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### LEADER OVERVIEW

Everyone is going to die. It is an inevitable reality of every human life. Death is the end of earthly life. It is a natural event, but at the same time death is also a consequence of sin. From the beginning of the creation of humankind, death was not an intention of God but rather it came into play as a consequence of sin. (CCC 1001-1006)

Jesus transformed death by His own death. His obedience to death turned our own death into a blessing for “in death, God calls man to Himself” (CCC 1011). Death is still an earthly reality for our human bodies, but we no longer have to fear death for it is our way back to our eternal home in heaven. (CCC 1006-1011)

It is our hope that after death we will enter into the eternal happiness of heaven, but the reality is that where we go after we die is entirely our decision and based off of the decisions we make in this life. After we die we no longer have the ability to make decisions, we can no longer choose good or evil. Only here on earth are we able to freely choose God. We must, therefore, begin to prepare for our own deaths by turning away from our sins right now. (CCC 1012-1690)

But what will happen when we actually die? There is no way to know for certain, but we do know that at the moment of the death of our earthly bodies, our immortal souls will be judged by all the actions and decisions of our lives. After judgment, souls go either to heaven, Purgatory, or hell. (CCC 1021-1022)

Heaven is where those who die in God’s graces go to live a perfect life for eternity with the Holy Trinity, the Virgin Mary, and all the angels and blessed. By His Death and Resurrection, Jesus opened heaven to us; it is “beyond all understanding and description,” it “is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness” (CCC 1023-1024).

Purgatory is for people who die in God’s grace but are still in need of purification of their sins and to be prepared for heaven. These souls are guaranteed eternal salvation and will go to heaven but only once they have finished their purification and achieved the “holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.” We can pray for those who have died that they might be delivered from their sins and lessen their time in Purgatory. (CCC 1030-1033)

Hell is the definitive state of self-exclusion from God. We can only be united to God in heaven if we freely choose to love Him here on earth. One should not expect to enter the glory of God in heaven if he or she never choose God on earth. Those who die in mortal sin — which is grave sin that completely cuts off a relationship with God — and those who persistently reject God and His mercy their whole life and die without repenting enter into eternal suffering. God does not want anyone to go to hell. Humanity was given free will; therefore, it is the choices that a person makes over his or her lifetime that will determine his or her eternal destination. (CCC 1033-1037)

Heaven, hell, and Purgatory are a reality. One day we will all die and face a judgment that will put us in one of those three realities, and we will ultimately spend the rest of eternity either in heaven or in hell. That is why it is crucial that we live each day of our lives with our eternity in mind and make our choices accordingly.

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# A LEGACY

An Edge Night on the Last Things

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## EDGE NIGHT OVERVIEW

### GOAL

The goal of this Edge Night is for the youth to come to a greater understanding of what happens when we die and how the lives we live now affect what happens after we die.

### SUMMARY

The Edge Night begins with a Gather activity where the youth create a story, and then it is acted out by their Core Members. The Proclaim discusses what happens after we die, particularly what are heaven, hell, and Purgatory. The Break gives the youth an opportunity to learn about the life of a saint and discuss the qualities that saint showed that helped lead him or her to heaven. During the Send the youth have an opportunity to pray for people they know who have died and also learn a traditional prayer of the Church for souls in Purgatory.

### MAIN IDEAS

- Death is a reality of life. We will all die at some point in time, and none of us know when that will be. Death is the end of our earthly life — it is a natural event, but it is also the consequence of sin. (CCC 1001-1008)
- At the moment of our death we will be judged by all the actions of our life, this is called particular judgment, and we will go either to heaven, hell, or Purgatory. (CCC 1021-1022)
- We, in the Church, are also given every advantage to help us to get to heaven; through the sacraments we have all the grace we need to live a life with Christ now and to choose Him in this life.

### ENVIRONMENT

Put the environment back to the original throne room state from the first Edge Night. Place a large scroll on one side of the throne and a stack of old looking books on the other side of the throne.



#### MEDIA

Edge Support November 2016: “Heartbeat Dreams” (lifeteen.com)

“The Spirit and the Bride Say Come” Matt Maher (*The Love In Between*, 2011, Provident)



#### SCRIPTURE

Luke 12:30-31, 17:33; John 14:6

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## EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

### GATHER

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#### Edge Night Introduction (5 min)

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

*A sure reality of life is that at one point in time we will all die. It is not something many people like talking about or thinking about, but it is important that we do not ignore it. How we live our lives now will affect what happens after we die as far as our eternal destiny. We should also have no fear in death for we know that Jesus has overcome death, calls us to eternal happiness with Him in heaven, and gives us all that we need to get there.*

#### Once Upon A Time (15 min)

This game is played in small groups.

1. Give each small group a large piece of brown paper that looks old like a scroll and a black marker.
2. Give each small group different criteria for a who, what, when, and where. To keep with the theme of the semester, make the criteria medieval themed. For example: a king, eating dinner, at midnight, in the great hall. Have the youth come up with the why.
3. The small groups have five minutes to write a story on their scroll based off of the criteria that is given. (Do not tell the youth the Core Members will be acting out the stories.)
4. Call up one small group at a time and choose one youth to be a representative to read the story to the large group.
5. Surprise the youth and have their Core Member act as the main character of the story and act out the story.
6. Have the other Core Members ready to jump in to act as supporting characters if need be.
7. After all the stories have been read and acted out, have a prize for the best small group.



#### SUGGESTIONS

If you want to make it more like an improv show, have all of the youth submit their stories, choose a few stories at random, and have the Core Members read and act out the skits.

## **PROCLAIM**

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### **“Working Together” Teaching (10 min)**

This teaching can be found on pages 80 to 82.

## **BREAK**

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### **The Legacy of the Saints (20 min)**

Before the Edge Night, instruct the Core Members to pick a saint that they want to learn about, or know about already, and want to share with their small group. Have them learn about the saint's life and come prepared to share about him or her with their small group.

Break the youth into their small groups. Instruct the Core Members to share the story of their saint with their small group. Then, together as a group, discuss what qualities the youth saw in this person that revealed that he or she

- What stood out to you the most about this saint?
- What challenges did he or she face? How did he or she overcome them?
- How do you see him or her cooperating with God in his or her life?
- What qualities of character did he or she have?
- What can we learn from this saint?



#### **SUGGESTIONS**

For saint ideas and links to their stories check out the blog “Biggest and Best List of Confirmation Saints (for Guys and Girls)” on [lifeteen.com](http://lifeteen.com).

## **SEND**

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### **The Deceased (15 min)**

In one corner of the room, set up a table with enough candles on it so that there is one for each youth. Behind the table, put up a holy image and a crucifix. Have at least three lighters for this activity. Dim the lights and have prayerful music playing in the background.

Bring the youth back to the large group and hand out a notecard and a pen to each youth. Have each youth write out the names of any friends or family members who have died. Also invite them to write things like “for all the soldiers who have died,” “for all of those who have died as a result of terrorism or war,” or “for all those who have lost their battle with cancer.”

When all of the youth have finished writing on their notecards, call them up three at a time and have three Core Members with lighters by the table with candles to assist the youth. Invite each youth to light one candle for all the people on their card, and, if there is room, place their card by their candle.



### SUGGESTIONS

While the youth are writing and lighting their candles, have a music minister lead them in singing the prayers of the Divine Mercy Chaplet.

### Prayers for the Deceased (10 min)

As the youth finish lighting their candles, introduce the closing prayer with the following:

*Those who have passed away and are in Purgatory can do nothing to help themselves. They are very dear to the heart of God and depend on the great mercy of Jesus and Mary to help shorten their time in Purgatory. We trust in the love and mercy of God for all those who have passed away. But we can also help those who have passed by offering our good acts, our suffering, and our prayers to lessen their time in Purgatory. (CCC 1031-1032)*

*Catholic Tradition holds that Jesus appeared to St. Gertrude the Great and gave to her a prayer to recite that would release a vast number of souls from Purgatory everytime that it was said.*

At this time pass out the “Prayer of St. Gertrude the Great” found on the *August 2017 Edge USB* and online on *lifeteen.com* under Edge Support: *August 2017*. Close the Edge Night by praying this prayer together, specifically for the souls of the people that all the youth have written on their notecards.

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# A LEGACY

An Edge Night on the Last Things

## TEACHING GUIDE

### GETTING STARTED

To cover the basic information follow along and craft the talk based off of the bullet points. If your 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.

### DEATH

- Death is a reality of life. We will all die at some point in time, and none of us know when that will be. Death is the end of our earthly life — it is a natural event, but it is also the consequence of sin. (CCC 1001-1008)
- But we, as followers of Jesus Christ, should not fear death but rather have great hope “for the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)
- *Project an image of the Resurrection.*
- We believe and we have hope that just as Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, we, too, when we die, will rise to new life with Him. (CCC 1006)
- *Ask the youth to respond: Do you think that people are fearful of death? Why?*
- Jesus transformed death by His own death. It is no longer something to be feared, but rather a blessing because we have the great hope that, after we die, we will return to our heavenly home with Christ. (CCC 1009)
- “In death, God calls man to Himself.” (CCC 1011)



#### GOING DEEPER

Discuss the following quote from C.S. Lewis and ask the youth how it makes them feel and if they have yet recognized desires that cannot be filled by things of this world. “If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world.” (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*)

- While it is certain that everyone will die and we have no control over that fact, we do have control over what will happen to us after we die.
- While we live on earth, we have the ability to make choices and decisions that will lead us toward what is good or what is evil. Not only do these choices affect our earthly lives, but they also affect our death where we will go after we die.

- *Ask the youth to respond: Who is someone in your life who you see making good choices? What is his or her life like as a result?*
- After we die, we no longer have the ability to make decisions, and we will be judged on how we lived our lives and the decisions we made on earth. (CCC 1012-1014)
- As Christians, death is the fulfillment of our baptism, for when we are baptized we are raised to new life sacramentally, and when we die we are raised to new life eternally. A Christian funeral is a way to reveal death as a journey back to our home in heaven where we will all one day meet again. (CCC 1680-1690)
- *Share a story about a funeral you have attended where it was truly a celebration, although sad, of joy for the deceased to enter into eternal joy.*

## DESTINATION

- As human beings we are created with both a physical body and a spiritual soul. Our earthly bodies will die, but our souls are immortal.
- At the moment of our death we will be judged by all the actions of our life. This is called particular judgment, and we will go either to heaven, hell, or Purgatory. (CCC 1021-1022)
- Those who live a life in God’s grace, following the example of Christ, and know God go to heaven. Heaven is where we will exist in perfect happiness for eternity with the Holy Trinity, the Virgin Mary, and all the angels and blessed. (CCC 1023-1024)



### GOING DEEPER

Play the video “Heartbeat Dreams” from the *Media Suggestions*.

- Heaven is the ultimate fulfillment of the deepest longings of our hearts; it is happiness beyond all understanding and description greater than we could ever imagine. Jesus is the one who opened up heaven to us by His Death and Resurrection. (CCC 1024-1027)
- For those who die having lived a good life in God’s grace but are still in need of purification from their sins, they will spend time in Purgatory.
- *Ask the youth to respond: Imagine you were able to go and have dinner with your favorite celebrity, how would you prepare, get ready, and what would you wear to go see him or her? Would you just go after a soccer game or if you hadn’t even showered?*
- If you would do all these things just to go see an earthly celebrity, imagine how much more you would want to look your best and be ready to see God!
- Purgatory allows us to be cleansed and prepared for heaven. If you spend time in Purgatory you will for sure make it to heaven, but only once you are totally made ready. (CCC 1030-1032)
- Those who have rejected God during their life, die in a state of mortal sins, and are entirely unrepentant are sent to hell. (CCC 1033-1035, 1855-1857)
- Hell is complete self-exclusion from God, for we can only be united to God if we choose to love Him. Therefore if we do not choose Him or choose to love Him in our earthly life, then we will not be united with Him in eternal life. (CCC 1033)
- God does not want anyone to go to hell. He loves all of us more than we could imagine, but He has given us free will and would never force us to love Him or spend eternity with Him.
- It has to be our choice. Therefore, it is important that we live our lives with our eternal destination in mind. (CCC 1036-1037)

**OUR CHOICE**

- We should not fear death if we have chosen to live a life with Christ.
- We, in the Church, are also given every advantage to help us get to heaven. Through the sacraments we have all the grace we need to live a life with Christ now and to choose Him in this life.
- Baptism opens, for us, the doors to eternal life through sanctifying grace, confession allows us to repent and be forgiven of our sins to prepare our souls for eternity, and the Eucharist is our spiritual food that keeps our souls alive and united to Christ.



**GOING DEEPER**

Discuss with the youth the importance of going to Mass on Sundays and going to confession as often as possible, sharing a personal story about an experience with either of these sacraments.

- We are given a choice, God has given us free will. If you want to go to heaven then live a life that reflects that desire.
- In your daily choices, through prayer, in everything that you do, orient your life towards Christ and towards heaven for we do not know the hour of our death. (Mark 13:35-36)

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<p>PRAYER OF <b>ST. GERTRUDE</b> THE GREAT</p>	<p>PRAYER OF <b>ST. GERTRUDE</b> THE GREAT</p>	<p>PRAYER OF <b>ST. GERTRUDE</b> THE GREAT</p>
<p>Eternal Father, I offer you the most Precious Blood of your Divine Son Jesus Christ, in union with the Masses said throughout the world today, for all the Holy Souls in Purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal Church, those in my own home, and within my family. Amen.</p> <p><b>EDGE</b></p>	<p>Eternal Father, I offer you the most Precious Blood of your Divine Son Jesus Christ, in union with the Masses said throughout the world today, for all the Holy Souls in Purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal Church, those in my own home, and within my family. Amen.</p> <p><b>EDGE</b></p>	<p>Eternal Father, I offer you the most Precious Blood of your Divine Son Jesus Christ, in union with the Masses said throughout the world today, for all the Holy Souls in Purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal Church, those in my own home, and within my family. Amen.</p> <p><b>EDGE</b></p>
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Middle School Ministry by Life Teen

EDGE

**ST. GERTRUDE THE GREAT PRAYER CARD HANDOUT**

Print off and cut out the prayer cards found on this handout to use during the Send activity. The full printable version of this handout can be found on the *August 2017 Edge USB* or online at [lifeteen.com](http://lifeteen.com) under Edge Support: *August 2017*.