

CALLED

The Sacrament of Holy Orders LIFE NIGHT OUTLINE

Goal for the Life Night

The goal for this night is to help teens understand the role and effects of Holy Orders for bishops, priests and deacons. This night will also give teens practical tools to discern their own vocation. Finally, this night will give the teens an opportunity to affirm and appreciate the priests and deacons in the parish.

Life Night at a Glance

It is very important that your parish priest(s) and deacon(s) are present this night. Be sure to invite them to come to Life Night well in advance. The night begins with a game that will help the teens get to know the priests a little better. The game will lead into a teaching on the Sacrament of Holy Orders. During the break the guys and girls will split up into different groups. The girls will discuss the universal priesthood given to us in Baptism. The guys will discuss the sacramental priesthood. At the end of the discussion, the teens will have an opportunity to write an affirmation letter to the priests or deacons thanking them for their service. The Send will give the teens who are discerning a vocation to the priesthood or religious life an opportunity to be prayed over by the priests and in return the teens will then pray over the priests of the parish for strength and renewal.

Environment

The environment for this night is very simple yet subtle. Hang floor-length black sheets across the whole front of the meeting room. Down the center drape one white cloth stripe. The idea is to make the environment look like an enormous priest collar. Have a large cross and a few chairs or stools for the priests to sit on. There will also need to be another meeting space that can be used during the girls/guys sessions.

GATHER *15 Minutes*

Welcome and Introductions (5 min)

The youth minister gathers the group together and welcomes everyone to the Life Night. He/she introduces any teens at Life Night for the first time.

Know Your Clergy Game (10 min)

(Disclaimer – you will need at least two priests and/or deacons from your parish for this game, but if you can get more – even better!)

The youth minister should ask for four volunteers (one from each class). Give each contestant some sort of noisemaker—bell, whistle, kazoo, etc. Explain that many of us don't know much about the priests and deacons who serve us but it's time we learned a little bit about them. The youth minister should read a fact about one of the priests or deacons without giving his name. The first teen to guess the correct priest or deacon will get a point. Have a Core member record the points. Make sure the facts span the priest's whole life. For example: "This person's favorite TV show is *Lost*" or "in high school, this person was a star pitcher on the baseball team." If possible, try to discover some really interesting and funny facts about the priests that the teens will relate to. If time allows, have the priest tell a story corresponding with the fact. After 10-12 facts, award the teen with the most correct answers a prize.

PROCLAIM *12 Minutes*

The Party: Episode 7 (2 min)

This semester features a reoccurring video series called "The Party." Each Life Night of this semester features a new episode in which a teen hosts a party and the guests are personifications of the seven sacraments. These short videos are designed to introduce the teaching for each Life Night in the semester. In Episode 7, the sixth guest, Preston (representing Holy Orders), arrives. The person giving the talk can point out the following ways that he represents the sacrament:

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2. Priest Witness

Invite one of your priests to give a witness on his journey of becoming a priest. Be sure to have him include some of the struggles and obstacles as well as how he knew that God desired him to be a priest. Have him share how the Lord is moving in his priesthood now. Allow time at the end for the priest to answer questions from the guys.

3. Discussion Questions

Use the following questions to start a discussion:

- What are some tasks a priest gets to do that a man called to the married life or single life does not?
- How would you answer someone who asked why priest cannot get married in the Catholic Church?
- What are some of your reservations about the possibility of God calling you to the priesthood?
- How can you be more open to God's calling for your life?

4. Affirmation Letters

Too often the service and sacrifice of our priests goes unnoticed or unappreciated. End the large group by having all the guys write a letter of affirmation to the parish priests thanking them for their yes to God's call in their life and for the ways they serve the parish. Give the letters to the priests at the end of the night.

SEND *15 Minutes*

Recap (5 min)

The youth minister should recap the night and explain that we are never too young to discern God's calling in our lives. Prayer is essential to vocation. We need prayer to help guide us in our discernment as well as in our vocation. It is through prayer that we will find strength to embrace the vocation God has planned for us. One of the oldest ways of calling upon the Holy Spirit is the laying on of hands. This ancient action is used in both the Sacrament of Holy Orders and Confirmation. Through the line of apostolic succession we receive the same Holy Spirit that came down upon the apostles at Pentecost. It is the Holy Spirit that will guide us in our discernment of God's will and plan for our lives.

Praying over Teens and Clergy (10 min)

Invite all the teens who are discerning a religious vocation, whether a religious sister, brother, priesthood or diaconate to come forward. Be aware that there might only be two or three teens come forward. Be sure to thank them for their openness to the calling of the Spirit in their lives. Have one of the priests lead a prayer over these teens. Ask all the other teens to extend their hands to pray with the priest. The prayer should ask for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit as a guide in the teen's discernment. After those teens are prayed over, the youth minister should ask all the priests and deacons to come forward. Invite one or two teens to write a prayer for the priests and deacons of the parish. The prayer should ask for a strengthening of their vocation and thanksgiving for answering God's call to the priesthood. Have all the teens extend their hands one more time and the selected teens to pray over the priests. Close the night with the Hail Mary and Ave Maria.

Community Connection

- Make sure to invite all the priests and deacons in your parish to be a part of this Life Night well in advance.
- Invite a religious sister or a woman who is discerning the religious life to share during the girls session.
- If your priest cannot stay for the guy's breakout, invite a seminarian from the diocese to share with the guys.

Making It Work

- If you only have one priest at your parish and/or Life Night, have the Gather game be a true or false question game.
- If there is not enough time for the teens to write an affirmation letter for the priests and deacons, challenge the teens to write one at home and bring it in next week.
- Work with the teens to plan a "clergy appreciation party." This is a great way to create connections between the teens and the clergy of the parish. Let the teens take the lead in the planning of this event.
- Follow up with any teens who came forward during the Send. Encourage them to pray and connect with a priest or nun to answer any questions about discernment.

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performing a service in the place of Christ, as His representative in the sacrament as Christ is the One High Priest.

How it's done:

To become a priest or deacon, you must be **ordained**. Ordination is a process that is the meat of the sacrament. It essentially is the sacrament. When Jesus sent out the apostles to evangelize the world, He “said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”

John 20:21-22

The Holy Spirit truly changes the soul of the man becoming a priest. It is the same sort of intrinsic change that takes place during Baptism and Confirmation—it leaves an indelible mark on the soul. Once a man is a priest; he will always be a priest. This is called a supernatural vocation because it forgoes the natural vocation of a person to find a spouse and raise a family.

**CCC 1581
CCC 1582**

During the ceremony (which is held during a Mass), the bishop lays hands upon the man who is to become ordained and says the words of ordination. At this moment the Holy Spirit seals the heart of the man and he is ordained either to the fraternity of bishops, the holy priesthood or the diaconate. For the ordination of bishops and priests, holy oil is also used.

**CCC 1558
CCC 1575
CCC 1561**

Deacons have always helped the Church throughout her existence. They have been specially ordained men who assist the priests in their pastoral responsibilities. They are not, however, the same as a priest. They are not able to hear confessions, anoint the sick, or celebrate the Mass. They can baptize, preside over weddings, and assist in the Mass. Deacons can also be married. They are ordained into the ministry of the priest, not into the ontological fraternity.

CCC 1569

The requirements to receive Holy Orders are simple. One must be a baptized male. The man must agree to live in celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom of God and a member of the Roman Catholic Church.

CCC 1578

It is also important that a man is formally educated in the ways of the Church. Just as in any other job, you would require some bit of vocational training before you began to work. So to are men educated in seminaries for many years before their ordination.

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Ordination is a gift. It's a sacrament, and like all sacraments, it does what it symbolizes and symbolizes what it does. Symbols therefore matter-particularly those that Christ himself has instituted-and the Church has no power to alter such symbols. Christ and the apostles revealed what the "matter" of ordination should be just as they revealed what the matter of Baptism and Eucharist should be. The Church merely obeys.

Why can't priests be married?

A priest's job is essentially to be a priest; he has to be Christ whenever he is called upon. In the same way a mother never has a "day off" from being a mom, priests are always "on call." Yes, it is true that they have days where they are not responsible for the day-to-day work of the parish, especially in parishes where there are several priests. There may be days full of meetings and special liturgies, but unlike a traditional, 8 to 5 job, a priest is always a priest. His vocation is complete, just as the vocation to be someone's husband or wife is complete in and of itself.

Imagine if a priest was married and "off the clock," so to speak. Where would his vocation lie? If someone needed confession, but he was sitting down to dinner with his wife and children, where would his duty lie? If a priest's wife were in labor in hospital, but someone in another section of the hospital was dying and in need of Anointing of the Sick, to whom does he owe his time and fidelity? The sacrifice to the Church is all encompassing, as a husband to his wife and wife to her husband. The priest represents Christ to the members of the Church, the bride of Christ. The priest takes on the life in supreme imitation of the bridegroom. This is the meaning of his vocation.

Only priests can celebrate Mass and only priests can absolve sin, both by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the name of Jesus, by the power of God the Father. This special grace is given for the sake of the Bride of Christ, that they may one day go to heaven. This is a very unique and amazing role in the plan of salvation.

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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 _____

Know Your Clergy Game _____

Girls Rap Session _____

Guys Rap Session _____

Prayer Over Teens/Clergy _____

Two Weeks Prior to Life Night:

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

Create a list of needed supplies and materials. Assign a person to collect and purchase 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 _____

Priests/Deacons for Game:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Priest Witness _____

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.

E-mail the entire Core team an overview of the night.

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.