

GRACE INFUSION

THE SACRAMENTS AND GRACE

LIFE NIGHT OUTLINE

CATECHISM

774-776
1084-1090
1115-1131
1996-2005
2559

YOUCAT

193
338-341

KEY TERMS

Sacrament
Grace

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 28:16-20
Luke 6:19
John 1:14-17
John 16:13
2 Corinthians 5:17
Titus 2:11-14
Hebrews 7:27

KEY CONCEPTS

- The sacraments are effective signs of God's grace that were instituted by Christ and given to the Church. They draw us into the relationship of the Trinity.

- Grace is free and undeserved help from God; grace makes us "partakers of the divine nature" of God. Grace is the communication of God's life to us.
- There are seven Sacraments that were instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church; they are Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Holy Orders, Matrimony, Anointing of the Sick, and Reconciliation.

SOCIAL MEDIA

#GraceInfusion
#LTSacraments

GOAL

This Life Night provides an introduction to grace and the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church. It challenges teenagers to be sustained by the sacraments of the Church and to constantly seek God's grace in all aspects of their lives.

ABOUT THIS LIFE NIGHT

This Life Night begins a semester about the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church. As teens gather, they are divided into small groups and are challenged to complete a "sacramental scavenger hunt." After the winners are awarded prizes, teenagers hear a teaching that provides an overview of the sacraments and grace. During the Break, teenagers reflect on the ways

they experience God's grace through both the sacraments and through everyday occurrences. They discuss their reflections during a small group discussion before transitioning into a closing prayer. Teenagers are invited to offer up any areas of weakness in their lives to Christ by praying before a cross.

PARENTAL NOTICE

This week at Life Night we began our semester about the sacraments. Teenagers learned that the sacraments are signs of God's grace and they make present what they signify. Grace is free and undeserved help and favor from God; grace is also a sharing in God's divine life. We receive grace every time we receive the sacraments and God also gives us special graces outside of the sacraments as well, often through prayer. We explored these aspects of the sacraments and grace, preparing teenagers for the upcoming semester. Grace is an important reality within our faith, but often times we overlook it.

Teenagers were challenged to explore the areas where they see signs of God's presence and experience God's grace, both in the sacraments and outside of them, and to be mindful of those things in the upcoming week. Take some time to discuss this reflection with your son or daughter, using these questions as a starting point:

- Where do you see God's presence during your day? How can you allow Christ to have a bigger place in your daily routine?
- What makes the sacraments important to our faith? As a family, what can we do to become more deeply rooted in the sacraments?

ENVIRONMENT

Create an environment for this Life Night by writing each of the seven sacraments of the Church on large pieces of butcher paper and hanging them on the walls of the room. Place a large cross or crucifix in the front of the room and tie string from the cross to each of the pieces of butcher paper. Be sure to keep this string out of the way as teenagers enter so that no one trips over it.

GATHER

SMALL GROUP DIVISION

(5 min)

As teenagers enter the main meeting space divide them into small groups. Assign two or three Core Members to do this and put teenagers into groups of six or eight as they walk through the door. Assign each group a Core Member as a leader and instruct teenagers to sit with their small groups at the beginning of the Life Night.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

(5 min)

The youth minister gathers teenagers together in the main meeting space and welcomes everyone to the Life Night. He or she introduces any teenagers that are attending Life Night for the first time and leads an opening prayer to begin the Life Night.

SACRAMENTAL SCAVENGER HUNT

(15 min)

Explain to the teens that the Life Night begins with a challenge between small groups. Each group will receive a list for a scavenger hunt and will need to collect as many of the items on the list using only what they have with them and what is on the parish property (NOTE: you may want to further limit / restrict the "search area" depending on the size of your parish property,

e.g., “only in the main meeting room,” “only in the youth center,” “only in the parish offices.”)

The Core Member leading each group should have the scavenger hunt list. Be creative and add your own items to the following list so it is unique to your parish youth group

- An item representing the Sacrament of Baptism
- A piece of paper that looks like your parish priest
- Three paper clips
- An item representing the Sacrament of Confirmation
- A non-food item that represents the Eucharist
- One purple marker
- A pen that has a chewed cap
- An item representing the Sacrament of Holy Orders
- A wedding ring
- An item representing the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick
- A band-aid
- An item representing the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- An empty gum wrapper

Give teenagers ten minutes to find the items, then gather all the teams back together. Award prizes for the first team to gather all the items as well as to the teams with unique items.

PROCLAIM

TEACHING: GRACE INFUSION

(15 min)

The teaching for this Life Night provides an introduction to the seven sacraments of the Church as well as a basic teaching about grace. It challenges teenagers to understand the divine gift of grace and how the sacraments provide us with an encounter with this grace.

An outline for the teaching can be found on pages 18 to 21.

BREAK

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

(30 min)

Break the teenagers and Core Members back into their small groups from the opening game. A Core Member begins the small group by leading a prayer and asking everyone in the group to introduce himself or herself. If this is the first Life Night of your semester, be sure to take extra time with these introductions. This will allow the teenagers to get to know each other better before beginning a discussion.

The Core Member facilitates a conversation with the teenagers using the following questions:

- Think of two or three places where you can experience God’s presence every day? What are they? How can you be more attentive to these experiences?
- Why is grace important to living our faith in Christ? Are you open to the ways that God shares grace with us? Why or why not?
- How can we become more grounded in the sacraments of the Church? Why is this so critical for us?
- Which of the seven sacraments would you like to understand more about? Why?
- How can we make our daily interactions and activities opportunities for grace? What effect will this have on the people around us?

SEND

LIFE NIGHT RECAP

(5 min)

Gather teenagers into the main meeting room and give each a small note card and pen. The youth minister recaps the main concepts of the Life Night:

- The sacraments are effective signs of God's grace that were instituted by Christ and given to the Church. They draw us into the relationship of the Trinity.
- Grace is free and undeserved help from God; grace makes us "partakers of the divine nature" of God. Grace is the communication of God's life to us.
- There are seven sacraments that were instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church; they are Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Holy Orders, Matrimony, Anointing of the Sick, and Reconciliation.

PRAYER AT THE CROSS

(10 min)

Close the Life Night by reading 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 to the teenagers before transitioning into a time of prayer:

Christ supplies us with grace in a concrete way through the sacraments. We also can receive special graces through prayer, works of charity, and moments of contemplation. We receive grace from Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross. The cross in Jesus' time was the ultimate symbol of weakness, defeat, and death. To us, though, it is a sign of victory, strength, and life.

In our own lives, we have areas that we are weak and are in need of grace. As we close Life Night, we approach the cross to offer those areas to Christ in prayer and petition for the grace to overcome them.

Invite the teens to write down their petition on the notecard they were given and then to come forward to kneel in front of the cross and offer up their prayer petitions by placing them in a basket at the foot of the cross. If possible, invite your music minister to be present to lead a worship song during this time. Otherwise, play quiet worship music as teenagers come forward to pray.

Once every teen has offered their prayer, close by offering all of the prayers to the intercession of Mary, praying a Hail Mary.

ADAPTING THE LIFE NIGHT

- For larger groups, only include scavenger hunt items that relate to the seven sacraments and require teenagers to use items that they have on their person (in their purse, wallet, etc.). This will keep the hunt from becoming chaotic. Award prizes for the most creative items.
- If your parish also subscribes to Edge resources, show the video "A Sacramental Life" from Edge Support DVD 11. This video will be most effective if shown prior to the teaching.

GOING DEEPER

- Throughout the semester arrange sacramental encounters for the teenagers. Plan a trip to be present at ordinations, invite a family to baptize their child at the Life Teen Mass or at a Life Night, and integrate opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation into your semester.

GRACE INFUSION

TEACHING

KEY TERM DEFINITIONS

- Sacrament – An outward sign of God’s invisible grace, instituted by Christ.
- Grace – Free and undeserved favor and help from God; a participation in the divine life of God.

SIGN, SIGN, EVERYWHERE A SIGN

- During the scavenger hunt, you found several items that represented something else. You picked up a piece of paper that looked like our priest, but you didn’t physically pick up and bring the priest here. When one thing represents another, it is called a sign.
- Signs are important. Some signs convey critical messages to us – traffic signs keep us safe and prevent the roads from becoming chaotic. Other signs communicate important information that can keep us safe.
- Other “signs” are more abstract – an object that we see or a phrase that someone says may be a “sign” that tells us to do something or to go in a certain direction. Our bodies can communicate different signs as well; if you came home and one of your parents was waiting for you with arms folded, you could take that as a sign you were in trouble.
- Ask the teens to give examples of signs that convey a meaning or message. If teenagers are in their small groups, this can be a brainstorming activity they do with their group.
- Our human culture communicates through signs – whether it is spoken language, art, symbols or other physical signs and representation – and these signs are important. Signs communicate a larger reality. One simple facial expression can communicate love, empathy, sadness, or anger. It is a sign of a deeper reality.

Compile a slideshow presentation of various signs and show each during the opening of the teaching. Briefly discuss with the teens what each communicates.

CCC 1146

Genesis 9:12
Numbers 21:9
Ezekiel 37:1-14
CCC 1147-1148

- God communicates to us through signs as well. Throughout Sacred Scripture, God uses physical elements of our world and makes them into signs. God uses a rainbow as a sign of the covenant he makes with Noah, during the Exodus God uses a serpent as a sign that saves people from illness, and the prophet Ezekiel sees dry bones as a sign of God's coming redemption.

CCC 1151
Mark 8:22-25
John 2:6-11
Matthew 14:16-21

- During Christ's ministry, he also used various physical signs and parts of creation to communicate his glory. Jesus used everyday things for these signs – things like spit, wine, bread, and fish. It is through these signs that Jesus makes the Kingdom of God known.

CCC 1152

- Jesus uses signs frequently through his ministry, but there were seven important signs that Jesus instituted during his ministry that the Church was entrusted with and that the Holy Spirit continues to work through. These signs are called sacraments.

THE SACRAMENTS

CCC 1131
Key Term

- The **sacraments** are "efficacious signs of grace," that were instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church. This means that the sacraments don't communicate an idea or thought, they actually communicate grace.

CCC 1996
Key Term

- **Grace** is free and undeserved favor that we are given by God; more than just favor, it is the way we participate in the divine life of God. Grace is God's very life, and it is given to us in a real way through the sacraments.

CCC 2000

- Our souls need grace the same way that our bodies need air in order to survive. When we are deprived of grace, our souls begin to suffocate. There are two kinds of grace: sanctifying grace and actual grace.

CCC 1129
CCC 2003

- Sanctifying grace is what we receive through the sacraments; each sacrament has a special grace associated with it that is specific to the sacrament.

CCC 2002

- Sanctifying grace is the seed of eternal life. If we continue to nourish it through the sacraments, we are led to heaven by it. Remember, this is not by anything we do other than allowing ourselves to be open to receiving the grace. God is doing the heavy lifting – grace is a gift.

- *A great way to illustrate this for the teenagers is to have a flowerpot with dirt in it. Plant a seed in a flowerpot as you talk about sanctifying grace. As you talk about actual grace and the sanctifying grace of the other sacraments, pour water into the flowerpot. Explain that, without the sacraments and grace, the seed of eternal life cannot grow within us. We need to continually water it and not allow our soul to become dry.*

- Actual grace is given to us in moments of our need. When we need to stand up for someone that is being bullied or need to walk out of a sinful situation, even when it is hard. Those are moments of “actual grace.”
- Think of a time when you really needed God’s help, or a time when you were in a difficult situation and were able to get through it. Those are moments of grace; God helps us in a real way and it impacts our ability to endure trial, difficulty, and have courage.
- We can petition God to give us grace or to give grace to others. Actual graces are moments when God intervenes in our life and provides us with spiritual nourishment in moments of our need.
- Grace “escapes our experience.” We don’t necessarily feel grace when we receive it, and we may only realize that the moment was filled with grace through hindsight.
- This is what makes the sacraments so important; they use physical signs to assure us that the grace they signify is being given to us.

CCC 2005

TO SERVE AND PROTECT

- When we celebrate and receive the sacraments it is Christ himself that is at work; that is how the sacraments can communicate grace. Jesus gave us the sacraments so that he could “be with us always,” and we could be intimately connected to his love and life through grace.
- Think about that – whenever you receive one of the seven sacraments you experience Christ. It isn’t an experience that “reminds us” of Christ or makes us think of Christ – it is an experience of Christ, himself.
- There are seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Holy Orders, Matrimony, Reconciliation, and Anointing of the Sick. Christ instituted all these sacraments during his ministry.
- Jesus Christ gave us the Church to protect these sacraments and administer them. We also can consider the Church a sacrament because the Church communicates the invisible grace that it signifies.
- We call the Church the “sacrament of salvation,” it is through the Church that we experience sanctifying grace through the sacraments.
- The sacraments provide a unique encounter with Christ; they are more than simple traditions that mark big moments in our life. When we celebrate the sacraments our unity as the Church is strengthened in Christ.

CCC 1127
Matthew 28:20

CCC 774

CCC 774-776
Matthew 16:13-18

CCC 1076

- Receiving the sacraments of the Church strengthens us individually, as well, and empowers us to live a “sacramental life.” This view of the world opens us up to many opportunities for actual grace in our daily lives.
- Each of the sacraments gives us a unique strength. When we receive Eucharist, we receive Christ and are nourished by His Body and Blood. In Reconciliation, we are healed from our sins and receive strength to avoid sin. Baptism makes us a new creation in Christ and provides strength to grow in faith.

INFUSED WITH GRACE

- The Church has a sacramental view of all reality; we know that we definitively experience grace through the seven sacraments of the Church and through the Church herself, but every moment in our daily lives can be an opportunity for grace.
- Christ can use conversations, people, experiences, and even physical objects to convey his grace and love to us. As we become more open to grace, we receive more grace, and as a result we are able to identify moments of grace in our lives.
- We remain open to grace through prayer. Prayer is how we communicate and build a relationship with God. It is absolutely necessary for us as disciples and believers in Christ. We pray when we celebrate the sacraments, and we can also pray when we are driving to school. The two kinds of prayer open us to different kinds of grace, but both build our relationship with Christ.
- This semester we will explore the seven sacraments of the Church and the ways they aid us on our journey to heaven. These are not things that are optional – they are essential parts of our faith. They open us up to the incredible grace that Christ wants to pour out on us daily and they build our relationship with Him in a real and incredible way.

CCC 2565

LIFE NIGHT 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 _____

Sacramental Scavenger Hunt _____

Small Group Discussion _____

Prayer at the Cross _____

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 _____

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.
- ☐ 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 Life Night. Pray for God's will to be done through the night. Pray over those involved.

LIFE NIGHT EVALUATION

INSTRUCTIONS:

Use the following questions to discuss and evaluate your Life Night.

1. On a scale of 1-10, how well did this Life Night accomplish the goal we set? Explain.

2. What was the strongest aspect of this Life Night?

3. What kind of follow-up do we need to do after this Life Night?

4. What can we improve for future Life Nights? How can we accomplish this?

1. On a scale of 1-10, how well did this Life Night accomplish the goal we set? Explain.

2. What was the strongest aspect of this Life Night?

3. What kind of follow-up do we need to do after this Life Night?

4. What can we improve for future Life Nights? How can we accomplish this?

1. On a scale of 1-10, how well did this Life Night accomplish the goal we set? Explain.

2. What was the strongest aspect of this Life Night?

3. What kind of follow-up do we need to do after this Life Night?

4. What can we improve for future Life Nights? How can we accomplish this?

1. On a scale of 1-10, how well did this Life Night accomplish the goal we set? Explain.

2. What was the strongest aspect of this Life Night?

3. What kind of follow-up do we need to do after this Life Night?

4. What can we improve for future Life Nights? How can we accomplish this?