

Y4 RE: Special Roles and Responsibilities

Lesson 1

Think about something that has been handed down to you through your family, perhaps from a grandparent or even a brother or sister. The role of Christians today is to hand down their knowledge of Jesus to other people.

Important People in the Church

Specific people today have the responsibility of spreading the good news to other people. Their roles in the community include:

- Priests - preaching the word of God, sanctifying the Sacraments, providing pastoral guidance and spiritual direction, visiting the sick, leading the community in serving the poor
- Deacons - baptising, witnessing marriages, performing funeral and burial services outside of Mass, distributing Holy Communion, preaching the homily

1. *Why do you think the roles of priests and deacons are important in a Church community?*
2. *Which role or responsibility do you think is the most important? Why?*

Monks and Sisters

Religious people have special responsibilities to pray and to care for God's family. Read the information about monks and nuns on the following page and answer the questions below.

3. *What is special about a monk's way of life?*
4. *What do you think might be difficult about a monk's way of life?*
5. *What are the roles of a religious sister in the church?*
6. *Why are the duties of sisters important to the community?*



Monks

A monk is a man who devoted part or all of his life to a religion. The word comes from Ancient Greek, and can be translated as solitary. In Greek, the word can be used for men and women alike, but in English, a woman who does the same is called a nun. Monks either live alone, or together with other monks who share the same ideals.

Below are some laws monks might choose to obey:

- **Poverty:** the monk cannot own anything.
- **Solitude:** the monk should always be alone.
- **Silence:** the monk shall not speak unless it is necessary.
- **Generosity:** the monk should always help other people.
- **Duty:** The monk must do some things every day. For example, the monk must pray or meditate and must do some work.

Sisters

Women have served in the Catholic Church since its earliest days and inhabit unique roles within it. The women who take permanent vows devoting their lives to the church are known as sisters. Two different kinds of sisters exist: those who take simple vows and can leave their convents to offer service and those who take solemn vows, live alone and are called nuns.

Below are some of the duties of sisters and nuns:

- **Prayer and Contemplation:** Nuns are sisters who have taken solemn vows and cannot leave the monastery. Traditional nuns spend their time in contemplation, working in the monastery, praying and studying. Sisters who take solemn vows devote their lives to contemplating and engaging in communion with God. This lifestyle is meant to preach to others by example.
- **Education:** Sects such as the Sisters of the Holy Child have historically focused primarily on providing education in a parochial school environment. Sisters teach in rural communities in many countries as well as in universities.
- **Nursing:** Groups such as the Sisters of the Holy Cross work in many countries in small clinics and hospitals and provide a variety of services.