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LIFE TEEN
Leading Teens Closer to Christ
www.LifeTeen.com

QUICK GLANCE

ONE CHOICE

The Dignity of the Human Person

GOAL

The goal of “One Choice” is to help teens understand the inherent worth of every person and encourage them to conform their hearts to God’s heart, enabling their words and actions to reflect the dignity of the human person.

KEY TERMS

Pro-Life, Human Dignity, Social Justice

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:26-27, 31; Matthew 5:21-22; John 3:16-17, 10:10;
Romans 5:8

CATECHISM

2239, 2258-2262

RESOURCES

Spotify: “LT - Gather Music” (spotify:user:lifeteen)

Spotify: “LT - Break Music” (spotify:user:lifeteen)

Spotify: “LT - Send Music” (spotify:user:lifeteen)

Life Teen: “The Older Brother” (Life Support: September 2017)

Christopher Georges: “My Prayer Time — Instrumental Prayer and Worship Music” (youtube.com)

GOD TV “You Are Beautiful - Mike Young” (youtube.com)

AleissaCaraVEVO: “Alessia Cara - Scars To Your Beautiful” (youtube.com)

GATHER

The Life Night begins with a Gather in which teens create string art to emphasize how attached they get to things of their own creation.

PROCLAIM

The following are the key concepts of the Proclaim:

- An authentic pro-life lifestyle is about making one consistent choice to recognize the inherent dignity of all people and treat all people, no matter the circumstance, with respect by conforming our hearts to God’s heart.
- God chose to create us in His image and likeness. He chose to make us like His very self. In fact, when God created us, He called us “very good.”
- People not only have the right to life but also a right to life to the fullest. Social injustices, anger, hatred, and apathy violate human dignity and a consistent pro-life attitude.

BREAK

The teens break into small groups to brainstorm ways they can be more consistently pro-life in their homes, schools, and communities, and they are encouraged to commit to two of their ideas.

SEND

The teens engage in a Scriptural reflection on how much they are loved.

PREP

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SETUP

Decorate the room with pictures and short biographies of various people in the style of “Humans of New York.” Showcase the young and old, the rich and poor, famous athletes, celebrities, and pictures of people from Life Teen, the parish, and the teens’ schools and families. Get these pictures from Google images, Instagram accounts, or Snapchat.

For the Gather, have corkboard or foam board, nails, scissors, colored string or yarn, and copies of the “String Art Template” handout on tables. This handout can be found at the end of this Life Night.

SUPPLIES

- Tables
- Corkboard or foam-board
- Nails
- Scissors
- Colored string or yarn
- String art templates
- Bibles
- Butcher paper
- Markers
- “Pro-Life Commitment Card” handout copies
- “String Art Template” handout copies
- Mirrors, one per person

ASSIGNMENTS

Use the following list to assign core members to specific tasks:

Setup:

Gather:

Proclaim:

Break:

Send:

OUTLINE

ONE CHOICE

The Dignity of the Human Person

GATHER

String Art (25 min)

As teens enter, the core members welcome them and help get them started creating string art. Use the provided templates, which can be found at the end of this Life Night. Consider creating templates unique to the area. Think about local colleges that the seniors may want to attend, local sports teams that the teens may support, or the abbreviation of the parish's name.

Instruct the teens to outline their chosen image with nails, spacing them approximately a half-inch apart. Then, tie one end of a piece of colored string around the first nail and begin to loop it around the others. This can be done in any pattern; it does not have to be uniform. If they get to the end of a piece of string, tie it to the nearest nail and start with a new piece of string.

Suggestions

For a more varied Gather, consider giving teens an assortment of crafts to choose from. Provide sketchbooks, pencils, adult coloring books, colored pencils, Legos, and colored or patterned paper with origami directions.

Transition from the Gather to the Proclaim by instructing the teens to grab their string art and sit near the front of the main meeting space. Let them know they can finish it later if need be. Then, welcome them to the Life Night, begin in prayer, and introduce the core member giving the Proclaim.

PROCLAIM

“One Choice” Proclaim Teaching (15 min)

The teaching can be found on pages 13 to 16. The following key concepts are covered in the teaching:

- An authentic pro-life lifestyle is about making one consistent choice to recognize the inherent dignity of all people and treat all people, no matter the circumstance, with respect by conforming our hearts to God's heart.
- God chose to create us in His image and likeness. He chose to make us like His very self. In fact, when God created us, He called us “very good.”
- People not only have the right to life but also a right to life to the fullest. Social injustices, anger, hatred, and apathy violate human dignity and a consistent pro-life attitude.

BREAK

The Choice to Love Others (20 min)

Divide the teens into small groups of six to eight, with at least one core member in each group. Give each teen a Bible and instruct them to open their Bible to Matthew 25:31-45 and reference this passage throughout the small group. Additionally, project the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Transition in the activity by using the following:

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus told His disciples that helping those in need is an essential aspect of the Christian life. He told them to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the ill and imprisoned. Based on the words of Jesus, the Church lists fourteen works of mercy that will help us love others as God does and defend their right to life. Then, we will brainstorm ways to incorporate these works of mercy into our lives in small groups.

Give each small group a large sheet of butcher paper and markers, and instruct them to create three lists. The first list details ways to be pro-life at home. The second list is ways they can be pro-life at school. Finally, a third list details ways

they can be pro-life in their community. Encourage them to be creative and concrete. For example, rather than “Give food to someone hungry,” encourage the teens to have a more concrete plan that names a food pantry or soup kitchen they can volunteer at or plans to have granola bars in the car to give to a person experiencing homelessness.

Once the lists are created, instruct the core members to hand out the Pro-Life Commitment Cards, which can be found at the end of this Life Night. Have each teen choose two items from the lists they just brainstormed and commit to doing them throughout the week. Ask the teens to share what they are committing to and instruct core members to create a group chat to check in during the next few weeks that follow to see if they were able to keep their commitments.

Lastly, hang the posters near the exits of the main meeting space as an additional reminder.

SEND

The Choice to Love Oneself (15 min)

Instruct the teens to spread throughout the main meeting space, giving each other personal space so as to not distract one another. Play prayerful recorded music and distribute small mirrors and pens and paper so they can write down the words or phrases they want to remember most from the reflection. Encourage the teens to actively commit to looking at themselves throughout the entire reflection and not be distracted. Have a priest or a fatherly core member slowly and prayerfully read through the following reflection:

You and I have dignity and value, just like everyone else. And loving ourselves is vital to being able to love others. But we can be our own harshest critics. While it can be easy to see the goodness and beauty in our family and friends, we can struggle to see it in ourselves. But God sees it. And He always tries to tell us just how beautiful and good we are. These are God’s words to all of us.

Project and read Genesis 1:26-27, 31.

My child, I love you. Look at your reflection closely. Can you see why? Do you see how good and beautiful you are? I created you in

my image and likeness. No matter what you do or where you go, I will always love you more than you can imagine. Even if you turn your back on me, even if you go against me, I will never love you less. You are good because I made you, and I made you worthy of being loved.

Project and read Jeremiah 1:5 and Psalm 139:13, 16.

From the very first moment of your existence, I loved you. Before your parents even knew you, I loved you. And I created you for a purpose. I made you because I wanted you and had a plan for you.

Project and read Matthew 10:29-30.

I know you better than anyone else. I know who you are, where you have been, and what you have done. I see the hurt and joy you have experienced. I know your ups and downs, achievements and disappointments, and I love you through it all. I love you because you are worth loving.

Project and read Exodus 19:5.

You are my treasured possession. I have not cast you aside nor forgotten about you. Rather, I care for you each day. I pay attention to your needs and your desires. And though you sometimes doubt it, I have your best interest in mind.

Project and read Jeremiah 29:11.

I have such grand plans for you, so I want to give you many things because I love you. I made you for greatness and have put it within your grasp.

Project and read Revelation 21:3-4.

One day, you will be made perfect because you are worth it. I will remove all those things that cause you suffering because I love you and do not want to see you in pain. You deserve to be loved, which is why I am here to tell you that I love you. I always have, and I always will.

Close the Life Night by praying a Hail Mary as a large group.

PROCLAIM

ONE CHOICE

The Dignity of the Human Person

GETTING STARTED

This teaching is provided to give you an example of how to present this topic in an age-appropriate way, making it relevant to high school teens.

KEY TERMS

Pro-Life: The recognition and respect of the dignity of the human person, regardless of circumstance.

Human Dignity: The belief that because all people are created in God's image, they have fundamental worth.

Social Justice: The rights which flow from human dignity and procedures that guarantee respect.

TEACHING GUIDE

Begin the Proclaim by asking the teens what they think when they hear the term "pro-life." Then, ask them what they think of when they hear the term "pro-choice." Finally, ask them to compare the terms "pro-life" and "anti-abortion." Briefly discuss their comments and then transition into the rest of the teaching.

PRO-LIFE IS A CHOICE

We often hear the terms "pro-life" and "pro-choice" associated with abortion. They are political terms, rallying cries, and are often thrown around without much definition or background.

The Catholic Church offers a pro-life teaching. We believe that all people have the right to life and that governments must support this right. By utilizing our political system — writing to members

of Congress, supporting pro-life initiatives, voting pro-life — we can provide care and resources to the most vulnerable. In fact, it is the duty of the lay faithful to influence politics to serve the common good. (CCC 1913-1915, 2239)

However, being authentically pro-life is not just about making pro-life choices regarding controversial political issues, like abortion. Instead, being authentically pro-life is about making one consistent choice to love and respect all people, regardless of the circumstances, whether it is politically visible or not.

At the core of what it means to be pro-life is the recognition of the inherent human dignity of all people; it is recognizing and respecting that every person we meet is infinitely and immeasurably valuable. This value does not come from whether or not they can survive outside their mother's womb, what they can contribute to society, their grades, sports or art accomplishments, or what brands they wear; it comes from the fact that they are children of God, created by God in His image and likeness. (Genesis 1:26-27)

Project and slowly read Genesis 1:26-27, 31.

In the book of Genesis, God the Father lays the foundation for how much He loves and values us. God chose to create us in His image and likeness. He chose to make us like His very self. He did not have to. He did not create anything else that way. However, He wanted us to be like Him and have dominion over the rest of creation. In fact, when God created us, He called us "very good." (Genesis 1:31)

God reveals our value to us even more in the New Testament. The Incarnation and the Crucifixion show us how much God thinks we are worth. First, think about the Incarnation. The God of the universe, who made everything, chose to become human. He did not decide to become a dog, cat, or even an adorable penguin, but human. Jesus took on growing pains, hunger, thirst, and emotions, and He walked with us. Now, think about the Crucifixion. Jesus became a man, suffered, and died to save us from the separating effects of sin. (John 3:16-17; Romans 5:8)

CREATE AND DESTROY

Ask the following, “How would you feel if I asked you to destroy your string art?” Then, after a few moments of silence, consider destroying your string art project.

Many of us would be hesitant if we were asked to destroy our creations. After all, we put time, effort, and creativity into making it. In a certain way, we put part of ourselves into it. Our art reflects and reveals us. We might even say it has our fingerprint on it. And like our fingerprints, our art is unique. Even if we were to try and re-create our art again, it would probably come out different than the original. Similarly, every human being is one of God’s works of art. He created us and put a part of Himself into us. Each of us reflects and uniquely reveals Him. Every person we meet bears a fingerprint of God.

Project and read CCC 2258.

God created and values every human life. Just like how it would hurt to destroy what we made, it hurts God even more when we do not respect what He has created. (CCC 2258)

THE RIGHT TO (A FULL) LIFE

Furthermore, while Jesus was on Earth, He told us that He had come so that we could have life to the fullest. There is more to life than just surviving. We were made to thrive. (John 10:10)

Share an example from a TV series or movie about characters wanting to do more than survive, but thrive.

Although Jesus died to give us life to the fullest, we live in a world where people still struggle to simply survive. The world suffers mightily from an epidemic of homelessness, hunger, and poverty due to socioeconomic and climate-changing factors. Too often, we are apathetic to their suffering, too focused on ourselves to reach out to someone in greater need. If we ignore the injustices around us, we are not living out our consistent pro-life choice. (Pope Francis: “Laudato Si’,” 20-22)

But it is not just our inaction and apathy that prevent us from being authentically pro-life. Sometimes we act anti-life and are not even aware of it.

Project and read Matthew 5:21-22.

Jesus reminds us that hatred and insults towards others are all common violations of other people’s right to life. When we manipulate, use, bully, or speak out in hatred, we are not authentically pro-life.

Share a story of when you realized how you were treating people was not pro-life.

Being pro-life is not just a label, a sign we hold, a shirt we wear, a post we share, or a homily we hear; it is a lifestyle. It involves valuing what God values — justice and mercy — and enabling our actions and words to always reflect the dignity of every human person. Sometimes being pro-life means volunteering at a food pantry or a homeless shelter or donating items to those in need. Other times being pro-life means showing mercy and compassion to our enemies and those who do not “fit in” our social groups.

Going Deeper

The Church lists seven Spiritual Works of Mercy and seven Corporal Works of Mercy. The Works of Mercy are ways we can help meet each other’s physical and spiritual needs. God’s presence becomes known in caring for each other and living out these Works of Mercy. In fact, God’s presence is so apparent in the Works of Mercy that even people without faith can often recognize their goodness. (CCC 2447)

Invite the teens to list as many of the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy as they can. List any works of mercy the teens did not name. The following are the Corporal Works of Mercy: feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned (or ransom the captive), and bury the dead. The following are the Spiritual Works of Mercy: instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, admonish the sinners, bear patiently those who wrong us, forgive offenses, comfort the afflicted, and pray for the living and the dead.

When we care for a person’s physical, spiritual, or emotional needs, our actions must flow from our one choice to love people according to their inherent dignity. If we can choose to do that and commit to it, we will begin to be aware of the opportunities God gives us every day to be pro-life and live a bold and abundant life in Him.

STRING ART TEMPLATE

Cut out the shape and place it over the foam board. Place nails over the dots into the foam board. Weave string back and forth between the dots to create string art. Carefully, tear away the template.



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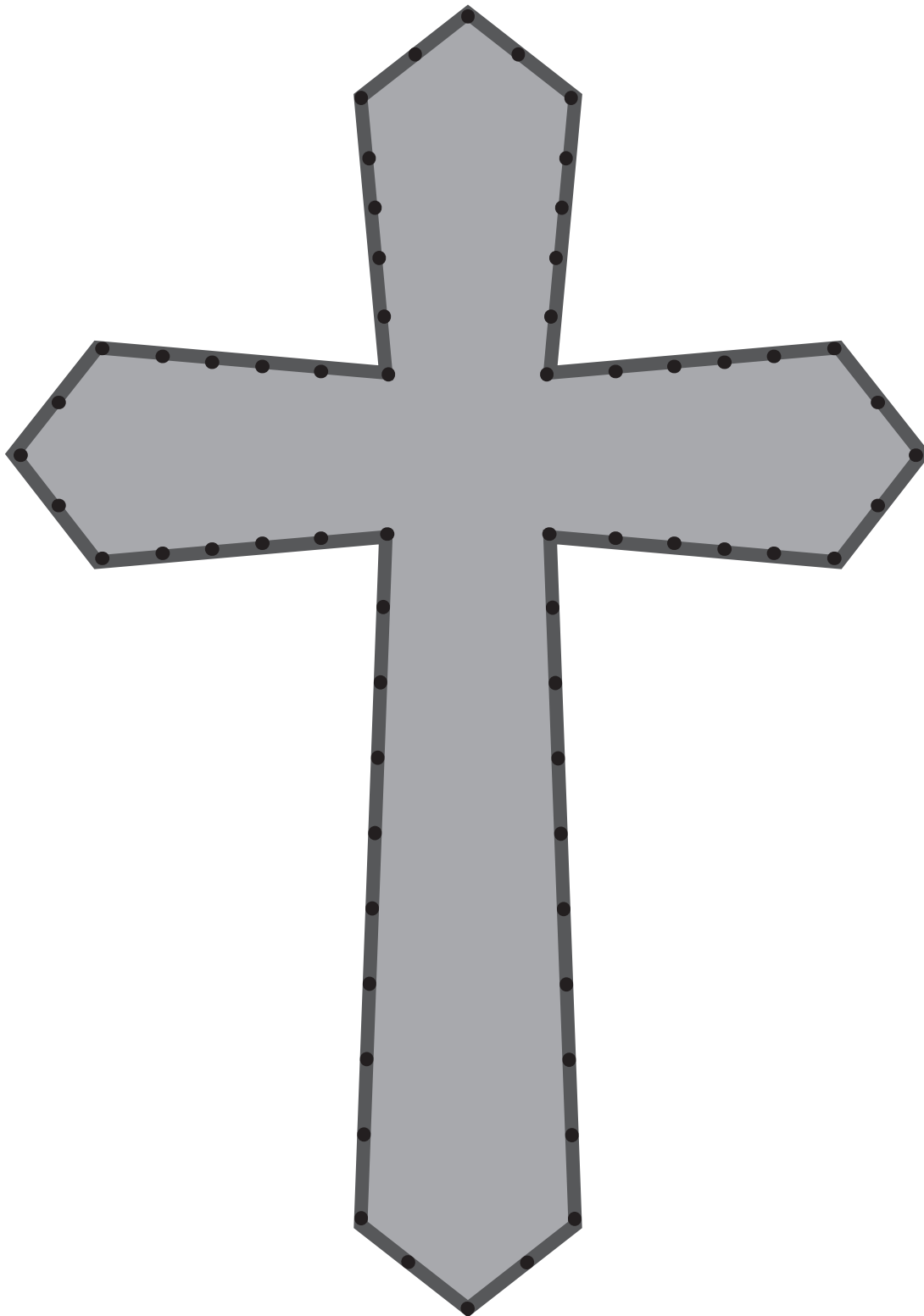
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PRO-LIFE COMMITMENT CARD

This week, I commit to making the choice to be consistently pro-life in the following ways:

- _____

- _____

Signature: _____



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ONE CHOICE

The Dignity of the Human Person

DEAR PARENTS AND FAMILY

At the core of what it means to be pro-life is the recognition of the inherent human dignity of all people; it is recognizing and respecting that every person we meet is infinitely and immeasurably valuable. This value does not come from whether or not they can survive outside their mother's womb, what they can contribute to society, their grades, sports or art accomplishments, or what brands they wear; it comes from the fact that they are children of God, created by God in His image and likeness. (Genesis 1:26-27)

The goal of "One Choice" is to help teens understand the inherent worth of every person and encourage them to conform their hearts to God's heart, enabling their words and actions to reflect the dignity of the human person. The conversation starters below will help you talk to your teen about the content they learned during the Life Night.

KEY CONCEPTS

- An authentic pro-life lifestyle is about making one consistent choice to recognize the inherent dignity of all people and treat all people, no matter the circumstance, with respect by conforming our hearts to God's heart.
- God chose to create us in His image and likeness. He chose to make us like His very self. In fact, when God created us, He called us "very good."
- People not only have the right to life but also a right to life to the fullest. Social injustices, anger, hatred, and apathy violate human dignity and a consistent pro-life attitude.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:26-27)

CATECHISM REFERENCE

"Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains for ever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being." (CCC 2258)

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Parents: Instead of facilitating a discussion, take time to write your son or daughter a letter. In this letter, explain how much you love them and how valuable they are to you. Make sure not to base this love on something your son or daughter accomplished but by being a beautiful creation of God. That is simply enough!