**LIFE Night no. 1**

1. **Purpose: What are we trying to accomplish?**
   1. Introduce teens to the new format of youth formation, LIFE Nights
   2. Introduce teens to the adult mentors
   3. “Set the bar” for their formation
   4. Introduce invitation to be a disciple
2. **Preparations**
   1. Food (if applicable):
      1. Who is preparing the food?
      2. When are they preparing the food?
      3. What do they need for preparation? Who is getting it?
      4. What do we need to prepare to eat? Who is getting it?
         1. Ex: disposable plates, forks, napkins, etc.
      5. What a drinks? Who is getting it?
         1. Ex: cups, ice, gallons of water, lemonade, etc.
      6. Who is helping with food set up and distribution?
         1. *Consider having parents or volunteers come to help with food distribution so that the adult mentors can be actively engaging the teenagers. It is more important for your mentors to be eating with the teens and talking to them than to be serving food.*
   2. **Environment:** 
      1. Who has the plan for set up?
         1. *How are we preparing the space so that it feels warm, welcoming, and comfortable for our teenagers?*
      2. Who is setting up?
      3. When are they setting up?
   3. **Music:**
      1. When do we need music?
         1. Playlist of upbeat music as teens arrive and through the gather.
         2. Live music in church for the “send”
      2. Who is providing music?
      3. What song(s)?
   4. **Small Groups:**
      1. How are we separating into small groups?
         1. Some Life Nights will recommend that teenagers are grouped in their “permanent small groups” (meaning the groups that they will meet with outside of the Life Nights.) For this particular night, that is not the case.
         2. Consider separating into “permanent small groups” at a Life Night before you kick-off small groups. This gives the group an opportunity to get to know each other and to see if any groups need to be adjusted before rolling out “permanent small groups”.
      2. How are they going to know which group they’re in?
         1. Consider ordering a variety of colored headbands to be used in the gather. Each teenager will receive a headband. When it is time to break into small groups, group all like colors together.
         2. If nametags are done ahead of time, consider using different colors on the nametags to indicate which group they belong to.
      3. Who are my small group leaders?
         1. Make sure that they have matching nametags/headbands (or however you decide to group small groups) so that the teens can easily identify their small group leader
   5. **What you’ll need:**
      1. Nametags & markers
      2. Elastic headbands (1/person) for the gather
      3. Game cards for the gather (at least 2-3 per person)
         1. These can be as easy as printing names/words on index cards or cardstock.
         2. Have some teenagers help you develop the list of words so that the game is full of people or things that are relevant to them.
      4. PowerPoint and projector for the proclaim
         1. Includes slides with words for the word recognition activity
         2. Notes from the talk, if desired
      5. Hard copy of the small group questions for your mentors for the break
      6. Tea lights (one per person) for the send
      7. Candles for the send, including a few large ones that can be used to light the tea lights
      8. Invitation card with a simple prayer for the send
         1. Decide what you want that card to look like.
         2. What do you want the teenagers to leave with?
            1. An invitation to follow Jesus
            2. A short prayer in response to that invitation
         3. Have them printed (can be as easy as printing a few on a sheet of cardstock and cutting them)
3. **Breakdown of the Night**
   1. Mass
      1. Who is saying Mass?
      2. Talk to Fr. about weaving the theme of the Life Night into the homily
      3. [If Life Night follows Mass] Have someone invite teenagers to join you after Mass for the Life Night
   2. Mentors (assign these roles ahead of time)
      1. Make sure that your mentors are in place and ready to welcome to teenagers.
      2. Who is going to make sure that the lights are on and the music is playing?
      3. 2 adult mentors outside inviting the teenagers into the building
      4. 1 adult mentor outside the door welcoming them
      5. 1 adult mentor inside the door welcoming them
      6. Remaining adult mentors inside mixing with the teens as they enter
   3. Pre-Gather
      1. [If you are serving food] Have it ready to go when the teenagers arrive.
      2. Give the teens time to eat and mingle with each other and the mentors.
      3. Relaxed atmosphere, upbeat music playing in the background
      4. There should be a table or designated area for teens to make their nametags
      5. All practical preparations should be done so that mentors can be completely focused on the teenagers.
4. **GATHER (20 min)**
   1. Everyone is given a headband.
   2. The Emcee offers instructions. Consider having two adult mentors offer a demonstration as part of the instructions.
   3. Instructions:
      1. Everyone will be given a card to place in their headband. The object is to figure out “what” or “who” you are by asking yes or no questions. *(Similar to the game Headbandz)*
      2. Players have to ask others in the room a question to try to figure out what is written on their headband …. ie. who/what they are.
      3. Don’t ask “What am I?”... instead, ask “Am I a \_\_\_\_\_?”
      4. If a player think they know who or what is on their headband, they can say… “am I \_\_\_?”. If they are correct, they may go to an adult mentor to get another card. The person with the most cards at the end is the winner. (*Consider having a couple of prizes available to encourage participation)*
      5. If the Emcee yells “act it out!” players have to act it out rather than to answer with words.
      6. If the Emcee yells “sing it!” players have the sing the questions and the response.
      7. Players can only ask 1 question or make one guess per person… then they must ask someone else. You can’t ask the same person more than once.
   4. After instructions are offered, adult mentors will attach a card to the headbands so that the teens can’t see what’s on their headband, but everyone else can.
   5. Adult mentors should play, too! Not only is it a fun way to show the teenagers that they are willing to be silly and vulnerable, but it puts them face to face with the teens- especially those who may need a little help engaging in the game.
5. **PROCLAIM (20 min)**
   1. 10 minutes:
   2. Welcome and introduction to the year’s journey.
   3. Reference the game - as we saw in the game, some words elicit a very specific image or a clear picture in our minds. Some are a little harder to define or may even evoke very different images for each of us.
   4. Do some more word recognition. Show slides with various words of easily known/identified things. (one by one)
      1. Ex: Display the word FOOTBALL and ask “what’s do you think of with this?”…. RAIN “what do you think of with this?”… SUNDAY “What about this?” (These words should elicit a very clear picture in their minds)
      2. “Now what about this”… and put up the word CHRISTIAN. “What do you think of with this word?”
   5. Break open ‘Christian vs. disciple’
      1. Explain the history of the word “Christian’
         1. Christian appears in the Bible only five times
         2. Acts 11:19-26 “… it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians.”
      2. While the word ‘Christian’ is often used in a general way, the word “disciple’ is actually something very focused and specific.
      3. Explain what a disciple really was in the time of Jesus. The disciple actually left to live with the teacher, the ‘master’. A disciple learns what the master teachers, teaches what the master taught, and lives likes the master. People would recognize who the disciple was a disciple OF… it was that clear to people.  Ex: ‘You are John’s disciple’
      4. Disciple is about a person, getting to know him, learning, allowing that to change your life
      5. At the core of the word ‘Christian’ is actually this word, “Disciple’. A Christian is meant to be a disciple of a specific person… Jesus Christ. To be a disciple of Jesus is about getting to know him, learning from him, and allowing that to change your life.
   6. 5 minutes (Testimony):
      1. Have someone give a personal testimony of how they grew and “made the move” to being a disciple
   7. 5 minutes (Wrap up):
      1. When Jesus chose his first disciples, they were like you and me… they had regular lives, relationships, concerns, struggles.  And with all of that, they came alongside Him…. And what began to happen is they began to be transformed by him. He began to show them a way of living and loving and being… and that was transformational
      2. Let them know that wherever they are is ok
      3. We desire their openness and to begin a journey with them… however that looks in their life
6. **BREAK (15 min)**
   1. Break into small groups.
   2. Begin with introductions and something simple to help them warm up. Ask them to share what was on their card during the game.
   3. Small group leader introduces themselves: name, a little bit about yourself, why you said “yes?”
   4. Small group questions:
      1. What do you think most people your age associate with the word ‘Christian?’
      2. What do you think most people your age would say are the biggest challenges to living “for God”?
      3. Generally speaking, as we start this journey … where are you with God?
7. **SEND (15 min)**
   1. In the church, low light, prayerful atmosphere, music ministry ready
   2. Everyone is given a tea light as they enter
   3. Once everyone arrives and is settled, offer pastoral guidance, meeting them where they are and being clear about the invitation from Jesus, to come to know Him and then follow Him.
   4. As we begin this new year together, tonight, we invite you to ask what is the one thing or the one area of your life that you need Jesus to not just be a word that has no meaning, but that you need the reality of Him to make a difference in your life.
   5. What do you want from him this year?  (Give examples at all ranges of where they may be: Maybe you’re not sure about who Jesus is and you need him to show you… or maybe you need Jesus to show you where He is in the midst of your family, or at school, or with a certain struggle, etc…. or maybe you desire to know Jesus even more deeply or learn how to grow in closer relationship with him) Wherever you are, think about what you desire from God.
   6. You received a candle when you came in tonight. Whenever you are ready, we invite you to come up and light that candle to represent the thing that you want from Him. Place your candle and pick up an invitation. Have a few adult mentors spread out ready to assist the teenagers if needed.
   7. The invitation from Jesus and a simple prayer in response… decide what you want it to be, and have them printed in advance. The goal is that it is something small that they can put somewhere where they’ll see it every day. A simple prayer that helps them recall the area that they need God and helps them open their hearts to the person of Jesus Christ.
   8. After everyone has come up…  offer further ‘send’ instructions:  “Take these home and put it somewhere you will see it every day. Maybe beside your bed, or in the place you get ready in the morning. Each day, at a certain time (like when you go to bed or go to get ready or when you see this card) consider that one thing you lit the candle for (where you need God) and I encourage you to consider praying this prayer.”