

## Proclaim

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### “Suffering Video Teaching” (5 min)

Play the video “A Good God in a Suffering World” found on the *August 2016 Edge USB* or online at [lifeteen.com](http://lifeteen.com).

### Alternative: “BAD NEWS” Teaching (10 min)

For a live teaching rather than the video teaching, an outline can be found on pages 102 to 104.

## BREAK

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### I See God In... (5 min)

Divide the youth back into their small groups. Ask the small group leaders to pass out paper for the teens to write on and pens for them to write with. Instruct them to write down all of the places where they see God in the world and in their everyday life. These can be in people, situations, places, events, etc.

Allow several minutes for the youth to write all of their responses. Instruct the small group leader to use this information to begin a discussion.



#### SUGGESTIONS

Incorporate this into the teaching at the very end and use it as the transition into small groups rather than instructing teens to do it individually.

### Small Group Discussion (10 min)

Instruct small group leaders to use the following questions to lead a discussion with the youth in their group. Small group leaders should close the discussion in prayer at the end of their allotted time.

- What are some places where you see God? Share what you wrote down.
- Is it easy or difficult for you to see Jesus Christ in moments of suffering? Why did you answer the way you did?
- How does recognizing the places where God is present in our world help us respond to times of suffering?
- Why is prayer so important during times of difficulty or suffering?
- How do you respond to bad news? Do you get angry, quiet, sad, hopeful? Why?
- God doesn't cause bad things to happen, but God can make good come out of a bad situation. Has this ever happened to you? Has God ever taken “bad news” and brought good from it? Share what happened.

**Prayer for Healing (10 min)**

Gather the youth into the main meeting. In the main meeting room, set up a cross surrounded by candles and dim the rest of the lights. Near the cross, place all of the poster boards that say “Bad News” around the cross and hang all of the poster boards that say “Good News” on the walls around the room.

Begin a time of prayer by making the sign of the cross. Remind the youth that all of our suffering and pain is bound up in the cross and Jesus is with us through all of it. Invite the teenagers to pray for all of the “bad news” they found at the beginning of the night. Call out a few particular stories that are well-known and petition God to be with those suffering and in pain.

Then, invite the youth to come forward and lay a hand on the cross and pray for a personal situation of suffering. Play an appropriate worship song during this time. Close the Edge Night by offering up all prayer to the intercession of the Blessed Mother by praying a Hail Mary together.



**SUGGESTIONS**

Invite your music ministry to be present to lead worship during this time. Cut your small group time shorter and allow more time for worship.



**SUGGESTIONS**

Scatter Core Members throughout the room to pray over youth that need someone to talk to and pray with during this time.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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# BAD NEWS

An Edge Night on Suffering and Evil

## TEACHING GUIDE

### GETTING STARTED

To cover the basic information follow along and craft the talk based off of the bullet points. If you youth are ready to take it deeper, start incorporating a few of the Going Deeper call out boxes (like the one below) by picking the ones your youth would relate to the most.



#### GOING DEEPER

Check inside these boxes for tips and ideas on how to take your youth a little deeper with the Proclaim.

### FREE WILL AND CREATION

- Invite several youth to share “good news” from this past week from their lives. This can involve sports victories, school events, personal accomplishments, etc. Invite everyone to applaud after each youth shares their good news.
- We experience many good things in our lives. We have “good news” to share with our friends and family. We publish it on Instagram and talk about it at school. When good things happen it is a cause for celebration. But we know that life isn’t only filled with good experiences. Sometimes we encounter suffering and pain – even evil.
- There are times when our encounters with suffering and pain are simply through what we see online or that we hear talked about at school when our teachers talk about world events. Other times suffering is very personal and real.
- **Pastoral Note:** Be aware of any youth that have experienced personal tragedy recently and be sure their small group leader is aware of how to follow up to this teaching with those youth.
- When we encounter suffering – whether it is in our world or happening to us personally – we may question why God would allow it. After all, if God created everything good, why does evil exist and why does God allow it?

### BAD NEWS

- We know that God created the world good but through original sin harmony with creation, each other, and God was disrupted and distorted. Because humanity refused to trust God and sinned, every person feels the effect of original sin. (CCC 386)
- This means that our world is fallen and is filled with “natural evils.” We experience natural disasters, sickness, and ultimately death. No matter how long we live, eventually we will have to die. Our bodies are mortal and eventually will stop working.
- There are also human evils. These evil things are the result of sin. Since every person struggles with an inclination to sin, our world can become very broken. When we see the harm that people can cause to each other in war or in our school hallways we know this is true.

- So how can God allow all of this? First, God gives us free will. Just like Adam and Eve freely chose against God in the Garden of Eden, we freely choose against God when we sin. We don't have to sin – but we do it, anyway. Our sin can hurt others.
- If God removes our free will, then God no longer loves us. Love requires free will. So we can abuse our free will and sin, but we can also use our free will to love God and others.
- Our world is also fallen and reminds us that we are not truly at home. The effects of original sin and natural evil remain. Whenever someone gets cancer or a natural disaster hits, it is hard to understand why God would allow it. God allows us to live in a fallen world as a reminder that we are not home, yet. Our home is in heaven and our world will never be perfect. It is governed by natural laws and mortality. But there is hope.

## HOPE REIGNS

- Jesus confronted suffering when He ministered before his Passion and Resurrection. One instance stands out:
- *Read or paraphrase John 11:17-35, emphasizing verse 35.*
- Jesus is close to the family of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. When He arrives people are grieving and upset. Jesus' first response isn't to immediately raise Lazarus from the dead. Instead, Jesus goes to the tomb and weeps. He suffers along with the suffering.
- Jesus does the exact same thing to an even greater degree on the cross. Jesus suffers for all of us. Jesus suffers with all of us. Jesus shows us that beyond suffering there is life. There is hope in a resurrection.
- This is the response to suffering. Jesus doesn't promise us that we will live a life without suffering. If God removed our suffering, then God really wouldn't love us anymore because God would also need to take away our free will. Instead, God promises to be with us when we suffer. Jesus is crying with us when we cry, and he is with people when bad things happen.
- Jesus is also with us in the good moments. God reminds us of His love for us through the many blessings that He bestows on us every day. Unfortunately, it gets easy to miss these blessings. We sometimes see more “bad news” than “good news.”



### GOING DEEPER

Play the video “Yours Are The Hands” from Edge Video Support 16 and lead a brief discussion with the group about ways they can be sources of light in their schools and community.

- When we begin to focus on our blessings, we start to realize that God can bring good out of bad things. God doesn't will bad things or cause them, but God can make all things work for our good – God can bring blessing out of suffering. (Romans 8:28)



### GOING DEEPER

Play the video “Stephen's Story” from Edge Video Support 18 or a clip from it to illustrate the ways that God can bring blessings out of suffering.

