESSON THREE: LEADERSHIP AND VALUES

ASSIGNMENTS (cont.)

LEADER INTERVIEW OR RESEARCH PROJECT

Ask students to choose a religious leader, alderman, youth mentor, teacher, or director in a service organization. This can be someone who is known historically or in current events – or it can be someone the student knows and respects. Using research and interview material as available, the students will write a three- to five-page paper describing this person's journey to becoming a leader, including the motivations, the principal focus of his or her work, the values that define his or her leadership, and why he or she is effective as a leader.

ALL-CLASS COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT: PART THREE

After completing Parts One and Two included in the previous lessons, students should now have a clear definition of the problem and a plan for how to address it. It is time to put the plan into action. Make sure to secure proper permission slips from parents and approvals from your administration. Ask students to undertake their plan during or after school hours. When they are finished, ask them to reflect on their experiences. Here are some guiding questions:

1. What did they choose to do and why?
2. What people or organizations did they work with and how did they execute the project?
3. How successful were they in accomplishing their goal?
4. What challenges did they encounter along the way and how did they overcome them?
5. How did the challenges help shape their growth and learning?
6. What more needs to be done?

As an extension activity, students can submit a press release to their local paper, including any information that will encourage members of the community to support their endeavor and help it to continue.



ISLAM

Tahera Ahmad and Bilal Ansari

BELIEF TYPE: Monotheistic

NUMBER OF ADHERENTS: About 1.2 billion

HISTORY: Founded by the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century.

SACRED TEXT: The Qur'an (Koran)

DOCTRINE: Summarized in Six Articles of Faith, a Muslim must believe in:

1. One God;
2. The angels of God;
3. The books of God, especially the Qur'an;
4. The prophets of God, especially the Prophet Muhammad;
5. The Day of Judgment (or the afterlife);
6. The supremacy of God's will (or predestination).

PRACTICE: Defined by the Five Pillars of Islam: faith, prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and alms.

PRINCIPAL SECTS:

- **Sunni:** Majority group that followed Abu Bakr, Muhammad's father-in-law and one of the first converts to Islam.
- **Shi'ite:** Group that believes that Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law, was Muhammad's successor.
- **Sufism:** Mystical form of Islam; practitioners seek a personal experience of God through self-denial, meditation, prayer, and fasting.

KEY TERMS

- **Allah:** Refers to God or the Oneness of God; the name has no plural and no feminine form.
- **Bilal:** A companion of the Prophet Muhammad.
- **Bismillah:** "In the Name of Allah" or "I begin in the Name of Allah."
- **Burka:** A long, loose garment covering the whole body, worn in public by many Muslim women.
- **Halal:** An adjective signifying that something is lawful and permissible to use/consume in Islam.
- **Ibadah:** Devotion or worship.
- **Imam:** "Leader" in Arabic; the term is generally applied to religious leaders.
- **Inshallah:** "With the will of Allah."
- **Islam:** Revealed to the Prophet Muhammad as a religion; Islam is the verbal noun of asalama – to submit oneself to God.
- **Jihad:** A holy war (striving or fighting in the way of Allah) by the order of an imam.
- **Labbaik:** Literally means "a response to the call."
- **Mecca:** A holy city in Saudi Arabia.
- **Muhammad:** The last of the Messengers of Allah to mankind.
- **Prophet:** A Messenger sent by Allah to mankind; for example, Adam, Nuh (Noah), Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus [A.S.]), and the Last Messenger, Muhammad.
- **Qira-at:** The reading of the prayer.
- **Qur'an:** The Holy Book, the Living Miracle, revealed from Allah as a guidance to mankind.
- **Ramadhan:** The ninth and the holiest month of the Islamic calendar. It is the month of fasting from sunrise to sunset.
- **Salam:** A salutation and the last recitation at the end of Salat.
- **Salat:** The obligatory prayers.
- **Shia:** Muslims of the branch of Islam that adheres to the orthodox tradition and acknowledges the first four caliphs as rightful successors of Muhammad.
- **Sunni:** Muslims of the branch of Islam that adheres to the orthodox tradition and acknowledges the first four caliphs as rightful successors of Muhammad.

Source: Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project (<http://www.Al-Islam.org>)

JUDAISM

Shmuly Yanklowitz

BELIEF TYPE: Monotheistic

NUMBER OF ADHERENTS: About 14 million

HISTORY: History traces to the creation of mankind, but Jewish origins begin with Abraham and the Hebrews.

SACRED TEXTS: The Torah (the first five books of the Bible) and the Talmud (rabbinical writings that interpret the Torah).

DOCTRINE: Thirteen Articles of Faith drawn up by Maimonides summarize core Jewish beliefs:

God exists, God is one and unique, God is incorporeal, and God is eternal.

PRACTICE: Actions, not beliefs, are the most important aspect of Jewish religious life.

PRINCIPAL SECTS:

- **Orthodox:** Strict interpretation and application of the laws canonized in the Talmud.
- **Conservative:** Jews should strive to live by Jewish law, while allowing for modernization.
- **Reform Judaism:** Jewish traditions should be compatible with the surrounding contemporary culture.

KEY TERMS

- **Beit (Hebrew for "house"):** House.
- **Kasher (Hebrew for "fit"):** Fit for ritual use. Also a verb meaning "to make a food or object fit for ritual use."
- **Kashrut (Hebrew for "fitness"):** Jewish dietary laws.
- **Kedusha (Hebrew for "holiness"):** Holiness.
- **Kippah (Hebrew; yarmulke in Yiddish):** Disc-like head covering.
- **Hashem (Hebrew for "The Name"):** God. Used especially by Orthodox Jews to avoid saying a name of God.
- **Mazel tov (Hebrew for "good planetary influences"):** "Good luck." Usually said at the end of a wedding or upon hearing good news.
- **Midrash (from Hebrew derash, meaning "sermon"):** Stories, sermons, parables, and other material explaining the Talmud.
- **Mikva:** Body of natural water used for ritual cleansing.
- **Minyan:** Quota of 10 adult Jews required for certain prayers and observances.
- **Mishnah (Hebrew for "a teaching that is repeated"):** Rabbinic commentary on the Torah and part of the Talmud. Codified ca. 200 CE by Judah Ha-Nasi.
- **Mishneh Torah (Hebrew for "repetition of Torah"):** The book of Deuteronomy or, more commonly, the code of Maimonides.
- **Mitzvah (pl. mitzvot):** Divine commandment, religious action. Sometimes used more generally to refer to any good deed.
- **Rabbi (Hebrew for "teacher"):** The chief religious official of a synagogue, trained usually in a theological seminary and duly ordained, who delivers the sermon at a religious service and performs ritualistic, pastoral, educational, and other functions in and related to his or her capacity as a spiritual leader of Judaism and the Jewish community.
- **Shalom:** "Hello," "goodbye," or "peace."
- **Shabbat:** The seventh day of the week, on which God rested from His creation of the world.
- **Tikkun olan:** The healing of the world; world peace; social justice.
- **Torah (Hebrew for "Law"):** The first five books of the Jewish Bible. Also known as the Five Books of Moses or the Pentateuch.
- **Yarmulke (Yiddish; kippah in Hebrew):** Male head covering.

Source: <http://www.religionfacts.com/judaism/glossary.htm>

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

Steven Gamez

BELIEF TYPE: Monotheistic; deity referred to as “the Trinity” (or “triune God”): Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

NUMBER OF ADHERENTS: About 1 billion

HISTORY: Formed in 33 CE, official religion of the Roman Empire in 380 AD.

SACRED TEXTS: The Bible (New and Old Testaments)

DOCTRINE: Divinity of Christ, inspiration of the Bible, special authority of the Pope, ability of saints to intercede for believers, Purgatory as a place of afterlife purification before entering heaven, and transubstantiation – the bread and wine in the Eucharist becoming the true body and blood of Christ.

PRACTICE: Services follow a prescribed liturgy; Members of the clergy take vows of chastity and obedience.

KEY TERMS

- **Altar:** A table on which the sacrifice of the Mass is offered. It is the center of importance in the place where the Mass is celebrated. Also called *The Table of the Lord*.
- **Brother:** Term for a man who is a member of a religious order, but is not ordained or studying for the priesthood.
- **Catholic:** A Greek word for “universal.” First used in the title “Catholic Church” in a letter written by St. Ignatius of Antioch to the Christians of Smyrna about 107 A.D.
- **Holy Communion:** Occurs after saying a preparatory prayer. The celebrant (or other designated ministers) gives communion (the consecrated bread and wine) to himself and the other ministers at the altar, and then communion is distributed to the congregation.
- **Mass:** The common name for the Eucharistic liturgy of the Catholic Church. Synonyms: *Eucharist, Celebration of the Liturgy, Eucharistic celebration, Sacrifice of the Mass, Lord's Supper*.
- **Ordain and Ordination:** Terms referring to the conferral of the sacrament of holy orders on a deacon, priest, or bishop.
- **Parish:** A specific community of the Christian faithful within a diocese, which has its own church building, under the authority of a pastor who is responsible for providing them with ministerial service. Most parishes are formed on a geographic basis, but they may be formed along national or ethnic lines.
- **Seminary:** An educational institution for men preparing for Holy Orders.
- **Seven sacraments:** Rituals believed to be commanded by God and effective in conferring grace on the believer: Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Confirmation, Marriage, Holy Orders, and Anointing of the Sick.
- **Vow:** A promise made to God with sufficient knowledge and freedom, which has as its object a moral good that is both possible and better than its voluntary omission.

Source: <http://www.catholic.org/clife/terms.php>

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY (SUBSET OF CONSERVATIVE PROTESTANTISM)

Rob Pene is Evangelical Christian, Jeneen Robinson is African Methodist Episcopal

BELIEF TYPE: Monotheistic; Catholics and conservative Protestants agree on major theology.

NUMBER OF ADHERENTS: About 648 million

HISTORY: Began in Great Britain in the 1700s, a subset of Protestantism.

SACRED TEXTS: The Bible (New and Old Testaments)

DOCTRINE: Main differences between conservative Protestantism and Roman Catholicism are expressed by Protestant “Solas,” including:

- “Sola Scriptura”: The Bible is the sole authority for beliefs and practices.
- “Sola Gratia”: One is saved through grace alone – not deeds – which is given to the believer by God directly.
- “Sola Fide”: Salvation is by the individual’s faith alone in trusting Jesus as Lord and Savior.

PRACTICE: Personal conversion (being “born again”); Active evangelizing through missionary work, Bible study, social causes; Biblical authority and the literal truth of the Bible.

KEY TERMS

- **Evangelical:** Refers to Christians who emphasize the need for a definite commitment to faith in Christ and a duty by believers to persuade others to accept Christ.
- **Evangelical Christianity:** Historically refers to Protestant churches that believe
 - a) in the supreme authority of Holy Scripture in doctrinal matters of the church;
 - b) salvation of the believer comes from placing faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Evangelist:** A preacher or revivalist who seeks conversions by preaching to groups.
- **Faith:** Trust, belief, or conviction.
- **Salvation:** The promise that if one believes that Jesus Christ came down from heaven, died on the cross for the sins of the world, and that God raised him from the dead, that person will have “eternal life” (in heaven after physical death) and will not truly “die” (go to hell after physical death).

African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church: The AME Church is the oldest African American Christian denomination in the United States, founded in 1799. It was created by Richard Allen, the first black man to be ordained in the Methodist Episcopal Church because of discrimination and even physical abuse he and other freed blacks had to endure at the hands of white Christians during religious services. In 1787, Allen and some others made a formal break with the Methodist Episcopal Church and founded the Free African Society; however, this group gradually moved away from Allen’s theological position and became increasingly associated with Quaker ideas, something which displeased Allen greatly and caused him to found a new church altogether. In 1799 six black Methodist congregations came together and founded the African Methodist Episcopal Church, consecrating Richard Allen as their first bishop.

Source: <http://www.ame-church.com/>

Presbyterian: After the Protestant Reformation in the 1500s, reformed communities developed in England, Holland, and France. The Presbyterian church traces its ancestry back primarily to Scotland and England. The Rev. Francis Makemie, who arrived in the United States from Ireland in 1683, helped to organize the first American presbytery, the Presbytery of Philadelphia, in 1706. In 1726, the Rev. William Tennent founded a ministerial “log college” in Pennsylvania. Twenty years later, the College of New Jersey (now known as Princeton University) was established. Other Presbyterian ministers, such as the Rev. Jonathan Edwards and the Rev. Gilbert Tennent, were driving forces in the so-called “Great Awakening,” a revivalist movement in the early 18th century. One of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, the Rev. John Witherspoon, was a Presbyterian minister and the president of Princeton University from 1768 to 1793.

Source: <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/101/history/>

L1 WORKSHEET: DESCRIBE YOUR FUTURE

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Describe what your future will be like based on what you “saw” during the visualization activity in class. Use the following questions as a guide to write down as much information as you can, including details – such as images, sensations, and emotions – and anything else that stood out or surprised you.

1. What is your first image or sensation when you wake up in the future?

2. Describe your morning routine and home surroundings. What do you do first? Do you live with family? Friends? Do you live in a house? Apartment? What is it like? Modern or older? Big or small? What do you eat for breakfast? Describe your surroundings. Urban? Suburban? Rural?

3. How do you get to work? What do you see along the way? If you work at home, do you go to a special room in the house? Describe it.

4. What is the place where you work like? Who is there? How does it feel to arrive?

5. What work do you do? How often do you interact with others – either clients or co-workers or both? What are the interactions like?

6. How does it feel to be there? How do you feel about the work you are doing?

7. When you finish your workday what do you do and with whom?

8. How do you feel at the end of your day?

L2 HANDOUT: INTERVIEW A MENTOR

For this activity you will interview someone you can spend a little time with on the job and interview as a mentor or role model. This can be a member of the clergy you already know, a person whose career is similar to your future calling, or simply someone whose work you admire. If you need help identifying an individual for this interview, consider contacting your local Boys & Girls Club; Big Brothers Big Sisters program; homeless shelter; soup kitchen; Humane Society; or organizations supporting wildlife preservation, human rights, environmental advocacy, etc.

1. Select your mentor.
2. Write a letter or email or prepare a phone call script to request the interview.
3. Decide if you are going to do a video, audio, or written presentation. Work with a partner to prepare and refine your interview questions. Questions should address how the person chose this career, whether he or she considers it a calling (and what the word *calling* means), and what obstacles or challenges had to be faced in order to pursue this calling and whether they would change what their response was.
4. Present your questions to your teacher before scheduling the interview.
5. Schedule and prepare for the interview. If you are videotaping or recording audio, make sure to test your equipment in advance. If you are planning to do a written piece, it is a good idea to record the audio, so you can focus on the person without the need to take detailed notes.
6. Conduct the interview.
7. Send a thank-you note to anyone who helped you, especially the mentor.
8. Edit and refine the interview into a presentable format.
9. Present your interview to the class as a written story – or as an audio or video piece.

L2 WORKSHEET: A LIFE-CHANGING CHALLENGE

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Think about a challenging experience that affected you in deep and lasting ways.

It might be something you intentionally chose to do, such as a marathon or a difficult course of study, or something you did not expect, such as an illness or injury. Perhaps you overcame a challenge and learned something important from the experience.

Or, perhaps you did not succeed and you learned something equally important but entirely different. You might find yourself thinking about something that happened to a family member or close friend.

You can use any of the above examples for this activity, as long as it's a challenging experience that changed your life and taught you something important.

Describe the experience from beginning to end and share it with the class in a written, oral, or visual presentation.

1. What was the challenge?
2. How did the challenge present itself?
3. What was your first reaction/response?
4. What did you decide to do? What or who inspired your decision?
5. What did you do? (Describe details, feelings, events, etc.)
6. What was the outcome? Would you say that you succeeded in facing the challenge?
7. If so, what contributed to your success?
8. If not, why? What would you have done differently?
9. What lesson(s) did you learn?
10. How will this experience help you in the future? How might sharing it help others?
11. Was your challenge similar to any of those encountered by the subjects in the video modules?

L3 WORKSHEET: DEFINING CORE VALUES

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

PART ONE

The purpose of this activity is for you to think more deeply about core values that you hold. In the spaces below, write about your values.

1. Identify a core value that governs your behavior or life.
2. Write about how you came to that value, how or why it developed.
3. Explain how the value protects or serves you.
4. Describe an actual or possible example of you behaving according to the value.
5. Describe a situation in which you might want to hide your value, or a situation that could make your value hard to live by.
6. On a blank sheet of paper, write the value that most guides your decisions and actions. Write it in large letters and tape it to your chest so that others can see it clearly.
7. Now walk around the room and talk about your value to five people (you tell them and they tell you): Why did you pick that value? If you have a story connected to how that became your most important value, please share it.

Before the class starts Part Two, one student will write on the board each value that is represented in the class. Each time a word is mentioned an additional time, put a check next to it.

PART TWO

1. The teacher will ask you to form groups of four to five students.
2. Work together with your group to select the three most important values from the list on the board – and to prioritize them from one to three. Discuss and defend your choices.
3. Have a representative from your group go to the board and write your ordered list.
4. The representative should give a short explanation about how and why your group decided on the priorities.
5. Have the class vote on a final list of three priorities.

PART THREE

Use the space below to answer the following:

1. What did this activity teach you about your values?
2. When you were working with the group and/or defending your values and priorities, what did you learn about yourself and your leadership qualities?
3. If your values conflicted with those of another group member, how did you resolve the issue? Did you hold back or speak up? Do you wish you had said more? Less?
4. Were there values you would concede and some you would not?
5. Were you able and willing to listen to other people's opinions? Did listening change your mind about any of your values and their importance?
6. What did you think about some of your group members' values, especially if they seemed to conflict with your own?
7. How is this exercise like "real life" when you are faced with decisions in which values come into play?

L3 WORKSHEET: GUIDED BY VALUES

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Write down what you would do in each of the following situations. Discuss your answers with others in a small group and compare your responses.

STEALING

You discover that your friend is stealing money from a fundraising drive organized by your school band. When you confront your friend about it, he or she says to stay out of it and continues stealing. You know that that money is meant for helping band members travel to competitions and for purchasing instruments for students to use. And you know your friend may get in serious trouble if you tell. What do you do?

DRUG PROBLEM

Someone you know from school is doing drugs and you are worried that he is getting addicted. You are more of an acquaintance than a close friend but you see that the person's friends aren't doing anything, and you think that they might have the same habits. What do you do?

NIGHT SHIFT

You are walking home right before dark and your family is waiting for you. You see someone running away and you see a girl sitting on the curb crying. She doesn't appear to be hurt – but she is clearly unhappy. You don't see any lights on in the house behind her. She looks up at you briefly and then puts her face back into her hands and continues to cry. What do you do?

WRONG PARTNER

You see your best friend's mother at a restaurant getting very cozy with someone who is not her husband. When you were at your friend's house a few days ago, the parents acted perfectly normal. You are pretty certain they are not getting divorced. What do you do? Do you tell anyone (your friend, parents, pastor, or rabbi)? Why or why not?

Credits

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Gail Evenari started teaching in Oakland, California, in 1975 and has worked in the field of education ever since. Spurred by her work developing Social Studies curriculum materials for textbook publishers, Evenari began her own business as a writer and documentary filmmaker. She has produced and collaborated on multiple educational film projects, including *Spirit of the Land*, *Wayfinders: A Pacific Odyssey*, *The New Americans*, *A Doula Story*, *Hold Your Breath*, and *The Calling*. Currently, Evenari is working on a groundbreaking multimedia project that teaches children about global cultures and environments and encourages them to become compassionate, informed, and engaged citizens of the world.

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