

The goal of this Life Night is for teens to reflect on our need for Jesus and His ability to transform our lives and our world.

Main Ideas:

- We all encounter the brokenness of the world and desire to live a fuller and happier life than we currently experience.
- Jesus boldly enters the world to save us and heal our relationship with God, offering the fullness of life we desire.
- Jesus shows us that God sees us and the world we live in and is unafraid of the dark, messy, and confusing parts of our lives.

Scripture for the Week:

- John 10: 10
- 1 John 4: 9-10, 14
- Hebrews 10: 5-10

Opening Prayer: Decade of the Rosary

At Life Teen, we have a special devotion to our Blessed Mother. Praying the rosary is a beautiful way to ask for Mary's intercession. Nobody sees the life of a child the way that child's mother does—not even the father. This is Mary's perspective of Jesus' life. She has a unique perspective. In the Rosary we ponder the life of Jesus through the eyes of his mother. This is an incredibly powerful experience if we enter into it fully. Before you begin the rest of the Life Night, pray the fifth sorrowful mystery (The Crucifixion of Jesus) and contemplate the sacrifice that both Mary and Jesus made that we may be fulfilled.

Begin with the sign of the cross.

We turn to the Lord, who knows our suffering and longs to give us his comfort and peace. Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured. (Isaiah 53:4a)

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

While we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted. (Isaiah 53:4b)

Our Father // *Because God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living. (Wisdom 1:13)*

Hail Mary // *For he fashioned all things that they might have being; and the creatures of the world are wholesome, (Wisdom 1:14a)*

Hail Mary // *And there is not a destructive drug among them nor any domain of the nether world on earth, (Wisdom 1:14b)*

Hail Mary // *For justice is undying. (Wisdom 1:15)*

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Fifth Sorrowful Mystery: The Crucifixion of Jesus

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. (Luke 23:33)

Our Father // *Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)*

Hail Mary // *"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." (Luke 23:42)*

Hail Mary // *And about three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)*

Hail Mary // *Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." (Luke 23:46)*

Hail Mary // *And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit. (John 19:30b)*

Hail Mary // *Do not hide your face from me; do not repel your servant in anger. You are my help; do not cast me off; do not forsake me, God my savior! (Psalm 27:9)*

Hail Mary // *But I believe I shall enjoy the Lord's goodness in the land of the living. (Psalm 27:13)*

Hail Mary // *Wait for the Lord, take courage; be stouthearted, wait for the Lord! (Psalm 27:14)*

Hail Mary // *But the souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. (Wisdom 3:1)*

Hail Mary // *They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction. (Wisdom 3:2)*

Hail Mary // *But they are in peace. (Wisdom 3:3b)*

Glory Be

"Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life." (John 12:24-25)

Hail, Holy Queen

Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope.

To you we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to you we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.

Turn, then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy toward us;

and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

End with the sign of the Cross.

Teaching:



PROCLAIM OUTLINE

SHATTERED

KEY TERMS

Original Holiness: The state in which God intended humanity to exist, where humanity and God do not experience separation due to sin and live in a relationship of justice.

Original Sin: The first sin of humanity when human beings disobeyed God's commandment and preferred themselves over God. As a result, all of humanity has lost original holiness and experiences a separation from God that manifests itself in personal sin.

Sin: Any action that harms our relationship with God and our neighbor, sometimes resulting in the suffering of ourselves and others and always causing a spiritual wound.

TEACHING POINTS

- Every person experiences desire. We have desires for things we "want" like clothing, material goods, and technology. We also have desires for things we need; hunger signals a biological desire for food.
- Our desires are sometimes fulfilled, but they often return. We will become hungry again. We will want the latest piece of tech. We will wonder if people really love us. No one exists in a state of total fulfillment.
- Our desires point us to something greater that can ultimately fulfill our desires.

CREATED FOR RELATIONSHIP

- God created humanity as a unique creature, set apart from all of creation. God desires a special relationship with people.
- Our relationship with God was broken when the first people God created — Adam and Eve — preferred themselves to God and were disobedient. This act of distrust of their creator led to original sin. All of humanity is implicated in this original sin.
- The lie that God is not enough to fulfill our desires was at the root of original sin.
- Sin is how we break our relationship with God. On a deeper level, sin is the belief that our relationship with God is not enough to make us happy. As a result of original sin, we cannot escape the tendency we have toward sin, but that does not mean we are doomed to always fall into sin; with God's grace, we can resist the temptation to sin and avoid it.
- Sin in our world causes suffering. When others sin, we experience pain. When we sin, we inflict suffering on ourselves and cause suffering to be inflicted upon others.
- No person can escape suffering and no path can help us avoid it in this world. Our world is not perfect. We experience unhappiness, suffering, and the reality of being disappointed by unfulfilled desires and the persistent feeling that "there must be more." There is an answer to sin and suffering.

THE GOD WHO SAVES

- God does not abandon humanity to sin, suffering, and, ultimately, death. God enters into our human experience through Jesus, the second person of the Trinity. The light of Christ entered the darkness of the human experience.

- Nothing we do on our own can save us from sin, and nothing we do on our own can fulfill our desires. We need Jesus to do both of these things.
- Jesus reconciles all of humanity back to God and promises us a full life. In Jesus we experience all of the goodness of what it means to be human and to know love, peace, and joy.
- Jesus accomplishes our salvation by entering into the most extreme human experience: death. Jesus experiences death in humanity so we can experience life in His divinity.

OVERFLOWING

- Jesus did not wait for humanity to be perfect or have it all together before offering His life for us — an offering some people would reject. Instead, Jesus died for us “while we were yet sinners” (Romans 5:8).
- A full life does not mean we are happy all of the time or avoid real human experiences; rather, it means we live a life free from sin. Jesus also experienced all of the challenging human experiences we face.
- Jesus is not afraid of entering into the broken places of our world and being a light in the darkness. Jesus came to save us so we could share in His light.

“Smoke and Mirrors” Reflection:

SMOKE AND MIRRORS JOURNAL REFLECTION

“The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples; and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God!’ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned, and saw them following, and said to them, ‘What do you seek?’ And they said to Him, ‘Rabbi’ (which means teacher), ‘where are you staying?’ He said to them, ‘Come and see.’ They came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his brother Simon, and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which means Christ).”

John 1:35-41

When I seek affirmation from others, what am I looking for?

When I seek friendship with someone who does not like me, what am I looking for?

When I seek likes on Instagram, what am I looking for?

When I look at myself in the mirror, who do I see?

When I look at myself in the mirror and do not recognize who I see, what am I missing?

When I hide aspects of my life from others, what am I hiding?

When I look at my life, where am I unhappy?

When I feel that something is not enough, what am I missing?

As I reflect on these different aspects of my life, what do I think I am looking for most at this moment?

Discussion:

Spend some time sharing and discussing your answers from the "Smoke and Mirrors" Reflection.

Closing Prayer: Veneration of the Cross

On Good Friday, we venerate (to hold in high regard, to revere) the cross. The tradition of venerating the cross dates back to the fourth century. On Good Friday, Christians in Jerusalem would gather before a relic of the true cross to kneel, bow, and kiss the cross in remembrance of the suffering and death of Christ.

Create a quiet and prayerful tone by gathering a Cross/Crucifix and placing it in the center of a table/desk/etc., light candles, etc.

Kneel in front of the crucifix/cross and spend some time in silent prayer – spend some time contemplating the crucifixion (what Jesus' sacrifice means for you, how it changes your life – if you don't know, say that!).

Begin with the sign of the cross.

Everyone says: *Behold the wood of cross, on which hung our salvation. O come let us adore.*

One person reads 1 John 4: 9-10 and the reflection:

"In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the expiation for our sins."

In St. John's first letter, he reminds us that God's love is made known through His Son's sacrifice on the cross. On this instrument of death, Jesus took on the punishment we deserve for our sins. He chose His own death over the possibility of losing us forever, Jesus' sacrifice is the cure for all of our ailments and doubts. As we come forward to venerate the cross, we will see that the light of Christ is reflected all around us when we place our sufferings and uncertainties on His shoulders. In trust, let us bring all that we have, all that we are, to the foot of the cross.

At this time, take a moment to venerate the cross – this could be genuflecting before it, placing your hand on it, kneeling before the cross and taking a few moments in silent prayer. As you venerate the cross, reflect on the sacrifice Jesus made for you – for each one of us; that He would rather suffer and die than risk losing YOU.

End with a prayer bouquet – pray an Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.

End with the sign of the cross.