



## SESSION 5 BREATH

### GOAL

The goal of this session is for the teens to understand that they were created to be in relationship with God and through this relationship, they will find fullness of life.

### KEY CONCEPTS

God created us through love. We are sustained by the love of God.

God is a personal God, never ceasing to draw us closer to Him.

The fullness of life is found in acknowledging God's love and responding to it.

### KEY TERMS

**Free Will:** The power of the will to determine itself and to act of itself, without compulsion from within or coercion from without.

**Fullness of Life:** In order to reach the perfection of charity, the faithful should use the strength dealt out to them by Christ's gift, so, doing the will of the Father in everything, they may wholeheartedly devote themselves to the glory of God and to the service of their neighbor.

**Identity:** Quality of sameness. Absolute identity is total sameness, without any change or difference; relative identity is all other sameness, which allows for numerous differences in nature and degree.

**SCRIPTURE:** 2 Corinthians 6:18, Genesis 1:25-27, Genesis 2:4-9, 15-24, Genesis 3, Psalm 39:11-12

**CATECHISM:** 27, 30, 295, 301, 1730, 2196

### ABOUT THIS CONFIRMATION SESSION

The Engage is a modified *Summit* session followed by a game of would you rather. The Reflect encourages the teens to make their faith a priority by reminding them of God's love and explaining where we find fullness of life. The Respond is a Scripture study on the creation narratives followed by a simple prayer, thanking God for who He is. The session ends with the Come, Holy Spirit prayer.

### ENVIRONMENT

Gather in a comfortable environment where you all are able to sit in a circle facing one another. Consider meeting somewhere at the parish or at a local coffee shop, but always consult and follow your diocesan safe environment rules.

### MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

Purpose Video: "Heart of God" ([resources.lifeteen.com](https://resources.lifeteen.com))

## AS YOU GET STARTED

*For an alternate Respond, consider having the teens complete a journal reflection. Invite the teens to spend some time reflecting on and journaling about their relationship with God, specifically where it is currently at and where they would like it to be when they get confirmed. Challenge them to identify concrete ways they can grow in their relationship with God over the course of the preparation program. If time allows, encourage the teens to share their reflections with a partner or the small group.*

## ENGAGE

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 min)

Welcome the teens to the session, and begin in prayer.

Summit (20 min)

Use the modified *Summit* session to lead the teens through a lectio divina based reflection on the Sunday readings.

Would You Rather (10 min)

Introduce the activity, using the following as an example:

*Decisions, decisions, decisions; life is full of them. Some are simple and others are difficult. Oftentimes, choices can be framed in the manner of, "Would you rather...?" I am going to ask several "would you rather" questions and you have to decide which option you would choose.*

Instruct the teens to raise their right hand if they agree with the first option mentioned or raise their left hand if they agree with the second option offered. After each question, ask one of the teens to give a defense as to why they chose the option they did. The following is a list of questions to get you started, but be sure to add your own:

- Would you rather live in a place that is always hot or always cold?
- Would you rather never play sports again or lose every game you play?
- Would you rather be able to be invisible or be able to fly?
- Would you rather be able to talk to animals or speak eight languages?
- Would you rather be without Netflix or without social media?
- Would you rather have your flight delayed ten hours or lose your luggage for a week?

## REFLECT

"Breath" Teaching (20 min)

Use the following as a guide for a time of reflection:

### **The Book of Genesis**

*Read Genesis 1:25-27 or Genesis 2:4-9, 15-24. Before reading, encourage the teens to listen for what the narrative says or implies about God. After the passage is read, invite the teens to share words they would use to describe God based on the reading.*

It can be easy to skip over the Book of Genesis when we read the Bible. Many of us have probably heard or read these narratives before, so we sometimes tune them out when they are read at Mass or assigned as required reading.

But this section of Genesis reveals a great deal about who God is and why He matters. Let us take a look at the line, “God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7). In this sentence alone, we learn many things about God.

First off, we know that God is tangible — He can be felt and seen — and works with the Earth to create. We also know that God is the creator; He breathes life into what He made. Furthermore, God is close and personal. From one line, we know that God is not distant, disconnected, or uncaring.

In fact, God is so caring that He not only places humanity in the most prime location, but He also recognizes man’s need for communion with another being and, thus, creates a companion for him: woman.

- What is your favorite of the five senses? Why?
- How is God tangible to us, even in hidden or mysterious ways?
- Have you ever felt like God is distant or disconnected from your life? What do you do when you feel like this?

### **God Sees, Knows, and Provides**

This is a God who sees, knows, and provides for His creation. He sees that Adam is lonely, He knows what Adam longs for, and He provides for Adam’s needs. This is a God who cares for, sustains, and interacts with His creation. This is the same God we can know in our lives.

God sees us. Not in a creepy Santa Claus way, but in a real and honest way. God sees when we have a rough week at school, just as much as He sees when we score the game-winning goal. God is there with us for the good and bad, because we are His creation and He loves us.

Often, we forget how close God really is to us and how much our existence depends on Him. We forget how well He knows our hearts and lives. We forget that we must depend on Him. The Catechism tells us that we were created through love and are sustained by the love of God.

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- How do friends show each other that they care about each other? How do they act? What sorts of things do they do?
- How is this similar to or different from how God shows us He cares about us?
- How do you feel when you hear that God knows everything about your life? Why?

### **Our Priorities**

We tend to fill our days with lots of activities. Between school, friends, sports, and homework — not to mention eating and sleeping — our lives are pretty busy. Each year seems to go by faster, and it seems like our schedules keep getting busier and busier. In the midst of it all, God can become less of a priority. Our faith, prayer, and relationship with God often take a backseat to everything else we have going on. But that is the opposite of the life God has prepared for us.

God loves us, but He does not love us like we love tacos. He loves us in a profound, life-changing way. He loves us in a way we can only gradually understand, which is why He desires that we spend our lives getting to know Him and falling deeper in love with Him. We cannot fully live unless we acknowledge God's love and entrust ourselves to Him.

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We can fill our lives with lots of great things. We can travel, we can fall in love, and we can see the wonders of the world, but none of these things can be experienced in their fullness unless we receive and return God's love.

To live our lives rooted in God's love means we receive His love and return it, which can be challenging in the midst of our busy lives.

First, we need to know and embrace the fact that our identity is in Christ alone. Our whole life — our whole identity — is rooted in the fact that we are beloved children of a good Father. When we live our lives rooted in this love, everything changes. If we believe we are “the beloved,” we no longer strive to be something else and instead come before God just as we are. We trust His plan for our lives and know that He will provide for us.

This impacts the way we live, love, work, and speak. It changes how we spend our time, money, and talent. It changes our social media posts and texts. It changes the movies and TV shows we watch. Not because we want God to like us, but because we trust Him and believe His way is the best way.

- What things in your life inform your identity? (*E.g., sports, music, talents, family, friends, school, age, possessions, faith.*)
- Is faith just one part of your life or identity? Explain. How can you better integrate your faith into your life, so it can become the core of your identity?
- How would your life change if you put your faith as your first priority?

### **Right Priorities**

God asks two things of us: to love Him above all things and to love our neighbors as ourselves. He asks us to put things in order. Saint Augustine would say, “To order our hearts rightly.”

When we do this — when love of God is first — we open ourselves to fullness of life. God does not desire a relationship with us to boost His popularity or number of followers. He desires a relationship with us for our own good.

An encounter with God, a relationship with Him, changes us because His love is so powerful, so good, and so beautiful that it shapes how we see and know the world. And here is the crazy thing about God: Even though He knows He is right, even though He knows that His way is the best way, He lets us choose. He lets us choose how to “order our lives.”

This is the free choice God presents us with. We can choose life in its fullest form by choosing to put God in His rightful place, or we can choose death by putting God aside and living only for ourselves.

And the great paradox is this: The fullest life sometimes means death to self. In choosing life, we have to die to our sins and our will. And this is where many people walk away or decide they do not want to be in a relationship with God. When they see the decision laid before them, they choose themselves over God — very much like Adam and Eve in the Garden.

*Read Genesis 3.*

- Name the last five choices you made today.
- Why is it significant that God allows us to choose whether or not we follow Him?
- Do you know someone who strives to put God first in their lives? What is their life like?
- How can we evaluate ways we currently do not put God first? How can we strive to live differently?

### **Lessons from Adam and Eve**

We can learn a lot from Adam and Eve. First, you cannot hide from God in a garden He created. Second, Adam and Eve chose to disobey God. They chose to try to be God instead of trusting in His love and providence and being obedient to Him. They forgot who they were as beloved children and who God is as a good Father.

We often do the same thing! We want our will and our way. We want control over our lives. We do not want to trust God or we do not think He is worth trusting.

These are the things that keep us away from Him, that keep us from loving Him with all of our heart. We are afraid God will ask us to give up something we do not want or feel ready to give up. We worry He will call us to something we do not want to do. We think He could not love us because of our sin.

But God, in His goodness, does love us. He only asks us to give up things that are going to be bad for us in the long run. He calls us to greatness — to what He knows we were made for — and loves us more than we could ever imagine.

Adam and Eve's experience and choices in the garden also teach us about our hearts. Are we grasping at something God has asked us not to reach for at this time? Are we listening to voices that are leading us astray? Are we standing up for truth when our friends are drifting away from God? Are we hiding from God because we have done something wrong? Are we placing blame for our mistakes on someone else?

Genesis chapter three, Adam and Eve's departure from the garden, also teaches us about God. While He has to enforce the natural consequences of Adam and Eve's actions, He does so with mercy. He makes clothes for them, caringly seeks them out, and continues to watch over them after their exile.

God is calling you by name to seek Him, to come to know Him, and to live your life for Him. The more you give, the more you will receive. Ultimately, we can choose a full, abundant life in relationship with God, or we can choose to simply walk away.

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- Why do you think people struggle to trust God? Do you ever struggle to trust God?
- What would happen in your life if you gave God a chance and decided to trust in Him, seek Him, and even follow Him?

## RESPOND

The Garden (30 min)

Transition into the prayer activity, using the following as an example:

*We often breeze through the Book of Genesis without paying much attention to what is actually being revealed to us by God. We might only think of children's Bibles or not really see how such an ancient story even matters to our lives. We are going to take some time to prayerfully and intentionally read parts of Genesis, pausing and reflecting on what God is revealing to us.*

Use the following Scripture verses and prompts to lead the teens through this activity:

Give each teen a piece of paper and a drawing utensil. Read Genesis 1:1-5, and give the teens one minute to make a quick drawing of what stood out to them from the passage. Have each teen share their drawing and what it reveals to us about God (e.g., He desired to create, He made order out of chaos, He creates good).

Ask the teens to turn over their piece of paper. Read Genesis 1:9-13, and give the teens one minute to draw their favorite plant. Have each teen share what plant they picked (and why) and what this passage reveals about God (e.g., He saw His creation was good, He created in order, He created living things after He created what they needed to survive — water, sun, etc.).

Read Genesis 1:14-19. Then, use a core member's smartphone or ask each teen to use their smartphones to Google, "What Did Hubble See On Your Birthday? Nasa." Enter each teen's birthday to see different images of outer space.

Read Genesis 1:20-23 and then ask the teens the following questions:

- Would you rather be able to fly like a bird or swim like a fish? Why?
- What stood out to you from this passage?
- What does this passage tell us about God (He is imaginative, He creates all sorts of creatures and life, He is detail-oriented, He is intricate, etc.)?

Read Genesis 1:24-31. Then, challenge the teens to go around the circle and say the name of an animal. The catch is they cannot repeat animals or hesitate; if they do, they are out. Play for a few minutes. Then, ask the teens what stood out to them from the passage, what the passage tells us about God (He creates more and more complex things, He dives more and more deeply into the act of creating, etc.), and what the passage tells us about ourselves (to know that you were created in the image and likeness of God, He trusts us with everything He created, He thinks we are very good, etc.).

Read Genesis 2:1-3. Then, ask the teens to share what their go-to song or album is when they want to relax. (If the song is appropriate, have them share a clip.) Ask the teens what stood out to them from the passage, what the passage reveals to us about God (He rests, He takes time to be present to His creation, etc.), and what the passage means for us (we need to be present, we need to rest, we need to observe a “Sabbath,” etc.).

Ask one teen to read Genesis 2:4-7, ask another teen to read Genesis 2:15-17, and ask a third teen to read Genesis 2:18-24. Then, use the following questions for discussion:

- How was this creation account similar to what we read in the first chapter of Genesis? How was it different?
- Why do we have two different accounts of creation?
- What do we learn about God in the first and second accounts?
- What do we learn about ourselves as God’s creation in the first and second accounts?

Thank You, God Prayer (5 min)

Transition into a time of prayer, asking the teens to take a few deep breaths and call to mind the presence of God. Begin with the Sign of the Cross. Then, go around the circle and ask each teen to complete the following phrase, “God, thank you for being \_\_\_\_\_,” inviting them to fill in different attributes of God they learned about in the previous activity.

Closing Prayer (5 min)

Transition into a time of prayer, asking the teens to take a few deep breaths and call to mind Pray the Come, Holy Spirit prayer together, and give any final comments or instructions for upcoming meetings.

*Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the Earth. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*