

HEAD, SHOULDERS, KNEES & TOES

Jesus Reveals the Church LIFE NIGHT OUTLINE

CATECHISM

- # 811-812
- # 813-815, 816
- # 1814-1816
- # 2135

SCRIPTURE

- Acts 1: 6-12
- 1 Corinthians 12:1
- 1 Corinthians 12:18-26
- 1 Corinthians 12:27-31

KEY CONCEPTS

- The Church is founded by Jesus Christ as a sign and guide for the people of God, showing us how to return to the Father.
- Faith is a gift from God that leads us to belief in His revelation and commit our whole self to him.
- Through the Sacrament of Baptism we are given a unique role in advancing the Church, the Body of Christ.

GOAL

The goal of this Life Night is to help the teens understand why Jesus Christ established a Church. This Life Night will also address the differences between faith and religion and how each plays a role in the teens' lives. Finally, this night will challenge the teens to live out their unique role in the Body of Christ, the Church.

ABOUT THIS NIGHT

The Catholic Church was founded by Jesus Christ and stands as His Body in the world. This Life Night seeks to explore this truth and make it relevant to the lives of teenagers. The Life Night begins with an opportunity for the teens to give their interpretation of 1 Corinthians 12. The game leads into a short skit and teaching on Christ's establishment of the Church. After a time of small group discussion, the night will close by praying the prayer of St. Teresa of Avila: *"Christ has no body but yours, No hands, no feet on earth but yours..."*

PARENTAL NOTICE

This week's Life Night is about Jesus Christ's role as the founder of the Catholic Church. The Church is known as the Body of Christ. During the course of the night, your teens learned how being a part of the Body of Christ practically applies to their lives. This week, take a few minutes to pray the short St. Teresa of Avila prayer before or after dinner. Use the following questions to help discuss this topic at home.

1. What does it mean to you to be a part of the Body of Christ?
2. What do you think God's plan for you is as part of the Body of Christ?
3. How can we as a family better serve the Church, locally and globally?

ENVIRONMENT

We are the Body of Christ. The environment for this night is all about the body. Cut out different parts of the body like hands, feet, arms, legs, ears, toes, etc. from paper. Hang the different parts on the walls and from the ceiling. If possible, gather copies of x-rays to add as well. If possible, get Halloween skeletons and hang them around the room.

MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

Life Teen Video: "Sainly Minute: St. Teresa of Avila" (Life Teen Video Support 10)
Song: "We are One Body" by Dana Scallon (*Spirit and Song Vol. 1*, OCP)

NOTES

GATHER *15 Minutes*

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (5 min)

The youth minister will welcome all the teens to the Life Night and introduce any teens at Life Night for the first time.

ONE BODY, MANY PARTS SKITS (10 min)

Divide the teens into small groups of 6-8 teens with one Core Member (this will be the small group for the Break as well). Give each group a copy of 1 Corinthians 12:14-26. Each group has 5 minutes to create a 30-second skit illustrating this passage. It can be as funny and/or ridiculous as they want. After the groups have created the skit, choose a few groups to present their skit.

PROCLAIM *15 Minutes*

"HEAD, SHOULDERS, KNEES & TOES"

TEACHING (15 min)

Begin the teaching with a short modern day skit retelling Acts 1:6-12. Following the skit, the teaching will focus on why Christ established the Church and the difference between faith and religion.

The skit can be found on pages 47-48.

The teaching can be found on pages 43-46.

BREAK *30 Minutes*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS (30 min)

Break the teens up into small groups. Challenge the teens to get into groups with people they do not know. Begin the time of discussion in prayer and thanksgiving for the Church. Use the following question to guide the small group discussion. If necessary, create questions based on the needs of the group.

- Why do you think the Church is referred to as a body?
- How would you define faith? Religion?
- Why do you think our culture looks down on the word "religious"?
- What do you think your role in the Body of Christ is?
- How can you live that role out this week?

SEND *15 Minutes*

RECAP OF LIFE NIGHT (5 min)

The youth minister should gather all the groups back together. He/She should recap the night reminding the teens that we each play a unique role in the Church, Body of Christ. At our Baptism, our parents and godparents asked for the gift of faith on our behalf. It is through this gift of faith that we live out our call to build the Body of Christ. We are Christ's hands and feet in this world. He moves by the power of the Holy Spirit through each one of us. We are the witnesses to Jesus' great love for everyone we encounter.

SAINTLY MINUTE:

ST. TERESA OF AVILA (1 min)

Use the Sainly Minute: St. Teresa of Avila found on Video Support 10 to introduce the time of prayer for the night.

"CHRIST HAS NO BODY..." (4 min)

St. Teresa of Avila gave us a powerful prayer that helps us bring to life our role in the Body of Christ. Close the night by praying this prayer together as a group. Before for the Life Night ask three teens to help with the prayer. Give each teen one stanza of the prayer. Invite the parish music minister to be present during this time of the night. Between each stanza play the chorus of the song "We Are One Body."

*Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,*

*Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.*

*Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*

CHRIST'S HANDS (5 min)

After the prayer has been read, invite the teens to silently think of one person in their life that needs Christ's presence. Ask the teens to pray for that person and ask Jesus how they can be Christ's hands for that person. Challenge the teens to invite that person to Church next week. Close the time of prayer by praying together the Hail Mary and Ave Maria.

GOING DEEPER

- Invite the teens to Church during the week to brainstorm a service project they can do in the community by the end of the semester.
- During the coming week, have a gathering for teens. Take that time to discuss how the Church is portrayed in current media and headlines. Allow them to discuss how to defend the Church with friends and family.

ADAPTING THIS LIFE NIGHT

- For smaller youth groups, have the teens say the name of the person they are praying for aloud and invite the entire group to pray for them.
- For larger youth groups, have the skits in the Gather prerecorded and shown as a video. This will take some coordination but is a great way to get more teens involved.

HEAD, SHOULDERS, KNEES & TOES TEACHING

We cannot find God on our own. Since the fall of Adam and Eve, man has disconnected his life from the divine. Salvation history shows us the way back always begins with God acting first. We are the ones who need Him, but without Him making the effort to meet us, we would be doomed. God saved the Jewish people in the Old Testament and sent prophets to bring them back. The person of Jesus Christ redeemed mankind from the sin of Adam and Eve, restoring our nature. The God-man's love for us saved us and the whole world.

Not everyone believed in Him. He was rejected even by the people among whom He lived. God will not force His love upon anyone who willingly rejects him. You cannot force someone to love you; the same is true for God. In order for the world to find the truth of His sacrifice for our souls, Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit nurtured, sustained and enlivened the hearts of the men and women who followed Jesus. These people, united with Christ and each other, become the Mystical Body of Christ on earth. Their faith was practiced in a variety of ways, but in unity of belief. Time passed and the world grew to know this Church, composed of the preserved and protected teachings of Christ, God Himself. The mission of the Church commissioned by Christ is to save all souls by bringing the Gospel and the Holy Spirit to them. The Church was founded as God's tool to unite all peoples to Himself. You and I share in that mission and that vocation.

FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

As Catholics we believe with confidence that God's revelation, His divine actions of revealing the fullness of who He is, is found within the Catholic Church. We believe that the groundwork for the Church was laid in the Old Testament. God slowly revealed more and more about Himself until it was time for Him to become one of us.

Jesus Christ's life on this earth was the most significant shift in human history. The events of His life were not the mere words and actions of a holy man; they were the events of God acting directly in history. His words to Peter, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it," really signify to us that something important is being established. At this moment, Christ instituted His Church—the Church that has been handed down through the same apostles standing there with Peter. It was these apostles who were also present in the Upper Room at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon them. After this moment, the apostles went out into the streets and preached the Good News of Jesus Christ to the pilgrims in Jerusalem. We call Pentecost the "birthday of the Church" because this is the very first time that the followers of Jesus, united to Him in the Holy Spirit began to minister to the world by proclaiming salvation to all those who would be baptized and believe. This is the first time in history that these actions—a continuation of the actions of Christ while on earth—were carried out by His followers. This is the first time we see the Church as we know her today; a people of God who share in sacramental communion with Jesus Christ and who live in accordance with the Word.

The Church is the home of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that lives in and moves the Church. The Church exists to bear the light of Christ to all peoples in every age. The Holy Spirit is what makes the Church holy. From the early days of the Jewish people, the word for church (*ekklesia*) meant a people gathered together for God. Christians experience this gathering with a common union found in the Body of Christ and established by their Baptism. St. Paul compares the union between Christ and His Church to the unity of a bride and groom.

Matthew 16:18
Acts 2

CCC 748
CCC 749
CCC 751

Ephesians 3:9-11, 5:25-27, 32
CCC 752

When we talk about "the Church," who or what are we actually talking about? The Church is not the buildings that we have Mass in. The Church is not the Vatican or the cathedrals. The Church is not the pope. "The Church' is the People that God gathers in the whole world. She exists in local communities and is made real as a liturgical, above all a Eucharistic, assembly. She draws her life from the word and the Body of Christ and so herself becomes Christ's Body." We are the Church. We are the Mystical Body of Christ that St. Paul teaches, with Christ as our head.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14
Ephesians 4:15-16
CCC 750
CCC 813-815

This is why it is impossible to talk about the person of God and His relationship with humanity without talking about the Church. "To believe that the Church is 'holy' and 'catholic,' and that she is 'one' and 'apostolic'...is inseparable from belief in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." These four marks of the Church (one, holy, catholic and apostolic) are not invention of her members; they are testaments to her supernatural source. The unity of her members is found in their profession of faith received by the apostles, common celebration of divine worship and the Sacraments and the unbroken line of apostolic succession, maintaining the revealed truths found in teachings of Christ to His apostles.

CCC 880-896

The apostles chose successors to continue the mission of the Church after their deaths. These successors would also choose successors, and so on and so on. The bishops we have today are the direct descendants of the men in the Upper Room with our Lord at the Last Supper. This is what we know as apostolic succession. This teaching office of the Church is known as the "Magisterium." "The mission of the Magisterium is...to preserve God's people from deviations and defections and to guarantee them the objective possibility of professing the truth faith without error." The bishops' (united under Peter's successor, the pope) main purpose is to make sure the whole Church can access the whole truth of Christ and so to be free from sin and deception. This Magisterium was established by Christ.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Not everyone believes that Jesus founded the Catholic Church. Some think that His message has been confused over the centuries and that His real Good News is found in the Bible and the Bible alone. This idea was popularized during the Protestant Reformation as the doctrine of *sola scriptura* or "Scripture alone." Basing their arguments on the theology of the Reformation and their own person beliefs, many try to prove that the Church isn't really the home of Christ and His truth. If you're going to go that route, there are a few things you ought to consider before shutting the door on the Catholic Church.

First, let's look at the arguments. There are many who believe that the Bible is the **only** source of God's revelation to man. This means that if the Bible doesn't expressly teach something, then there is no reason to believe it to be true.

This may sound like a safe approach to Christianity: Stick with the "Good Book," and you can't go wrong. The problem with this method is that there are a number of practices and beliefs held by all Christians that are not explicitly mentioned or outlined in Scripture. Doctrines like the formulas of the Sacraments, the official moving of the Sabbath day from Saturday to Sunday and even the celebration of Christmas are not found in the Bible. These things all emerged and crystallized through the Church. Some believe that these things are "inventions" of the men who were governed the Church and not really Christ's intentions. But what about the Bible?

2 Timothy 3:16

For the first few hundred years of the Church's history, there was no Bible. That's right. When St. Paul encourages communities to live according to the Scriptures, he's not talking about his letters or the Gospels; he's referring to the Old Testament. Nearing the end of the fourth century, St. Jerome was commissioned to compile the sacred texts traditionally held by the Church at the time. These writings were added to the

Old Testament and the Bible as we know it today was completed. This means that for almost 300 years, the Church couldn't have been governed by the Bible. It was governed by the successors of the apostles and the traditions held by the faithful.

Secondly, there is a claim that the men of the church "invent" teachings. There is a difference between sacred Tradition, which comes to us from revelation not explicitly noted in the Bible (elements of our *faith*), and the church's customs (elements of our *religion*). It wasn't revealed to the Church that on Ash Wednesday, Catholics all over the world would fast, not eat meat and have the ashes of palms wiped on their foreheads in the shape of a cross. This is a Church custom. Other Church customs include the various sacramentals (the rosary, holy water, novenas, holy days of obligation, etc.) that are good works, but do not in and of themselves "save" us. It is greatly recommended by the Church that we use these good things in our regular rhythm of prayer, but it is true that you can be saved without them. It is very hard to be holy without some devotions in your spiritual life, but it is possible.

Church dogma is not the same as Church custom. A dogma is an element of faith that is believed by all members of the Church. (Doctrine is the "teaching" of a dogma. Not all doctrines are dogmas, but all dogmas are doctrines.) Dogma is an element of faith that has been divinely revealed by God. Examples of dogma are, "the articles of faith of the Creed, the various Christological dogmas and Marian dogmas; the doctrine of the institution of the sacraments by Christ and their efficacy with regard to grace."

Doctrinal Commentary on the Concluding Formula of the *Professio Fidei*, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1998

These are things that Catholics believe because they were revealed to the Church by Christ. The Bible is authoritative in all ways and in these doctrines, the Bible supports the Church's dogma. People who criticize the Church dogmas do so based on what's called an argument from silence. In other words, if there is no explicit teaching, the teaching therefore does not exist. Jesus never said, "The bishop of Rome will have authority over all other bishops," but He did give Peter that authority, and Peter became the bishop of Rome. Logically, His successor in Rome would maintain such authority, and thus, the dogma is realized. Critics fail to make the connection. As Catholics, we believe that the "Magisterium is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed on to it."

FAITH IN THE CHURCH

People are usually skeptical of the Church's historic claims. Many Catholics even find themselves defending their faith ineffectively, by qualifying their messages with disclaimers that downplay the supernatural events of Scripture in an attempt to present our faith in an "easier to believe" way.

A critic may ask, "How do we know that Jesus healed the blind?"
Our only response may be simply, "Because it's in the Bible."
Only to hear them reply, "Yeah, but how do we *know* that it happened?"

How do we know Alexander the Great existed? How do we know how the ancient Egyptians lived? How are those pieces of evidence any more authoritative than Biblical evidence? Are we to not trust any historical claims?

As Catholics, we don't have to worry about the authenticity of what we believe. Even before the Bible was assembled as the Scriptures we know today, great efforts went into preserving the teachings of Christ. Though the Gospels differ on details, they all teach in unison on the major theological messages—on the life, death and Resurrection of our Lord.

When people hear that Catholics believe the pope is "infallible," they assume that Catholics believe that the pope is always right. Actually, the Church teaches that the pope is without error only when speaking on matters of faith or morals, that is, on things that are either revealed by God to be true or things that are intrinsically good or evil. In fact, the pope isn't the only person who is infallible in the Church. All of the bishops share in the infallibility when they teach the teachings of the Church handed down from the apostles. They also can exercise infallibility when they clarify revelation (dogma) while gathered in a council under the authority of the pope. Again, this isn't a ploy for a pope to set his own agenda in motion. Not everything the pope says is infallible and the things that he can say infallibly are things that are already believed by the faithful (dogma) that haven't been formalized (i.e. documented as doctrine).

Papal infallibility has only been used on a few occasions. In 1854, Pope Pius IX proclaimed that the Virgin Mary was conceived without sin (the Immaculate Conception). This was already believed by the faithful but was not expressed in any formal way in the Church. Pius IX's proclamation solved that. Again in 1950, Pope Pius XII proclaimed that Mary was assumed bodily into heaven (Assumption of Mary). However, during Pope John Paul II's time as pope, he chose not to make the infallible proclamation that abortion and euthanasia were morally and always wrong because he believed the teaching was so widely evident in the Catholic faith that it was already preached universally by the bishops. Pope Benedict XVI has reminded us that, "The pope is not an oracle; he is infallible in very rare situations."

The infallibility of the Church is something that is received from the origin of her existence—Christ. Infallibility simply means the ability to teach the truth; the ability to teach Christ. The Church maintains this because of her founder and because of the apostolic succession that ensures her purity of teaching.

"ACTS 1:6-12" SKIT

CHARACTERS:

Peter
James
John
Philip

2 Men dressed in white garments (Man 1 and Man 2)

As the skit begins, the four Core Members should be standing at the front of the room looking up at the "sky." The skit picks up right after Jesus ascends into heaven. They should be perplexed and confused about what just happened and asking each other questions.

PETER

(Pointing to the sky) I think I still see Him!

JAMES

(Squinting and trying to focus) Where? I don't see him!

PETER

Right THERE! *(Pointing at the sky)*

JAMES

Oh, you mean that dove?

PETER

Oh... Yeah. I guess He's really gone.

JOHN

(Looking up at the sky)

I really loved him. I don't know what we're going to do now that He's gone.

PHILIP

(Looking up at the sky)

I know what you mean. Does this mean we go back to the lives we had before he was here?

PETER

(Still looking up at the sky and starting to panic a little)

He gave me these keys. I'm not sure what I'm supposed to do with them. Something about binding and loosing. I should have paid better attention.

JAMES

(Still looking at the sky) Do you think He'll ever come back?

JOHN

I hope so.

While still looking up at the sky, the two men dressed in white garments come walking up to the Peter, James, John and Philip. The men look up at the sky and then look at the apostles.

MAN 1

(To Peter)

Why are you looking up at the sky? Is something wrong?

PETER

No. Just looking for a friend.

MAN 2

Jesus?

PHILIP

(Looking toward the man)

Yes! Do you know Him?

MAN 1

Yes, we know Him.

MAN 2

He'll be back, you know. He'll come back the same way He went up.

PETER, JAMES, PHILIP, & JOHN

(all together) COOOOOL!

PETER

Let's go to Jerusalem and tell the others!

Peter, James, Philip and John should all run offstage. The two men should follow.

HEAD, SHOULDERS, KNEES & TOES 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 _____

One Body, Many Parts _____

Acts 1:6-12 Skit _____

Small Group Discussions _____

Christ Has No Body... _____

Christ's Hands _____

TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO LIFE NIGHT:

Turn in a detailed outline of the Life Night to the youth minister. Allow the 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 _____

Acts 1:6-12 Skit _____

Peter _____

James _____

John _____

Philip _____

Man 1 _____

Man 2 _____

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. Youth minister gives feedback.

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.

If needed, set up audio and video. Test the video clips to make sure both picture and sound work.

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.