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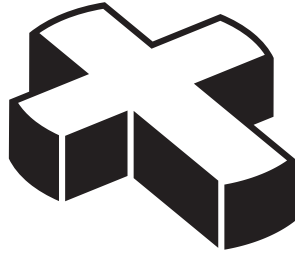
Semester Planning Guide



EXISTENCE

An Edge Resource on the Creed

EDGE



EDGE

Middle School Ministry



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EXISTENCE

An Edge Resource on the Creed

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EXISTENCE

Semester Planning Guide Introduction and Overview

ABOUT THIS SEMESTER PLANNING GUIDE

Who is God? How did our world come to be? Why do we exist? Why is there evil in the world? What is the point of any of this?

Everything began from nothing. Everything was created by God who has always been and will always be. Our world is vast, intricate, and created by a loving God with a specific purpose and plan. Each and every one of us was created with a specific purpose and plan. God, who is three in one, is our divine designer, the unmoved mover, and, at the same time, our loving Father who desires nothing more than knowing us and being known by us.

Existence dives deep into the very beginning of everything. Starting with wonder and awe of the universe, the youth will be plunged into the depths of the love of God and the great truth that we were created out of the love of God and to love God. This *Semester Planning Guide* will walk the youth through learning about who God is, the world He has created, and the creation of humanity. They will also tackle the tough reality of the fall of man and original sin as well as the ever timely question of why evil exists.

USING THIS SEMESTER PLANNING GUIDE

Existence is created to be implemented in the order that the Edge Nights appear in the *Semester Planning Guide*. The Social and Issue Nights are built into the *Semester Planning Guide* but, depending on how often you meet, you may need to add in supplementary Issue and Social Nights to fill out your semester. These supplementary Social and Issue Nights can be found on the *August 2016 Edge Support USB* and online at www.lifeteen.com under Edge Support: *August 2016*.

LEADER OVERVIEW

Existence guides the youth through the fundamental questions about the existence of God, the world, and humanity. To prepare the Core Team, be sure to give them the *Leader Overview* to review before each Edge Night so they can continue their own formation as well as feel prepared to answer the youth's' questions throughout the Edge Night.

INTRODUCTORY MATERIALS

The *Goal*, *Summary*, *Main Ideas*, *Scripture*, and *Catechism* give a snapshot of what will be happening during the Edge Night and what the main focus of the night will be. Review these points before each Edge Night and use them as a guide in preparing content.

ENVIRONMENT

The environment serves the purpose of calculated disengagement; it is meant to help the youth refresh their mindset as they enter the room. Environment sets the tone and helps the youth begin to think about the topic before the Edge Night even begins.

MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

Media Suggestions provides music and video clips that creatively support the content and main themes of the Edge Night. While planning, take a look at the media suggestions and consider weaving a video clip or song into the Edge Night. Media communicates with our hearts and minds in a unique, powerful way – especially the hearts and minds of youth.

*Note that there are suggestions for videos from Life Support. Due to the vast majority of our parishes subscribing to both Edge and Life Teen, we intend to help those parishes to see the wide variety of ways they can utilize their video content from both. These videos are only used for suggested content and not the main content of the Edge Night to ensure that those who only subscribe to Edge are not missing any vital content.

FLOCKNOTE

For those parishes that also subscribe to Flocknote, *Parent Letters* and text messages are loaded into the interface. Simply log in to schedule these communications to be sent. You can find more information about subscribing to Flocknote at flocknote.com.

SUGGESTIONS AND STEP IT UP

The *Suggestions* are helpful tips and pointers for running different activities. *Step It Up* involves different ways to amp up the activities for those parishes with more resources, bigger budgets, and more time to invest in big ideas.

PROCLAIM

The attention span of modern middle school youth is not very long. To cater to the audience, the teachings should be no more than ten minutes. The Proclaim is written in a bullet point fashion to encourage the speaker and youth minister to shape and mold the content to be specific for the middle school youth they are serving. The bullet points contain the basic information that follows the guidelines and content from our *Edge Framework*.

There are various suggestions in italics for stories or images to be projected. This is to help make the teaching more interactive and to help hold the attention of the middle school youth. The *Going Deeper* suggestions give different ideas for taking content deeper if the youth are ready to go to the next level. Not all of the *Going Deeper* suggestions are meant to be implemented, choose one or two that will really enrich and inspire the youth you are serving.

SMALL GROUPS

Due to the great range of development during the middle school years, it is recommended that youth are broken into small groups that are grade and gender specific. For the youth to really get to know one another and feel comfortable opening up and sharing their faith, it is also recommended that they stay in these same small groups with the same Core Member(s) for the entirety of the year.

HANDOUTS

All the handouts for Edge Nights are on the *August 2016 Edge Support USB* and online at www.lifeteen.com under Edge Support: *August 2016*. The handouts are formatted for you to easily print and copy on standard letter-size paper. Please be diligent in accessing and looking these over while planning the EDGE Nights.

PARENT LETTERS

The *Parent Letter* contains a brief overview of the Edge Night along with discussion questions for the family to use as a follow up from the night.

The *Parent Letter* can either be emailed in advance or after the Edge Night. It can also be handed out at the end of each specific Edge Night. Consider having Core Members at the doors and in the parking lot immediately following the night in order to distribute Parent Letter and watch the youth for safety purposes.

The *Parent Letter* can be found in both English and Spanish on the *August 2016 Edge Support USB* and online at www.lifeteen.com under Edge Support: *August 2016*.

FRAMEWORK AND METHOD

Existence dives into the very beginning of the Church's teachings in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. To ensure that middle school youth get the fullness of the deposit of faith in a systematic manner, Life Teen has created an *Edge Framework*. This framework outlines the entire *Catechism of the Catholic Church* so that in three years middle school youth will cover and learn the basics of the Catholic Faith.

Existence is the first of the nine *Semester Planning Guides* of the *Edge Framework*. This *Semester Planning Guide* covers the Creed section of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Any content in italics refers to the sections of Prayer from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that have been interwoven throughout the framework. Refer to the following outline to see how each night covers the content of the *Edge Framework*.

EPIC UNIVERSE

I. How Can We Know God Exists?

- A. Man is created by God and for God and will only know true happiness through God. (CCC 27-30)
- B. Man can know that this God he desires exist through various means.
 - 1. Man can see God in the order of the created world. (CCC 32)
 - 2. Man can see God in himself through his knowledge of himself, his desire for God, his sense of right and wrong, and his desire for happiness. (CCC 33-35)
 - 3. God is mysterious and our knowledge of Him and how we talk about Him will always be limited. (CCC 39-43)
- C. Man can know that God exists because God has revealed Himself to man.
 - 1. Throughout all of history, God has been gradually revealing who He is to man; He is revealed most fully through Jesus Christ. (CCC 54-67)
 - 2. The ways that God has revealed Himself throughout human history are made known to us today through what has been passed down in writing and orally – also known as Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. (CCC 74-133)

RESPOND

- D. We are called to have faith. Faith is based in love and trust of God.
 - a. Abraham and Mary are our two great examples of faith. (CCC 142-149)
 - 2. Faith is a personal act to believe in God and what He has revealed. (CCC 150-152)
 - a. God helps us to have faith to believe in Him; faith is a grace and free gift from God. The Holy Spirit also aids us in growing in our faith. (CCC 153A-155)
 - b. Faith works along with our intellect and reason. (CCC 154-159)
 - c. Faith is our free choice and response to God; it is not forced upon us. (CCC 160)

3. "Believing in Jesus Christ and in the one who sent Him for our salvation is necessary for obtaining that salvation." (CCC 161)
4. Faith is also the truths that we believe and pass on through the one Catholic Church (CCC 166-175)
 - d. We need the community of the one Catholic Church to learn about and nurture our faith as well as to grow in our understanding of the faith and to pass it on. (CCC 166)
 - e. What we believe is contained within the Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed. (CCC 185-187)
5. *Prayer is a gift from God in which we raise our minds and hearts to Him or request good things of Him. We encounter God in His great love and desire for us, and we respond in faith and love recognizing all that He has done for us. (CCC 2559-2561)*

THE FATHER

II. Who Is God?

- A. "Our profession of faith begins with God, for God is the First and the Last, the beginning and the end of everything." (CCC 198)
 1. There is only one God. (CCC 199-202)
 2. God reveals His name; He makes Himself known in a personal way. (CCC 203-204)
 3. "I Am who Am" – He has always been and will always be. He is the fullness of being and is always present to His people in order to save them. (CCC 203-204, 212-214)
 4. "God [is] merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love." (CCC 210-211, Exodus 34:5-6)
 5. God is the fullness of truth and love. (CCC 214-221)
 6. God is three persons in one true God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (CCC 232-260)
- B. God the Father is the origin of everything and has ultimate authority and power, but at the same time He is our good and loving Father. (CCC 239)
- C. God is the Creator. (CCC 279)
 1. Creation shows us the foundation of human and Christian life. It answers our questions of "where do we come from?" and "where are we going?" (CCC 282-285)
 - a. Faith helps us to understand that God created the world, and human reason allows us to see a loving plan behind all of creation. (CCC 286-289)
 2. God created everything and holds it all in existence. (CCC 290-301)
 - a. He created the world to reveal His glory, His wisdom, His goodness, and His love. (CCC 293-295)
 - b. He created the world out of nothing. (CCC 296-298)
 - c. He created everything with order, purpose, and goodness. (CCC 299)
 - d. God has a perfect plan for all of creation. (CCC 302-308)
 3. *Lord's Prayer: We can pray to the Father with certain filial boldness with "simplicity, filial trust, joyous assurance, humble boldness, the certainty of being loved." (CCC 2777-2778)*
 4. *Lord's Prayer: When we pray "Father" we must be cleansed of other images of fathers we have in our life for "God the Father transcends the categories of the*

created world.” We call God Father because that is how Jesus revealed Him to us and in our adoption as children of God in Baptism we are given new life to turn to God as the Father. (CCC 2779-2785)

HIDDEN

D. God created the Heavens (the invisible).

1. Heaven is God’s own “place” for which the world is destined and where the angels and the saints are. (CCC 325-327)
2. Angels are the messengers and servants of God. (CCC 329)
 - a. They have no bodies but are purely spirit; they do have intellect and will. (CCC 329)
 - b. They have been present since creation and throughout the history of salvation. (CCC 321-333)
 - c. “From the beginning until death, human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession.” (CCC 336)
3. The Fall of the Angels
 - a. Some angels freely choose to reject God and His reign and by doing so they became evil. (CCC 391-393)
 - b. Satan, or the devil, is the greatest of the fallen angels; he tempts and leads men to sin. (CCC 394)
 - c. Satan’s power is real, but not infinite, and Jesus Christ came to destroy the work of the devil. (CCC 395)
 - d. God is far greater than evil and Satan and can bring good out of all situations. (CCC 395, 412)
 - e. *Lord’s Prayer: The final petition of the Lord’s Prayer – “deliver us from evil” – does not mean something abstract but “refers to a person, Satan, the Evil One, the angel who opposed God.” In this petition we find through God and through Christ’s victory over the Evil One and that “one who entrusts himself to God does not dread the devil. ‘If god is for us, who is against us.’” When we “ask to be delivered from the Evil One, we pray as well to be freed from all evils” and “the Church brings before the Father all the distress of the world” praying in communion for the “deliverance of the whole human family.” (CCC 2850-2854, Romans 8:31)*

WHAT WE SEE

E. God created the Earth (the visible).

1. God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh (not literal but reveals truths about God and creation). (CCC 337)
 - a. God rested on the seventh day and we are also called to rest on the seventh day (Sunday). This day was made for rest and worship and adoration of God. (CCC 345-349)
2. The beauty of the created world reveals the beauty of the Creator. (CCC 341)
3. All creatures have their own goodness and all of creation works together and is dependent upon each other and God. (CCC 338-340)
4. Man is the greatest of all creation. (CCC 342-343)

THE FINAL CREATION

III. Who is Man?

A. God created man in His own image.

1. Man can know God, love God, and share in God's own life; this is what man was created for. (CCC 355-356)
2. Man has dignity, self-knowledge, and freedom to give of himself to others. (CCC 357)
 - a. We are called to use this freedom to respond in faith and love to God. (CCC 357)
3. God created everything for man, and man was created to love and serve God. (CCC 358)
4. *Prayer is a relationship with God. We pray with our whole being and in our hearts we encounter God and find, through the grace of Baptism, the continual call to communion with the Holy Trinity. (CCC 2563-2565)*

B. Man is both body and soul.

1. Man's body and soul are united together as one. (CCC 362)
2. The soul is the spiritual principle of man. It comes from God (not our parents) at the moment of our existence.
 - a. The soul is immortal. When we die, it is separated from the body and does not die with it. The soul and body will be united again one day at the final resurrection. (CCC 366)

C. God created man male and female. (CCC 369)

1. Men and women have equal and full dignity that comes from God. (CCC 369)
2. God created men and women together and they are meant for each other. (CCC 371)
 - a. Men and women are complimentary. (CCC 372)
 - b. As man and wife they join in God's creative work and bring new life into the world. (CCC 372)
3. Men and women have the responsibility to care for all of God's creation. (CCC 374)
4. The Good News.
 - a. After the fall of man, God does not abandon him. (CCC 410)
 - i. Immediately after the fall, God speaks of the coming of a Redeemer. (CCC 410, Genesis 3:15)
 - b. Jesus is the Redeemer. He comes to be the "New Adam" and to make right what Adam did wrong and to save us from the power of evil and sin. (CCC 411)
 - c. God makes good out of every situation, this is made manifest in our great Savior and Redeemer Jesus Christ. (CCC 412)

THE BIG LIE

D. The Fall of Man.

1. Adam and Eve (the first man and woman) were created good and lived in perfect harmony with God, themselves, each other, and all of creation. (CCC 374-379)
2. Original sin came into the world when they fell into temptation and did not trust in God. (CCC 396-398)
 - a. They were tempted by Satan to eat of the one tree they were commanded not to and in doing so they choose themselves before God. (CCC 396-398)

- 3.** This sin had great consequences, destroyed the harmony that they lived in, and brought in the reality of suffering; the greatest consequence of sin is death. (CCC 399-401)
- 4.** Original sin and its consequences are passed down to all of humanity. (CCC 402-409)
 - a.** Man is now subject to suffering, death, ignorance, inclination to sin, and disunity between each other.
 - b.** Baptism erases Original Sin and restores man's relationship with God, but the consequences and inclination to sin still remains; man's life becomes a battle between good and evil. (CCC 409)
 - c.** *Lord's Prayer: Temptation leads us to sin and in the petition "lead us not into temptation" we "ask him not to allow us to take the way that leads to sin" for God himself tempts no one and only desires for us to be free from sin. It implies the battle in which we need to make a decision in our heart of which way we are to walk and victory in this battle "becomes possible only through prayer." (CCC 2846-2849)*

BAD NEWS

- E.** If God is so good and created everything good, why does evil exist?
 - 1.** Sin is present in our world. God gave man free will which means that he can choose to do evil, not trust in God's loving plan, and ultimately reject God. (CCC 386)
 - 2.** Evil came into the world with man's first sin, original sin, and the perfection and harmony of creation was destroyed. (CCC 387)
 - 3.** God has a plan and does not abandon us; He can make good come from all things and sends us a Savior to overcome all the evil in our world. (CCC 312-314, Romans 8:28, 410)

Notes: _____

EPIC UNIVERSE

An Edge Social Night

LEADER OVERVIEW

The universe is vast, mysterious, and larger than we know or could ever imagine. Yet, in the midst of the largeness of the universe, God has created our world and He created us. Humankind was created by God and for God and will only ever know true happiness when we are in relationship with God (CCC 27-30). Deep in the heart of every person there is a longing and a yearning for happiness, for greatness, for something beyond oneself.

"It is Jesus that you seek when you dream of happiness; He is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you; He is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is He who provoked you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise; it is He who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it is He who reads in your heart your most genuine choices, the choices that others try to stifle. It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be ground down by mediocrity, the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal."

- St. John Paul II

God is not distant from humanity, nor is He in hiding; rather, He comes to meet humanity and to reveal Himself to it. God reveals Himself in the order of the created world, in the very being of man, and, if that were not enough, God comes to earth and reveals Himself personally to humankind through all of salvation history. Even then His desire for us to know Him and to be in a relationship with Him does not stop. He sends His only Son who is fully God and fully man and paves our path to salvation (CCC 32-35, 54-67).

All of the knowledge of God, all of the revelations throughout history have been safeguarded and handed down to us with great care. We come to know all of these things about God in our own personal experiences but also more fully through reading Sacred Scripture and knowing more about what has been handed down to us through the Catholic Church in Sacred Tradition. (CCC 77-133)

God is mysterious and far greater than we can describe. Everything we try to say about God falls short because we cannot comprehend the infinite. Yet God is not far off. He is not distant. He did not put the world into motion and then step back. Rather, He leaned in and does everything in His power, while still respecting our free will, to reveal Himself to us and to enter into a loving relationship with us.

EPIC UNIVERSE

An Edge Social Night

EDGE NIGHT OVERVIEW

GOAL

The goal of this Edge Night is to build community through fun activities that also bring the youth to wonder and awe of God and the universe that He has created. It also builds a foundation for the proof of God's existence and His desire for humanity to know Him.

SUMMARY

The Gather contains various games and activities that draw the youth's attention to creation and the vastness of the universe. The Proclaim is a brief teaching about the magnificence of the universe. The Break and Send are combined and the youth participate in a prayer experience adapted from the 38th chapter of the book of Job.

MAIN IDEAS

- God created the whole universe and we can see proof of His existence in the intricate details of the created world and humanity.
- God reveals Himself to humankind in creation, salvation history, Scripture, Tradition, and most clearly in Jesus Christ.
- Humanity is created by God and for God and will only find true happiness in Him.

ENVIRONMENT

Cut out stars and planets and hang them around the room. Create a large sun and moon and put them at opposite ends of the room. Put up pictures or cut-outs of various animals around the room, twist large pieces of butcher paper to hang as vines, and borrow plants from around the parish to put at the entrance to decorate your meeting space.



MEDIA

To Scale: "To Scale: The Universe" (youtube.com)



SCRIPTURE

Job 38:4-7; Matthew 10:29-31



CATECHISM

27-30, 32-43, 54-67, 74-133

Notes: _____

EDGE SPG: Existence

EPIC UNIVERSE

An Edge Social Night

EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

GATHER

Edge Night Introduction (5 min)

Welcome the youth and begin in prayer. Introduce anyone who is new, recognize any birthdays, and ask about any big events happening this week. Introduce the Core Team Members and give a brief overview of the topic using the following as a guide:

Does God exist? And if He does exist, how do we know that He exists? That is one of the greatest questions of humanity. This series will start the amazing journey of getting to know who God is and discovering proof for His existence all around us. God is mysterious and far beyond our understanding but because of His great love for us, He choose to reveal Himself to humanity. God does this throughout all of human history, in the Scriptures, in the Tradition of our Church and most fully in Jesus Christ. God is real. God is real. God does exist. We were created by God and for God and in Him we will find the true happiness we all desire. (CCC 54-133)

Get To Know You (10 min)

Break youth into small groups to spend time getting to know one another using the following questions:

- What is your name?
- What school do you go to?
- Would you rather be a tiger, a blue jay, or a shark? Why?
- Would you rather be surrounded by bees, scorpions, or snakes? Why?
- Would you rather live on the beach, in the desert, or in the forest? Why?
- Would you rather be stuck in a blizzard, a thunderstorm, or a sandstorm? Why?
- Would you rather be an astronaut, a zoo-keeper, or a scuba diver? Why?



SUGGESTIONS

Divide small groups by grade and gender and keep them in the same group for the whole year.



STEP IT UP

Name each small group after an aspect of outer space such as a planet, constellation, star, or galaxy.

Animal Noises (10 min)

This game is played in small groups.

1. Stand in a circle and have the youth say their names. Choose one person to go into the center of the circle and close his or her eyes.
2. The rest of the group runs clockwise around the person in the center.
3. The person in the center shouts “stop” and everyone freezes. Then, with eyes still closed, he or she points in any direction and says an animal (e.g.: horse, dog, cat, cow...). The youth who is closest to where the centered youth is pointing must make the noise of the animal.
4. The person in the center guesses who it is based solely off of the animal noise.
5. If the person in the center guesses correctly, then the youth who made the noise then goes to the middle. If the guess is incorrect, the person in the center stays and the game continues.



STEP IT UP

Put together multiple small groups to make the game more challenging.

Dessert Creations (15 min)

Have youth stay in small groups and rotate between three dessert creation stations, giving them two to three minutes at each station. At station one youth decorate cupcakes, at station two each small group creates something out of rice crispy treats, and at station three youth decorate cookies. Allow youth to eat their treats as they go from station to station.



STEP IT UP

Make creation based themes for each station - decorate cupcakes to look like plants, create animals out of rice crispy treats, and decorate cookies to look like outer space.

Solar System Scramble (10 min)

This game is played in groups of eight.

1. Every youth in the group picks a planet (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, or Neptune). Make sure that youth who are in the same group are not picking the same planet.
2. Then, everyone forms two circles- a large circle with a smaller circle inside of it. Be sure that the youth are not standing next to anyone in their group.
3. Start music. While the music plays, the outer circle walks clockwise and the inner circle walks counterclockwise.
4. When the music stops, the groups must reform and get into a line in the correct order of the planets starting with Mercury at the front of the line.

5. The group that is the last to get in order, or gets in the wrong order, is out. Use Core Members to help facilitate the game, to see who the last group is, and to check the order.
6. The game is played until there is one winning group.



SUGGESTIONS

Give each youth a nametag to write which planet he or she is or a colored bandana that identifies the planets to speed up the time of checking the right order.

Fun Facts About the Universe (5 min)

Gather the youth together in a large group and have a Core Member or the youth minister present the following facts about the universe:

- The slowest spinning object in the universe is the planet Venus. A person could walk faster than it rotates.
- The density of every neutron star is equivalent to what you would have if you crushed a cruise ship to the size of the ball in a ball-point pen.
- The large dark blotches on the moon are all names for weather events or emotions e.g.: Ocean of Storms or Sea of Emotions.
- The largest storm in the known universe is Jupiter's Great Red Spot. It is a hurricane that is three times the width of Earth and floats five miles above Jupiter's surface.
- In addition to white, stars are colored red, orange, blue, violet, yellow, brown, and even black. The only color hue missing is green.
- The fastest spinning objects in the universe are pulsars or tiny stars. The fastest of these turn 716 times per second.
- Neptune has the strongest winds in the solar system. They move at 1,300 miles per hour, which is four times faster than Earth's fiercest tornado.
- The Earth's axis is tipped at a perfect 23.5 degrees. Anything more or less and we wouldn't be able to survive.



SUGGESTIONS

Instead of using the facts above play the YouTube video "To Scale: The Solar System".



STEP IT UP

Create a slideshow of pictures to go along with each fun fact and have a Core Member read each fact in an epic deep voice.

Proclaim

"Epic Universe" Teaching (5 min)

This teaching can be found on page 20.

Prayer of Job (15 min)

Youth remain in the large group while a Core Member or the youth minister leads the following prayer reflection. Instruct the youth to bow their heads and close their eyes.

Begin by reading Job 38:4-7:

“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements – surely you know! Or who stretched the lines upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”

Then, say something similar to the following:

Consider God’s magnificence, His power, His might, the epic universe that He has created. He formed the entire universe out of nothing, He knows the exact number of the stars in every galaxy. He knows the deepest depth of the ocean. He created everything.

We are so small and our time here on Earth is so short in comparison to the age of the universe.

And yet, in the Gospel of Matthew, our Lord tells us how very important each one of us is to Him.

A Core Member reads the following passage from the book of Matthew 10:29-31:

“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father’s will. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.”

End by saying the following:

Lord, you are mindful of us. Even in the greatness of who you are and all you have created, you still want to know us and for us to know you. You know us and are concerned with every detail of our lives- all of our joys, our hopes, our fears, our worries, our dreams. While sometimes it may seem like we are little or insignificant or may feel like we are nothing, the truth is to you we are everything. We praise you and we thank you, Lord our God. You are mightier, more powerful, and bigger than we could ever imagine, and yet you know us and love us. Thank you!



SUGGESTIONS

End the Edge Night with a few upbeat praise and worship songs.

Notes: _____

EPIC UNIVERSE

An Edge Social Night

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.

GOD OF THE UNIVERSE

- Tell a story about a time that you were struck with wonder and awe by the vastness of the universe or a favorite fact or show you enjoy about the universe.
- The universe is massive. There are solar systems, stars, and galaxies far beyond our wildest imagination. The universe is bigger than we could ever comprehend – and so is our God. (CCC 39-43)
- Yet, in the midst of such complex systems and the vast expanses of stars, God has created our world and He has created us.
- God created man with great care and great love. Man was created by God and for God and will only know true happiness in God. (CCC 27-30)
- We can come to know that God exists in many different ways – through seeing order and design in the created world, through our own human reason, through our instinctual understanding of right and wrong, and through a desire for happiness and something greater than ourselves. (CCC 32-35)
- God reveals Himself to man through all of salvation history and most specifically through Jesus Christ. We can know all of this because of Sacred Scripture (what we know from the Bible) and Sacred Tradition (what has been handed down to us through the Catholic Church). (CCC 54-133)
- This semester we are going to be diving into getting to know who God is and more about the world He has created.
- Challenge the youth to star gaze this week and contemplate the vastness of the universe.

Notes: _____

RESPOND

An Edge Night on Faith

LEADER OVERVIEW

God is great. He is mysterious. He is beyond comprehension and anything we say about God never fully expresses or explains the totality of who He is. Yet, at the same time, God desires for us to know Him and He reveals Himself to us – in the created world and within our own being. But who could ever believe this? How could anyone ever know that there really is a God?

God, more than anyone else, understands our humanity. He understands our struggle to know things that seem so beyond human comprehension, but even still He wants us to believe. He wants us to believe in Him and to believe in everything that He has revealed about Himself and all that He had done for us. This is called faith. Faith is “both a gift of God and a human act by which the believer gives personal adherence to God who invites his response, and freely assents to the whole truth that God has revealed” (Catechism of the Catholic Church Glossary). God freely gives us the grace of faith and the gift of the Holy Spirit to help us grow in faith; it is not forced upon us. We have the choice to accept this gift from God and we have the choice to respond.

While faith is a personal act and decision, it is not an isolated act. “No one can believe alone, just as no one can live alone. You have not given yourself faith as you have not given yourself life” (CCC 166). Our faith life is beautifully wrapped up in the life of the Catholic Church through which we receive what has been passed on throughout all of history concerning God. Through the Church we come to know the truths of our faith for “she guards the memory of Christ’s words [and] it is she who from generation to generation hands on the apostles’ confession of faith” (CCC 170). The Church not only gives us access to God through all the sacraments and liturgical life, but also gives us access to the entirety of Christ’s teachings. We find these teachings and our identity in the one Catholic faith expressed in the Apostles’ Creed and Nicene Creed.

This twofold nature of faith, the belief in God and assent to the truths of the one faith, is not only something that God desires for us to do but it is necessary for our salvation. It naturally follows that “believing in Jesus Christ and in the one who sent Him for our salvation is necessary for obtaining that salvation” (CCC 161). Our faith leads us to eternal life- for in having faith we come to love God and in loving God we follow Him and live holy lives. Living a life of faith is not easy; it can be challenging and we can often find ourselves in darkness. But we know that we have a loving God and the community of the Church to nurture, guide, and sustain us along the way. Growing in faith is the journey of our lifetime, but once we make the decision to follow God and to believe, when we act and respond to God’s invitation, it will change our lives in the most wonderful way – “do not fear, only believe” (Mark 5:36).

RESPOND

An Edge Night on Faith

EDGE NIGHT OVERVIEW

GOAL

The goal of this Edge Night is for the youth to understand the twofold meaning of faith as a personally responding and believing in God and what He revealed, as well as believing and following the teachings of the Catholic Church.

SUMMARY

During the Gather the youth play a game that gets them to think about the proper responses in different situations which leads into the Proclaim teaching on faith as our response to God and all that He has revealed. During the Break, the youth break into small groups to discuss the faith of Abraham and Mary. The Send is a time of personal prayer during which the youth have an opportunity to reflect on their relationship with God and other people in their lives.

MAIN IDEAS

- Faith is a personal act to believe in God and all that He has revealed.
- Faith also refers to the teachings and beliefs handed on through the Catholic Church.
- Faith is the proper response to the love of God and will change the course of our lives for the better

ENVIRONMENT

Place or project images of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit at the front of the room, along with a picture of the Annunciation, and the sacrifice of Isaac. Create a sacred space at the front of the room with a large table covered in a nice tablecloth and display a Bible, crucifix, and a statue of Mary. Use dimmed lights, Christmas lights, or candles to create a prayerful mood around the sacred space.



MEDIA

Life Teen Video Support September 2012: "Year of Faith" (lifeteen.com)
Edge Video Support: "Why Be Catholic?" (lifeteen.com)



SCRIPTURE

Genesis 22:1-14; Luke 1:26-38; John 13:34; Mark 9:24; Mark 12:30-31; John 10:10



Notes:

EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

GATHER

Edge Night Introduction (5 min)

Welcome the youth and begin in prayer. Introduce anyone who is new, recognize any birthdays, and ask about any big events happening this week. Give a brief overview of the topic using the following as an example:

God exists and He continually reveals Himself to humanity. He desires for us to know Him and love Him. We are called to have faith, which is both a decision and an act to believe in God and what He has revealed. God gives us grace to have faith and in Scripture we have great examples of people who were able to respond to God in faith. Faith is based in trust of and love for our great God who loves us more than we can imagine. Faith is also based in knowing and following the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Proper Response Skits (20 min)

Break youth into nine small groups. Each group receives one slip of paper and the small group leader shares what action is written on the paper with the group. Give the youth a couple of minutes to mentally prepare how they would like to act out their assigned action (each member of the group must perform the action when it is their group's turn).

To set up the game get nine slips of paper and write one of the following responses on each slip of paper:

1. Pretend like you are eating something off the ground.
2. Pretend like you are cleaning something off the ground.
3. Pretend like there is something really smelly on the ground and run away from it, plugging your nose and yelling "STINKY!"
4. Pretend like you do not understand someone and start speaking a different language.
5. Pretend to faint.
6. Say, "I am sorry. I forgot. I will do it tomorrow."
7. Say, "Hi, how are you?"
8. Look down at your feet and mumble.
9. Jump up and down and act extremely excited and squeal.

Without saying the responses that are listed below each situation, call up the small group with the corresponding slip of paper. When the group gets to the stage (or front of the room), have everyone in the group act out the response from their slip of paper. Ask the crowd to guess what they are all doing, and then reveal what the response was if the crowd guesses wrong. After the

three groups with responses to the question are done, ask the youth what the proper response to the situation is by round of applause. Continue this process until all the situations are given and every small group has had a chance to act out a response.

Use the following prompts to lead the activity (printable version found on the *Edge Support August 2016 USB* and online at lifeteen.com under Edge Support: August 2016):

Begin by reading each situation then proceed to call up each group one at a time where designated.

Situation 1: Your dog poops on the carpet in the living room. What is the your response?

- Call up group one to act out what is written on their slip of paper.
 - Ask the youth to guess.
 - Reveal the actual response: "What is your response ... To eat it off the floor!"
- Call up group two to act out what is written on their slip of paper.
 - Ask the youth to guess.
 - Reveal the actual response: "What is your response ... To clean it off the floor!"
- Call up group three to act out what is written on their slip of paper.
 - Ask the youth to guess.
 - Reveal the actual response: "What is your response ... To run away, plugging your nose and yelling "STINKY!"

Situation 2: Your teacher calls you up to turn in your homework but you forgot to do it. What is the proper response?

- Call up group four to act out what is written on their slip of paper.
 - Ask the youth to guess.
 - Reveal the actual response: "What is your response ... To pretend like you don't understand and start speaking a different language!"
- Call up group five to act out what is written on their slip of paper.
 - Ask the youth to guess.
 - Reveal the actual response: "What is your response ... To pretend to faint!"
- Call up group six to act out what is written on their slip of paper.
 - Ask the youth to guess.
 - Reveal the actual response: "What is your response ... To tell the teacher the truth- that your forgot your homework and you will turn it in the next day!"

Situation 3: Your crush says, "Hi." What is the proper response?

- Call up group seven to act out what is written on their slip of paper.
 - Ask the youth to guess.
 - Reveal the actual response: "What is your response ... To say "Hi" and ask how he or she is doing!"
- Call up group eight to act out what is written on their slip of paper.
 - Ask the youth to guess.
 - Reveal the actual response: "What is your response ... To look down at your feet and mumble!"
- Call up group nine to act out what is written on their slip of paper.
 - Ask the youth to guess.
 - Reveal the actual response: "What is your response ... To jump up and down and squeal in excitement!"

**STEP IT UP**

Create a game show stage and dress up like a game show host.

Proclaim

“Respond” Teaching Guide (10 min)

This teaching can be found on pages 30 to 32.

BREAK

Mary and Abraham Reflection (20 min)

Break youth into their small groups.

Girls read and reflect on Luke 1:26-38 and use the following questions for discussion:

- Do you think that Mary trusted God? Why?
- How is Mary an example of faith?
- Why is it important that Mary had faith?
- Why is it important for us to have faith and trust in God?

Guys read and reflect on Genesis 22:1-14 and use the following questions for discussion:

- Do you think that Abraham trusted God? Why?
- How is Abraham an example of faith?
- What was Abraham's continual response to God?
- Why is it important for us to have faith and trust in God?

**SUGGESTIONS**

Have a Core Member read the passage while the youth follow along in their own Bibles.

**STEP IT UP**

Purchase Bibles for all of your youth to have and hand them out during small groups.



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.

WHAT IS FAITH?

- *Begin by sharing a humorous story about a time in your life where you did not respond properly to a situation.*
- In our lives there are proper ways to respond to situations and in our journey with God there are proper ways to respond to His love. God loves us so much and reveals Himself to us because He desires for us to know Him. We are called to respond to Him and this response is called faith.
- Faith is based in love and trust in God. It is a personal act by which we believe in God and all that He has revealed. God does not force us to believe; it is our choice. (CCC 150-152, 160)
- Faith is a gift from God; it is grace freely given to us to help us to believe in Him and to respond to Him. When faith works along with our intellect and reason we can learn and grow in knowledge of God and learn why we believe certain things. (CCC 154-159)



GOING DEEPER

“Though faith is above reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason.” As long as it is conducted morally, “methodical research in all branches of knowledge ... can never conflict with the faith, because the things of the world and the things of faith derive from the same God.” Science and faith do not contradict each other, rather they work together. (CCC 159)

- *Give a few practical examples of what it looks like to respond to faith in the life of a middle school youth. For example: whenever we end a prayer we say “Amen” which is a response of faith saying that we believe. Or when we follow the Ten Commandments we are responding to what God asks of us in faith through our actions.*
- *Project an image of Christ.*

- Faith is not just a nice sentiment or idea but it is necessary for our very salvation. We hear in scripture that “he who believes in the Son has eternal life” (John 3:36). It is essential for us to have faith if we desire eternal life; for in having faith we come to love God and in loving God we follow Him and live holy lives. (CCC 161)
- It is in living a life in communion with God that we will not only find happiness in this life, but also eternal happiness in the next.



GOING DEEPER

“He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:54)

FAITH OF THE CHURCH

- When we talk about faith, or the Faith, it is also in reference to all that we believe and all that has been handed down to us through the Catholic Church. (CCC 166-175)
- *Ask the youth to respond: How do we learn about our Catholic faith?*
- It is through the Church and through the community of people who gather that we learn more about who God is, what He has revealed, and what we believe as Catholics. It is through the Church that our faith and all that God has revealed is strengthened, nurtured, and passed onto future generations. (CCC 166)



GOING DEEPER

Watch the video “Why Be Catholic?” from Media Suggestions and ask the youth to share what it means to be Catholic.

- *Project an image of the two Creeds.*
- All that we know and believe and all that has been revealed to us through Jesus Christ has been passed down throughout history. Our entire faith can be summarized in the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed. We pray the Nicene Creed every Sunday at Mass. (CCC 185-187)

OUR FAITH

- Faith is a central part of your relationship with God. It is your response to God and His great love for you, for creating you, and for all the wonderful things He has given to you or done in your life. Believing in God and what He has revealed and following Him is the proper response to His love and desire to know us.
- Having faith and believing in God will change the course of your whole life. Faith transforms the way you live, the way you think, and the way you treat others because your thoughts and actions become informed by God and His commandment to love. (John 13:34, Mark 12:30-31)
- *Share a story about how your life has been transformed by your faith and by the Faith of the Church and your response to God.*



- You can continue to learn about your faith by coming to Edge every week, reading the Bible, reading the Catechism, and going to Mass and other parish events with your family. You can even come to know God by going out in nature or to the zoo and marveling at all He has created.
- God wants you to use your intellect and reason to come to know Him, so if you have a question seek out the answer from a reliable resources such as the Youth Minister, a Core Member, a priest, or your parents.
- *Project an image of Jesus reaching out to man.*
- Growing in faith is a journey that we are on our whole lives. But once we make the decision to follow God and to believe in what He has revealed to us, when we act and respond to God's invitation, it will change our lives in the most wonderful way – "do not fear, only believe." (Mark 5:36)
- *Give the youth a challenge to do one thing this week to grow in faith.*

RESPONDING IN PRAYER

BEGIN WITH THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

Take a few moments to reflect on the good things that God has done or has given to you in your life. Write down three things that you are thankful for.

Reflect on some things in your life that you struggle with or some people who need prayer. Lift these up to God and write down three requests.

Reflect on the following scripture verse: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34). What does this reveal about God?

How does this commandment affect your relationship with others?

Lift up all of your responses to God, take a few moments in silence, and end your prayer by making the sign of the cross.

EDGE

RESPONDING IN PRAYER

This handout is intended to help guide your youth through a time of silent prayer. The printable version can be found on the *August 2016 Edge USB*.

THE FATHER

An Edge Night on God the Father

LEADER OVERVIEW

God was before anything was created and God will exist after all that we know and understand no longer exists. When we profess our faith we begin with our belief in God because God is the source of all that is. We believe in God and only one God. The belief in one God is the central teaching of Christianity.

We know that there is one God because He reveals Himself to us. Throughout salvation history God is continually reaching out to His people, trying to guide them, and showing them His ways. In one particular instance He appears to Moses in a burning bush and reveals His name, “I AM WHO AM” (Exodus 3:1-6, 10-14). By revealing His name God shows us His desire to know us in a personal way. His name in and of itself shows us that He has always existed and always will exist, that He IS. From this point on, God continues to reveal Himself, showing us that He is gracious, slow to anger, merciful, loving, truth, goodness, and beauty (Exodus 34:5-6). Eventually He sends His only Son, who reveals many things about God, to save us. One thing in particular that Jesus reveals is the greatest mystery that God Himself is an internal exchange of love between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This does not change the fact that God is one in substance. It simply means that there are three different persons who all have a distinct role.

God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, is our loving Father and He has ultimate authority and power. God created everything in the world from nothing (Genesis 1). He did it to reveal His majesty, His glory, and His love. He creates everything with a purpose and a plan. If we but look at the intricacies of the human body, or the animal kingdom, or even the simplest plant, we will see that everything is created with a beautiful design for a specific reason.

God holds all created things in existence. He is the being that is the source of everything. If God were to stop thinking about something, to stop holding it in existence, it would simply stop being. He is the alpha and omega; He is the beginning and the end. God simply IS.

THE FATHER

An Edge Night on God the Father

EDGE NIGHT OVERVIEW

GOAL

The goal of this Edge Night is for the youth to learn more about God and His relationship to them as a loving Father.

SUMMARY

During the Gather, the youth play a game of Simon Says to contrast that God is a loving Father and not just a rule enforcer. The Proclaim discusses the significance of God revealing His name and His desire for a relationship with us as our Father. During the Break, the youth look up the meaning of their own names and discuss the significance of names in a relationship. The Send is a powerful prayer experience focused on God the Father with the reading of *The Father's Love Letter*. You can check it out at fathersloveletter.com.

MAIN IDEAS

- God reveals His name to Moses, "I AM WHO AM," which shows His identity and desire to be in a personal relationship with humanity.
- God is three persons in one God. He created the whole world and holds it in existence.
- God is our loving Father and desires a personal relationship with each one of us.

ENVIRONMENT

Post images of fathers from popular movies around the room. At the front of the room project an image of God the Father or the Trinity.



MEDIA

Edge Support Video 17: "Glorify" (lifeteen.com)
Life Teen Video Support September 2014: "Dealn' with Dad" (lifeteen.com)
"Good Good Father," Chris Tomlin, (Good Good Father, 2015, [sixstepsrecords](http://sixstepsrecords.com))



SCRIPTURE

Exodus 3:1-6, 10-14; Jeremiah 29:11; Matthew 6:31-33



CATECHISM

205-217, 232-260, 282-289

Notes: _____

EDGE SPG: Existence

THE FATHER

An Edge Night on God the Father

EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

GATHER

Edge Night Introduction (5 min)

Welcome the youth and begin in prayer. Introduce anyone who is new, recognize any birthdays, and ask about any big events happening this week. Give a brief overview of the topic of the night using the following as an example:

Last week we learned that we are called to have faith and that faith is a response to God's great love and all that He has done for us. But who is God? Our faith and trust in God will grow as we continue to learn more about Him. Today we will be learning more about our great and loving God, who is the beginning and end of everything, and focusing on God the Father who is the creator of everything.

Simon Says (10 min)

This game is played by everyone in a large group.

1. Pick a Core Member to be "Simon" and lead the game.
2. "Simon" stands in the front of the room and the youth stand and face him or her.
3. "Simon" says commands for the youth to perform (e.g. rub your stomach, hop on one foot, touch your toes). Some of these commands will begin with the statement, "Simon says" and others will not. Youth are to do whatever "Simon" says, but only when he or she begins the command by saying "Simon says ..."
4. Anyone who does not do the proper action or does an action that is not preceded by "Simon says ..." is out of the game.
5. The game is played until there is one person left.

Proclaim

"The Father" Teaching (10 min)

This teaching can be found on pages 42 to 44.

BREAK

What Does It Mean (20 min)

Break youth into small groups. Make sure each group has at least one Core Member with a phone with Internet access. Use the web browser and search “meaning of names” and pick a reputable website to use. Go around the circle and look up the meaning of each of the youths’ names. Use the following questions for discussion:

- Did you know the meaning of your name before tonight? Did anything surprise you?
- Why are names important? Is it special to know someone by name?
- Why is it important that God revealed His name to us?
- What did you learn about God tonight that you didn’t know before?
- How does this new knowledge of God the Father affect your relationship with Him?



SUGGESTIONS

If you have time also look up the meaning of middle names. If your middle school ministry meets in a location that does not have good internet connect, gather one baby naming book for each group to use to look up the meaning of their names.



STEP IT UP

Purchase Bibles for all of your youth to have and hand them out during small groups.

8th Grade Adaptation

Use the following questions for a more challenging discussion for 8th grade youth:

- Did anything surprise you about the meaning of each other’s names?
- When we meet someone new, why is the first question we ask usually, “What is your name?”
- What does that reveal about names and relationships?
- Why is it significant that God revealed His name?
- What does that show about God and our relationship with Him?
- What does God’s name reveal about Him?

SEND

Good, Good Father (30 min)

Gather youth together as a large group. Dim the lights and play soft acoustic music in the background. Project an image of the Prodigal Son at the front of the room and begin with the following reflection:

God is our Father. He desires to be in a relationship with us and for us to know Him personally. Sometimes we imagine or make God to be like our own father or examples of fathers we see in our daily lives or in the media. In some circumstances these fathers give us a good example of God the Father, and in other circumstances they give us a bad example of a father. Regardless of your relationship with your earthly father, or the way that fathers are portrayed, we are called to see God the Father with new eyes that see Him for who He is and not project our own idea of a father on Him. We call Him “Father” because Jesus revealed Him as the Father and through adoption we become His children. He is the Father who loves us and cares for us, and desires our happiness and our holiness. He is the perfect Father far beyond any category or definition of the created world. (CCC 2779-2785)

Instruct the youth to close their eyes and enter into a prayerful reflection led by a male Core Member or youth minister. The male Core Member or youth minister slowly reads The Father’s Love Letter found on page 45. (also found as a handout on the *August 2016 Edge USB* and online at lifeteen.com under Edge: *August 2016*):

Transition into the song “Good, Good Father” from the Media Suggestions and allow the youth a few minutes to pray through the song and reflect on the letter they just heard. End the time of prayer with the following:

We are children of God and, as His children, we can pray to Him with boldness and know that He hears our prayers and desires our best. As His children we have certainty that He love us (CCC 2777-2778). Let us lift up all of our prayers to our loving Father as together we pray, Our Father...



SUGGESTIONS

Print off copies of the Father’s Love Letter and hand them out to the youth as they leave, challenge them to read it every day this week or to post it somewhere that they will see it often.

Notes: _____

THE FATHER

An Edge Night on God the Father

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.

I AM WHO AM

- *Begin by projecting an image of the burning bush and reading Exodus 3:1-6, 10-14.*
- In this mysterious conversation between God and Moses, God reveals to us His name, "I AM WHO AM." It is significant that God reveals His name and it shows us more about who He is.
- When we meet someone for the first time we usually ask what their name is and we tell them our name. This exchange signifies the beginning of a relationship. We know that person and they know us.
- *Share a story about meeting someone for the first time and emphasize the importance of sharing names. If you are married share the story of how you and your spouse met.*
- This same thing is happening when God talks to Moses. By reaching out to Moses God reveals His desire to be in a relationship with all of mankind. Even though we didn't see the burning bush that doesn't mean that God does not want us to know Him personally, He gave His name to Moses to share with all of mankind His love and presence. He wants us to know Him in a new and personal way. God is not some far off dictator who sits in heaven and barks orders, like in our game of "Simon Says," but He is a God who is near to His people, who cares about His children, and who desires a loving relationship with them. (CCC 205-207)



GOING DEEPER

If you are also subscribed to Life Teen, play the video "Dealing with Dad" from the Media Suggestions and discuss the similarities and differences between earthly fathers and God the Father.

- By saying "I AM" God is revealing that He is the fullness of being. He has no beginning, He has no end, and He simply is. Because God IS, He is constantly and continuously faithful to man and is ALWAYS "merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." (CCC 210-213, Exodus 34:5-6)

- God is also the fullness of truth; He cannot deceive and He always keeps His promises. (CCC 215-217)



GOING DEEPER

Pick a scripture verse about the promises of God and discuss how God is always faithful to His promises and what that means in our daily life (e.g.: Jeremiah 29:11, Luke 18:27, Matthew 6:31-33).

- God is the fullness of love; He loves us more than we could ever imagine. God's love is neverending and never fading. This love is also revealed in a new way through Jesus, who refers to God as His Father, to Himself as the Son, and to the Holy Spirit who is at work with them. The three persons of the Trinity are a relationship and exchange of love. (CCC 218-221)

THE FATHER

- God is one; there is only one God. But in this oneness He has revealed to us three distinct persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is called the Trinity and Jesus Christ revealed this to us. As we continue our journey of knowing God we are going to focus first on God the Father. (CCC 232-260)
- *Project an image of God the Father.*
- God the Father is almighty; there is nothing that is impossible for Him. He is all-powerful and has ultimate authority over everything. But at the same time, He is our loving Father who takes care of our every need. (CCC 268-274)
- God is the Creator revealing to us where we come from and where we are going, for we were created by God and for God. (CCC 282-285)



GOING DEEPER

Discuss the following quote: "Wherever I go I will find you, my God." St. John Baptist de la Salle.

- Faith helps us to understand and see that God created the world and our reason helps us to see the plan behind all of creation. (CCC 286-289)
- There is a plan, a purpose, and a specific design in everything that God creates. He created everything and holds it all in existence. If He were to stop thinking about something, it would cease to exist. (CCC 290-301)
- God has always been with no beginning and no end and He created the whole world out of nothing. He created it to reveal His glory, His wisdom, His goodness and His love. (CCC 293-295)



GOING DEEPER

Play the video "Glorify" from Media Suggestions and discuss ways that the youth can participate in revealing the glory of God in their daily lives.

OUR FATHER

- God did not just create everything and step back from it, but He stays close to His creation and cares for it, most especially for humanity.

- *Project an image of Baptism.*
- We learn from Jesus Christ that God is not only His Father, but God is our Father too. Jesus not only teaches us about the Father, but He also teaches us how to pray to Him and, by merit of His death on the cross, He makes it possible for us to become God's adopted children through Baptism. (CCC 240, 1265, Matthew 6:9-13)



GOING DEEPER

Discuss the following quote and the importance of Baptism in our spiritual lives, “Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the neophyte ‘new creature,’ and adopted son of God, who has become a ‘partaker of the divine nature,’ member of Christ and co-heir with him, and a temple of the Holy Spirit.” (CCC 1265)

- God the Father wants a relationship with you. He has created you with a purpose- for a specific reason- and He has created you to be His son or daughter.
- *Share about a time in your life that you had an encounter with God the Father or a moment of clarity about His love and presence in your life.*
- In our daily life we can look at all the intricate designs of creation and see God's love and plan or we can stop and pray to Him for all our needs, trusting that He is almighty and always faithful to us. When we are confused or hurt, we can turn to God the Father who is the fullness of truth and love.
- In all circumstances of every day "HE IS." He is present to you in every moment and holds your very life in existence.
- *Challenge the youth to be more attentive to the presence of God the Father in their lives this week and to pray an Our Father every day.*

LOVE LETTER FROM GOD

My Child,

You may not know me, but I know everything about you. (Psalm 139:1)
I know when you sit down and when you rise up. (Psalm 139:2)
I am familiar with all your ways. (Psalm 139:3)
Even the very hairs on your head are numbered. (Matthew 10:29-31)
For you were made in my image. (Genesis 1:27)
In me you live and move and have your being. (Acts 17:28)
For you are my offspring. (Acts 17:28)
I knew you even before you were conceived. (Jeremiah 1:4-5)
I chose you when I planned creation. (Ephesians 1:11-12)
You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book. (Psalm 139:15-16)
I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live. (Acts 17:26)
You are fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:14)
I knit you together in your mother's womb. (Psalm 139:13)
And brought you forth on the day you were born. (Psalm 71:6)
I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me. (John 8:41-44)
I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love. (1 John 4:16)
And it is my desire to lavish my love on you. (1 John 3:1)
Simply because you are my child and I am your Father. (1 John 3:1)
I offer you more than your earthly father ever could. (Matthew 7:11)
For I am the perfect father. (Matthew 5:48)
Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand. (James 1:17)
For I am your provider and I meet all your needs. (Matthew 6:31-33)
My plan for your future has always been filled with hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)
Because I love you with an everlasting love. (Jeremiah 31:3)
My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore. (Psalms 139:17-18)
And I rejoice over you with singing. (Zephaniah 3:17)
I will never stop doing good to you. (Jeremiah 32:40)
For you are my treasured possession. (Exodus 19:5)
I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul. (Jeremiah 32:41)
And I want to show you great and marvelous things. (Jeremiah 33:3)
If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me. (Deuteronomy 4:29)
Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:4)
For it is I who gave you those desires. (Philippians 2:13)
I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine. (Ephesians 3:20)
For I am your greatest encourager. (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17)
I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)
When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you. (Psalm 34:18)
As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart. (Isaiah 40:11)
One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes. (Revelation 21:3-4)
And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth. (Revelation 21:3-4)
I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus. (John 17:23)
For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed. (John 17:26)
He is the exact representation of my being. (Hebrews 1:3)
He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you. (Romans 8:31)
And to tell you that I am not counting your sins. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)
Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)
His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you. (1 John 4:10)
I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love. (Romans 8:31-32)
If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me. (1 John 2:23)
And nothing will ever separate you from my love again. (Romans 8:38-39)
Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen. (Luke 15:7)
I have always been Father, and will always be Father. (Ephesians 3:14-15)
My question is... Will you be my child? (John 1:12-13)
I am waiting for you. (Luke 15:11-32)

Love, Your Dad Almighty God

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EDGE

LOVE LETTER FROM GOD

Use this handout to lead a prayerful reflection on the love of God and pass it out to the youth at the end of the night. These can be found on the *August 2016 Edge USB*.

LEADER OVERVIEW

In the Apostles' Creed we hear the words "I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of *heaven and earth*" and in the Nicene Creed we say the words "I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things *visible and invisible*" (CCC 325). Both of these realities make up the entirety of creation and they are closely linked, bonded, and both are entirely real. When we speak of the heavens it refers to the "firmament and God's own 'place' – 'our Father in heaven' and consequently the 'heaven' too which is eschatological glory. Finally, 'heaven' refers to the saints and the 'place' of the spiritual creatures, the angels who surround God" (CCC 326). From the beginning, God made both the spiritual and the physical worlds and creatures and then He made man who is both physical and spiritual (CCC 327).

It is a truth of our faith that there is a spiritual realm made up of spiritual, non-physical beings called angels. Angel is the name of their office, their duty as messengers of God, not of their nature, which is that of pure spirit. They constantly behold the face of God and do His work, heeding to His word (CCC 328-329). Angels have both intellect and will. They are personal, immortal, and surpass all visible creatures in perfection. At the center of the angelic world is Christ. Angels are constantly at work with Him as the messengers of His saving plan (Hebrews 1:14). Angels have been present since the beginning of creation and through all of salvation history, announcing the news of salvation and working to accomplish the plans of God. Christ's life was also surrounded by the protection and service of the angels and the whole of the Church benefits from the help and power of the angels, for "from its beginning until death, human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession" (CCC 336).

Some of the angels choose to reject God and His reign- a choice which they can never take back. The leader of the fallen angels is Satan. The Church teaches "the devil and the other demons were indeed created naturally good by God, but they became evil by their own doing" (CCC 391). There are disastrous influences of Satan recorded through all of Scripture; the greatest of these being the temptation of Adam and Eve which led to the fall of the whole human race.

It is important to keep in mind that while Satan is real and his powers are real, he is not infinite. Satan is still a creature, and "the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil," which He did ultimately through His death on the cross (CCC 394). God is still far greater and far surpasses the works of evil and it is only in His divine providence that He even allows for evil to be present in the world. Which in itself "is a great mystery that providence should permit diabolical activity, but 'we know that in everything God works for good with those who love him'" (CCC 395, Romans 8:28).

HIDDEN

An Edge Night on Creation of the Spiritual World

EDGE NIGHT OVERVIEW

GOAL

The goal of this Edge Night is to teach the youth about the spiritual realities of creation, focusing specifically on angels.

SUMMARY

The Gather begins with a video about the invisible realities of our faith, followed by an opportunity for the youth to experience some invisible realities. The Proclaim dives deeper into the reality of the spiritual world, specifically teaching about the angels and the fallen angels. The Break gives the youth an opportunity to learn more about the archangels and the Send is a prayer to St. Michael the Archangel.

MAIN IDEAS

- God created a whole spiritual realm that we cannot see.
- Angels are messengers of God; they are constantly at work to do the will of God and to bring about His plans of salvation for the world.
- The fallen angels, led by Satan, refused the reign of God and definitively turned away from Him. They are real, but God's power is far greater.

ENVIRONMENT

Put up or project photos of extreme weather conditions like heat, wind, and cold. Hang cut-outs of visual representations of invisible things around the room – suns to represent heat, snowflakes to represent cold, and swirly lines to represent wind, hearts to represent love, etc.



MEDIA

Edge Video Support 17: "Beyond Illusion" (lifeteen.com)

Life Teen Video Support May 2015: "Defend Us In Battle" (lifeteen.com)

Life Teen Video Support May 2010: "Armor of God" (lifeteen.com)



SCRIPTURE

Genesis 3:24; Exodus 23:20-23; Luke 1:26-38; Luke 22:39-46



CATECHISM

325-327, 329-336

EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

GATHER

Edge Night Introduction (5 min)

Welcome the youth and begin in prayer. Introduce anyone who is new, recognize any birthdays, and ask about any big events happening this week. Give a brief overview of the topic using the following as an example:

God created everything. In the beginning He created both the physical world that we see and a spiritual realm that we cannot see. Even though we cannot see the spiritual world, and it is hidden from our senses, does not mean that it is not real!

Beyond Illusion Video (5 min)

Play the video “Beyond Illusion” from the Media Suggestions.

Experience the Hidden (10 min)

As a large group travel through three different rooms having the youth experience something they cannot see. In the first room, raise the thermostat so the room is extremely warm. The youth cannot see the heat but they experience it. In the second room, lower the thermostat so the room is extremely cold or use a walk-in freezer. The youth cannot see the cold but they can experience it. In the third room, set up a number of fans so the room is extremely windy. (If you do not have multiple fans, have the youth take turns walking in front of one fan.) The youth cannot see the wind but they can feel it.

Hidden Brainstorm (5 min)

This game is played in small groups.

1. Give each group paper and a pen.
2. Designate who will be the recorder for the each group.
3. Give the youth one minute to brainstorm as many invisible things as they can (e.g.: wind, heat, cold, air, angels, love, sadness, Holy Spirit, etc).
4. Have Core Members check the answers to confirm they are invisible things. The group with the most reasonable responses wins!



SUGGESTIONS

Have a prize for the winning group.

Proclaim

“Hidden” Teaching (10 min)

This teaching can be found on pages 54 to 55.

BREAK

The Archangels (20 min)

Break the youth into age specific small groups. The 6th graders reflect on St. Gabriel, the 7th graders reflect on St. Raphael, and the 8th graders reflect on St. Michael. Give a brief introduction to all three of the archangels before sending the youth off to their groups. Use the following as an example:

Scripture has revealed only three names of angels, all of whom are archangels. These archangels are Gabriel, Raphael, and Michael. The name Michael means “Who is as God?” and he is the great warrior angel who fought against Satan and his demons. St. Michael also fights against all the enemies of God and His people. Gabriel means “Man of God” or “Strength of God” and all of his missions were closely tied with announcing the coming of the Messiah – particularly when He announced to Mary that she would be the Mother of God. The name Raphael means “God heals” or “Divine healer” and his mission is that of healing both physical and spiritual illnesses. These three angels, like all angels, are constantly at work to do the will of God. (Read more about this here “Proper Name of the Angels” by Pascal P. Parente, ewtn.com)

(6th Grade) St. Gabriel:

Read Luke 1:26-38. Give each youth a Bible to follow along and use the following questions for discussion:

- When you think of angels, what do you imagine? What do you think angels do?
- Angels are messengers of God. What was the task of the archangel Gabriel?
- Why was his job so important?
- If you were Mary, how do you think you would react to seeing an angel?
- What other invisible reality is at work in Mary’s life at this time? (The Holy Spirit)
- Mary’s “yes” to becoming the Mother of God changed the world forever. How does her “yes” to the angel affect your daily life?

As a group, draw a picture of this scene in scripture using a large sheet of butcher paper and markers.

(7th Grade) St. Raphael:

Read Tobit 12:11-21. Give each youth a Bible to follow along use the following questions for discussion:

- When you think of angels, what do you imagine? What do you think angels do?
- Angels are messengers of God. What was the task of the archangel Raphael?

- What good works did the people do in this Scripture verse? What did the angel do?
- Where do you see it written that God sent the angel to do his will? What does this reveal about the work of angels?
- The angel says that it is “glorious to reveal the works of God.” How can you do this in your daily life?

As a group, draw a picture of this scene in scripture using a large sheet of butcher paper and markers.

(8th Grade) St. Michael:

Read Revelation 12:7-10. Give each youth a Bible to follow along and use the following questions for discussion:

- When you think of angels, what do you imagine? What do you think angels do?
- Angels are messengers of God. What was the task of the archangel Michael?
- We learned in the talk about the fallen angels, the angels that St. Michael was fighting. Why were they fighting?
- What does this story reveal about St. Michael?
- Is he the type of angel you would want at your side? Why or why not?
- How do you think St. Michael can help you in your daily life?

As a group draw a picture of this scene in scripture using a large sheet of butcher paper and markers.

SEND

Archangel Sharing (10 min)

Allow each group time to briefly share their picture and explain how it represents the archangel and his mission.

Deliver Us From Evil (10 min)

Project the Our Father prayer and put the words “deliver us from evil” in bold font. Use the following as an example of an introduction to this time of prayer:

In the great prayer that Jesus gave us, the Our Father, we pray and ask for God to “deliver us from evil.” This is not something abstract, rather we are literally asking for God’s protection from Satan, the evil one. We know, though, that through God and through Christ’s victory on the cross, we have no need to fear evil for “if God is for us, who is against us!” We are not only praying for our own deliverance from the evil and sin in the world, but also for the whole human family. When we pray we are praying that everyone may come to know the peace, freedom, and joy by entrusting their lives to God and turning from evil and sin. (CCC 2850-2854, Romans 8:31)

As a group pray together the Our Father and the Prayer to St. Michael for the specific intention of the protection of the whole human family from the snares of the devil.



STEP IT UP

Notes:

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.

THE HEAVENS

- In the Apostles' Creed we hear the words "I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of *heaven and earth*" and in the Nicene Creed we say the words "I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things *visible and invisible*" (CCC 325).
- *Go back and reemphasize some of the things the youth brainstormed that are real even though we cannot see them.*
- It is a truth of our faith that God created a whole spiritual realm that we cannot see. This spiritual realm is made up of the heavens, where the angels and saints dwell in full communion with God in eternal happiness and fulfillment - this is the state that the world is destined for. (CCC 326-327)



GOING DEEPER

Briefly explain the process of canonization and share a story of your favorite saint.

THE ANGELS

- Angels are messengers of God; they are constantly at work to do the will of God and to bring about His plans of salvation for the world. (CCC 329)
- Like us, the angels have an intellect and will and are personal and immortal. Unlike us, they have no physical component to their being. Angels are pure spirit. Angels are a unique creature and creation of God; people do not become angels when they die. (CCC 330)
- *Project an image of the Annunciation.*
- Angels have been present throughout history, since creation, and scripture is full of stories of angels announcing salvation and the plans of God. We see angels present through the entire life of Jesus Christ, particularly during the announcement of His birth, through His passion and death, and they will accompany Him when He comes again at the end of time. (CCC 332-333)



GOING DEEPER

Read through a few specific accounts from Scripture of the presence of angels – Genesis 3:24, Exodus 23:20-23, Luke 1:26-38, Luke 22:39-46.

- *Project an image of a Guardian Angel.*
- The angels are ever present in the life of the Church and we all benefit from their mysterious and powerful help. Angels are always present to us during the Mass and “beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life.” (CCC 334-336)

THE FALL OF THE ANGELS

- Angels have intellect and will which means they can choose to follow God or not. At one point in time a certain group of angels willingly chose to turn away and reject God and His reign. Because of the nature of the angels, this choice could never be taken back. (CCC 392-393)
- *Project an image of St. Michael the Archangel.*
- The leader of this group of fallen angels is Satan or the devil. Satan and all the demons were naturally created good but “they became evil by their own doing” by making the radical choice to turn completely from God. (CCC 391)
- Satan is the father of lies and scripture reveals his disastrous influence, the worst of which was leading Adam and Eve to sin causing the fall of the human race. The devil even tries to divert Jesus from His mission, but he fails because “the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the work of the devil.” (1 John 3:8, John 8:44, CCC 394)
- Satan is real and his entire mission is to lead humanity astray and away from God. He does have power due to his spiritual nature, but he is still just a creature. His power is not infinite. God is still far greater and far more powerful than any work of the devil. (CCC 395)



GOING DEEPER

If you are also subscribed to Life Teen play the video “Armor of God” from the Media Suggestions.

- We should not be afraid of the devil, but we also cannot pretend like he doesn’t exist. He may try to lead us astray, and it is important to be on guard by praying, avoiding sin, going to the sacraments, and using our freewill to do good things. But we have to always remember that God is far greater than the devil and that Jesus Christ has already defeated him by His Death and Resurrection.



GOING DEEPER

Incorporate the follow passage in your talk, “For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39)

- *Challenge the youth to pray the prayer to their Guardian Angel everyday this week and end the talk by projecting the Prayer to Guardian Angels and praying it together as a group.*

WHAT WE SEE

An Edge Night on the Creation of the Earth

LEADER OVERVIEW

It is incredible to contemplate the diversity of animals - their colors, their patterns, their sizes and capabilities. There are incredible intricacies that enable them to live underwater, to soar through the skies, and to run at incredible speeds and they all depend on each other. It may have been a while since you last learned about photosynthesis or the complexity of the food chain and cells, but take a moment and look at the world around you with new eyes. See the masterpiece of creation. Notice how everything is intertwined. Thank the great designer behind the design. “The beauty of creation reflects the infinite beauty of the Creator and ought to inspire the respect and submission of man’s intellect and will” (CCC 341).

Everything owes its existence to God who drew it out of nothingness (CCC 338). God created everything with purpose, design, and goodness and did it all in six days. This creation narrative reveals that everything relies on God for its existence. The story of creation usually brings up a lot of dispute about whether or not it is literal, but the Church holds firm that it is more about what the creation story reveals - That there is order, that all things are good and each has its place in the world, and that man is the greatest of all creation. (CCC 339-343)

The six days of creation also reveal the importance of the seventh day. “And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day” (Genesis 2:2). The day of rest, the day of worship - the Sabbath day. “Creation was fashioned with a view to the Sabbath and therefore for the worship and adoration of God. Worship is inscribed in the order of creation” (CCC 347). Humanity and all of creation were created to worship God and to reserve this day of the week specifically for that worship. It is important that we remember this as we plan our weeks and our activities and as we live in the busyness of the modern world. We must make room for God, for worship, for it is inscribed in our very being and in the beautiful and intricate world around us.

WHAT WE SEE

An Edge Night on the Creation of the Earth

EDGE NIGHT OVERVIEW

GOAL

The goal of the Edge Night is for the youth to learn more about the story of creation and what it reveals about God and about the world around us.

SUMMARY

The Gather includes a Garden of Eden memorization game. The Proclaim calls attention to the order and purpose of creation and how it reveals the glory of God. The teaching also discusses the importance of the Sabbath day and how the youth are called to care for creation. During the Break, the youth plant seeds to take home and discuss what they learned from the teaching. The Send ends the Edge Night with the a story of St. Francis of Assisi and the *Canticle of Creation*.

MAIN IDEAS

- The sequence of the creation of the world reveals that God has a plan, a purpose, and a design for everything.
- God rested on the seventh day, writing into the very creation of the world the importance of the Sabbath day.
- God entrusts humanity with the care of creation.

ENVIRONMENT

Visually represent the seven days of creation around the room. Put up pictures, posters or cut-outs of the sun, stars, moon, water, earth, plants, animals, and Adam and Eve. Gather plants, trees, and flowers to make it feel like a garden.



MEDIA

Life Teen Video Support September 2014: “Created To Adore” (lifeteen.com)
Movie Clips Coming Soon: “Noah Movie CLIP – Creation Sequence (2014) – Darren Aronofsky Movie HD” (youtube.com)
Life Teen Inc: “Mass Fitness” (youtube.com)
Edge Video Support August 2016: “Creation Loop” (lifeteen.com)



SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:1-31; Genesis 2:1-3; Luke 12:6-7; Matthew 12:12



Notes:

WHAT WE SEE

An Edge Night on the Creation of the Earth

EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

GATHER

Edge Night Introduction (5 min)

Welcome the youth and begin in prayer. Introduce anyone who is new, recognize any birthdays, and ask about any big events happening this week. Give a brief overview of the topic of the night using the following as an example:

God created everything. He created the stars, the sun, the grass, and every single animal. He created man and woman and is the author of all life. God IS that means He is eternal, has always existed, and will always exist. He was there before anything we know existed and He brought all created things into existence out of nothing!

In the Garden (15 min)

This game is played in groups of 15.

1. Each group creates their own circle.
2. Pick one youth to begin by saying, "I am in the Garden of Eden and I see ..." filling in the rest of the statement with any element of creation.
3. Then the youth on his or her right goes next saying, "I am in the Garden of Eden and I see ..." filling in the rest of the statement with what the first person said and adding in his or her own element of creation.
4. The next person repeats the saying and the first two elements of creation and adds his or her own.
5. This continues all the way around the circle until the last person has to repeat all of the elements of creation.



SUGGESTIONS

If you want to challenge your youth more, make the groups larger. If you have a small program, do one large group instead of breaking into smaller groups.



STEP IT UP

If you want to challenge your youth more, make the groups larger. If you have a small program, do one large group instead of breaking into smaller groups.

Proclaim

“What We See” Teaching (10 min)

This teaching can be found on pages 66 to 68.

BREAK

Help It Grow (20 min)

Break youth into small groups. Give each youth in the small group a Styrofoam cup, soil, and seeds. Have the youth plant their seeds in the Styrofoam cup and water them. Then continue with the following discussion:

- What is your favorite animal? What is your favorite plant?
- When you think of a beautiful landscape, what comes to mind?
- What does creation reveal about God?
- Do you set aside Sunday as a day of rest and worship of God? If not, what can you do differently?
- What are some of the good things people are doing for the environment in our world today? What are some harmful things?
- What can you do to take care of creation?



SUGGESTIONS

Have youth write their names on their cups so that they do not get mixed up.



STEP IT UP

Buy actual pots for your youth to plant their seeds in.

8th Grade Adaptation

Use the following questions for a more challenging discussion for 8th grade youth:

- How does creation reveal the glory of God? What does it reveal about Him?
- As the days of creation progress the creatures get more and more intricate. What does this reveal about humanity?
- Does your family make Mass a priority over other activities? If so, how? If not, how can you help to change this?
- What is your general attitude towards the environment? Why?
- What are things you can do to better take care of the environment?

St. Francis of Assisi (15 min)

Gather youth back as a large group and give a brief introduction to St. Francis using the following as an example:

St. Francis is a great saint known for his poverty, his great love of God, and his closeness to all of creation. One of the most remarkable things he is known for is his ability to communicate with animals and his preaching on the glory of God found in all of creation.

Read a popular story about St. Francis of Assisi, for example: *St. Francis and the Wolf*, *St. Francis Preaches to the Birds*, or *St. Francis, Rabbits and Fish*.

Canticle of Creation (10 min)

Help the youth recall the importance of taking care of creation and that all of creation sings of the glory of God. Remind them to be more mindful of seeing the beauty of God, the Great Designer, in everything that He has created and to be thankful for all the ways that God cares for them and sustains them through creation. End the Edge Night by praying the *Canticle of Creation* by St. Francis. Project the prayer or hand out copies of the prayer so that the youth can follow along.

Canticle of Creation

Be praised Good Lord for Brother Sun who brings us each new day.
 Be praised for Sister Moon: white beauty bright and fair,
 with wandering stars she moves through the night.
 Be praised my Lord for Brother Wind,
 for air and clouds and the skies of every season.
 Be praised for Sister Water: humble, helpful, precious, pure;
 she cleanses us in rivers and renews us in rain.
 Be praised my Lord for Brother fire: he purifies and enlightens us.
 Be praised my Lord for Mother Earth: abundant source,
 all life sustaining; she feeds us bread and fruit and gives us flowers.
 Be praised my Lord for the gift of life; for changing dusk and dawn;
 for touch and scent and song.
 Be praised my Lord for those who pardon one another for love of thee,
 and endure sickness and tribulation.
 Blessed are they who shall endure it in peace, for they shall be crowned by Thee.
 Be praised Good Lord for sister Death who welcomes us in loving embrace.
 Be praised my Lord for all your creation serving you joyfully.

**SUGGESTIONS**

Purchase St. Francis medals for all of the youth and have them blessed.

Notes: _____

WHAT WE SEE

An Edge Night on the Creation of the Earth

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.

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

- *Begin by reading Genesis 1:1-31 and project an image of the creation of the world.*
- God created everything we see out of nothing. In the very beginning, there was only God and “the world began when God’s word drew it out of nothingness.” Every single created thing owes its existence to our good and loving God. (CCC 338)



GOING DEEPER

Play the video clip from the movie Noah found in the Media Suggestions for a creative visual explanation of the days of creation.

- The story of creation tells us that God created the world in six days, which isn’t meant to be taken literally but rather to reveal to us certain aspects of creation. The world was created with order. There is purpose behind everything and the elements of creation grow in complexity and design. God has a plan for everything that He creates, and all of creation is good. (CCC 337-340)
- *Project and image of the food chain.*
- Think about things like the food chain or photosynthesis – these things reveal to us that there is an interdependence of creatures. Everything that is created relies on something else to survive. (CCC 340)
- *Have the youth give a few examples of how animals/plants/people rely on other elements of creation to survive.*
- The six days of creation also show us that there is a hierarchy of creation, meaning that it goes from the less perfect to the more perfect. God loves all His creation and creatures but humanity is the summit of creation and is clearly distinguished from the creation of everything else. (CCC 342-342, Luke 12:6-7, Matthew 12:12)
- *Project an image of a beautiful landscape.*

- The “beauty of creation reflects the infinite beauty of the Creator” and all of creation has solidarity in that it all reflects the infinite glory of God. (CCC 341, 344)



GOING DEEPER

Project and discuss this quote: “The aesthetic value of creation cannot be overlooked. Our very contact with nature has a deep restorative power; contemplation of its magnificence imparts peace and serenity. The Bible speaks again and again of the goodness and beauty of creation, which is called to glorify God.” - St. John Paul II

THE SEVENTH DAY

- *Read Genesis 2:1-3.*
- This seventh day is called the Sabbath day, and for us the Sabbath day is Sunday. When God created the world, He laid a foundation for us and fashioned a model of life for us which includes rest and worship of God on the Sabbath day – “worship is inscribed in the order of creation.” (CCC 345-347)
- Our lives get busy and with a mentality of constantly doing things we can forget this crucial part of our creation. We were made to worship God and to set aside a day specifically for Him and our own rest. (CCC 347-348)
- It is important to make Sunday’s different - to go to Mass every Sunday, to spend time together as a family, to rest from work and to do something that brings new life into your week.



GOING DEEPER

Play the video “Mass Fitness” from the Media Suggestions and discuss the importance of being fully present and participating in Mass.

- *Let the youth give a few ideas of things that they can do to make their Sundays more inline with the Sabbath day.*

MY ROLE IN CREATION

- In the garden God entrusted the care of the land and all living creatures to Adam and Eve. That same duty is given to us. We are also called to take care of all of creation. (Genesis 1:28-30)
- Humanity is called to respect the goodness of every creature and to avoid misusing any element of creation. It is up to us to be good stewards of everything that God has freely given to us. (CCC 339)



GOING DEEPER

Project and discuss this quote: “Animals are God’s creatures. He surrounds them with his providential care. By their mere existence they bless him and give him glory. Thus men owe them kindness.” It is important to remember that while “one can love animals; one should not direct to them the affection due only to persons.” (CCC 2416, 2418)

- *Have the youth give some examples of what they can do to take care of the environment.*
- Creation is beautiful. Creation is a free gift given to us and we are called to take good care of it because God has asked us to, for our sake and for the sake of future generations.
- *Challenge the youth to do one thing this week to take better care of creation (e.g.: pick up trash, recycle, plant something, be conscious of turning off lights...)*



GOING DEEPER

Challenge the youth to research an environmental initiative in your community and to come to Edge next week with ideas. Then pick one of those ideas and implement it.

Notes: _____

THE FINAL CREATION

An Edge Night on the Creation of Humanity

LEADER OVERVIEW

Men and women are the final creation, the greatest of all of God's creations. Humanity was created in the divine image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). Men and women are created with dignity, self-knowledge, and freedom - freedom to give of themselves to others, and freedom to respond to God in faith and love. Humankind was also created to love God and to respond to God in thanksgiving and adoration for all that God has done and created. Men and women are created to love and serve God, not because they are forced to do so, but through their own free will. (CCC 358)

God created the physical world and the spiritual realm and man is the only creature who is a part of both. Humans are both body and soul, spiritual and physical. The spiritual principal of men and women comes directly from God and is given to men and women at the moment of their conception - this is the soul. The soul is immortal. At death the soul departs from a person's body into eternity and will again be reunited with a person's glorified body at the end of time. (CCC 362-366)

After God had created the whole world and the first man, He saw that none of the animals were suitable partners for the man - therefore He created a woman (Genesis 3:18-24). God created male and female with equal and full dignity. He created them to be complimentary. Men and women were created to work together - to be helpmates to each other. Men and women are complementary in all that they do and they work together to bring about the will of God. As man and wife they also join with God and participate in the creation of new life (CCC 372).

As God created the world, each day creation got more and more complex with the final creation being man and woman. All of creation is entrusted to the man and woman. "God blessed them saying to them: 'Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth'" (Genesis 1:28). Men and women are given the responsibility to care for all of creation.

THE FINAL CREATION

An Edge Night on the Creation of Humanity

EDGE NIGHT OVERVIEW

GOAL

The goal of the Edge Night is for the youth to understand the unique aspects of the creation of humanity: we are created in the image and likeness of God, we are both body and soul, and God created men and women as equals and complementary.

SUMMARY

The Gather begins the Edge Night with a fun guessing game and the Proclaim discusses the unique aspects of the creation of humanity. During the Break, the youth will have an opportunity to explore the complementarity of men and women through a few different games. The Send ends the night with a simple time of prayer where the youth will learn how we pray with our whole being, both body and soul, and will be challenged to be more aware of their posture during prayer.

MAIN IDEAS

- Men and women are created by God and destined for God.
- Men and women are both spiritual and physical; they have both a body and a soul.
- Humanity was created as male and female who are different yet equal and are complementary to one another.

ENVIRONMENT

Split the front of the room in half with a strip of painter's tape. Decorate one side of the tape like a middle school girl's room with posters, a bed with a girly bedspread, clothes, makeup, etc. Decorate the other side of the room to look like a middle school boy's room using similar elements. In the middle of the two rooms, put up a picture of God and write out the words "image" and "likeness" on a large sheet of paper and put them on either side of the picture.



MEDIA

Outside Da Box: "You're Dead, Now What?" ([youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...))

Life Teen Video Support September 2014: "Created To Adore" ([lifeteen.com](https://www.lifeteen.com/...))



SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:28, 2:17-24; Ephesians 5:21-33



Notes:

THE FINAL CREATION

An Edge Night on the Creation of Humanity

EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

GATHER

Edge Night Introduction (5 min)

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

As God created the world His creations got more and more complex with each passing day until He reached the greatest of all His creations – man and woman. Men and women are created in the image and likeness of God and are given the task to work together to take care of and bring new life into the world that God has created.

Peek-A-Who? (15 min)

This game is played as a large group.

1. Have two Core Members stand a distance away from one another, each holding one side of a large, dark colored tablecloth or sheet so that one side is in their hands and the other side reaches the ground, creating a wall.
2. Break youth into two equal groups and stand on either side of the division. Be sure the Core Members hold up the division so the youth on either side of the cloth cannot see each other.
3. On each side, one youth steps forward away from the rest of the group.
4. When both groups have a youth step forward, the Core Members drop down the cloth and the youth on either side compete to be the first to say the following: “Child of God, (name),” filling in the name of the youth on the other side.
5. The first one to say the phrase and the right name gets a point for their team.
6. Play this until everyone in the group has an opportunity to play. The team with the most points at the end wins.



SUGGESTIONS

If you have a large group, break into four groups and have two games going on at the same time.

“The Final Creation” Teaching (10 min)

This teaching can be found on pages 78 to 79.

BREAK

Piecing It Together (25 min)

Before the Edge Night, purchase enough puzzles - at at least fifty pieces and of various landscapes - so that you have one full puzzle for every two small groups. Put together each puzzle and then split the puzzle in half. Put half of the pieces in one bag and half of the pieces in another bag. Make sure to label them for your own reference but remove these labels before giving them to a small group.

Break the youth into their small groups (if they have not been gender specific throughout the semester as suggested make sure that they are gender specific for this activity). Give each girls group one half of a puzzle and each guys group the other half of a puzzle. Challenge the youth to see who can put together the puzzles the fastest but do not tell them that they only have half of a puzzle. Once they put together their puzzles, they will notice it is missing half and quickly realize they have to find their corresponding girls or guys group to complete the puzzle. Have a prize for the first guys and girls group to fully complete their puzzle.

Discuss the activity in the large group using the following questions:

- What was your group's reaction when you found out you only had half of a puzzle?
- How long did it take you to figure out you had to find the corresponding group?
- Why do you think we set it up that a girls and a guys group needed each other to completed the puzzle?
- What was it like when you had to work with the opposite gender?
- What were some of the difficulties?
- Was it easier or harder to work with the opposite gender? Why?
- Why do you think it is so important for men and women to work together?



SUGGESTIONS

If you have uneven numbers of male or female small groups, combine groups until you have an equal amount of female and male small groups.

THE FINAL CREATION

An Edge Night on the Creation of Humanity

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.

THE CREATION OF HUMANITY

- Begin by reading Genesis 2:17.
- Humanity is the only one of God's creations who is created in His image and likeness. Only people can know God and share in His life. All of humankind was created by God and for God, "of all the visible creatures only man is 'able to know and love his creator.'" (CCC 335-356)



GOING DEEPER

If you also subscribe to Life Teen, play the video "Created to Adore" from the Media Suggestions.

- Being made in the image of God, a person is not just something but he or she is set apart from all creation as someone with personal dignity and knowledge of self. A man knows that he exists, whereas animals have no knowledge of their own existence - they just operate off of instincts of survival. (CCC 357)
- "God created everything for man, but man in turn was created to serve and love God and to offer all creation back to him." (CCC 358)
- Give the youth concrete examples of how they can offer creation back to God by taking care of the things they have been blessed with in their lives.

BODY AND SOUL

- Humanity is the one creation that is both material and spiritual. We have souls that are purely spiritual and we also have physical bodies. (CCC 362)
- Each and every person has a unique soul, which is the principal of his or her lives, that is given to us from God at the moment of our existence. It makes us who we are. (CCC 362-366)

- *Have the youth turn to the person on their right and tell them one thing about themselves that is physical, like I have blonde hair or am five feet tall, and one thing about them that you can't see, like I desire to be a doctor or I feel happy when I am at the beach.*
- Our souls are immortal which means when we die our souls do not cease to exist. We will exist forever, but our bodies will one day die and our souls will move on to eternal life. Then at the end of the world our bodies will be glorified and reunited with our souls. (CCC 366)



GOING DEEPER

Play the video “You’re Dead, Now What?” from the Media Suggestions.

MAN AND WOMAN

- *Read Genesis 2:18-24 and project an image of Adam and Eve.*
- Men and women are different. They look different, they think differently, and they act differently. But they were created equal, with equal and full dignity that comes from God. (CCC 369)
- **Pastoral Note:** Be aware of any youth in your program who may struggle with gender identity and be sensitive to their situation. If necessary call the Life Teen offices or connect with us on Live Chat for tips and guidance on pastoral care for your youth.
- God created man and woman for each other to be companions and to help one another. They are complementary and are meant to work together. Men and women are most clearly complementary in their physical nature and as man and wife they work together to bring new life into the world. But they are also called to work together sharing their special gifts and qualities in all areas of life. (CCC 371-372, Ephesians 5:21-33)



GOING DEEPER

Discuss the following quote from St. John Paul II; “Only the chaste man and chaste woman are capable of real love.” Begin a discussion on the importance of chastity and what that looks like in the life of a middle school youth.

- *Have a married Core Member or Youth Minister give a brief uplifting testimony about his or her complementarity with his or her spouse.*
- Man and woman are not only given the responsibility to work with God as man and wife to bring new life into the world but also to care for all of creation. (CCC 374, Genesis 1:28)
- Man and woman were created by God and for God and in the beginning they lived in perfect harmony with God, with each other, and with all of creation. This is the harmony we were created for and the harmony we are destined for. (CCC 374-379)
- *Challenge the youth to write down three qualities that are both physical and spiritual and unique to them as a man or woman.*

THE BIG LIE

An Edge Night on the Fall of Man

LEADER OVERVIEW

We are familiar with the narrative accounts of creation at the beginning of the Bible. These are accounts we've heard told through Vacation Bible School, television programs, and movies. The plotline is common but our familiarity can cause us to miss important aspects of these narratives. One of the most critical pieces of the creation narratives is the description of the "Fall of Man."

Adam and Eve were created good and lived in harmony with God, with each other, and with all of creation (CCC 374-379). This perfect relationship only existed because of the free will that God gave to Adam and Eve. God placed a tree, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, in the Garden of Eden and commanded Adam and Eve to not eat the fruit of that particular tree (Genesis 2:17). Adam and Eve were tempted to disobey God by a serpent in the garden. They gave into this temptation and their sin disrupted the relationship and harmony they shared with God, each other, and creation. We call this action *original sin*. (CCC 396-398)

Through this sin, Adam and Eve chose themselves before God (CCC 396-398). This is what happens every time we sin; we prefer our will over God's will. The sin of Adam and Eve had consequences for all humanity (CCC 402-409). The greatest of these consequences is death (Romans 6:23). God expelled humanity from the Garden of Eden and humanity experiences suffering, an inclination to sin, disharmony with the created world, and ultimately death (Genesis 3:16-19).

From this point forward, humanity struggles with concupiscence, which is the inclination to sin. We will face temptation to choose ourselves over God. We pray that God will lead us "not into temptation" because we know that it is only through God's grace that we can avoid sin and strive toward holiness. (CCC 2846-2849)

We can trust in this grace because God does not abandon humanity after the fall (CCC 410). God promises a savior to redeem humanity and restore what was broken through original sin (Genesis 3:15, Romans 5:12-17, CCC 410). Jesus becomes the "new Adam" and, through His perfect obedience to God, the eternal effect of original sin (eternal separation from God) is destroyed (CCC 411). We trust in this redemption and it strengthens our prayer in the face of temptation and sin, since we know that Jesus Christ saves us and redeems us. We will always wrestle with concupiscence and must make a decision daily to choose God over sin and resist temptation, which is made possible through His grace.

THE BIG LIE

An Edge Night on the Fall of Man

EDGE NIGHT OVERVIEW

GOAL

This goal of this Edge Night is to help middle school youth understand the impact that original sin has on their relationship with God and the world around them. They are challenged to recognize their own sin and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

SUMMARY

The Edge Night begins with a Gather dynamic that invites each small group to create and present a “commercial” for a product that make promises the product cannot keep. The Proclaim challenges the youth to understand the impact of original sin and personal sin. During the Break, middle school youth have an opportunity to examine their conscience and then receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the Send. While the Sacrament of Reconciliation is taking place there will also be a time for the youth to pray before the Blessed Sacrament in Eucharistic Adoration.

MAIN IDEAS

- God created humanity in His image and likeness and created them good, but through a free choice, humanity broke its relationship with God through sin.
- Original sin has consequences for all humanity and is transmitted to all generations; the consequences are a broken relationship with God, each other, and creation.
- God the Father does not abandon us to temptation and sin but sends a Savior, Jesus Christ, His Son, to redeem humanity and rescue us from sin.

ENVIRONMENT

Create several “false advertisements” and hang them up around the room. These posters should advertise products that make big promises they can’t keep. Find common products that middle school students are familiar with or that are trendy. Put images of the products on a slideshow and run them on a screen as youth enter the room. Core Members walk around trying to “sell” youth on the products by making a lot of big promises, which are ultimately just big lies.



MEDIA

Edge Support Video 05: “I Confess” (lifeteen.com)

Life Teen Video Support 04: “Join the Club” (lifeteen.com)

Life Teen Video Support January 2015: “Guardrails” (lifeteen.com)



Genesis 3:1-19; John 3:16-17; Romans 5:12-21



374-379; 396-411; 2846-2849

Notes: _____

THE BIG LIE

An Edge Night on the Fall of Man

EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

GATHER

Edge Night Introduction (5 min)

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

God created the world good and created humanity good. Adam and Eve, our earliest parents, lived in harmony with God, each other, and creation. They were tempted to disobey God's rules, though, and gave into that temptation. As a result, the peace and harmony that existed in the world was destroyed. Even though things seemed bad, the story wasn't over. God had big plans to rescue us and God did.

Big Promises, Big Lies (15 min)

Divide the youth into small groups. Give each group an item that has a well-known use or purpose (e.g. toothpaste, crayons, a loaf of bread). Each group must develop a 30-second "commercial" that explains some of the "lesser known" benefits of the product and then come up with the best lies they can to sell it. Some examples may be that toothpaste will help you lose weight, fly through the air, make you new friends, help you win a million dollars, etc. Challenge the groups to be funny and creative in their sales pitch. Allow groups ten minutes to work out their commercial and practice, then invite them to present to the group. Have prizes to award to the groups with the best sales pitch, most creative lies, shortest commercial, etc.



SUGGESTIONS

If you have a large group, only invite a few groups to present in front of everyone. If someone on your Core Team is skilled at video editing and production, record an example commercial to play for the entire group before they plan their skits.

Proclaim

"The Big Lie" Teaching (10 min)

This teaching can be found on pages 90 to 92.

BREAK

Examination of Conscience and Journaling (10 min)

Divide the youth into their small groups and pass out copies of the “Examination of Conscience” found on the *August 2016 Edge USB*. A preview is found on page 93. This examination is broken up by grade level, so be sure to give each middle school youth the appropriate handout. Invite the youth to take several minutes to examine their conscience and prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



SUGGESTIONS

If you are unable to offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation, lead a small group discussion with the youth and then invite them to complete the Examination of Conscience to close the small group. The following questions can be used to facilitate a discussion:

- Why do you think Adam and Eve were so tempted by the serpent? How would you have responded to that temptation?
- Why is sin a lie? What makes a lie believable? How do you feel when you have been lied to?
- In what ways have you felt the effects of original sin (suffering, broken relationships, natural disasters)? How does Jesus offer us hope?

SEND

Sacrament of Reconciliation and Adoration (35 min)

Prior to the Edge Night, invite several priests to be present to hear confessions. Ask your parish priest to be present to expose the Blessed Sacrament before opening up a time for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. If possible, invite your music ministry to lead worship during Eucharistic Adoration. Challenge the youth to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and then spend time with Jesus in Adoration through the rest of the evening.

Close with Benediction. Pass out cards that list your parish’s schedule for the Sacrament of Reconciliation to all of the youth in case any middle school student did not receive the sacrament but wanted to go.



SUGGESTIONS

If you have never done Adoration with middle school youth refer to the “How To” *Do Adoration With Middle School Youth* handout found on the *August 2016 Edge USB*.

THE BIG LIE

An Edge Night on the Fall of Man

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

- Ask the youth to recall as much as they can about the creation of humanity from the previous Edge session. Write their responses on a whiteboard or large piece of butcher paper.
- At our last Edge Night, we learned that God created the world and created it good. God created men and women and created us very good; we are all made in God's image and likeness. Humanity had a perfect relationship with God, each other, and with creation. (CCC 374-379)
- God gave Adam and Eve free will so they could choose Him without being forced to love God. Without free will, love cannot exist. God makes a single rule for Adam and Eve to obey:
- Read Genesis 2:15-17.
- Adam and Eve can obey the rule and live in a relationship with God, but they can also freely choose to disobey the rule and break their relationship with God.



GOING DEEPER

Ask the group to quickly brainstorm a list of rules and why they are important, e.g., "Traffic rules are important because they keep people safe." Then, ask them what the consequences of not following these rules are. Point out that all of the consequences involve a breakdown of order and peace into chaos and suffering.



GOING DEEPER

If your parish subscribes to Life Support, show the video "Guardrails" from the Media Suggestions.

ORIGINAL SIN

- Unfortunately, Adam and Eve are not alone in the garden. A serpent that challenges their obedience to God and their relationship with God tempts them. The serpent implies that God is withholding something from them – he tells them a lie. (Genesis 3:5)
- Adam and Eve believe the lie rather than trusting that God was telling the truth and that God would take care of them. They choose to break God’s rule and choose themselves over God. (CCC 396-398)
- When this happens, the harmony that humanity lived in with God was broken. Adam and Eve became afraid of God, rather than trusting in God. They felt ashamed around each other, and the relationship they had with creation was also distorted. (Genesis 3:7-8)
- We call the moment that Adam and Eve chose against God original sin and every person is impacted by it. The consequences of original sin are suffering, evil, and ultimately death. (CCC 399-401)
- Every person is born with the stain of original sin. Our world is impacted by original sin and we see the effects every time we witness a natural disaster, hear about an act of terrorism or violence, or when we personally sin. (CCC 402-409)



GOING DEEPER

For a greater understanding of how every person is impacted by the decision of someone else, walk through St. Paul’s explanation of original sin in Romans 5.

- God loves us, though, and didn’t abandon us to sin and death. God makes a big promise – a promise much bigger than the lie that the serpent made. God promises to send us a savior that will redeem us. That savior is Jesus. (Genesis 3:15, CCC 410)

RESCUED

- Jesus is the “new Adam” who is perfectly obedient to God the Father. Adam’s sin brought death into the world, but Jesus’ sacrifice and death on the cross brings life. That is pretty amazing. God makes a huge promise at the beginning of creation and keeps it. (CCC 411)
- Jesus gave us the Sacrament of Baptism so that we could be free from the effects of original sin. Many of us were baptized as young children or babies, so we may not remember a lot about the sacrament. The moment we were baptized, though, the stain of sin that we are left with from Adam and Eve was erased. (CCC 1263)
- Baptism erases the stain of original sin from our soul, but not the effects. We will still wrestle with a tendency to sin, which we call concupiscence. It means that without God’s grace, we will choose sin. But when we cooperate with God’s grace, we can choose to avoid sin – we can do what Adam and Eve failed to do. (CCC 1264)
- *Ask for a few examples of times when the youth were presented with a choice to do the right thing or to do the wrong thing and chose the right thing. What happened when they decided to do what was right? How did they feel? Take a few answers and affirm the choices the youth made.*
- Even though we make the right decisions, it is impossible to make the right decisions all of the time without grace. We may never be perfect in our lifetime, but Jesus is continually working in our hearts to make us perfected and holy. We have to want to be holy, though.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Sixth Grade

LOVE GOD

"Jesus said to them, 'You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'" - Matthew 22:37

Examination Questions:

- Have I been to Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation?
- Did I pay attention at Mass?
- Do I put God after friends, video games, sports, or other activities?
- Do I pray every day?

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

"Jesus said to them, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" - Matthew 22:39

Examination Questions:

- Do I love my family as best I can? (Using kind words, and thoughts)
- Do I respect my parents and teachers and others that lead me? (Babysitters, relatives, youth ministers, Core Members)
- Do I talk badly about other people behind their back?
- Do I apologize when I make a mistake, or do I blame others?
- Do I try to get along with and love my brothers and sisters? How do they frustrate and annoy me?

EDGE

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Seventh Grade

LOVE GOD

"Jesus said to them, 'You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'" - Matthew 22:37

Examination Questions:

- Have I been to Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation?
- Did I pay attention at Mass?
- Do I put God after friends, video games, sports, or other activities?
- Do I pray every day?

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

"Jesus said to them, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" - Matthew 22:39

Examination Questions:

- Do I love my family as best I can? (Using kind words, and thoughts)
- Do I respect my parents and teachers and others that lead me? (Babysitters, relatives, youth ministers, Core Members)
- Do I talk badly about other people behind their back?
- Do I apologize when I make a mistake, or do I blame others?
- Do I try to get along with and love my brothers and sisters? How do they frustrate and annoy me?

EDGE

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Eighth Grade

LOVE GOD

"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone! Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God, with your whole heart, and with your whole being, and with your whole strength. Take to heart these words which I command you today." - Deuteronomy 6:4-6

Examination Questions:

- Do I make God a priority in my life? Have I put other people, events, or activities in front of God?
- Have I made an idol out of my schoolwork, sports, activities, or relationships? Do I trust those things to "save" me, rather than God?
- Have I used Sunday as a day to rest and thank God for blessings in my life, or have I filled it up with other activities?
- Did I miss Mass on a Sunday or another Holy Day of Obligation?
- Have I remembered to pray every day? Do I spend meaningful time in prayer, or do I give it less effort than I should?

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

"The scholar of the law said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Jesus replied, 'A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went on leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise, a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.' Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?' He answered, 'The one who treated him with mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'" - Luke 10:29-37

Examination Questions:

- Have I been kind and respectful to other students at school? Do I stand up for people who are being bullied or made fun of, or have I joined in or ignored it?
- Do I love and honor my parents, or do I blame them for my own shortcomings or hold their failures against them?
- Have I been sexually pure? Have I looked at pornography, engaged in masturbation or sexual behaviors with another person?
- Have I shared my possessions and time with those who are in need? Do I make an attitude of service a way of life?
- Do I gossip about other people in person or on social media? Have I engaged in "cyber-bullying"?

EDGE

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Use these grade specific Examination of Consciences to help the youth prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. These can be found on the *August 2016 Edge USB*.

BAD NEWS

An Edge Night on Suffering and Evil

LEADER OVERVIEW

One of the most challenging questions we can ask as Christians is, “Why does a good and loving God allow suffering in the world?” Every day we are confronted with “bad news” on social media, television, and online. The question of suffering and evil requires prayer, trust, and hope in Christ.

Sin is present in the world and exists as the result of our free will. Sin is one major source of suffering and pain. Since God loves us, God allows us to choose Him or to reject Him. This rejection leads to sin which hurts ourselves and can hurt other. Crime, violence, hatred, indifference, war, and many other afflictions caused by people bear witness to this reality. (CCC 386)

Evil entered into the world through original sin and exists in two forms. Human evil, which was discussed above, and natural evil. Natural evils exist in the form of disease, disasters, and other areas of suffering that are not directly caused by humans but are the result of our existence in the natural order. Since original sin destroys our harmony with God, other people, and creation, we know that our world will always be a hostile place and that the natural order will ultimately work toward our death. (CCC 387)

The reality of natural suffering in our fallen world reminds us that we are not at home here, and that our true home is in heaven. At the end of history, God will redeem the world and restore the created order so that there is no more suffering, sin, or death. (CCC 1045-1050)

Still, while we are here the reality of suffering and evil are difficult. We find hope in the cross of Christ. Jesus has redeemed us through his suffering and death. We can unite our suffering to His suffering on the cross and find grace and the hope of everlasting life (CCC 411). Jesus redeems us from the eternal effects of sin and suffering by opening the path to eternal life. This gives us great hope, even in a world that is filled with suffering (Romans 5:1-5). When we are hurting, Christ is hurting and promises healing. When we face death, Jesus tells us that He has conquered death (John 16:33, 1 Corinthians 15:55-57). This is good news and the message we boldly Proclaim as Christians.

BAD NEWS

An Edge Night on Suffering and Evil

EDGE NIGHT OVERVIEW

GOAL

The goal of this Edge Night is to help youth understand why suffering and evil exist in the world and are allowed by God who is good and loving.

SUMMARY

This Edge Night begins with a Gather dynamic that challenges small groups to find pieces of good and bad news in a newspaper. This activity provides a transition for the Proclaim, which addresses the challenge of suffering and evil. During the Break, the youth journal about areas where they see God present in the world and then discuss how to approach and deal with suffering. The Send invites middle school students to pray for the “bad news” they found during the Gather and then pray at the foot of the cross and unite areas of personal suffering or struggle with Jesus’ suffering.

MAIN IDEAS

- God gave humanity free will to choose God or reject God. Sin results in suffering both personally and communally.
- The effects of original sin are felt through disharmony in the natural order which leads to “natural evils” like disease, natural disasters, and death.
- Jesus Christ redeems us and suffers with us; God can make good come from suffering and evil.

ENVIRONMENT

Keep the environment for this Edge Night simple. Near the front of the room place a large cross and some candles. These will be used during the Send. Clear space on the walls of the room for the “Good News” poster boards to be hung during the Send. Create a slideshow which features pictures of “Good News” from your local community (school and parish events, etc.) and have it looping as the Edge Night begins.



MEDIA

Edge Video Support August 2016: “A Good God in a Suffering World” (lifeteen.com)
Edge Video Support 13: “The Dos and Don’ts of the Corporal Works of Mercy” (lifeteen.com)
Edge Video Support 16: “Yours are the Hands” (lifeteen.com)
Edge Video Support 18: “Stephen’s Story” (lifeteen.com)
Life Teen Video Support January 2013: “Risk Living” (lifeteen.com)



SCRIPTURE

Psalm 34:18; John 16:32-33; Romans 5:1-5; Romans 8:28



CATECHISM

385-387, 410-412, 618

Notes: _____

BAD NEWS

An Edge Night on Suffering and Evil

EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

GATHER

Edge Night Introduction (5 min)

Welcome the youth, introduce anyone who is there for the first time, recognize any upcoming birthdays, and begin in prayer. Give a brief overview of the topic of the night using the following as an example:

Have you ever wondered how suffering and evil can exist in a world that was created by our good and loving God? It is a hard question, but we are going to wrestle with and answer that question tonight. In our world there is a lot of “bad news,” but at Edge we are going to focus on the good that God brings and how He walks with us in times of suffering and trial.

Bad News, Good News (20 min)

Divide the youth into small groups and give each small group leader a current newspaper, two large pieces of poster board, a black marker, scissors, and tape or glue. Instruct the groups to write “Good News” on one board and “Bad News” on the other board.

Challenge the groups to find as many “bad news” stories as they can in the newspaper in ten minutes. Instruct them to tape or glue these to the poster board labeled “bad news.” After ten minutes is up, instruct the groups to repeat the challenge, but this time to look for “good news.” Once the activity is completed, collect all of the poster boards for the Send.



SUGGESTIONS

Give each group a newspaper but hang two large pieces of butcher paper in the front of the room with the titles “Good News” and “Bad News” written on the top. Give each group a unique color of tape and instruct them to find new stories that go under each heading, bring them to the front of the room, and tape them on the appropriate piece of butcher paper. Challenge groups to find the most stories in each category and then count how well groups did using the unique color of tape. Award prizes to the groups that find the most good news stories and the most bad news stories.

Small Group Processing (10 min)

After the activity, instruct small group leaders to facilitate a discussion with the middle school youth using the following questions:

- Was it easier to find good news or bad news? Why?
- How do you feel when you hear stories about suffering, evil, or pain?
- What do you do when a friend is hurting, in pain, or experiencing “bad news” in his or her life?

Proclaim

“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.

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

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.



Notes:

BAD NEWS

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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)

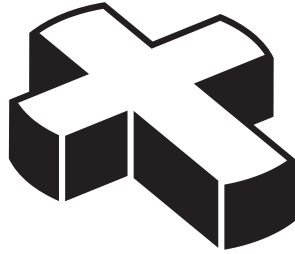


GOING DEEPER

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.

- Jesus loves us. Jesus walks with us and rejoices with us and cries with us. He never leaves us, even in moments of suffering. He is right there, carrying us and reminding us that death is not the end; Heaven is the end.

Notes:



EDGE

Middle School Ministry

