



Hearing the Call: Listening to Your Inner Voice

Overview: The purpose of the “Hearing the Call” activity is to provide an opportunity for reflection. The poem prompts readers to think about what it means to “be called” to do something with their lives and to explore the ramifications of that call.

Category: Visioning, Personal Development, Perspective Taking

Bonner Recommended Sequence: This activity can be integrated with a junior renewal activity or at a senior retreat. It should be intentionally integrated with dialogue about vocational discernment.

expectation	explore	experience	example	expertise
			♥	♥

VALUES: ALL - community engagement, community building, diversity, social justice, international perspective, spiritual reflection

Level: This activity is most effective with individuals in the example and expertise stage as they will have a broader world and personal view.

Type: This is a structured activity suitable for use in a workshop, retreat or training session. It can also be used during a regular meeting. The latter half of the module (parts 3 & 4) can be used with individuals integrating reflective discussion during a one-on-one meeting.

Focus or Goals of this Guide:

- Assist students in conceptualizing what it means to be called to do something.
- Provoke participants to consider whose voice(s) is/are influencing and/or nurturing their sense of call.
- Provide an opportunity for students to reflect and to listen and to discern as it relates to their call.

Materials:

- “Mr. Holland’s Opus” video clip
- “The Call” poem
- “The Call” worksheets
- Pens and/or pencils
- VCR/DVD player

How to Prepare:

Read the activity to become familiar with the exercise. It is important to view the clip from *Mr. Holland’s Opus* in advance. This will allow you to see how the questions connect with the movie. In addition, you may develop additional questions you feel are appropriate to ask.

Facilitators are also encouraged to practice a “dramatic reading” of the poem or identify in advance someone else to do so. It is important, if you choose to have the poem read aloud, that the reader is familiar with the language and the feel of the text to give the hearer the best possible listening experience.

How to Do/Brief Outline:

The outline has the following five components:

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| 1) Introduce Activity | suggested time 5 minutes or less |
| 2) Show & discuss clip from <i>Mr. Holland’s Opus</i> | suggested time 15 minutes |
| 3) Read “The Call” Poem | suggested time 5 minutes or less |
| 4) Individual Reflection | suggested time 5-10 minutes |
| 5) Sharing | suggested time 15-30 minutes |

Part 1) Introduction

Suggested time: No more than 5 minutes

Say to participants:

Each of us has a song inside us, waiting to be played. Some people describe this music of the soul as our “calling”. In Mr. Holland’s Opus, a young woman is encouraged by her music teacher, Mr. Holland, to discover her song.

In the poem, “The Call”, the reader is challenged to think about the nature of being called to a specific vocation in life. The author, Oriah Mountain Dreamer, believes we each have a larger purpose in the world. In order to fulfill our larger purpose, we must take time to listen for, hear, and respond to our call. Our calling is something that is within us; it is not “found in the expectations of others.”

This activity will give us an opportunity to reflect on what it feels like when you are “called” to do something and how you might respond intellectually, spiritually, emotionally.

Part 2) Video Clip

Suggested time: No more than 15 minutes

Say:

Vocation is defined as that which someone is called to do. In addition to reading a definition of a word or concept, it is often helpful to see the “idea in action”. In this clip from Mr. Holland’s Opus, we can gain additional insights into the concepts of vocation.

Show the aforementioned clip from *Mr. Holland’s Opus*.

Ask:

How does this scene enhance our understanding of “calling.” (the music rested within her)

What characteristics might a call have? (we are called to do things we enjoy, have an undiscovered talent for, that are fun)

What role did Mr. Holland play in the discernment process? (he asked questions, he nurtured, he encouraged her to work through her fears and insecurities, he let her discover her own way, he quit playing... he supported her and then let her play on her own)

How that might also connect to the need for mentors in our lives?

Say:

Let’s now consider the concept of call through another artistic medium, poetry.

Part 3) Poetry Reading

Suggested time: No more than 5 minutes

If you are an effective reader or you have a participant who is gifted with dramatic interpretation, read the poem “The Call” to participants. The reader is strongly encouraged to spend time with this piece prior to sharing it with the participants. This allows for a more meaningful and nuanced interpretation of the work. (In order to have attention focused solely on the reader, you may choose to wait until Part 3 to distribute copies of the poem to participants.)

In the event you choose not to have the poem read aloud, distribute copies of “*The Call*” and ask participants to take some time to read it over and let it really sink in.

Part 4) Individual Reflection

Suggested time: 10 minutes

After hearing and/or reading the poem, distribute copies of the discussion questions. If the poem was not distributed in Part 2, distribute it to participants at this time.

Say to participants:

Keeping the words of “The Call” in mind, please respond to the questions on the handout provided. Please feel free to refer back to the printed poem as necessary.

Part 5) Sharing

Suggested time: 15 – 30 minutes

Depending on the level of emotional safety individuals feel with the group, they may wish to share in a more private setting, such as a one-on-one meeting.

If there is a high level of emotional comfort among the participants, ask individuals to share their responses with the group.

The amount of sharing time will vary based on the size of the group.

Handouts:

“The Call” poem

“The Call” worksheet

The Call

*I have heard it all my life,
A voice calling a name I recognized as my own.*

*Sometimes it comes as a soft-bellied whisper,
Sometimes it holds an edge of urgency.*

*But always it says: Wake up, my love. You are walking asleep.
There's no safety in that!*

*Remember what you are, and let this knowing
take you home to the Beloved with every breath.*

*Hold tenderly who you are, and let a deeper knowing
color the shape of your humanness.*

*There is nowhere to go. What you are looking for is right here.
Open the fist clenched in wanting and see what you already
hold in your hand.*

*There is no waiting for something to happen,
no point in the future to get to.
All you have ever longed for is here in this moment, right now.*

*You are wearing yourself out with all this searching.
Come home and rest.*

*How much longer can you live like this?
Your hungry spirit is gaunt, your heart stumbles. All this trying.
Give it up!*

*Let yourself be one of the God-mad,
faithful only to the Beauty you are.*

*Let the Lover pull you to your feet and hold you close,
dancing even when fear urges you to sit this one out.*

*Remember, there is one word you are here to say with your whole being.
When it finds you, give your life to it. Don't be tight-lipped and stingy.*

*Spend yourself completely on the saying.
Be one word in the great love poem we are writing together.*

Oriah Mountain Dreamer

6. What other thoughts do you have in response to this poem?