

GO FISH!

Discipleship, Call to Holiness

LIFE NIGHT OUTLINE

Goal for the Life Night

The goal for this night is to help teens hear God's call to discipleship and holiness. This night will also help them understand what it means to be a follower of Christ through practical applications such as prayer and service.

Life Night at a Glance

This night brings the Paschal Mystery theme to a very practical level for the teens. This night is about the universal call to holiness and discipleship and how we are called to "drop our nets" and follow Christ on his terms, and not our own. The fish-themed night starts with a crazy, messy icebreaker. Then the teaching breaks discipleship down to three essential elements: call to holiness, conversion and prayer. The Break for the night will ask the teens to take an honest assessment of where they are at this point and then the small group discussion will be tailored to their answers. Finally, the Send calls on the power of the Holy Spirit to help us respond to the call of holiness.

Environment

Think about the last time you were flipping through the channels on the TV and came across a fishing show and wondered if TV could get any more boring. There's your environment. Use everything possible to turn your meeting space into a fishing trip. Create the feel of a lake by creating a shoreline around the perimeter of the room. The lake will be where the teens are sitting. Have a rowboat, fishing poles, stuffed fish, coolers, tents, camping chairs, a dock, a campfire (maybe not a real one, but you get the idea), etc. The most important item in your environment is fishing nets. Get as many nets as possible and have them draped around the room. Record an episode of your favorite fishing show and have that playing on the screen. If you can get lake sounds (i.e. water, frogs, birds, etc.), have that playing. For added effect, have your Core members dressed to fit the environment. As the teens come in, have the core tell them exaggerated stories about the last fish they caught.

GATHER *15 Minutes*

Welcome and Introductions (5 min)

Have the youth minister welcome everyone to the Life Night and introduce the teens who are there for the first time.

Option #1- Kiss the Fish (10 min)

A youth ministry favorite! This game is basically a slightly grosser version of musical chairs. Choose eight teens to play in this game. They will stand in a line (shoulder to shoulder) facing the audience. Then bring out a large whole fish (the dead variety from the local market). As music is played, the teens have to pass (no throwing allowed) the fish up and down the line. The person who is caught with the fish when the music stops has to kiss it and that person is out. Continue with the game until there is just one teen left standing. Caution – the fish will probably get dropped during the course of the game, so you might want to put a tarp down to avoid fish-gut stains. Have a prize for the winner and hand sanitizer for the losers.

Option #2- Bob for Fish (10 min)

If Kiss the Fish is a little too much for your group, here's another option. For this game you will need four teens (one from each class) and four pie tins (each one filled with vanilla pudding and lots of Goldfish crackers). The pie tins will need to be set on a table. Have a Core member tie the hands of the teens behind their backs. The object of this game is to have the teens "bob" for goldfish (the crackers not the actual fish). The teen who pulls out the most Goldfish crackers in three minutes wins. Have a prize for the winner and paper towels for all the competitors.

CATECHISM REFERENCES:
#2013-2014 #2700-2719
#1816 #2725-2745
#618
#2472
#2653-2654

SCRIPTURES:
1 John 1:1-4
Acts 1:8
Mark 8:34
Luke 5:1-11, 14: 25-35
John 14: 16-31, 15:14-15

PROCLAIM 10 minutes

Discipleship Teaching (10 min)

This talk should help the teens get a realistic picture of what it means to be a disciple of Christ.

The teaching outline can be found on page 57.

BREAK 30 minutes

Luke 5: Group Division (10 min)

After the teaching, have a teen read Luke 5:1-11. The youth minister will then describe the three movements of Simon Peter becoming a disciple of Christ in this passage. The three movements mirror the three elements of discipleship discussed in the teaching.

1. Call to holiness. Peter had a personal encounter with Jesus when Jesus got in his boat. After Peter had listened to Jesus teach the crowds, he was willing to follow Jesus' call to, "put out into the deep." The truth is we cannot be a disciple of someone we do not know. How many of you feel like you don't really know Christ? Have you ever had a personal encounter with Him and felt His love for you?
2. Conversion. After his initial encounter with Christ, Peter recognized that he was a sinful man. Peter knew that things had to change before he could completely follow Christ. How many of you feel that you have had a personal encounter with Christ (like on a retreat), but there are serious patterns of sin that would need to change before you could really follow His call? How many of you are scared to make big changes in order to follow Christ?
3. Prayer. Jesus reassured Peter and told him that he had a new mission for him. At that moment Peter had the courage to drop his nets (leave what he had known and follow Christ). But this would not be easy; Peter would need the constant support and guidance of Christ. It is the same for us. We cannot follow Christ on our own power. We need prayer. We need to be in union with the One we are following. How many of you feel that you have heard the call to holiness, have made steps to change your life, but sometimes get tired of trying?

Designate three areas of the room by having a Core member stand up with a sign (one will have a "call to holiness" sign, another will have a "conversion" sign, and the other will have a "prayer" sign). Once a description of each group is given to the teens, ask them to choose which one best describes their spiritual lives right now. Then ask the teens to move to the area they have chosen.

Small Group Discussion (20 min)

Once the teens have divided into the three groups, subdivide the groups into smaller groups with five or six teens and one Core. Depending on which group the teens have chosen, there are different small group questions. The goal of this time is for the teens to come up with concrete ways to more closely follow Christ in their everyday lives.

Call to holiness questions

- Why did you choose this group?
- Do you believe that God knows you personally and desires a relationship with you? Why or why not?
- Do you want a real relationship with Christ now? Why or why not?
- What is one thing you can do this week to open your heart to an encounter with Christ? To "put out into the deep?"

Conversion questions

- Why did you choose this group?
- What is one of the biggest obstacles keeping you from following Christ?
- What are your fears about giving up your old habits/ behaviors in order to follow Christ?
- What is one thing you can do this week to acknowledge your sin and take a step closer to Christ?

Prayer questions

- Why did you choose this group?
- Why is prayer an important part of being a disciple of Christ?
- Describe your prayer life right now. What makes prayer difficult for you?
- What is one thing you can do this week to improve your prayer life and reconnect with the God who calls you to be His disciple?

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SEND *20 Minutes*

Drop Your Nets – Testimony (10 min)

Bring the small groups back together and remind the teens that it does not matter which group each person chose. We are all on a journey of holiness and discipleship together. Encourage the teens to follow through on the commitments they made in small group. Introduce a person who will give a short witness talk about following Christ. The focus of the witness talk should be the joys of following Christ and also the need to choose him everyday. Being a disciple of Jesus isn't a one-time decision, but a constant call to choose holiness everyday and in every situation. Have the group pray over the person giving the witness talk.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit (10 min)

After the talk, enter into a time of prayer. Remind the teens that we are incapable of holiness. It is only the power of the Holy Spirit working within us that we can hear the call of Christ, change our lives and develop a relationship through prayer. We need to continually ask the Holy Spirit to draw us closer to His Son. Close the night asking the Holy Spirit to be with the teens and give them what they need to follow Christ. Here is a possible prayer to use:

Holy Spirit of light and love, you are the substantial love of the Father and the Son; hear my prayer. Bounteous bestower of most precious gifts, grant me a strong and living faith, which makes me accept all revealed truths and shape my conduct in accord with them. Give me a most confident hope in all divine promises, which prompts me to abandon myself unreservedly to you and your guidance. Infuse into me a love of perfect goodwill, and act according to God's least desires. Make me love not only my friends but my enemies as well, in imitation of Jesus Christ who through you offered himself on the Cross for all people. Holy Spirit animate, inspire, and guide me, and help me to be always a true follower of you. Amen.

Close the night by asking the intercession of the first disciple, Mary, by praying together the Hail Mary and Ave Maria.

Community Connection:

- Ask an upperclassman to give the testimony during the Send. Make sure that he/she is well prepared and keeps his/her talk short. This talk point out to the teens that the decision to follow Christ is more than a one-time thing but a daily commitment.
- Have one of your Core members compete in the Icebreaker (preferably an unsuspecting one!).
- Contact a local Bait and Tackle store to help with the environment.

Making it Work:

- The Core members will have to be flexible about which group they take a small group from. In order to best prepare the Core, make sure they have a copy of all three small group questions (even though they will only use one of them).
- Encourage the Core team to follow up with the members of their small group during the week following the Life Night. Ask them to encourage and challenge the teens to take a step towards "dropping their nets" and following Christ.
- If time allows, you can add to the Send of the night by inviting the teens to come forward and be prayed over. The Core members can simply pray over the teens asking for the power of the Holy Spirit to be with them.

GO FISH!

Discipleship, Call to Holiness

TEACHING

Introduction:

We are all called to be like Christ. That is why we call ourselves Christian. Today there seems to be an obsession with making ourselves famous, popular, honorable and rich. It is seen as a good thing to have one of the deadly sins! (Pride)

What we need to understand is that Christianity goes beyond just being “nice” or “good.” Christianity is much more than a bumper sticker, a wristband, or even a quote on our facebook wall. Christianity is a sacrifice. It is counter-cultural. It is a call to holiness beyond our comfort level.

Christianity and even Catholicism has been hijacked today by well-meaning people who try to package Christ in a way to make Him more attractive to the modern person. Unfortunately because of that, we miss out on what makes Christianity so unique, so powerful, and in a way, so attractive.

CCC# 618, 1816, 2473

**1 John 1:1-4
Acts 1:8**

Lumen Gentium #42

GO FISH!

Discipleship, Call to Holiness

TEACHING

Call to Holiness:

Every person who claims to be a Christian is called to holiness and Christ was very clear about what that call entailed. We who claim to be fully Christian cannot ignore the call to take up our cross.

God has given us an amazing gift in our free will. Think about it, we can make a free choice to do what we want! We can choose the good or we can choose the evil and God will never prevent us from making that choice! God has given us a gift that He will never take away.

Our response to God is shown in the way that we live our life. St. James actually tells us that we need to show our faith with our works. If we ask God the Father for anything He will give it to us. This is how we receive the grace in the sacraments and the power of the Holy Spirit to live the holy life of a disciple. A life set apart.

If we are to grow in holiness, we must spend time reflecting on our lives, examining our actions, and realizing who we are as Christian brothers and sisters.

CCC #2012-2016

Mark 8:34

Luke 14:25-35

Lumen Gentium #40 - The Lord Jesus, the divine Teacher and Model of all perfection, preached holiness of life to each and everyone of His disciples of every condition. He Himself stands as the author and consumator of this holiness of life: "Be you therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect". Indeed He sent the Holy Spirit upon all men that He might move them inwardly to love God with their whole heart and their whole soul, with all their mind and all their strength and that they might love each other as Christ loves them. The followers of Christ are called by God, not because of their works, but according to His own purpose and grace. They are justified in the Lord Jesus, because in the baptism of faith they truly become sons of God and sharers in the divine nature. In this way they are really made holy. Then too, by God's gift, they must hold on to and complete in their lives this holiness they have received. They are warned by the Apostle to live "as becoming saints", and to put on "as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience", and to possess the fruit of the Spirit in holiness. Since truly we all offend in many things we all need God's mercies continually and we all must daily pray: "Forgive us our debts." Thus it is evident to everyone, that all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity; by this holiness as such a more human manner of living is promoted in this earthly society. In order that the faithful may reach this perfection, they must use their strength accordingly as they have received it, as a gift from Christ. They must follow in His footsteps and conform themselves to His image seeking the will of the Father in all things. They must devote themselves with all their being to the glory of God and the service of their neighbor. In this way, the holiness of the People of God will grow into an abundant harvest of good, as is admirably shown by the life of so many saints in Church history.

GO FISH!

Discipleship, Call to Holiness

TEACHING

Conversion:

For someone to be a disciple, it means that they “sit at the feet of” someone. For us as Christian disciples, that means that we have pay close attention to the teachings of Jesus! Imagine someone calling him or herself a Christian and having no idea what Jesus taught!

Jesus repeatedly told us that we need to have a change of heart and mind, what is known as a conversion. It is not enough that we simply know the teachings of Christ in our head, but we must embrace them in our heart. We must take our lives and conform them to what Jesus taught.

We are given the ability to do this through participating in the Sacraments. It is through these Sacraments that we receive spiritual “super powers” to love and worship God as Jesus taught.

This also gives us the ability to live as we should, doing what is required as a Christian. This means living the moral teaching of Christ, serving the poor and those who are cast out by society, and fulfilling the mission of Christ by bringing the Good News to those around us.

Prayer:

How do we get the strength to be the type of disciples who will bring the Good News to those around us? We need to have a relationship with God. We need to communicate with him in prayer. Prayer is our connection to God. Prayer is our path to a vital relationship with God that is experienced through our prayer.

Prayer isn't simply something that we can do “in addition” to our lives as Christians. It is an essential part of what it means to be a believer or a disciple. In fact, one cannot be a disciple without prayer.

If your gas tank is empty, what would the car run on? The way that we fill the spiritual gas tank of a disciple is through prayer. That is our source. It is our cooling, refreshing water that will quench our thirst for God.

CCC #2084

Redemptoris Missio #46-47

CCC #2653-2654, 2700-2719, 2725-2745

John 14:16-31
John 15:14-15

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Discipleship, Call to Holiness

TEACHING

One of the ways that we are able to pray is through the Scriptures. It is easy to reference the Scriptures in prayer, as so many of our prayers come from the Scriptures! The Psalms, the Hail Mary, the Angelus, the Our Father, the various Canticles and songs. These are all found in Scripture.

We also see models of prayer in the Biblical figures and how they chose to pray and communicate with God. Elijah listened to God in the silence and also threw himself on God and prayed loudly. Mary gives us her fiat while at the same time offering her contemplation of Christ on the Cross, suffering as only a mother can for her Son.

Prayer can be vocal. This type of prayer is out loud, like a conversation with a friend. Sometimes we get angry with friends. Sometimes we are sad, brokenhearted. Sometimes we are overjoyed, confident, and want to share that joy. Vocal prayer is all of these things.

Prayer can also be meditative. In meditative prayer we focus on a journey in order to fashion our lives to what Christ is asking us as disciples. For instance, when we meditate on the Mysteries of the Rosary we meditate on how the lives of Jesus and Mary impact our own lives and call us to follow their example. Meditation involves thought, imagination, emotion and even our desires.

When we speak of contemplative prayer, we speak of contemplating something outside of us, such as God. Many times the saints would contemplate God or they would simply contemplate the face of God. When we do this, we unite ourselves with God on an intimate level in our souls. We take the time to gaze upon Christ as he looks upon us.

Prayer requires effort and commitment. It is important to note that as disciples we are not going to pray perfectly every time. We are not going to lead others in prayer perfectly every time either. The important thing is that we simply make the effort to do it. This requires a commitment to prayer.

Jesus calls us to be a disciple. Do we have the courage to stand up and be holy? Do we have the courage to answer the call to conversion and prayer?

Catechesi Tradendae #5 - The fourth general assembly of the synod of Bishops often stressed the Christocentricity of all authentic catechesis. We can here use the word "Christocentricity" in both its meanings, which are not opposed to each other or mutually exclusive, but each of which rather demands and completes the other. In the first place, it is intended to stress that at the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, "the only Son from the Father...full of grace and truth," who suffered and died for us and who now, after rising, is living with us forever. It is Jesus who is "the way, and the truth, and the life," and Christian living consists in following Christ, the sequela Christi. The primary and essential object of catechesis is, to use an expression dear to St. Paul and also to contemporary theology, "the mystery of Christ." Catechizing is in a way to lead a person to study this mystery in all its dimensions: "to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery...comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth ...know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge. . . (and be filled) with all the fullness of God." It is therefore to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God's eternal design reaching fulfillment in that Person. It is to seek to understand the meaning of Christ's actions and words and of the signs worked by Him, for they simultaneously hide and reveal His mystery. Accordingly, the definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity

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Discipleship, Call to Holiness

CHECKLIST

Core Planning Team:

Date of Life Night:

One month prior to the Night:

Give copies of the Life Night to each of the members of the planning team. Each person should read the Scripture and Catechism references as well as review the planning guide before the brainstorming meeting.

Get the planning team together for a brainstorming meeting (this should last no longer than 1 hour). The team prays and discusses where the teens are in their faith journey in relation to this topic. Then using this planning guide as a starting point, the team adapts the Life Night to meet the needs of the teens and the parish. Create a detailed outline with any changes and/or adjustments.

Assign the person responsible for each part of the Life Night:

Environment _____

Introductions _____

Kiss the Fish/Bob for Fish _____

Teaching _____

Small Group Divisions _____

Testimony _____

Prayer for the Holy Spirit _____

Two Weeks Prior to Life Night:

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

Create a list of needed supplies and materials. Assign a person to be responsible for collecting and/or purchasing the materials needed.

Decide the people that will be doing the following things. Make sure they have a copy of the script and/or teaching outline. Inform them of any practices and/or deadlines.

Teaching _____

Testimony _____

Week of the Life Night:

Written outline of the teaching is given to the youth minister and practiced.

Run a dress rehearsal of the Life Night.

Create environment and collect needed supplies

E-mail entire Core team an overview of the night and small group questions.

Day of the Life Night:

Set up the environment. Make sure the room is clean and presentable.

Walk the entire Core team through the Life Night. Make sure all transitions are ready and everyone knows their roles.

Pray! Pray for the teens attending the Night. Pray for God's will to be done through the night. Pray over those involved.