How Can I Help?

GOD’S CALLING FOR KIDS

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Illustrated by
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Being a child is a vocation, a calling from God. Not only that, Luther said that a little boy doing what his parents say or a little girl doing her chores is doing a holier work than that of the strictest monks or nuns (“The Fourth Commandment,” The Large Catechism).

How can that be? Because Christian children have faith and live out that faith in their everyday lives where God has placed them, just as their parents do. When we hear the word vocation, we think about jobs and how we make our living, but the word literally means “calling.” Paul summarizes the doctrine of vocation: “Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him” (1 Corinthians 7:17).

We have been “called” by the Gospel, as the Small Catechism says, something that first happened in Baptism. God “assigns” us to different spheres of life and “calls” us to them through the course of our lives. Christians have multiple vocations: in the workplace, but also in the church (as in our “called and ordained” pastors), in the society (as citizens), and in the family (as husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters).

The purpose of every vocation is to love and serve our neighbors. Our relationship with God is based solely on His love for us in Christ, but then He sends us out into our everyday callings to love and to help the people He brings into our lives through our various callings (1 John 4:7–21).

So this applies to baptized children as well!

Their world is much smaller than an adult’s, but they, too, are learning to serve in church (going to Sunday School and worship services), in the society (learning to be well-behaved in public), in their future workplace (developing their talents and beginning their education), and—most important for them—in the family (learning to honor their parents and to get along with their neighbors, who are their brothers or sisters).

Luther taught that God is present in all vocations, and they are grounded in Him (marriage manifests Christ and the Church, parenthood is grounded in our heavenly Father, childhood rests in the Son of God). Furthermore, God Himself works through vocations. He gives us our daily bread through farmers and bakers. He heals us through doctors and nurses. He protects us through police officers and firefighters. He creates and cares for children through mothers and fathers.

This means that God is present in children and works through children as well! We parents know how much God blesses us through our children, how they pull love out of us, force us into responsibility, and turn us into adults.

Part of the vocation of being a parent is to help our children grow up into callings of their own. This book is designed to help with that. It is written by my daughter. She and I collaborated on a book entitled Family Vocation: God’s Calling in Marriage, Parenthood, and Childhood. How happy she makes me to see how God is working through her in her various callings as a deaconess, a wife, a mother, and a writer!

Being a child is the only vocation that everyone has (since everyone has been born). And though children grow up into adults, they will always be sons or daughters of their parents. Those vocations are permanent. And as Christians, we are all permanently God’s children.

Parents are called to love and serve their children, and children are called to love and serve their parents. Both will be asking each other all of their lives, “How can I help?”

Gene Edward Veith
God is the greatest helper.
He is so great
He never needs help!
God may not need help, but I do.

God gives me people in my life so we can share His gifts.