

BOUND TOGETHER

Discernment and Community
LIFE NIGHT OUTLINE

Goal for the Life Night

This Life Night will help the teens understand that no vocation is lived in isolation. This night will explore various relationships in a teen's life and how those relationships are a means to grow closer to God and discover His calling for their lives.

Life Night at a Glance

This is the final night of the semester on vocations. This night seeks to show the teens that we need one another to grow in holiness and foster our primary vocation. This night begins with a game that shows the teens that a task is easier and less burdensome when done as a group. The teaching for this night will help the teens understand that living their vocation starts with loving one another. The Break will give the groups an opportunity to answer a few questions and set up an accountability system. The night will end with the small group members praying over each other.

Environment

The environment for this night should be a visible representation of how all vocations are interconnected. Around the room have large signs with all the various vocations (if possible, bring back the vocation booths from the "Now Hiring" Life Night). From the different signs (or booths), have string or yard connecting to all the others signs. If possible, the string should be one long piece strung around the room. The room should look like a tangled mess of string and should be difficult for the teens to maneuver around. This environment will become an important part of the Send.

Before the Life Night

At the entrance of the room, have a large sign that says, "No Talking, No Eye Contact, No Human Interaction." As the teens enter, the room should be silent. Have Core Members enforce these rules. The point is to make everyone disconnected and isolated from one another. This exercise can be used in the teaching to demonstrate the importance of community.

GATHER *15 Minutes*

Gather and Introductions (5 min)

The youth minister should break the silence and gather all the teens together. After he/she has welcomed everyone to the Life Night, ask a few teens for their reactions to being isolated at the beginning of the night. The youth minister should also introduce any teens at Life Night for the first time.

"Give Me a Lift" Game (10 min)

For this game, you will need a plywood board that measures five feet by six feet. Ask for six guy volunteers and one girl volunteer (the guys should be strong and the girl should be small). Instruct the girl to sit on the board. The guys should stand around the board. The youth minister should instruct the six guys to pick up the board (with the girl on it) and lift her over their heads. Explain that the object of the game is to see how few guys it will take to keep this girl in the air. One at a time, the youth minister will ask one of the guys to step away from the board. When the board gets too unstable, the game is over (be sure to stop it before she falls). If time allow, have a second group do the same exercise. The youth minister should point out how much easier the task is when there are many people working together. This point will set up the rest of the night.

PROCLAIM *10 Minutes*

Teaching (10 min)

The final teaching for this semester will focus on how the teens can begin to live vocation in their lives now and how we are called to the sacrificial love Christ modeled for us on the cross.

The teaching for this night can be found on pages 96-99.

BOUND TOGETHER

Discernment and Community

TEACHING

To the presenter: The teaching outlines given in this Curriculum Guide cover much more information than can be presented in a 10-minute talk. This is done on purpose. It is the role of presenter to be familiar with the topic and then prayerfully prepare the main points that will be presented to the teens. Use Scripture, Catechism and personal experience to convey the message.

So in the course of this semester we have covered the idea of vocations, what it means to live a vocation, and what the different types of vocations are. Tonight we want to talk about what vocations means to you, right now, tonight. What difference does it make when you are in high school? How does it impact the way that you are going to live your life? Does this mean that you have to change your life and start living a particular vocation right now? Do you even have to know for sure what your vocation is? How do you find what your vocation is? How can you be sure when you find it?

Tonight, we want to try to answer some questions, and put you in the right place where you can seek out the answers to the questions that may come up later, when the night is over and you have to apply these issues to your own life.

If there is one thing that we have to learn as Christians, it is that Jesus is our example when we are unsure. So many times we hear today that "if Jesus walked the earth today, He would..." The truth is that Jesus did walk the earth and left a number of examples of how He would behave, what His expectations would be, and what He would ask of us.

Jesus made love His number one priority. He loved those who followed him "to the end." He told them that if they were to be a part of His body, they were to love. They were to love one another as He loved them. He literally makes love His commandment.

If Jesus tells us to love, what does that mean for us today and what does it look like? It's not like there are a bunch of crosses lying around that we can get up on and let ourselves be crucified for others!

Love is a sacrifice.

Introduction: In this final night of the semester we are looking to bring the idea of the vocation home to the teens. Don't focus so much on catechesis but let them see how each relationship in their lives is a way for them to focus on their vocation and to understand the call that God has placed in their hearts for a self-sacrificial love.

If you haven't already, read the Pope's latest encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*. It offers guidance in our pursuit of love in light of truth. Love without truth is not love at all, but merely emotion. In the end, vocation is about living in love, which means living in the truth that we were created in.

CCC 1823
John 13:1, 15:9, 12
Caritas in Veritate 7

BOUND TOGETHER

Discernment and Community

TEACHING

Love is not just a sacrifice when it is convenient for us. Love means to desire a person's good and to take the steps needed for them to have it. So part of following the example of Christ is to love the people around us. This means that we have to desire the good of the people around us. Through that we will find our vocation.

Think about it this way. If Jesus designed us and Jesus wants us to love, then each of us are designed to love in a particular way that no one else can. It is not just our duty, but it is simply the one thing that we can do that the rest of the world needs us to do, because no one else can fill that role!

This means that our love is an unselfish gift of ourselves to the world! It is our service to our fellow man, to all of mankind. There is nowhere in the definition of love that says: when it is convenient, when we think it is okay or when we are going to get something out of it. We are literally living for other people. The more that we do it, the more we are going to realize that by giving ourselves away in love we are finding who we are, what God created us for and what we are meant to be.

How is this love to played out in the different relationships that we have every day?

The first thing we have to understand is that God did not restrict all power in the universe to Himself. In the sense that all things come from God, yes, He is the source of all power, but He does give us "dominion" over the earth. An important principle to remember about loving others is the principle of "subsidiarity." This principle means that a "community of a higher order should not interfere with the internal life of a community of a lower order... but rather support it in case of need..." This means that our love should never dictate to others what they should do, but give them the freedom to pursue the good that we desire for them.

This means that your vocation right now is to love others and to help them, through their own free will, pursue the good that God has in store for them. You cannot force them to act a certain way, and you cannot impose your will on someone else, but you can support them in need and help to make sure that they are able to help others. The more that you give yourself away in this way, the more that you are going to find the gifts that God has blessed

CCC 1878-1886
Pacem in Terris 36
Mater et Magistra 60
Gaudium et Spes 25
Centesimus Annus 48

BOUND TOGETHER

Discernment and Community

TEACHING

you with, and the more you are going to see how Jesus is calling you into a specific vocation, a specific way of expressing the divine, sacrificial love of God.

This means that we have to respect the hierarchy of things. The spiritual is the most important because it is immortal. The physical and instinctive dimension of life, which seems to dominate our world today, is actually supposed to be submissive to the our soul, because the physical will not last forever. In respecting this hierarchy we have to respect that we live in a society.

Because we live in a society, we need to recognize and listen to the voices of authority, even if we don't want to hear what they have to say. Your parents, your older siblings, your teachers, your Core Members, your youth minister, your guidance counselors, your priests, your bishop, etc. All of these people have been placed in your life with the ability to guide you and to help you realize how God wants you to serve the world through His gift of self-sacrificial love.

The most important authority to listen to is God's. Just as in the same way that a guidance counselor cannot tell you the best college to go to if you do not visit him/her, God cannot guide you to the correct vocation if you do not open yourself up to Him in prayer. Only God knows exactly what is right for you because only God made you. Only God can tell you what to do with your life and lead you to the right opportunities and people, because only God is outside of time and space. If you don't open yourself up to God on a regular basis, how are you going to be open to what God has in store for you? How are you going to be able to listen to what it is that he has to say if you are not in the practice of listening to him?

In order to find our vocation then, we need to:

1. Love others
2. Pay attention to how that love manifests our gifts
3. Listen to how God is calling us into a particular vocation through those around us, especially those in authority.
4. Most of all: pray

BOUND TOGETHER

Discernment and Community

TEACHING

So how do you live "vocation" now when you are just a teenager?

The answer is simple, but like most things in life that are rewarding, is not easy.

Love.

To become love by loving others.

To love others by giving of yourself unselfishly so that they may have the good that you desire for them.

To understand that the good that you desire for them is a spiritual good because that is everlasting, while a physical or instinctual good is only temporary.

To realize that the best spiritual good for another person is that they get to heaven.

To understand that they get to heaven by living their own vocation, which means that they themselves must be allowed to love, to offer themselves as a sacrificial gift for others. We cannot do this for them and we cannot force it on them.

Sometimes this love is going to sting, hurt and make us uncomfortable.

In the end this love is going to reveal a way to love that is unique to us. It is going to point us to our spouse, be that another person, the Church, or Christ himself. In the end, it is going to reinforce our eventual vocation since all vocations are simply a different way of serving others, of desiring their good, of sacrificing for them so that they get to heaven.

The more we practice doing that, the more we will realize our particular vocation and our path in God's plan.

BOUND TOGETHER

Discernment and Community

CHECKLIST

Core Planning Team:

Date of Life Night:

One month prior to the Night:

Give copies of the Life Night to each of the members of the planning team. Each person should read the Scripture and Catechism references as well as review the planning guide before the brainstorming meeting.

Get the planning team together for a brainstorming meeting (this should last no longer than 1 hour). The team prays and discusses where the teens are in their faith journey in relation to this topic. Then using this planning guide as a starting point, the team adapts the Life Night to meet the needs of the teens and the parish. Create a detailed outline with any changes and/or adjustments.

Assign the person responsible for each part of the Life Night:

Environment _____

Introductions _____

Give Me A Lift _____

Large Group Sharing _____

Bound Together _____

Two Weeks Prior to Life Night:

Turn in a detailed outline of the Life Night to the youth minister. Allow the youth minister to give feedback and make any necessary changes.

Create a list of needed supplies and materials. Assign a person to be responsible for collecting and/or purchasing the materials needed.

Decide the people that will be doing the following things. Make sure they have a copy of the script and/or teaching outline. Inform them of any practices and/or deadlines.

Teaching _____

Week of the Life Night:

Written outline of the teaching is given to the youth minister and practiced.

Run a dress rehearsal of the Life Night. Youth minister gives feedback.

Create environment and collect needed supplies.

Email entire Core team an overview of the night and all small group questions.

Day of the Life Night:

Set up the environment. Make sure the room is clean and presentable.

Set up audio and video. Test the video clips to make sure both picture and sound work.

Walk the entire Core team through the Life Night. Make sure all transitions are ready and everyone knows their roles.

Pray! Pray for the teens attending the Night. Pray for God's will to be done through the night. Pray over those involved.

