

BREAK THE ICE

**A LIFE TEEN
SEMESTER KICK-OFF**

QUICK GLANCE

ABOUT THIS LIFE NIGHT

We're leaning into the literal side of icebreakers with this engaging and high-energy Life Teen Social Night. Each game and activity centers around the idea of ice and is crafted with the goal of fun and connection. Teens meet new people and strengthen ties with old friends through structured interactions that might give them frosty fingers if they don't work as a team. The night concludes by thawing out around a bonfire before taking a moment to reflect on the coming year. This night is a great way to kick-off your semester with fun and relationship-building!

Invite your core members to participate fully while actively seeking teens who need encouragement to get involved. This Life Night has a high success rate when thoughtfully planned and energetically presented. Teens will respond to the contagious fun and be excited to return to Life Teen in the following weeks.

RESOURCES

Music

Spotify: "LT - Gather Music"

Spotify: "LT - Break Music"

Spotify: "LT - Send Music"

GOAL

The goal of "Break the Ice" is for the teens to have fun and get to know one another by engaging in fun icebreaker games.

ENVIRONMENT

Decorate the room to look like a frozen wonderland. Ice dominates the landscape as teens come dressed on theme for this Life Night.

GATHER

Panicked Penguins

Teens put their penguin impersonation skills to the test as they waddle around a numbered grid. Every so often, the ice picker harvests an ice square, eliminating whoever was standing on it.

PROCLAIM + BREAK

Meltdown

Teens work together through a sheet of ice-themed clues to get the answer to the final question. Groups have to be the first to thaw out letters frozen in ice and use them to spell out the final answer.

Frigid Fortress

Teens collaborate to build the tallest fortress in the amount of time. Core members serve as judges as teens explain the features of their fortress.

Frozen T-shirt Challenge

Teens receive a Ziploc bag with a t-shirt frozen solid inside. The first group to get the shirt completely on one of their teammates wins.

SEND

Thawing Out and Looking Ahead

Everyone gathers for a time of s'mores and socializing around a bonfire. Teens are encouraged to think about ways they want to grow in their relationship with God and with their community in the coming year.

GETTING READY

LIFE NIGHT DATE: _____

FOUR WEEKS BEFORE

- Read through the entire Life Night.

TWO WEEKS BEFORE

- Assign core members to the assignments on the Core Meeting Worksheet

ONE WEEK BEFORE

- Distribute the Life Night outline to the core members.
- Pray with the core members over the Life Night.
- Review the highlights for the Life Night.
- Explain the core assignments.
- Encourage the core members to pray for their small group.

THE WEEK OF THE LIFE NIGHT

Get ready for the Life Night by preparing the following ahead of time.

- Advertise the Life Night on the parish youth group's social media channels. Be sure to encourage teens to dress accordingly with gloves, scarves, hats, and jackets.
 - Make a plan for the Life Night Environment using the suggestions below.
 - Download, print, and make copies of the "Meltdown Clues" handout found on the enclosed January 2024 Life Teen USB drive and online at lifeteen.com.
 - Download and print the "Meltdown Answer Key" handout found on the January 2024 Life Teen USB drive and online at lifeteen.com.
 - Freeze rocks for the Meltdown activity.
 - Acquire enough ice for the Frigid Fortress activity.
 - Freeze enough t-shirts for the Frozen T-shirt Challenge.
 - Make sure everything is ready for the bonfire and social time.
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THE DAY OF THE LIFE NIGHT

Ensure these details are set the day of the Life Night (before the Youth Mass begins).

- Test all audio-video elements of the Life Night.
 - Project an environment image found on the January 2024 Life Teen USB drive and online at lifeteen.com.
 - Play the "LS - Catchphrase" Spotify playlist as teens gather.
 - Make a grid and the corresponding paper strips for the Panicked Penguins game.
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ENVIRONMENT

Your teens should feel like they are walking into a frozen wonderland. Use cardboard painted blue and white to create ice pillars around the walls and an icy archway near the entrance. Run white and blue LED light strands where the walls and ceiling meet. Cut out paper snowflakes and hang them from the ceiling with strings. Create paper icicles and hang them in the corners of the room. Use cotton fiberfill to create snowy patches near the walls, pillars, and ice arches. For total immersion, consider lowering the thermostat to create a wintry chill.

Have core members dress in Arctic attire. Encourage teens to bring gloves, scarves, jackets, and hats to match the theme.

NOTES

[illegible]

SUPPLIES

	Cardboard
	Blue and white paint
	White and blue LED light strands
	Paper snowflakes and icicles
	Cotton fiberfill
	Tape
	Paper slips
	Bluetooth speaker or sound system
	Towels
	Ice trays with frozen letters for Meltdown activity, one per group
	Writing utensils
	“Meltdown Clues” handout, one per group
	“Meltdown Answer Key” handout
	Bible
	Folding tables
	Coolers full of ice
	Frozen t-shirts
	S’mores materials
	Materials for bonfire
	Hot chocolate (optional)

CORE MEETING WORKSHEET

Use this outline for your core team meeting before the Youth Mass. The core meeting follows the Gather-Proclaim-Break-Send structure.

CORE MEETING START TIME: _____

GATHER

- Begin with a brief social time and rapid high point/low point of the week report from each core member.
- Pray with your core team and include one of the Scripture passages from the Life Night.

PROCLAIM

- Review the Life Night outline.
- Assign core members to the assignments for this Life Night and write their names here.

Setup:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Check-in:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Audio-Visual: _____

Opening Prayer: _____

Ice Picker: _____

Meltdown Station: _____

Frigid Fortress Station: _____

Frozen T-shirt Challenge Station: _____

Closing Prayer: _____

BREAK

- Have a core member discussion addressing hopes and expectations for the coming semester. Spend about 15 minutes on this section.
- Take questions.

SEND

- Conclude the meeting with a Hail Mary.
- Set up final details for the Life Night.
- Arrive early to the Youth Mass to greet teens as they arrive.

NOTES

[illegible]

GATHER

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER 5 min

Gather in the main meeting space and welcome the teens to the Life Night. Introduce any teens or core members attending for the first time, and begin in prayer.

PANICKED PENGUINS 15 min

Use tape to lay out a large grid on the floor of your main room or another large room at your parish. You will need at least one square for every two people in your program. Squares should be large enough for two people to stand inside. Label the columns with numbers and the rows with letters so that each square in the grid has an assigned value (A3, D4, G6, etc.).

On strips of paper, write down each possible column and row combination for your grid. Fold them and put them in a large bowl.

Assign one core member to be the ice picker. If possible, have them dress the part with a thick winter jacket, goggles, gloves, boots, snow pants, and an ice pick.

Introduce the activity with the following or similar words:

If you've ever wanted to be a penguin, this game is for you! We're all going to pretend we're a group of penguins huddled on a large block of ice above frozen waters. These penguins love music, so they waddle around freely whenever it's playing. When the music stops, however, they panic and huddle back together because they know the ice picker is coming. These penguins are particularly territorial, though, so they don't let more than one other penguin in their square if music isn't playing. When the music stops, the ice picker always comes to harvest one of the ice squares with his pick. Any penguin standing on that square falls into the freezing water and is out of the game.

Start the game by playing some fun music. Everyone waddles around the grid during this time. When the music stops, they must get in a square with no more than one other person. If they try to enter a square that already has two people, those people can squawk at them like penguins to tell them to find another square.

Once everyone is in a square, select a strip of paper from the bowl. That is the square that the ice picker will

harvest this round. Anyone standing on that square is out of the game. The ice picker harvests that square and tapes it with an X. From now on, that square is no longer traversable. Anyone who steps into that square is automatically out of the game. Discard that strip of paper so it can't be chosen again. Start the music again and continue playing until only one person is left in the game. If more squares are available than people, everyone must be in their own square.

As people get out of the game, encourage them to cheer on their friends. Let one of the people who just got out choose the next strip of paper out of the bowl.

SUGGESTION

You know your teens best. For the music, choose a variety of popular songs that will keep them entertained and engaged according to their tastes.

STEP IT UP

Carpet squares or foam mat squares make an easy and adjustable grid. If you have some at the parish or can afford to buy some, use them instead of tape. The ice picker just removes a square instead of taping over it.

PROCLAIM + BREAK

For this combined Proclaim and Break, groups rotate through three activities. Divide your teens into their small groups, and assign an even number of groups to each station to start. They will have ten minutes at each station. Have core members present at each station to explain the games and encourage the teens as they play. Have towels available for cleaning up the water from melting ice.

MELTDOWN 10 min

On small landscaping rocks, use a sharpie to write down the following letters, one letter per rock: B - E - N - A - I - A - H. Freeze them in individual ice blocks on an ice tray. If your ice trays have more space, write down additional letters on rocks and freeze them as well.

Give the core member overseeing this station a copy of the “Meltdown Answer Key” handout. Give each group a copy of the “Meltdown Clues” handout and an ice tray. Have a few writing utensils available for groups to use and a few Bibles nearby for them to consult.

Explain that groups have to answer the questions on the handout to find the clue to the final question — who fought with a lion on a snowy day? The final answer must be spelled out with the letters that are frozen in the trays. Teams must work together to melt the cubes and get the correct answer before time runs out. Ban groups from crushing the ice cubes. They must free the rocks by melting the ice only.

Once they spell out the answer, have the core member overseeing the game check to ensure they’re right.

STEP IT UP

Swap out the rocks for letter tiles from the game Bananagrams. Whatever you choose to use, it needs to be heavy enough to not just float at the top of the water when you freeze it. The more surrounded it is by ice, the more challenging and fun the game will be.

SUGGESTION

Have a bucket available for each group over which they can melt their ice cubes. This will significantly reduce the amount of towels needed and water cleanup.

FRIGID FORTRESS 10 min

Set out plastic folding tables for the teens to build their fortress on. Give each group a cooler full of ice. Explain that they have ten minutes to create a frigid fortress. They are only allowed to use the ice cubes, no other objects. The bigger and more elaborate the fortress, the more likely the group is to win. Encourage the group to work as a team to create the best fortress.

Have a group of core members serve as judges to evaluate the fortresses.

When the time is up, have one representative from each team explain the features of their fortress to the judges and the other groups. Give a little time for the judges to confer with each other and then announce the winner.

SUGGESTION

Have teens build their ice fortresses inside an upside-down tub lid or on a large sheet pan to capture all the water from the melting ice.

FROZEN T-SHIRT CHALLENGE 10 min

Purchase one t-shirt per group (size large or bigger). Soak the t-shirt in water and then fold it and stuff it into a quart-sized Ziploc bag. Do not add extra water to the bag. Freeze the shirts overnight.

Give each group one of the Ziploc bags with a frozen t-shirt inside. Start a countdown to begin the activity. Groups try to be the first to get the t-shirt fully on one of their group members (head through head hole, arms through armholes, shirt completely unfurled down to the waist). Ban groups from using easy solutions to unfreeze the shirt, such as running it underwater or microwaving it.

The first group to get the t-shirt completely on one of their team members wins. Have groups continue to compete for second and third place.

SUGGESTION

If weather permits, play this game outside. It will result in less clean up and open up more creative options for the teens to thaw out their shirts.

SEND

THAWING OUT AND LOOKING AHEAD 20 min

Gather everyone around a bonfire for some s'mores and social time.

After some snacks and conversation, invite everyone to reflect on the opportunity a new year brings using the following or similar words.

A new year provides an excellent opportunity for self-examination, thinking about who we were last year and who we want to be this year. It's a common practice for individuals to make a New Year's resolution at the beginning of a new year. These are ways they want to improve this year or things they want to do differently than last year. Things like working out, seeing friends more, reading more books, and being more positive are all common New Year's resolutions and are great ways to try to better ourselves as we move into another year of life. As we wrap up this Life Night, I want everyone to take some intentional time to think about how you want to grow closer to God and your community this year. What resolutions can you make to help you on your faith journey and help you grow in your relationships with others? Here, at the beginning of the year, it's helpful to think about what sort of person we want to be at the end. And then we need to make some practical resolutions to help us get there.

Give everyone a few moments to think about the proposed questions. Then, wrap up with the following.

Coming to Life Teen this semester is a great resolution to make to help you grow in your relationship with God and others. We have a whole semester planned of faith, fun, and community, and we hope you'll be around for it.

SUGGESTION

If you cannot make a bonfire work or it's too cold when you do this Life Night, have a hot chocolate party indoors. Consider making s'mores dip or providing some other sort of snack for the teens to have as they socialize.

CLOSING PRAYER AND ANNOUNCEMENTS 5 min

Close with a brief prayer thanking God for the blessing of gathering together and offering any prayer intentions. Consider allowing teens to offer any prayer petitions or prayers of thanksgiving. Close by praying a Hail Mary together and give any necessary closing announcements.

STEP IT UP

Create a calendar for upcoming Life Nights. This can be offered as a digital calendar by projecting a QR code or a printed calendar handed out to the teens.

AFTER THE LIFE NIGHT

Most core members are tired at the end of the session, but be sure to do two things upon the completion of a Life Night.

FIRST, CLEANUP

(aka, “Be your maintenance team’s favorite ministry.”)

You can guide the core team to this time with the following prompt:

*Do not rush the teens out the door, but as relational ministry naturally wraps up, **let’s all work together** to clean up the main meeting space and put things away.*

Set a timer and work for ten minutes, ensuring everyone sticks around. The fastest way to a divided core team is for one or two members to neglect cleanup.

SECOND, EVALUATE

After all the teens have left, appreciate what God has accomplished through the Life Night. **Share the praise reports. Identify who or what needs follow-up.** Set a timer and invite the group to share in these five categories of the Life Night: Pros, Cons, Questions, Comments, and Concerns. Remind the core team that evaluations are intended to improve the teens’ experiences at Life Teen and are not critical judgments of a youth minister’s or core member’s performance. As you discuss, encourage the core team to consider each of the Life Night movements of Gather, Proclaim, Break, and Send, or pass out/email the evaluation forms. Conclude your time together in prayer and praise to God.

LIFE NIGHT EVALUATION

GOAL

For the teens to have fun and get to know one another by engaging in fun icebreaker games.

1. On a scale of 1-10, how well did this Life Night accomplish the goal we set?

Did not accomplish

Nailed it

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

2. What was the strongest aspect of this Life Night?

Gather

Proclaim + Break

Send

Environment

Optional: Please explain further.

3. What kind of follow-up do we need to do after this Life Night?

4. What can we improve for future Life Nights? How can we accomplish this?

ONE FOR ALL

A LIFE NIGHT ON COMMUNITY

QUICK GLANCE

ABOUT THIS LIFE NIGHT

Let's set sail on a journey to understand the vital role of community in God's plan! Through this Life Night, we unpack the Church's social teachings, painting a vivid picture of the Church as a beacon of unity and communion. **We aim to inspire our teens to reflect on their role in shaping a community that genuinely mirrors Gospel values and advocates for social justice.** Let's step up together to nurture a vibrant, compassionate community that radiates God's love!

MAIN POINTS

1. God's plan includes the Church as a community of believers united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit.
2. Social teachings of the Church emphasize building a just society rooted in moral law, civil authority from God, and the common good.
3. As members of the Church, we are responsible for contributing to building a community that reflects Gospel values and promotes social justice.

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 1:17 | Micah 6:8 | Matthew 5:3-12 | Matthew 25:31-46 | Acts 2:44-47 | Acts 4:32-35 | 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

CATECHISM

753 | 1899 | 1905-1912 | 1959 | 2239 | 2649

KEY TERMS

Common Good | Social Justice

SAINTS

St. Teresa of Calcutta | St. Francis of Assisi | St. Catherine of Siena

RESOURCES

Articles

Lumen Gentium, 1

Music

Spotify: “LS - Catchphrase”

GOAL

To inspire teens to reflect on their role in shaping a community that genuinely mirrors Gospel values and advocates for social justice.

ENVIRONMENT

Photos, stock images, and other materials representative of the local community decorate the room to root the idea of community in the places and faces the teens see daily.

GATHER

Community Blueprint

Teens break into groups and design a blueprint for an ideal community using butcher paper and markers.

PROCLAIM

Talk: One For All

As members of the Church, we all have an important role to play within the Body of Christ and our wider communities as well. By living out the Gospel call daily in our relationships with one another, we can help to build communities little by little that are unified, just, and centered on the common good.

BREAK

Small Group Discussion

Teens gather in their small groups to discuss the interplay between their faith and society and to brainstorm ways they can work toward bringing Gospel values to life in their local communities.

[illegible]

GETTING READY

LIFE NIGHT DATE: _____

FOUR WEEKS BEFORE

- Read through the entire Life Night.
 - Pray with the Scripture and Catechism references.
 - Read through the Resources suggestions.
 - Select a presenter for the Proclaim and contact them this week.
 - Send the Proclaim Teaching Guide to the presenter.
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TWO WEEKS BEFORE

- Assign core members to the assignments on the Core Meeting Worksheet.
 - Check in with the Proclaim presenter and ask for an outline and slides, if applicable.
 - Schedule practice time with the presenter if needed.
 - Reach out to a music minister or worship leader to see if they can lead music for this Life Night.
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ONE WEEK BEFORE

- Distribute the Life Night outline to the core members.
 - Pray with the core members over the Life Night.
 - Review the highlights for the Life Night.
 - Explain the core assignments.
 - Encourage the core members to review the discussion questions and pray for their small group.
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THE WEEK OF THE LIFE NIGHT

- Advertise the Life Night on the parish youth group's social media channels.
 - Preschedule the Parent Letter email as a follow-up to the Life Night.
 - Make a plan for the Life Night Environment using the suggestions below.
 - Gather the supplies needed for the Life Night.
 - Inform core members of their roles during the session and provide them with the required materials and instructions.
 - Pray for the teens who will be present and experience the Life Night.
 - Gather images and other materials representative of the local community for the environment.
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THE DAY OF THE LIFE NIGHT

- Test all audio-video elements of the Life Night.
 - Decorate the youth room using the Environment instructions below.
 - Project the environment image found on the January 2024 Life Teen USB drive and online at lifeteen.com.
 - Play the "LS - Catchphrase" Spotify playlist as teens gather.
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ENVIRONMENT

Gather images of well-known landmarks from your local community (parish, schools, grocery stores, etc.) and hang them around the room. If you have a group photo of the teens in your program or photos from their time in youth group, print those out and hang them as well. Find newspaper articles or headlines from your city or county newspaper and post them on the walls. Intersperse images of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy on the walls as well.

The idea for this environment is to root the idea of community in something tangible, the people and places that teens know and recognize. The more images and pictures you can get on the walls, the more that point will be driven home. They all serve as visual aids to help teens understand who their community is — not an abstract idea but the faces of the people around them and the places they go daily.

SUPPLIES

	Photos of well-known local landmarks
	Photos of teens at youth group and activities at their school
	Stock photos of corporal and spiritual works of mercy
	Clips from local newspaper
	Butcher paper, one piece per small group
	Markers
	Index cards, one per person
	Ball of string (may need more for a bigger group)

CORE MEETING WORKSHEET

Use this outline for your core team meeting before the Youth Mass. The core meeting follows the Gather-Proclaim-Break-Send structure.

CORE MEETING START TIME: _____

GATHER

- Begin with a brief social time and rapid high points/low points of the week report from each core member.
- Pray with your core team and include one of the Scripture passages from the Life Night.
Scripture choice: _____

PROCLAIM

- Review the Life Night outline.
- Assign core members to the assignments for this Life Night and write their names here.

Setup	1.	2.	3.
	4.	5.	6.

Check-In	1.	2.	3.
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Audio-Visual	
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Opening Prayer	
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Proclaim Presenter	
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Closing Prayer	
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- Review the Life Night small group questions with a core member discussion. Spend about 15 minutes on this section.
- Take questions.

- Conclude the meeting with a Hail Mary.
- Set up final details for the Life Night.
- Arrive early to the Youth Mass to greet teens as they arrive.

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, providing a guide for handwriting or typing. The paper itself is a clean, off-white color.

GATHER

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER 5 min

Gather in the main meeting space and welcome the teens to the Life Night. Introduce any teens or core members attending for the first time, and begin in prayer.

COMMUNITY BLUEPRINT 20 min

Explain to the teens that they will be designing a blueprint for their perfect community, emphasizing the importance of collaboration, unity, and creativity. Divide the teens into their small groups. Hand out a roll of butcher paper and a set of markers to each group and ensure every group has a flat surface to draw on.

Explain that they will have ten minutes to design their ideal model community. Explain that each group member must contribute by drawing at least one element of their blueprint (e.g., Church, park or green space, school food bank or community kitchen, housing areas, health centers). After one teen finishes drawing their part, they pass the marker to the next teammate. The goal is to get each group to work together to create their vision of a perfect, inclusive, and just community.

After the instructions are given, start the timer and let the creativity commence! Walk around, observe each group, and offer encouragement or help as needed.

After the time limit has elapsed, ask each group to present their blueprint to the whole group. They should explain why they chose to include each element and how these elements contribute to a vibrant community.

SUGGESTION

After all the groups have presented, lead a reflection discussion. Ask questions like:

- What common elements were found across the various blueprints?
- Why do you think these elements are essential for an ideal community?
- How does each element reflect the teachings of the Church and the Gospel?
- What can we, as a community, do to realize some of these elements in our church and local community?

PROCLAIM

GETTING STARTED

This Teaching Guide is not just an outline; it's a tool to help you craft a powerful and personalized talk that will leave a lasting impact. You can make this topic relevant and engaging for your youth group, and this guide is here to assist you every step of the way.

Don't just prepare the main points — unleash your creativity and incorporate media to captivate your audience. Whether you use the suggested media or find your own, make sure it's visually engaging, attention-grabbing, and/or thought-provoking.

Beyond these guidelines, the most important thing is to be yourself and let the Holy Spirit guide you. Practice your talk, pour your heart into it, and trust that your authenticity and humility have the power to make a difference in the lives of these teens. If possible, record yourself giving the Proclaim — making mental notes on what you can improve or avoid. This guide is just the beginning — the rest is up to you!

MAIN POINTS

1. God's plan includes the Church as a community of believers united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit.
2. Social teachings of the Church emphasize building a just society rooted in moral law, civil authority from God, and the common good.
3. As members of the Church, we are responsible for contributing to building a community that reflects Gospel values and promotes social justice.

KEY TERMS

Common Good - The welfare of the whole community, as the proper object of a just law, and is distinguished from individual good, which looks only to the good of a single person.

Social Justice - The respect for the human person and the rights which flow from human dignity and guarantee it. Society must provide the conditions that allow people to obtain what is their due, according to their nature and vocation. **(CCC 1928, 1931)**

TEACHING GUIDE 15 min

- Tonight, we're going to embark on an exciting journey as we explore a critical facet of our faith: community.
- Now, what comes to mind when you think of community? Perhaps it's your friends, family, or even us here at Life Teen. That's all true! But what if I told you that it goes much deeper than that?
- In the eyes of God and in the heart of the Church, a community is not merely a group of people living together. It's a beautiful tapestry woven with threads of love, unity, and shared mission.
- It's about being part of something much bigger than ourselves, being united in Christ, and guided by the Holy Spirit.
- But why does this matter? Why should we care about this idea of community? Well, that's what we're here to explore and unpack together. Let's dive in!

Main Point 1:
God's plan includes the Church as a community of believers united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit.

SCRIPTURE

Project and read **Acts 2:44-47** and **4:32-35** or ask a leadership teen to read it.

SUGGESTION

When presenting in front of a group, **use a Bible** to read the passage rather than a digital copy or a paper printout.

- In these passages, we see how the early Christians lived together as a community. They shared everything they had, they broke bread together, they prayed together, and they cared for one another.
- It's this image of unity and love that presents us with an ideal Christian community.
- But this unity and love weren't random or accidental. They were part of God's plan.
- God wanted the Church, His people, to be a community of believers, united in their faith in Jesus Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit. **(CCC 753)**

- But what does this look like? Let's think about it in terms of the human body. Remember how, in your biology class, you learned that the body is made up of many different parts. There's the heart, lungs, arms, legs, etc. Each part has its unique function, but all are united in one purpose: to keep the body healthy and functioning.
- This is what Apostle Paul teaches us about the Church in his first letter to the Corinthians.

SCRIPTURE

Project and read **1 Corinthians 12:12-27** or ask a leadership teen to read it.

- Just as a body, though one, has many parts, so it is with Christ.
- So, in a real sense, we're all part of this body. We're all members of this community of believers, and we each have a role to play.
- Some of us might be the hands, reaching out to help others. Some might be the mouth, spreading the Good News of Christ. Others might be the heart, praying and providing spiritual support. But whatever our role is, we're all crucial parts of this body, this community, and we're all united in Christ.
- Remember, it's not just about me or you; it's about all of us together. And that's the beauty of the Church as a community of believers. **(Going Deeper #1: "The Communion of Saints")**

Main Point 2:

Social teachings of the Church emphasize building a just society rooted in moral law, civil authority from God, and the common good.

- Now that we grasp how we, as the Church, form a community of believers, let's dive a bit deeper into our responsibilities within this community. Let's explore the Church's social teachings and what they mean for us.

SCRIPTURE

Project and read **Isaiah 1:17** and **Micah 6:8** or ask a leadership teen to read it.

- These verses lay out a clear call to action for us: to strive for justice, show mercy, and walk humbly with God.

- So, how does the Church interpret this call? The Church teaches that we should work towards building a just society, one that respects the dignity of every human being and promotes the common good. The Church goes on to teach that civil authority has a moral function — to ensure order and protect the rights of individuals and families, and this authority comes from God Himself. **(CCC 1899, 1905-1912, 1959)**
- The Church also emphasizes the concept of the common good. It's the idea that we should organize society so everyone can achieve their potential.
- We do this by ensuring that basic rights are respected, social harmony is pursued, and material goods are justly distributed.
- You might think, "Well, that sounds great, but how do I do that?" That's a great question!
- While it may seem like a daunting task, remember that even small actions can make a big difference.
- By showing kindness to someone who's struggling, standing up against bullying, volunteering to help those less fortunate, or even voting responsibly when you're of age, you're contributing to a just society.
- So, each of us, in our own way, can help build a community that reflects these values. And remember, we're not doing this alone, but together as one community. **(Going Deeper #2: "The Dignity of the Human Person")**

Main Point 3:

As members of the Church, we are responsible for contributing to building a community that reflects Gospel values and promotes social justice.

- Building on what we've learned so far, let's turn to another crucial aspect of our journey in faith: How do we actively contribute to building a community that mirrors the Gospel values and promotes social justice?
- To guide us, let's look at two profound passages from the Gospel of Matthew.

SCRIPTURE

Project and read **Matthew 5:3-12** or ask a leadership teen to read it.

- Here, Jesus outlines the attitudes and actions that his followers should embody. These include being poor in spirit, meek, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, and even being persecuted for the sake of righteousness. Essentially, the Beatitudes present us with a blueprint for Christian living.

SCRIPTURE

Project and read **Matthew 25:31-46** or ask a leadership teen to read it.

- Called the parable of the Last Judgment, here, Jesus emphasizes our duty to care for the least among us — to feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and visit those in prison. Jesus tells us that whatever we do for the least of our brothers and sisters, we do for Him.
- These passages, though challenging, outline our responsibilities as followers of Christ. They guide us in how we should interact with others, particularly those in need, in our daily lives.
- Additionally, the Church reminds us of our duty to contribute to the common good and actively participate in public life. We are also encouraged to pray for all, especially those in need. As high school students, you may not be able to influence public policy or address major societal issues yet. Still, you can contribute in many other meaningful ways. **(CCC 2239, 2649)**
- In our schools, homes, and communities, we can practice these Gospel values. We can visit the elderly who don't have family nearby, lend a helping hand to a struggling classmate, volunteer our time for community service, or simply be a good friend to someone who needs it.
- Remember, we don't have to do grand things to make a difference. Even small acts of kindness, rooted in love, can have a tremendous impact.
- Our call as Catholics, then, is to transform our communities into a reflection of God's Kingdom here on earth — a place where love, justice, peace, and mercy reign. That is the power of a Gospel-driven community. **(Going Deeper #3: "The Beatitudes as a Roadmap to Holiness")**
- Let's remember the immense power and beauty of community. We're not merely a group of individuals; we're the Church, a body united in Christ. We are called to live out the Gospel values and work towards building a just society.
- Whether it's in our schools, families, or wider communities, we each have a unique role to play. Let's embrace this call to community with open hearts.
- Reflect on how you can contribute, think about the steps you can take this week, and remember, no act of kindness or justice is too small. We are indeed "one for all".

BREAK

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION 20 min

Gather the teens into their small groups, where the core member will begin in prayer and transition into a small group discussion. Use the following questions as a guide, but be aware of where the Holy Spirit is leading the discussion. Moreover, do not feel the need to rush through all of the discussion questions. Only move on to the next question when the conversation has organically ended.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Whip Around Question: If you could live in any society from history, which would it be (e.g., The Roman Empire, Victorian England, Aztec Empire)?

1. What does it mean to be part of a community of believers united in Christ? How does our faith guide our actions within our community?
2. How do the social teachings of the Church influence our understanding of a just society? Can you give examples?
3. How does the idea of civil authority coming from God shape our perspective toward governance and laws?
4. Discuss the concept of the 'common good'. How should it influence our decisions as individuals and as a community?
5. Reflect on the different elements in the "Community Blueprint" activity. How can we contribute to making these elements reflect Gospel values in our real communities?
6. What are some ways we can actively promote social justice in our community? What role do our Gospel values play in this?

SEND

PRAYER WEB OF INTERCESSION 15 min

As the teens transition back into the main meeting space from small groups, dim the lights and play reflective music in the background, setting a prayerful environment. Instruct the teens to sit in a circle.

Give each teen an index card and a writing utensil. Ask the teens to write a prayer intention for their community (it could be their local community, school community, the global community, etc.) on the index card. This intention could be a prayer for peace, justice, understanding, or any other concern they might have.

Begin by holding one end of a ball of string and opening with the Sign of the Cross. Share your prayer intention with the group to model what they should do. Say something like: “As I hold this string, I share my prayer intention for our community... [share your intention]”. After sharing your prayer intention, hold onto the string and gently toss the ball of string to a teen in the circle. The teen who receives the ball of string then shares their prayer intention, holds onto their section of the string, and tosses the ball to another teen. This process continues, with each teen sharing their prayer intention until everyone has had a chance to share, and the string forms a web-like structure connecting everyone in the circle.

Once everyone has shared their prayer intention and the web is complete, lead the following closing prayer:

Gracious God, we thank you for the gift of community. As this string connects us physically, so does our shared faith connect us spiritually. We ask for your guidance as we strive to build a just society that reflects Gospel values. Hear our intentions [motion to the web of string] and help us to be ever attentive to the needs of our brothers and sisters in our local and global community. Amen.

After the prayer, remind the teens to take their prayer intention index card home as a reminder to continue praying for their community. Encourage them to place it somewhere they will see it daily, such as on their mirror, desk, or inside their Bible. This will serve as a tangible reminder of their commitment to pray for their community and the needs they shared in this prayer activity.

SUGGESTION

Larger groups will need more balls of string to reach every person. Consider having multiple different colored balls of string being passed around at once.

ANNOUNCEMENTS 5 min

Make announcements for your program, then dismiss the teens.

STEP IT UP

A well-placed song increases energy and makes everyone feel great. Empower the core member tasked with audio-video support to prepare an upbeat song from the Life Teen Spotify playlist to play as the teens leave the Life Night and start their week.

AFTER THE LIFE NIGHT

Most core members are tired at the end of the session, but be sure to do two things upon the completion of a Life Night.

FIRST, CLEANUP

(aka, “Your maintenance team’s favorite ministry.”)

You can guide the core team to this time with the following prompt:

*Do not rush the teens out the door, but as relational ministry naturally wraps up, **let’s all work together** to clean up the main meeting space and put things away.*

Set a timer and work for ten minutes, ensuring everyone sticks around. The fastest way to a divided core team is for one or two members to neglect cleanup.

SECOND, EVALUATE

After all the teens have left, appreciate what God has accomplished through the Life Night. **Share the praise reports. Identify who or what needs follow-up.** Set a timer and invite the group to share in these five categories of the Life Night: Pros, Cons, Questions, Comments, and Concerns. Remind the core team that evaluations are intended to improve the teens’ experiences at Life Teen and are not critical judgments of a youth minister’s or core member’s performance. As you discuss, encourage the core team to consider each of the Life Night movements of Gather, Proclaim, Break, and Send, or pass out/email the evaluation forms. Conclude your time together in prayer and praise to God.

LIFE NIGHT EVALUATION

GOAL

To inspire teens to reflect on their role in shaping a community that genuinely mirrors Gospel values and advocates for social justice.

On a scale of 1-10, how well did this Life Night accomplish the goal we set?

Did not accomplish

Nailed it

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

What was the strongest aspect of this Life Night?

Gather

Proclaim

Break

Send

Environment

Optional: Please explain further.

What kind of follow-up do we need to do after this Life Night?

What can we improve for future Life Nights? How can we accomplish this?

NO STRINGS ATTACHED

**AN ISSUE NIGHT ON
MATERIALISM & DETACHMENT**

QUICK GLANCE

ABOUT THIS LIFE NIGHT

In a world that worships material possessions, we're here to shine a light on the path of detachment. This Life Night guides teens to understand the pitfalls of materialism and the beauty of a life rooted in God, not possessions. **We aim to inspire a sense of detachment, cultivating an appreciation for what truly matters — our relationship with God, spiritual growth, and service to others.**

MAIN POINTS

1. Material possessions are not bad in themselves, but when we become attached to them, they can distract us from our relationship with God and prevent us from living out our mission as Catholics.
2. Detachment is a virtue that fosters dependence on God, placing Him above all else and viewing our possessions as gifts intended for serving others.
3. Through prayer, reflection, and action, we can grow in detachment and in our appreciation for the things that truly matter: our relationship with God, our relationships with others, and our spiritual growth.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 16:24-25 | Mark 8:35-36 | John 6:35 | Philippians 4:11-13 | James 4:4

CATECHISM

27 | 1718-1719 | 1723 | 1730

KEY TERMS

Detachment | Materialism | Virtue

SAINTS

St. Ignatius of Loyola | St. Therese of Lisieux | St. John of the Cross | St. Katharine Drexel

RESOURCES

Music

Spotify: “LS - Catchphrase”

Videos

Ascension Presents: “Learning Detachment from Your Stuff” (youtube.com)

GOAL

To inspire a sense of detachment, cultivating an appreciation for what truly matters — our relationship with God, spiritual growth, and service to others.

ENVIRONMENT

A silhouette at the front of the room with strings attaching it to the crucifix represents our attachment to the Lord. The walls are filled with phones, money, and other material objects that are vying for our attention and trying to attach us to them.

GATHER

Full Hands Relay

Small groups compete to be the first team to get all the objects back to their starting area in this relay with a twist. Teens must race to a pile of objects, grab one, and return to their team. The next teammate has to take that object and grab another one from the pile, with subsequent members having to transport an additional item there and back with each consecutive run.

PROCLAIM

Talk: No Strings Attached

This Life Night dives into the danger of attachment to material goods. Though they are not bad in themselves, when held too tightly these goods can often distract us from our relationship with God and from being available to others. In the midst of a materialistic culture, Catholics need to practice detachment and learn its importance for the spiritual life. The talk closes with a few practical ways to grow in detachment.

BREAK

Start Somewhere

Teens have a brief period of time to reflect on the ways to grow in detachment shared during the Proclaim and choose one to implement in practical ways the coming week.

Small Group Discussion

Teens gather in their small groups for a discussion centered on materialism and how changing our perspective on material goods can change the way we relate to them.

SEND

Fulfilled in God

The group gathers for everyone to reflect on one material possession they feel particularly attached to. Using a method known as the five whys, teens dive into the deeper desires they are seeking and offer a prayer for those longings to be satisfied in God.

NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

GETTING READY

LIFE NIGHT DATE: _____

FOUR WEEKS BEFORE

- Read through the entire Life Night.
 - Pray with the Scripture and Catechism references.
 - Read through the Resources suggestions.
 - Select a presenter for the Proclaim and contact them this week.
 - Send the Proclaim Teaching Guide to the presenter.
-
-

TWO WEEKS BEFORE

- Assign core members to the assignments on the Core Meeting Worksheet.
 - Check in with the Proclaim presenter and ask for an outline and slides, if applicable.
 - Schedule practice time with the presenter if needed.
 - Reach out to a music minister or worship leader to see if they can lead music for this Life Night.
-
-

ONE WEEK BEFORE

- Distribute the Life Night outline to the core members.
 - Pray with the core members over the Life Night.
 - Review the highlights for the Life Night.
 - Explain the core assignments.
 - Encourage the core members to review the discussion questions and pray for their small group.
-
-

THE WEEK OF THE LIFE NIGHT

- Advertise the Life Night on the parish youth group's social media channels.
 - Preschedule the Parent Letter email as a follow-up to the Life Night.
 - Make a plan for the Life Night Environment using the suggestions below.
 - Gather the supplies needed for the Life Night.
 - Inform core members of their roles during the session and provide them with the required materials and instructions.
 - Consider reaching out to parishioners and clergy to participate in the Discernment Panel for the Life Night "Go Figure."
-
-

THE DAY OF THE LIFE NIGHT

- Test all audio-video elements of the Life Night.
 - Decorate the youth room using the Environment instructions below.
 - Project an environment image found on the January 2024 Life Teen USB drive and online at lifeteen.com.
 - Set up for the Full Hands Relay.
 - Play the "LS - Catchphrase" Spotify playlist as teens gather.
-
-

ENVIRONMENT

Create a cardboard silhouette of a human being, draw a heart on the front of it, and place it at the front of the room. Place a crucifix at the front of the room as well, and run strings from the crucifix to the heart on the silhouette. Use cardboard or poster board to create large images of common items that we can get overly attached to (phone, laptop, dollar bill, etc.) and hang them around the room. Weave strings in and out of these cutouts and make it seem like the strings are creeping toward the front of the room and the cardboard silhouette.

SUPPLIES

	Cardboard for silhouette and object cutouts
	Black paint
	String
	Objects for the Full Hands Relay
	Cones, one per small group
	Writing utensil, one per person
	Index card, one per person

CORE MEETING WORKSHEET

Use this outline for your core team meeting before the Youth Mass. The core meeting follows the Gather-Proclaim-Break-Send structure.

CORE MEETING START TIME: _____

GATHER

- Begin with a brief social time and rapid high points/low points of the week report from each core member.
- Pray with your core team and include one of the Scripture passages from the Life Night.
Scripture choice: _____

PROCLAIM

- Review the Life Night outline.
- Assign core members to the assignments for this Life Night and write their names here.

Setup	1.	2.	3.
	4.	5.	6.

Check-In	1.	2.	3.
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Audio-Visual	
--------------	--

Opening Prayer	
----------------	--

Proclaim Presenter	
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Closing Prayer	
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BREAK

- Review the Life Night small group questions with a core member discussion. Spend about 15 minutes on this section.
- Take questions.

SEND

- Conclude the meeting with a Hail Mary.
- Set up final details for the Life Night.
- Arrive early to the Youth Mass to greet teens as they arrive.

NOTES

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, providing a template for handwriting practice or general note-taking. The margins are consistent on all sides.

GATHER

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER 5 min

Gather in the main meeting space and welcome the teens to the Life Night. Introduce any teens or core members attending for the first time, and begin in prayer.

FULL HANDS RELAY 15 min

Divide the teens into their small groups. Line teams up behind a cone or other object to designate a starting location. Pile up various material items on the ground a good distance away from the group's starting point. One at a time, teens must run and grab an object from the pile and bring it back to their team. The next person in line must carry that object as they go and acquire another from the pile, bringing back both the original and new item. The race gets increasingly difficult with each member bringing back an additional item that needs to be carried. Teams continue running relay style until no items are left in the pile.

Have core members stationed with each team to cheer them on and encourage full participation.

Example items:

- Designer t-shirt
- Phone
- Wallet
- Jacket
- Keys
- Makeup
- Book
- Hat
- Video game controller
- Football
- Sun glasses
- Shoes
- Headphones
- Musical instrument case

SUGGESTION

The more items in the pile, the longer the relay will take but the more entertaining the final rounds will be as teens run back and forth trying to carry everything at once. If you have enough time and random objects, making a sizable pile will maximize the fun in this activity.

PROCLAIM

GETTING STARTED

This Teaching Guide is not just an outline; it's a tool to help you craft a powerful and personalized talk that will leave a lasting impact. You can make this topic relevant and engaging for your youth group, and this guide is here to assist you every step of the way.

Beyond these guidelines, the most important thing is to be yourself and let the Holy Spirit guide you. Practice your talk, pour your heart into it, and trust that your authenticity and humility have the power to make a difference in the lives of these teens. If possible, record yourself giving the Proclaim — making mental notes on what you can improve or avoid. This guide is just the beginning — the rest is up to you!

MAIN POINTS

1. Material possessions are not bad in themselves, but when we become attached to them, they can distract us from our relationship with God and prevent us from living out our mission as Catholics.
2. Detachment is a virtue that fosters dependence on God, placing Him above all else and viewing our possessions as gifts intended for serving others.
3. Through prayer, reflection, and action, we can grow in detachment and in our appreciation for the things that truly matter: our relationship with God, our relationships with others, and our spiritual growth.

KEY TERMS

Detachment - An attitude of the heart that withholds or properly orders one's appetites and affections toward created things for the purpose of serving God and others.

Materialism - A preoccupation with or stress upon material rather than intellectual or spiritual things.

Virtue - An habitual and firm disposition to do the good. The moral virtues are acquired through human effort aided by God's grace; the theological virtues are gifts of God. **(CCC 1803)**

TEACHING GUIDE 15 min

- We live in a materialistic culture that tells us we must have the latest trends and gadgets to be happy. But does all that stuff really make us fulfilled? **(CCC 1723)**
- That's what we're going to dive into as we look at how possessions can distract us from what matters most — our relationship with God and others.
- We'll also explore what the Catholic Church teaches about materialism and living simply.
- By the end, the hope is that we'll feel empowered to live with open hands — not clinging to stuff, but clinging to God. We'll discover how to stay focused on God's kingdom rather than get distracted by the stuff of this world. **(Matthew 6:33)**

Main Point 1:

Material possessions are not bad in themselves, but when we become attached to them, they can distract us from our relationship with God and prevent us from living out our mission as Catholics.

- To start, let's define materialism — it's valuing worldly possessions and success over spiritual matters. It's basing your joy and sense of self on what you own. **(CCC 1723) (Going Deeper #1: "Materialism")**
- There's nothing inherently wrong with having nice things. Money and possessions can be used for good purposes. The problem comes when they start to control us.

Share a story about an item you became overly obsessed with (such as a new phone) and how time spent on that item adversely affected some of your relationships.

- Material things like phones are meant to serve us, not rule us. But when we make idols out of possessions, we become slaves to them. We start valuing them over relationships, prayer, and serving others. **(Matthew 6:24)**
- Research shows that the more materialistic people are, the less satisfied they are with life, because things don't actually satisfy our deep spiritual longings. Only God's love can do that! (Tim Kasser and Richard M. Ryan: "A dark side of the American dream," American Psychological Association)
- Attaching ourselves to things of this world also makes it hard to share what we have generously. We grip tightly rather than live with open hands. This directly opposes Jesus' call to serve the poor and vulnerable. **(Luke 12:33-34)**

- So, how can we tell if possessions are becoming too big of a priority in our lives? Ponder on the following questions:

Project the following:

Do I spend more time shopping or playing with new gadgets than I do in prayer or service?

Do I obsess over brands and compare my stuff to what other people own?

Do I constantly desire newer, nicer possessions?

Am I reluctant to lend things out or give donations?

Main Point 2:

Detachment is a virtue that fosters dependence on God, placing Him above all else and viewing our possessions as gifts intended for serving others.

- If materialism is the problem, detachment is the solution. Detachment means freedom from attachment to worldly possessions and pleasures.
- It's closely linked to the virtues of generosity, humility, and trust in God. Detachment recognizes that since God created all things, we are simply stewards responsible for sharing what we've been given. **(CCC 2544)**
- Detachment does not mean we can't appreciate and enjoy the good things in life! It does mean, however, that we relate to them in a healthy way — as gifts from God rather than sources of meaning and identity.
- Detachment also does not require giving away everything you own! It's more an attitude of open hands — being ready and willing to share possessions for the sake of serving God and others. We recognize that our worth comes from being beloved children of God. **(Going Deeper #2: “Rich in This Life and the Next”)**
- There are so many benefits when we stop clinging tightly to things and start clinging tightly to God instead. We become less selfish, less worried, and more generous.
- We stop chasing the lie that we need to acquire more to be content. We realize that living simply allows us to be freer and more attentive to the eternal. We should remember what Jesus said:

SCRIPTURE

Project and read **Matthew 6:21** or ask a leadership teen to read it.

SUGGESTION

When presenting in front of a group, **use a Bible** to read Scripture rather than a digital copy or a paper printout.

- Saints like Francis of Assisi can inspire us in detachment. Though he was wealthy, Francis renounced material comforts to live in poverty. He found immense joy in serving others and praising God with his life.
- We likely won't be called to give up everything, but small acts of generosity train our hearts in detachment. Donate clothes you no longer wear. Offer to share your favorite possession with a sibling or friend. Tithe a portion of any money gifts you receive.
- As we become less attached to stuff, we make more room for God to fill our hearts.

Main Point 3:

Through prayer, reflection, and action, we can grow in detachment and in our appreciation for the things that truly matter: our relationship with God, our relationships with others, and our spiritual growth.

- Now that we've explored the problems of materialism and the power of detachment, let's talk about some practical tips for growing in this virtue.
- Take stock of your stuff and simplify — Go through your possessions and consider what you can give away. Make sure what you keep truly serves a purpose or brings joy. A cluttered space can clutter the soul.
- Practice gratitude — Remind yourself that everything is a gift on loan from God. Cultivate a heart of thanksgiving rather than entitlement.
- Be generous — Look for regular opportunities to share your time, talents, and possessions with others. Let go of the scarcity mindset.

- Tithe on any money you receive — Figure out a percentage you can consistently give away when gifted money for birthdays or holidays. Train your heart to hold possessions loosely.
- Limit impulse shopping — Ask yourself if a purchase is driven by true necessity, creativity, or peer pressure. For bigger purchases, give yourself one night of sleep between the impulse to buy and the time you actually make a purchase.
- Fast from technology — Set boundaries on screen time to train yourself that possessions don't control you. Make time for people and God instead.
- Prayerfully meditate on impermanence — Remind yourself that nothing in this world will last. Focus on storing up eternal treasure instead. **(Matthew 6:19-20)**
- Ask God for freedom — In prayer, bring Him your attachments and desires for stuff; ask for a detached heart that longs for Him alone.
- Study detachment role models — Learn from saints and others who live(d) simply, like St. Francis of Assisi.
- Trying these ideas may feel uncomfortable initially, but you'll experience new freedom as you cling less tightly to stuff. God will fill your hands with greater gifts if you offer them open to Him!
- When we let go of clinging to possessions, we can cling to God and experience joy and purpose that doesn't depend on stuff.
- This requires taking a courageous look at our priorities and making small daily choices to live more simply and generously.
- Imagine the difference we could make in the world if we didn't focus so much on accumulating things but instead on generously meeting needs.
- Let's choose to walk the path of detachment. Our hands may hold less stuff, but our hearts will hold more peace. And we'll stand out as radical witnesses of God's generous love!

BREAK

START SOMEWHERE 10 min

Project the list below of the ways to grow in detachment shared during the Proclaim. Invite the teens to quietly reflect on which one of these steps they want to try and the practical ways they can implement it in the coming week. Play soft, reflective music in the background.

- Take stock of your stuff and simplify
- Practice gratitude
- Be generous
- Tithe on any money you receive
- Limit impulse shopping
- Fast from technology
- Prayerfully meditate on impermanence
- Ask God for freedom
- Study detachment role models

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION 20 min

After a few minutes of reflection, gather the teens in their small groups. Have them pair up and share which step they chose to reflect on and how they plan to implement it this week. Once they have shared, transition to a time of small group discussion. Use the following questions as a guide, but be aware of where the Holy Spirit is leading the discussion. Moreover, do not feel the need to rush through all of the discussion questions. Only move on to the next question when the conversation has organically ended.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Whip Around Question: What is one item you own that other people could easily identify you by (e.g., water bottle decorated with stickers, specific type of shoes or shirt, backpack)?

1. Why do you think society places such a high value on material possessions? How can this distract us from our relationship with God?
2. Can you recall a time when a desire for material possessions caused you stress or distraction? How did you handle it?
3. What does detachment mean to you? How does this virtue help us to rely more on God and less on material possessions?
4. How can viewing our possessions as gifts to be used for serving others change our perspective and behaviors?
5. Why are our relationship with God, our relationships with others, and our spiritual growth more valuable than material possessions? Can you share a personal experience that illustrates this?

SEND

FULFILLED IN GOD 15 min

Gather everyone back into the main meeting space. Pass out index cards and writing utensils to everyone as they enter. Have them write the word “Why?” at the top of the card and then four more times underneath it with blank space in between each word. After that, open this activity with the following words or something similar.

We all have things in our life that we are attached to. Our society makes it really easy to find our value and satisfaction in the things we own. Tonight, we are going to try to get to the root of why we hold on to some of the things in our lives so tightly. What are we really seeking in them? I encourage everyone to participate in this activity and be honest with yourself.

I want everyone to think of a material possession they feel particularly attached to. It could be your phone, a certain article of clothing, a gaming system, your car, etc.

Give everyone a moment to think.

We’re going to examine our attachment to that thing using a method known as the five whys.

With that material possession in mind, I want you to ask yourself the following question.

Why am I attached to this thing? (e.g., Why am I attached to my phone?)

When you have an answer, write it beneath the first “Why?” on your card.

(e.g., because it makes me feel connected)

Give the teens a moment to think and write.

Now, I want you to examine that answer by looking for the deeper why. Why is this the case? What am I looking for or seeking in this? (e.g., Why do I want to feel connected?)

When you have that answer, write it beneath the second “Why?” on your card.

(e.g., because it makes me feel like people care about me and that I’m valued)

Give the teens a moment to think and write.

We're going to repeat the same process three more times. Every time, look for the deeper why in your answer.

Example:

Why am I attached to my phone?

Because it makes me feel connected

Why do I want to feel connected?

Because it makes me feel like people care about me and that I'm valued

Why do I want to feel like people care about me and that I'm valued?

Because it gives me self-esteem

Why am I looking for self-esteem from others?

Because aside from their opinion, I doubt my value

Why do I doubt my value?

Because I'm not confident in my own worth

Continue to walk the teens step by step through the five whys. Once they are done, invite the teens to think for a moment about what they are actually trying to fulfill by grasping at material possessions. Then, continue the activity with the following or similar words.

God desires to satisfy us to the full. He is the answer to our deepest needs and longings. He wants to be the one who fulfills whatever need we're seeking in this material possession. When we try to find satisfaction in these things apart from Him, we will always be left feeling empty. Whatever void we are trying to fill in our lives can only be satisfied in Him. When we place our hope, trust, and desire in Him, we can be led to ultimate fulfillment.

Invite the teens to quietly offer a simple, heartfelt prayer, asking God to fulfill whatever desire they are seeking. Offer the following as an example.

God, You say that You love me. Help me to experience Your love in my life. I know that I am seeking/need _____. Give me the grace to seek that in You, who alone can satisfy the deepest longings of my heart. Help me to detach from material possessions to be available to You and others.

After everyone has had time to offer their prayer, lead a closing prayer asking for God's guidance and grace to live a life of detachment, prioritizing what truly matters.

SUGGESTION

For a more reflective environment, play some instrumental music softly in the background for the duration of this activity.

CLOSING PRAYER AND ANNOUNCEMENTS 5 min

Invite the preselected core member to lead a closing prayer. Make announcements for your program, then dismiss the teens.

STEP IT UP

A well-placed song increases energy and makes everyone feel great. Empower the core member tasked with audio-video support to prepare an upbeat song from the Life Teen Spotify playlist to play as the teens leave the Life Night and start their week.

AFTER THE LIFE NIGHT

Most core members are tired at the end of the session, but be sure to do two things upon the completion of a Life Night.

FIRST, CLEANUP

(aka, “Your maintenance team’s favorite ministry.”)

You can guide the core team to this time with the following prompt:

*Do not rush the teens out the door, but as relational ministry naturally wraps up, **let’s all work together** to clean up the main meeting space and put things away.*

Set a timer and work for ten minutes, ensuring everyone sticks around. The fastest way to a divided core team is for one or two members to neglect cleanup.

SECOND, EVALUATE

After all the teens have left, appreciate what God has accomplished through the Life Night. **Share the praise reports. Identify who or what needs follow-up.** Set a timer and invite the group to share in these five categories of the Life Night: Pros, Cons, Questions, Comments, and Concerns. Remind the core team that evaluations are intended to improve the teens’ experiences at Life Teen and are not critical judgments of a youth minister’s or core member’s performance. As you discuss, encourage the core team to consider each of the Life Night movements of Gather, Proclaim, Break, and Send, or pass out/email the evaluation forms. Conclude your time together in prayer and praise to God.

LIFE NIGHT EVALUATION

GOAL

To inspire a sense of detachment, cultivating an appreciation for what truly matters — our relationship with God, spiritual growth, and service to others.

On a scale of 1-10, how well did this Life Night accomplish the goal we set?

Did not accomplish

Nailed it

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What was the strongest aspect of this Life Night?

Gather

Proclaim

Break

Send

Environment

Optional: Please explain further.

What kind of follow-up do we need to do after this Life Night?

What can we improve for future Life Nights? How can we accomplish this?

HANDMADE

God the Creator

GOAL

This Edge Night aims to teach the youth that God alone created the universe freely out of nothing and upholds and sustains creation.

Scripture

Genesis 1:1-31, Isaiah 44:24, Hebrews 11:3

Catechism

CCC 279-301, 325-349

Resources

Video

Bishop Robert Barron, “Understanding Genesis: Creation” (youtube.com)
Life Teen, “The Joy of Origami - The Fox” (lifeteen.com)

GATHER

Trivia and Bingo combine for this fun game that kicks off the Edge by highlighting famous creators (artists, composers, movie directors) and introduces the ultimate Creator.

PROCLAIM

The following are the main teaching points of the Proclaim:

- God is the Creator who made heaven and earth to reveal His glory.
- The Holy Trinity was involved in creation – the Father created through the eternal Word, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, the “giver of life.”
- God created everything, and the summit of His work occurred on the sixth day with the creation of man and woman in His image and likeness. We are distinct from other creatures and possess dignity.

BREAK

Youth become a creator and make something reflecting an aspect of themselves. The purpose is to help them relate to God the Creator. This activity is followed by a small group discussion.

SEND

Youth receive a prayer card and pray together “The Canticle of the Sun,” which gives glory and praise to God for His creation.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Pray “The Canticle of the Sun” every day on the way to school.

HANDMADE

God the Creator

PREP

Read through the entire Edge Night and gather all the necessary art supplies for the Break.

Download, print, and copy the “Bingo Card” handout found on the enclosed USB and online at lifeteen.com. Cut into individual cards.

Download, print, and copy the “The Canticle of the Sun Prayer Card” handout found on the enclosed USB and online at lifeteen.com.

Download “The Joy of Origami - The Fox” video found on the enclosed USB and online at lifeteen.com.

SETUP

Give core members Bingo cards to hand out to youth and “The Canticle of the Sun Prayer Card,” enough for every member of their small group.

Put art supplies in the front of the main meeting space.

Test all audio-visual elements of the Edge Night.

Project the environment image, and play the “ES - Unfolded” Spotify playlist as youth enter.

SUPPLIES

Prepare the following supplies:

G: Bingo card, one per person

G: Bingo markers, such as game chips, stamps, stickers, or paper punch-outs (optional)

G: Writing utensils, one per youth

B: Various art supplies: sketch paper, drawing pencils, colored pencils, watercolor paints and brushes, palettes, modeling clay, lined notebook paper, origami paper, and instructions how to make origami animals, hearts, and flowers

B: Paper cups of water

B: Paper towels

B: Paper plates

S: “The Canticle of the Sun Prayer Card,” one per person

CORE ASSIGNMENTS AND NOTES

This youth minister worksheet provides writing space to detail core member assignments and notes specific to running this Edge Night.

Highlights:

- Select a “caller” for the Bingo Gather game.
- While youth are creating art during the Break, engage them in small talk to continue building relationships among your small group.

Setup: _____

Opening Prayer: _____

Gather – Creator Bingo

Bingo Caller: _____

Proclaim – Handmade _____

Break – Mirror, Mirror, Small Group Discussion _____

Send – The Canticle of the Sun

Reader: _____

Closing Prayer: _____

Weekly Challenge: _____

Parking Lot: _____

NOTES

HANDMADE

God the Creator

GATHER

Introduction (5 min)

Welcome the youth and introduce those who are there for the first time. Invite the preselected core member to begin in prayer. Give a brief overview of the Edge Night topic, using the following as an example:

Our world is full of mass-produced products, like those found on drop shipping websites Temu and Shein. We don't often see things made by hand. When something is handmade, each part is intricate and purposeful. Artists and craftsmen take special care as they make goods by hand. God, the "Craftsman" behind all of creation, made us and everything that exists with the loving care of an artist for his art.

Creator Bingo (15 min)

Core members distribute bingo cards, writing utensils, and markers (optional) to each person.

The Caller announces a bingo space followed by a corresponding trivia question about creators. Players write their answer to the trivia question in the bingo space. Then, the Caller reveals the correct answer. Players with the right answer can mark their bingo space with a chip or stamp or by writing an "x" over the space.

Hispanic Inculturation

Consider using *Loteria* cards instead of bingo cards.

Step It Up

Put together a slideshow with images of the art and clips of the music and movies from the questions.

Creator Trivia Questions

1. Name the artist who painted the Mona Lisa. (ANSWER: Leonardo Da Vinci)
2. Name the singer-songwriter of the song "Single Ladies." (ANSWER: Beyoncé)
3. Name the director of the movies "The Dark Knight" and "Interstellar." (ANSWER: Christopher Nolan)
4. Name the artist who painted the Sistine Chapel ceiling. (ANSWER: Michelangelo)

5. Name the band who sings “Bohemian Rhapsody.” (ANSWER: Queen)
6. Name the director of “Avatar.” (ANSWER: James Cameron)
7. Name the composer of “Symphony No. 9.” (Note: There are many numbered symphonies, so it will be necessary to play an audio excerpt to identify this one.) (ANSWER: Ludwig van Beethoven)
8. Name the pioneer of modern cartoon movies. (ANSWER: Walt Disney)
9. *Project an image of “The Starry Night.”* Name the artist who painted this work of art. (ANSWER: Vincent van Gogh)
10. Name the singer-songwriter of the song “Blank Space.” (ANSWER: Taylor Swift)
11. *Project an image of “The Kiss.”* Name the artist who created this work. (ANSWER: Gustav Klimt)
12. Name one of the singers of the song “I Will Always Love You.” (ANSWER: Dolly Parton, remade by Whitney Houston)

PROCLAIM

“Handmade” Teaching Reflection (10 min)

The teaching can be found on pages 42 to 44. The following are the main points covered in the teaching:

- God is the Creator who made heaven and earth to reveal His glory.
- The Holy Trinity was involved in creation – the Father created through the eternal Word, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, the “giver of life.”
- God created everything, and the summit of His work occurred on the sixth day with the creation of man and woman in His image and likeness. We are distinct from other creatures and possess dignity.

BREAK

Project and watch “The Joy of Origami - The Fox” video before transitioning into small groups.

Mirror, Mirror (15 min)

Provide a variety of art supplies for a creative activity. Use the following suggestions or come up with your own:

Drawing

Sketch paper, drawing pencils, colored pencils

Painting

Watercolor paints and brushes, palettes, cups for water, paper towels for drying

Sculpting

Modeling clay, paper plates for sculpting

Creative Writing and Poetry

Lined notebook paper, writing utensils

Origami

Colorful origami paper, instructions how to make animals, hearts, flowers, etc.

Instruct the youth to divide into their small groups. Then, invite them to create something that reflects an aspect of themselves and provide multiple methods of creating: sketching, coloring, molding clay, writing a poem, painting with watercolors, and origami.

Share a few examples of art that the youth can create, such as a self-portrait or sculpture, a drawing of a favorite hobby, a watercolor painting that illustrates your personality, or a poem that describes you. Encourage the youth by saying that the goal is to create, and there is no right or wrong way to do so. Invite the youth to pick up supplies. Ask them to maintain a quiet and prayerful environment. Play prayerful music.

Small Group Discussion (10 min)

Use the following questions to foster a discussion within the small group:

- Whip Around Question: What's your favorite piece of art?
- What is a well-known piece of art?
- How does it make you feel that you are God's most precious work of art?

Eighth Grade Adaptation

Use the following questions for a more challenging discussion for eighth-grade youth:

- What does creating something do for the person who made it?
- Why does God create?
- Can you share an example of a piece of art you have made and how it reflects you?
- Why did you create that art piece?

SEND

The Canticle of the Sun (15 min)

Pass out "The Canticle of the Sun Prayer Card" handout to each youth. Explain that it is a song and prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi that praises God's creation. Designate a core member to lead the prayer by reading it aloud. Instruct the youth to read along on their prayer card.

Weekly Challenge (5 min)

Invite the preselected core members to present the Weekly Challenge and Closing Prayer.

Pray “The Canticle of the Sun” every day on the way to school.

Dismiss the core members preassigned to parking lot safety.

Make announcements related to your program.

Dismiss the youth.

HANDMADE

God the Creator

GETTING STARTED

This Teaching Guide is a starting point for crafting a talk relevant to middle school youth. It provides bullet points of information and writing areas for presenter notes.

The presenter's preparation, prayer, and personalization of this outline will add the elements essential to delivering an impactful Proclaim.

TEACHING GUIDE

Created Things Require a Creator

- Every work of art – the Mona Lisa, the Sistine Chapel, “Single Ladies,” “The Dark Knight” – has an artist or creator behind it.
- All created things require a creator. Remember those origami hearts we made in the first Edge Night? We were origamists, and we created origami hearts. Likewise, all of creation is made by God, the Creator.
- Creation gives glory to the Creator.
- Glory means high renown or honor won by notable achievements.
- We give glory to creators all of the time: Academy Awards are given to excellent directors and actors, Grammys are given to excellent musicians, and famous works of art are on display in museums for all to see and enjoy.
- The excellence of the art, movie, or song point to the glory of their creator.
- Creations may also include hints that point back to the creator, like how a director may include themselves in the background of their movies or how a songwriter writes lyrics about circumstances from their life.
- God's creation reveals the Creator, God, and His glory. (CCC 279, 293 - 294, Isaiah 44:24)

Share an example from your life where you have experienced God's glory in nature. Describe the beauty, peace, wonder, and awe you experienced, and how it led you to know God as the Creator who created all things good. Take notes here:

- God's creation reveals the Creator, God, and His glory. (CCC 279, 293-294, Isaiah 44:24)

The Trinity As Creator

- Each Person of the Trinity participated in the creation of our world.

Project and read Genesis 1:1-2.

- God the Father was the one who spoke all things into being out of the void and darkness. (Genesis 1:1)
- “The Spirit of God” moved over the waters. (Genesis 1:2)
- And where is the Son? If we look at the Gospel of John, he tells us that “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” and that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” (John 1:1, 14)
- The Word God spoke at the beginning of the world is the same Person who became the “Word Made Flesh” — Jesus Christ.
- The Three Persons of the Trinity exist in an eternal exchange of love, and through creation, freely give life to all things – the sun, the stars, the Earth, plants, trees, the oceans, animals, and sea creatures – out of that love.

Project and read Genesis 1:1-25. Stop to emphasize what He created on what day and that it was “good.”

- On the first day, God created light and separated it from the darkness.
- On the second day, God created the sky and separated it from the waters below.
- On the third day, God created dry land and filled it with plants and trees.
- On the fourth day, God created the sun and moon to rule over the day and night.
- On the fifth day, God created land, sea, and sky creatures to fill the land and sea.
- Creation becomes more and more complex as the days go on.
- On the first, second, and third days, God created the environment. Then, on the fourth and fifth days, He filled those environments.
- But what God made on the sixth day is truly the summit of all His work.

God Created Man and Women Very Good

Project and read Genesis 1:26-31. Emphasize the words “image and likeness” and “very good.”

- This creation is different. Humanity is made in the image and likeness of God.
- We are distinct from other creatures. We are “very good.”
- Humanity is set apart from and above all other creatures and is given the responsibility to be stewards of other created things.

- More than all of the rest of creation, we, human beings, are prized above everything because we are a reflection of the image of God.
- The image of God we were created in means we have dignity.
- Dignity means nobility, elevation of character, and worthiness. It means each and every one of us is worthy of great respect.
- We deserve to be treated with dignity because we have been created in the image and likeness of God.

Invite the youth to think of the piece of art they have created — the time, attention, care, that went into their creation. Ask them to imagine how God took time, attention, and care for creating them, as an artist creating a work of art.

- The creator is reflected in what they create. For example, the joys and suffering associated with love and loss are evident in the songs we listen to and reflect the songwriter's life story.
- Likewise, God created us, and we reflect Him.
- Our great dignity means that we must also have great respect for others.
- Every human being, no matter their age, gender, or abilities, is a “very good” part of God's creation.
- When we treat others with that in mind, we better reflect the image and likeness of the Trinity, who loves all parts of creation.
- The three Persons of the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – exist in a profound relationship and exchange of love and created us so that we can share in that love.
- Creation is a gift to us, a free gift of love. We can enjoy creation and see God's love for us and know God's love for us in it.
- When we love others with the dignity they deserve and care for creation well, we live more fully in the love of the Trinity.

NOTES



LIFE TEEN

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QUICK GLANCE

GREEN

An Edge Issue Night on Envy and Comparison

GOAL

This Edge Issue Night helps middle school youth identify and explore comparison and how it leads to the vice of envy. The virtue of charity is presented as a contradiction to envy, and practical tools are suggested to grow the virtue of charity and reduce jealousy.

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 37:2-36, 45:1-15, Matthew 22:37-40, John 10:10, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, 1 Peter 2:1-3

CATECHISM

1822, 1825-26, 2536, 2538-2540

RESOURCES

“Jealousy Doesn’t Look Good on You ... Or Anyone” (lifeteen.com)

“The Secret Weapon of a Teenage Slave” (lifeteen.com)

Kevin Timpe and Craig A. Boyd, “Virtues and Their Vices”

GATHER

The youth play a game of decoding images and phrases to find a message. This game emphasizes how comparison often only shows part of the picture.

PROCLAIM

The following are the main teaching points of the Proclaim:

- Envy is a vice expressed as sadness or contempt toward another’s goods and the immoderate desire to obtain those goods. Toxic and habitual comparison of ourselves to others can produce envy, a capital sin forbidden by the Ninth and Tenth Commandments.
- Charity is the theological virtue that counteracts envy. This virtue flows from God, who is Love Incarnate, and it allows us to love Him above all things and our neighbor as ourselves.
- Envy causes us to live in desperation and scarcity; love calls us to live abundantly in freedom.

BREAK

Each small group prepares and performs a skit based on a given scenario highlighting envy and a more favorable response. The skits may be substituted with small group discussion and personal journaling using the prompts provided.

SEND

The youth reflect on love and gratitude through a prayer activity.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

When you feel envy, stop and say a short prayer to ask for God’s blessing.

PREP

GREEN

An Edge Issue Night on Envy and Comparison

PREP

Prepare a large stack of quartered sheets of paper for each small group.

Write a list of scenarios for the Break activity. Use the following examples:

- A classmate showed up to school bragging about tickets to a concert, the same concert you have been asking your parents to buy tickets for you.
- One of your teammates was named the MVP of your soccer team.
- You studied hard for your test and got a C; the person next to you got an A.
- One of the popular girls at school posted a video on TikTok that everyone is talking about, and it got hundreds of more likes than any of your videos.
- Your neighbors are going on vacation to Disneyworld, and you have always wanted to go, but your parents said it is too expensive.

SETUP

Decorate the room with posters and images of items and accomplishments that could lead to envy, such as expensive shoes, brand-name clothes, awards, trophies, celebrities, or Olympic athletes. Lay out on a table miniature luxury cars and fake coins or dollar bills from a board game.

Play the “Mapp My Life” Spotify playlist as youth enter.

SUPPLIES

Prepare the following supplies:

- G: Sheets of paper, about 10 per youth
- G: Pens, one for each youth
- B: Prepared scenario, one per small group
- S: Bible

CORE ASSIGNMENTS

This youth minister worksheet provides writing space to detail core member assignments and notes specific to running this Edge Night.

Highlights:

- Explain the Gather and ensure each core member knows the rules of the game.

Setup:

Opening Prayer:

Gather:

Proclaim:

Break:

Send:

Scripture Proclamation: _____

Closing Prayer:

Weekly Challenge:

Parking Lot:

NOTES

OUTLINE

GREEN

An Edge Issue Night on Envy and Comparison

GATHER

Introduction (5 min)

Welcome the youth and introduce those who are there for the first time. Invite the preselected core member to begin in prayer. Give a brief overview of the Edge Night topic, using the following as an example:

Have you ever had a friend get something you have been saving for? You wish your parents would just buy you what you want. You want to be happy for your friend, but you struggle with feelings of anger and jealousy. During this Edge Night, we will discuss our shared experience of envy and comparison and how we can work through these feelings to be grateful for what we have and be happy for the blessings others receive.

Paper Telephone (15 min)

Divide the youth into groups of eight to ten people and assign one core member to sit with each group.

1. Instruct the small groups to sit in a circle. Provide each youth with a stack of paper. The stack will equal the number of people in their small group.
2. Instruct half the group to begin their stack by drawing a simple picture. The group's other half will begin their stack by writing a word, sentence, or phrase.
3. Instruct the group to pass their stack to the left. When a youth receives a new stack, they can move the word or drawing to the bottom and use the blank paper at the top to decode the image or word they saw. If they read a word, they can draw a picture; if they see a picture, they can write a word.
4. Once everyone has received their original stack, allow an opportunity for the youth to look over their original stack for a humorous result.

PROCLAIM

“Green” Teaching Reflection (10 min)

The teaching can be found on pages 12 to 17. The following are the main points covered in the teaching:

- Envy is a vice expressed as sadness or contempt toward another's goods and the immoderate desire to obtain those goods. Toxic and habitual comparison of ourselves to others can produce envy, a capital sin forbidden by the Ninth and Tenth Commandments.
- Charity is the theological virtue that counteracts envy. This virtue flows from God, who is Love Incarnate, and it allows us to love Him above all things and our neighbor as ourselves.
- Envy causes us to live in desperation and scarcity; love calls us to live abundantly in freedom.

BREAK

Envy vs. Charity (30 min)

Small groups prepare skits that act out the prepared scenarios highlighting envy and charity. Allow ten minutes for small groups to prepare two versions of their scenes. The first round presents an envious scene. In the second round, the scene is presented with a charitable or loving response.

Alternate Break: Small Group Discussion (20 min)

Use the following questions to foster a discussion within the small group:

- Whip Around Question: If you were stuck indoors on a rainy day and could choose a store to spend the day in, what store would you choose?
- What makes middle schoolers jealous?
- What are some negative consequences of envy?
- Name three things you are grateful for.
- How do you feel when someone encourages you?
- What are some ways we can show charity towards others instead of envy?

Eighth-Grade Adaptation

Use the following questions for a more challenging discussion for eighth-grade youth:

- When do you feel envy most often? What do you do in those situations?
- Are there any situations you can remove yourself from so you don't feel envy as intensely?
- What challenges may you experience as you try to practice charity despite feelings of envy?
- What are some of the things that you can do at school to practice this type of charity?
- Who are role models in your life who live lovingly?

Journaling (10 min)

Use the following prompts to guide the youth through a journaling exercise. Read the question and allow two minutes of silence for the youth to journal.

- What types of things do you wish you were not envious of?
- What types of feelings do you experience when you feel envy? Sadness? Anger?
- Ask Jesus in your own words to help you with these moments of envy.
- Take a moment to reflect on something kind you can do for a person you feel envious of and write it down.
- How can you work to have a greater spirit of gratitude for what you have?

SEND

Charity Lived Out (10 min)

Invite the youth to find a posture of prayer that is comfortable for them, close their eyes, and listen to the scripture passage. The same passage will be read three different times, with another reflection question to follow.

Invite the preselected core member to read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

When have you experienced this kind of love? Think of a person who has been kind to you. How did they make you feel?

Reread 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

Saint Paul lists several virtues. Which do you relate to? Are you patient? Are you kind? Or do you tend to be short-tempered? Think about where you fit into this Scripture.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 a third time.

Was there a part in this passage that caught your attention? Why did it draw your attention?

Conclude with the following prayer:

Lord Jesus, we thank you for your love and mercy. We ask you to give us the virtue of courage to choose charity toward others. You know what virtues we need to grow as disciples; we ask you to help us grow in these virtues so we can become great saints. Amen.

Weekly Challenge (5 min)

Invite the preselected core members to present the Weekly Challenge and Closing Prayer.

When you feel envy, stop and say a short prayer to ask for God's blessing.

Dismiss the core members preassigned to parking lot safety.

Make announcements.

Dismiss the youth.

GREEN

An Edge Issue Night on Envy and Comparison

GETTING STARTED

This Teaching Guide is a starting point for crafting a talk relevant to middle school youth. It provides bullet points of information and writing areas for presenter notes.

Going Deeper call-out boxes offer further insights to consider.

The presenter's preparation, prayer, and personalization of this outline will add the elements essential to delivering an impactful Proclaim.

Teaching Guide (10 Min)

Envy and Comparison

- There was a famous emperor who lived a privileged and spoiled life. He had everything he needed, including a palace, servants, an extensive wardrobe, and anything he wanted to eat, yet he seemed to need more. One of his closest advisors was extremely envious of him and sought to take over his kingdom. The emperor, tired of his advisor's jealousy, suddenly fired her. The former advisor, upset that she had been fired, became overcome by her jealous feelings and sought revenge. To get back at the emperor, she attempted to poison him but accidentally turned him into a llama creating a bigger problem.
- This story is from the movie, "The Emperor's New Groove," and it helps illustrate envy, a feeling of discontent at the possessions or successes of others.
- When we see what others have, we may experience anger or sadness when we realize we do not possess what they have.
- Feelings of envy become sinful when we allow ourselves to be overcome by them and wish harm on another person. For example, when the emperor's advisor was so envious and angry, she plotted to poison the emperor.

- God has given us the Ninth and Tenth Commandments to help us overcome envy.
- The ninth commandment states that we should not covet our neighbor's wife.
- The tenth commandment states that we should not covet our neighbor's goods.
- These commandments remind us to be grateful for what we have so as not to be overcome with a desire for things that do not belong to us or to amass earthly possessions without limit.

Ask the youth for examples or situations that make middle schoolers envious.

- All of us have compared ourselves to others and experience envy. There is a story in the Bible that will help us understand how comparison and envy can lead us to sin against charity.

Read Genesis 37:3-5.

- Joseph was hated by his brothers because of the special relationship he had with their father.
- Their envy led them to sell Joseph into slavery and deceive their father into believing that Joseph had been killed.
- Toxic and habitual comparisons of ourselves to others can produce envy.
- Envy can cause us to be happy when someone who has been successful or has something we desire experiences hardship. We may also become angry when something good happens to this person (CCC 2539)
- While serving Pharaoh, Joseph organized the collection of enough food to provide for the people during a terrible famine. He was praised for his accomplishment, saving many people, including Joseph's brothers.
- When reunited, Joseph greeted his brothers with kindness instead of reacting vengefully. He told about all the good God had done through him. (Genesis 45:1-15)

Share about a moment in your life when comparisons led you to envy. Make some notes about what you want to share.

- Comparison and envy not only hurt us but also hurt others.
- This comparison often makes us feel discouraged and sad.
- Have you ever had an experience where you were envious of something another person had, and it consumed your thoughts? If we let envy take over our thoughts, it can lead us to hurt others by showing anger or speaking badly about others.
- Our God is a good and generous Father. He has blessings for each of His children and will not run out of good gifts to share with each of us.
- God wants us to be grateful for what we have and rejoice at the successes and good fortune of others.
- Spiritually mature people realize that there is enough goodness in the world for many people and that one person's success does not mean personal loss.

Going Deeper

Invite the youth to reflect on a moment when they have been envious of someone else. Encourage them to think about their experience and how it made them feel.

Going Deeper

Read 1 Peter 2:1-3. One of the places where we may feel envious is social media. When we scroll through social media and see our friends' lives, we may begin to think their lives are perfect. It can be easy to compare ourselves to others when we only see a small snapshot of their lives.

Perception

- Our perception of what others have is warped by the little information we see, just as the pictures and messages were warped and changed by our perception during the Paper Telephone Gather game.
- Someone with the newest iPhone model might also need help with their grades.
- Another person might have hundreds of followers on social media but might feel like they have only a few close friends with whom they can share their lives.
- Knowing that what we see about other people's lives may not be the whole truth should help us shift away from comparing ourselves to others.
- When we spend our time comparing ourselves to other people, it causes us to take on a mentality of scarcity. In other words, we only see what we lack instead of being grateful for what we do have.
- When we focus on all the things we don't have and haven't accomplished, we won't be able to enjoy the joys of the present moment.
- It can be so tiring and devastating when we are consumed by comparing our lives to those of others.

Freedom in Christ

- Jesus desires for us to experience happiness and joy. He invites us to be content and grateful for what we have and to see everything as a gift from God.
- We can be grateful for the talents we have and for the accomplishments we have achieved.

- Jesus also invites us to live the virtue of charity.
- Charity is the theological virtue that allows us to love God above everything else and love our neighbors in the same way we want to be loved. (CCC 1822)
- When we love God above all things and know He loves us, we don't need other things to make us happy or fulfilled.
- When we are secure in God's love, we don't need the most expensive clothes or to be the most successful basketball player.
- Even though feelings of envy can be challenging to overcome, we have a virtue to strengthen us and redirect our thoughts.
- When we love our neighbor as ourselves, we can experience joy when they succeed.
- As we grow in this virtue, our hearts will expand so that we not only stop feeling envious but begin to rejoice in the good things that happen to others. (CCC 2540)

Ask the youth to share examples of what it can sound like to rejoice over someone else's accomplishment.

Going Deeper

Invite the youth to brainstorm a few ways to shift their thoughts when they begin to feel envy. For example, when they start to feel envious, they can thank God for this person and begin to notice their virtues.

- The Lord gives us the grace to grow in virtue. He will help us to be happy for others' successes.
- When we start to desire the good of others, we will experience freedom. This means that seeing other people's successes will no longer bother us.
- When we practice charity, we must remember that the person we envy deserves our love.
- Practicing charity and gratitude for our blessings will help reduce the envious or anxious feelings we may experience surrounding what we lack.
- God loves to bestow blessings upon us and waits for us to ask

Him for what we want. He knows exactly what we need.

- We can depend on God's goodness and generosity to help us.



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QUICK GLANCE

IF YOU AIN'T FIRST, YOU'RE LAST

An Edge Social Night

GOAL

The goal of this Edge Night is for the youth to have fun, get to know each other, and compete in relay-style games.

RESOURCES

Music

Spotify: "LT - Gather Music" ([spotify:profile:lifeteen](https://open.spotify.com/profile/lifeteen))

Spotify: "LT - Break Music" ([spotify:profile:lifeteen](https://open.spotify.com/profile/lifeteen))

Spotify: "LT - Send Music" ([spotify:profile:lifeteen](https://open.spotify.com/profile/lifeteen))

GATHER

Groups scramble to find hidden number stickers around the room. The first team to assemble their group with correct sequential numbers wins the warmup and kickstarts the competition.

PROCLAIM + BREAK

Five unique relay-style games, both mental and physical, test each team's cooperation and quick thinking. They involve popping balloons, sack racing, charades, word puzzles, and a chariot race.

SEND

Groups gather for the final award ceremony. Winners mount their respective podiums, celebrating their achievements. Everyone's effort is recognized and appreciated, culminating with a brief closing prayer.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Help someone who is "last" in some way — the last to finish a task, the latest in line at school, or someone who simply feels left behind. Remember, kindness can make a world of difference.

PREP

IF YOU AIN'T FIRST, YOU'RE LAST

An Edge Social Night

PREP

Read through the entire Edge Night and begin acquiring the supplies needed.

Create charade cards for each group, using the following as prompts as suggestions:

- Flying superhero
- Walking on the moon
- Eating spaghetti
- Roaring like a lion
- Breaking plates
- Ballet dancing
- Playing air guitar
- Doing homework on the computer
- Making a TikTok
- Cooking a fancy dinner
- Scuba diving
- Mowing the lawn
- Weightlifting at the gym
- Juggling flaming swords
- Watching the sunset
- Painting a picture
- Playing tennis
- Riding a horse
- Building a sandcastle
- Jumping on a trampoline

SETUP

Provide enough seating for all participants using tables and chairs.

Create an “Olympics” theme by decorating with vibrant colors. Create a bold “Start” line in tape on the floor at the entrance of the meeting space. At the opposite end of the room, hang a festive “Finish” banner. Hang colored hula hoops on the wall to create the Olympics logo. Put a battery-operated candle in a prominent place to represent the “Olympic torch.”

Use colored tape or chalk to draw winding “race tracks” on the floor, crisscrossing and looping for an exciting visual effect. To elevate the atmosphere, hang checkered flags and pennants from the ceiling and across the walls. Set up a podium for the

winners in one corner of the room. This could be as simple as sturdy stacked boxes draped with gold, silver, and bronze cloth. Consider creating mini race car track centerpieces for table decorations, complete with small toy cars.

Print large numbers on stickers to represent competitor hip numbers worn by track athletes. These should be double digits or triple digits, as long as you create several matching numbers to create a small group. For example, if your group will be divided into five groups of 8 people, create five sets of eight matching numbers. Prepare these beforehand and hide them around the room before the youth arrive. These will be used for the Gather game.

Arrange chairs 15 feet from a marked starting line and place balloons on each chair. Be sure to blow up at least one balloon per teen. Stage the balloons out of sight until they are needed for the Balloon Pop Relay.

Designate an area for the Sack Race Relay and stage obstacles like cones or soft toys to use during the race.

Choose a safe surface for the Chariot Races, such as a carpeted floor. Ensure the course is clear of any objects that could pose a tripping hazard. Prepare a scooter board and stick horse for each group.

SUPPLIES

- Checkered flags
- Colorful pennants
- Colored tape or chalk
- Cloth for the podium
- Stacked boxes
- Mini race car tracks
- Toy cars
- Posters with quotes
- Red, white, and black balloons
- Stickers with numbers
- Chairs
- King size pillowcases, one per small group
- Cones or soft toys (for obstacles)
- Charade cards
- Paper, one sheet for each group
- Pen, one for each group
- Scooter board, one for each group
- Stick horse, one for each group
- Tables

CORE ASSIGNMENTS

This youth minister worksheet provides writing space to detail core member assignments and notes on running this Edge Night.

Setup:

Opening Prayer:

Assigned to Small Group Teams:

Balloon Pop Relay Leader: _____

Word Relay Leader: _____

Sack Race Leader: _____

Charade Relay Leader: _____

Chariot Races Leader: _____

Closing Prayer:

Weekly Challenge:

Parking Lot:

NOTES

OUTLINE

IF YOU AIN'T FIRST, YOU'RE LAST

An Edge Social Night

GATHER

Introduction (5 min)

Welcome the youth and introduce those who are there for the first time. Invite the preselected core member to begin in prayer. Give a brief overview of the Edge Night topic, using the following as an example:

Welcome, racers, to an exciting, fast, and fun evening! You're about to embark on thrilling relay races that will challenge your mind and body. As you join forces with your teammates, remember that every second counts. So, buckle up, get ready, and always remember: If you aren't first, you're last!

Number Hunt (10 min)

1. As the youth arrive, explain that they are going on a “number hunt.” The goal is to find a racing number.
2. Once they find a number, they are to wear one and join the other youth who found the same number. This activity will help them create a group with people with the same number.
3. Once everyone has found racing numbers and formed their groups, explain that they will be competing against one another in physical and mental games that require them to act and think fast. Explain to the youth that they will receive points for coming in first, second, or third in each game and that the group with the most post-points wins at the end of the night.

PROCLAIM + BREAK

Everything is a Race (50 min)

The Proclaim and Break section of the Edge Night is divided into

five ten-minute games.

Balloon Pop Relay

1. Divide the youth into groups and have them line up at the starting line.
2. Place a chair for each team about 15 feet from the starting line. On each chair, place a balloon.
3. On “Go,” the first person in line from each group runs to the chair and attempts to pop the balloon by sitting on it.
4. Once the balloon is popped, they return and tag the next player.
5. If a youth fails to pop the balloon within 10 seconds, they must do a ‘penalty’ activity (like five jumping jacks or a funny dance) before they can try again. This will add an element of fun and surprise.
6. The first team to pop all their balloons and return to the start line wins the game.

Word Relay

1. Give each group a sheet of paper and a pen.
2. Project a three-minute timer.
3. The first youth writes a word and passes the paper to the next youth.
4. The second youth must write a new word underneath the first word, but it must start with the last letter of the previous word.
5. Repeat this process until all group members have written a word.
6. The group that writes the most valid words in 3 minutes wins the game.

At the end of each of the following two games, points will be awarded to the groups in the following manner:

- First place: 5 points
- Second place: 3 points
- Third place: 2 points

Sack Race

1. At the starting line, each group lines up with one youth standing inside a sack that comes up to their waist.
2. At the sound of the whistle, the youth must hop to a designated turn-around point and then return to the starting line.
3. Place some fun obstacles along the race track (like cones or soft toys) that the youth must navigate while hopping. This will increase the challenge and fun factor of the game.
4. Once they return to the starting line, the next youth in the group gets into the sack and repeats the process.
5. The first group to finish the relay wins the game.

Charade Relay

1. Divide the groups into their designated sections and project a five-minute timer.
2. Have core members monitor each group, ensure the youth follow the rules, and confirm correct answers.
3. The first youth in each group runs up to pick a charade card and acts out the prompt on the card for their group. Remind the youth that they cannot speak.
4. The group has to guess the action/situation correctly before the youth can run back to their group and tag the next player can go.
5. Remind the group that every youth must go at least once.
6. The group with the correct answers (or the first team to finish guessing all their cards) wins the game.

At the end of the final game, points will be awarded to the groups in the following manner:

- First place: 10 points
- Second place: 6 points
- Third place: 4 points

Chariot Races

1. Each group will select three people. Select one person to sit on the scooter board and hold the stick horse in the front. This will be their “chariot.”

2. The other two participants, or “charioteers,” will stand on either side of the chariot.
3. On the count of three, the charioteers will push their chariot along the pre-determined race course.
4. The race continues until one team crosses the finish line with their chariot.

SEND

Award Ceremony (10 min)

Calculate the total group points. Gather the youth in the decorated podium area. Start with acknowledging all the participants, appreciating their hard work, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

Announce the third-place team. Ask them to step onto the bronze podium and provide them with their medals or certificates. Applaud their effort and congratulate them. Continue with the second-place team, inviting them to the silver podium. Provide them with their medals or certificates. Congratulate them and applaud their effort. Finally, announce the first-place team. Invite them onto the gold podium, provide their medals or certificates, and give them loud applause. Remind everyone that they did a fantastic job, regardless of the position.

Conclude the Edge Night with the following prayer:

Lord, we thank you for this fun-filled day of camaraderie, competition, and unity. We are grateful for our friends, efforts, and lessons learned today. As we leave here, let us carry the spirit of fair play and teamwork into our everyday lives. Amen.

Weekly Challenge (5 min)

Invite the preselected core members to present the Weekly Challenge and Closing Prayer.

Help someone who is “last” in some way — the last to finish a task, the latest in line at school, or someone who simply feels left behind. Remember, kindness can make a world of difference.

Dismiss the youth.



LIFE TEEN

Leading Teens Closer to Christ
www.LifeTeen.com

Renewal Notice
Pentecost Sunday

FIRST READING

Acts 2:1-11

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13 or Galatians 5:16-25

GOSPEL

John 20:19-23 or John 15:26-27; 16:12-15

KEY WORDS

Reception, Power, Plentitude, Ability, Peace, Proclamation

KEY THEMES

1. Languages and gifts may differ, but the Father (whom we serve) and His Spirit (who dwells in us) remain the same.
2. As we disciple others, Christ is at work within us. He will never leave us.
3. The Holy Spirit's job is to make us holy.
4. The Holy Spirit motivates us to move forward, not backward.

The Ascent

Welcome and Introduction (5 min)

Welcome all of the teens to the discipleship group and invite them to share one "high point" and one "low point" from their week. If there are new teens, invite them to introduce themselves.

A Time to Renew (10 min)

Open the session with a time that encourages the teens to enjoy and/or cultivate the space the *Summit* group meets in regularly. Some examples include cleaning out or tidying up the room, dusting the church, or weeding the parish's garden. If the weather allows, consider holding the *Summit* session outside so the teens can enjoy nature.

Lectio

Opening Prayer

Our Voice (10 min)

Use the following questions to prepare the group for the topic of the session:



- *If you began the session “renewing” one aspect of the parish, ask the teens what their experience of that activity was.*
- What does it mean to “renew the face of the earth”?
- How do you experience renewal in your own life? What do you do when you need to be refreshed or rejuvenated?

Reflection: Renewal Notice (5 min)

Play the *Summit* reflection video, “Renewal Notice,” found online at lifeteen.com. Use this video to provide a thematic overview to the session before entering into God’s Word.

God’s Voice (5 min)

Read Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34 aloud and then invite a teen to read the passage aloud. Encourage the teens to actively listen. After the second read through, invite the teens to open their Bibles and silently read the passage a third time. Allow time to pause and reflect between read-throughs.

Meditatio

Reflecting on God’s Voice (10 min)

Invite the teens to take a few minutes to silently reflect and journal on the following question:

- A garden needs weeding to flourish, and sometimes our souls need to be renewed as well. Do you feel as though your soul is cared for and yielding good fruit, or is it in need of renewal? What areas of your life are in need of renewal?

Oratio

Discussing God’s Voice (30 min)

Following the silent reflection, guide the teens in a time of discussion. The following questions are a great starting point for the discussion, but be open to where the Holy Spirit may guide it:

- Have you ever experienced a moment of renewal in your life? What was that experience like? How did it make a difference in your life?
- The psalmist speaks of God sending down His Holy Spirit to renew the face of the Earth. What is your relationship like with the Holy Spirit?
- How might welcoming the Holy Spirit into your life renew you and, in turn, those closest to you?
- In the second reading, St. Paul talked about how there are many different gifts but one Spirit. Is there a specific gift of the Holy Spirit you would like more of in your life? Why would you like that specific gift?
- How do you care for and use the gifts God has given you? Do you use your gifts to their fullest potential?
- Is it easy or difficult to care for and use the gifts God has given you? Why?



- How can you better care for and use your gifts?

Contemplatio

Alive and Active (10 min)

As a group, pray the *Canticle from the Book of Daniel*, which can be found below. Before praying, briefly mention the line from the second reading, “No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.” Remind the teens that even if they do not see or feel Him, the Holy Spirit is very much alive.

Closing Challenge

Challenge the teens to pray this simple prayer every morning: *“Holy Spirit, be with me today in every moment. Protect the areas of my life that are yielding fruit and renew the areas of my life that are not. Amen.”* Invite the teens to ask themselves this question every night: *What area of my life has the Holy Spirit renewed today?*

LET ALL CREATURES PRAISE THE LORD

CANTICLE FROM DANIEL 3:57-88, 56

LEADER:

**Sing a hymn of praise to our God;
praise him above all forever.**

Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

Praise and exalt him above all forever.

Angels of the Lord, bless the Lord.

You heavens, bless the Lord.

All you waters above the heavens,
bless the Lord.

All you hosts of the Lord, bless the Lord.

Sun and moon, bless the Lord.

Stars of heaven, bless the Lord.

GROUP:

Every shower and dew, bless the Lord.

All you winds, bless the Lord.

Fire and heat, bless the Lord.

Cold and chill, bless the Lord.

Dew and rain, bless the Lord.

Frost and chill, bless the Lord.

Ice and snow, bless the Lord.

Nights and days, bless the Lord.

Light and darkness, bless the Lord.

Lightning and clouds, bless the Lord.

LEADER:

Let the earth bless the Lord.

Praise and exalt him above all forever.

Mountains and hills, bless the Lord.

Everything growing from the earth,
bless the Lord.

You springs, bless the Lord.

GROUP:

Seas and rivers, bless the Lord.

You dolphins and all water creatures,
bless the Lord.

All you birds of the air, bless the Lord.

All you beasts, wild and tame, bless the Lord.

You sons of men, bless the Lord.

LEADER:

O Israel, bless the Lord.

Praise and exalt him above all forever.

Priests of the Lord, bless the Lord.

Servants of the Lord, bless the Lord.

Spirits and souls of the just, bless the Lord.

Holy men of humble heart, bless the Lord.

Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael, bless the Lord.

Praise and exalt him about all forever.

GROUP:

Let us bless the Father, and the Son,
and the Holy Spirit.

Let us praise and exalt him about all
forever.

Blessed are you, Lord, in the firmament
of heaven.

Praiseworthy and glorious and exalted
above all forever.

**Sing a hymn of praise to our God;
praise him above all forever.**

Amen.

SONG SUGGESTIONS

Gathering

Come, Holy Ghost (arr. Bolduc) [edbolducmusic.com]

Come, Holy Spirit (Thompson) [giamusic.com]

Holy Spirit Come Now (Manibusan) [ocp.org, CCLI #5358948]

Let the Weight of Your Glory Fall (Merkel) [CCLI #2790475]

Send Down The Fire (Haugen) [giamusic.com]

Responsorial Psalm

Lord, Send Out Your Spirit (Angrisano) [ocp.org, Spirit & Psalm]

Lord, Send Out Your Spirit (Canedo) [ocp.org]

Lord, Send Out Your Spirit (Colson) [ocp.org]

Sequence

Pentecost Sequence (Bolduc) [giamusic.com]

Veni Sancte Spiritus (Colson) [giamusic.com]

Preparation

Altar of Hope, Be Still (Hess) [giamusic.com]

Awakening (Tomlin) [CCLI #5677399]

Breathe on Me (Waller, Adkins) [CCLI #4870111]

Breathe On Me, O Breath of God (Bolduc) [giamusic.com]

Come Holy Spirit (Mares) [davidmaresmusic.com]

Rest On Us (Lake, Smith, Bashta, Jay, White, Brown) [CCLI #7126736]

Communion

Behold, the Lamb of God (Maher) [ocp.org, CCLI #4669755]

O Salutaris Hostia, O Saving Lamb (Booth) [ocp.org, CCLI #5771611]

Taste and See (Moore) [ocp.org]

The Feast Meant For Everyone (Booth, Hart) [ocp.org, CCLI #7228943]

We Are Many Parts (Haugen) [giamusic.com]

Second Communion

Behold, Then Sings My Soul (Houston) [CCLI #7068430]

Breathe On Us (Cash, Jobe) [CCLI #7007817]

Come Down, O Love Divine (Da Siena, Littledale, Ortega) [CCLI #6128672]

Fall Afresh (Riddle) [CCLI #6032768]

Fire Fall Down (Crocker) [CCLI #4705200]

Purify My Heart, Refiner's Fire (Doerksen) [CCLI #426298]

Sending Forth

Burning In My Soul (Yunker, Maher, Reeves, Carson) [CCLI #6517874]

Love Unfolding (Blakesley) [ocp.org, CCLI #5403570]

Overflow (Maher) [ocp.org, CCLI #4613763]

Send Your Glory Down (Booth, Thomson) [ocp.org, CCLI #5917303]

Set a Fire (Reagan) [CCLI #5911299]

Soul on Fire (Brown, Carr, Powell, Lee, Maher, Anderson) [CCLI #7032679]

Your Grace Is Enough (Maher) [ocp.org, CCLI #4477026]