

How does  
prayer deepen  
my love for  
Jesus Christ?

# THE BRANCHES

An Edge Night on Prayer

## EDGE NIGHT OVERVIEW

### GOAL

The goal of this Edge Night is to emphasize the need for prayer in order to strengthen and maintain a relationship with God, and that Lent can be a good time to implement new prayer practices.

### SUMMARY

In the Gather, the parents and youth play a game to illustrate different aspects of prayer and relationships with God. The Proclaim teaches the youth and the parents about prayer and gives practical examples of how they can grow in devotion during Lent. The Break gives the youth an opportunity for spontaneous prayer, while the parents are given time to make a prayer journal. During the Send, the youth and parents come back together to pray as a group.

### MAIN IDEAS

- Just as a tree without branches is not really a tree, a relationship with God is impossible without prayer.
- If we truly want to turn our hearts to God, we have to have a relationship with Him; communication and quality time are vital parts of any lasting relationship.
- When we know God, and know we are loved unconditionally by Him, we realize how present He is within our lives. Knowing that He saves, protects, and guides us, we cannot help but be filled with happiness, joy, security, and love through all stages of our lives.

## ENVIRONMENT

Utilize the same environment elements from the first Edge Night in this series.



### MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

Edge Video Support August 2018: "The Branches Parent Teaching" (lifeteen.com)

"Glory Be," Chris Tomlin (*Never Lose Sight*, 2016, sixsteprecords/Sparrow Records)

"As It Is In Heaven," Matt Maher (*Empty and Beautiful*, 2008, Provident Label Group)

"You Speak," Audrey Assad (*Fortunate Fall*, 2013, Fortunate Fall Records)



### SCRIPTURE

Psalm 130; Matthew 6:5-8; Luke 11:1-13; Romans 8:26



### CATECHISM

2558-2565, 2705-2719

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## EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

### GATHER

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#### Edge Night Introduction (5 min)

Welcome the youth and parents and begin in prayer. Give a brief overview of the topic of the Edge Night using the following as an example:

*What is a tree without any branches? Is it technically still a tree? Or is it simply a trunk? Our relationship with God is similar to this image of a tree; in order for it to be recognizable it needs the branches of prayer. Just as the branches are essential for a tree, prayer is essential for our relationship with God.*

#### Blind, Lame, and Mute (20 min)

Before the Edge Night, create a hard-to-replicate tree out of scotch tape and a combination of other materials, such as popsicle sticks, rolled up paper, and index cards.

This game is played in small groups.

1. Break the youth into groups of three and the parents into groups of three.
2. In the groups, one person must have their hands tied behind his or her back, one person is blindfolded, and one person must keep his or her mouth shut the entire time.
3. The person with no hands is the one who directs the construction, the person who is blindfolded must actually build the tree, and the person who cannot speak is the one who retrieves the supplies (one supply at a time and cannot actually touch the structure).
4. Give the teams five minutes to create a replica tree of the one that was created before the Edge Night.
5. At the end of the time, decide which team did the best job.

After this game has been cleaned up, gather the youth and parents back to the large group and use the following as an example to explain the purpose of the activity:

*Prayer is the answer to all of our spiritual challenges; it changes our lives. It's our source for new life for it connects us to God who is the author of life. It is not passive, even when we sit in silence and simply receive God's grace. Prayer changes us. It calls us into action, to speak, to listen, and to act. When we pray, our hearts turn back to God and our eyes are opened to God's constant presence living and active in our day-to-day life.*

### PROCLAIM

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#### “The Branches” Teaching (10 min)

Break the youth and parents into different meeting spaces for the Proclaim and Break.

The teaching for youth can be found on pages 30 to 31. The teaching for parents can be found on pages 32 to 33 or utilize “The Branches Parent Teaching” video from the *Media Suggestions*.

### BREAK

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#### • 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

- **Daily prayer nourishes a relationship with God. How do you pray? What is your prayer life like?**
- **When praying we are trusting in God and asking for His will to be done. Have you ever had the experience of God answering a prayer?**
- **There are lots of ways to pray: adoration — sitting in the presence of God's greatness, petition — asking God for something, intercession — praying for someone else/their needs, thanksgiving — saying thank you to God for the**

- things He has done, praise — giving God honor, and many more. Which style is the easiest for you? Which is the hardest?
- **7<sup>th</sup> Grade**
  - Christians are called to pray throughout the day. What would your life look like if you were constantly praying? (Note not necessarily formal prayer in a Church but an ongoing dialogue knowing God is present with you in any situation.)
  - Praying with Scripture is a great way to learn how to live by growing in an understanding of the teachings of Jesus. What is your favorite Bible story and what does it teach you about how to live?
  - Sometimes it doesn't feel like our prayers are being heard but we still have to trust in God's plan. Does anyone relate to this or have a story about a prayer they have made?
- **8<sup>th</sup> Grade**
  - Praise: Loving and blessing God for who He is.
  - Blessing and Adoration: Recognizing oneself as a creature before the creator, and thus giving God glory and honor above all.
  - Petition: Asking God for something.
  - Intercession: Asking God for something for someone else.
  - Thanksgiving: Giving gratitude to God for who He is and all that He has done.

Give each youth a piece of paper and instruct them to draw a tree trunk. Then, coming out from the trunk like branches, have them write their own prayers for each of the five types of prayer. Consider having an example already completed for them to reference.

- Prayer is a relationship of love between God and his people. Can a relationship exist without communication? What makes prayer difficult? How can we work on these challenges to create a life of prayer?
- How do you pray? We should never be afraid to pray during any circumstance, for anything, at any time.
- Imagine Jesus came to school with you for a day. What would you talk about in the hallway, during lunch, at band practice, etc.

#### **Youth: Prayer Tree Worksheet (20 min)**

Break the youth into small groups.

As a group, discuss the five different types of prayer: praise, blessing and adoration, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving. Give the youth a brief explanation of each using the following as an example:

If time allows, have the youth share one of their prayers and explain why it is that specific type of prayer.

After all of the youth have created their prayer trees, create an accountability group. As a small group, they should decide on a time during the upcoming week that they will all pray. They should settle on a specific prayer or an amount of time to which they will all commit. Encourage them to set timers on their phones as reminders, or to text one another to hold each other accountable to that time of prayer.

#### **Parents: Prayer Journal (20 min)**

Begin by briefly explaining to the parents the five different types of prayer: praise, blessing and adoration, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving. Then give the parents a brief explanation of these different types of prayer using the following as a starting point:

- Praise: A form of prayer that recognizes most immediately that God is God. It gives God the greatest glory, not for the things that He does for us, but simply because He is. Praise is a part of all

prayer and lifts all of our prayers to God. (CCC 2639)

- Blessing and Adoration: A form of prayer in which we encounter God and respond to His many gifts. It is a form of prayer in which we exalt God as our creator and the power He has to set us free from sin and evil. (CCC2626-2628)
- Petition: A form of prayer in which we recognize our relationship with God. We first move toward Him and ask for forgiveness, requesting all that is necessary for us to live in and welcome the Kingdom of God within our lives. Every need can become the object of petition and we are called to pray at all times. (CCC 2629-2633)
- Intercession: A form of prayer that leads us to pray as Jesus did; He is our sole intercessor before God the Father. In intercession we pray



## STEP IT UP

Have your parish priest give a blessing over the parents and youth as they strive to grow in prayer this Lent.

**SEND**

### **Praying Together (20 min)**

Bring the youth and parents back together in the main meeting room. At this time, explain that they will have a time to pray with each other as a family. Break the youth off with their parents and have Core Members fill in for the youth whose parents are not there.

For the first few minutes, the parents pray with and for their child, asking him or her for any specific intentions. Then they switch and the youth pray with and for the parents, asking them for any specific intentions.

For more guidance and suggestions on how to do this type of prayer, see the *Praying Together* handout on the *August 2018 Edge USB* and online at [lifeteen.com](http://lifeteen.com) under Edge

prayers of petition on behalf of someone else, looking out for the interests of others and raising their needs to God. (CCC 2634-2636)

- Thanksgiving: A form of prayer in which we thank God for all that He is and all that He does. Thanksgiving characterizes the prayer of the Church and is particularly present in the Eucharist. Just like petition, all circumstances of life can become a prayer of thanksgiving to the Father who is our source of everything. (CCC2637-2638)

Pass out the *Parent Prayer Journal Pages* found on the *August 2018 Edge USB* and online at [lifeteen.com](http://lifeteen.com) under *Edge Support: August 2018*. Give the parents the remainder of the time to write their own prayers for the different types of prayer on each page.



## SUGGESTIONS

Play quiet, prayerful music in the background as they write their prayers.

Notes:

# THE BRANCHES

## Proclaim Details

### “THE BRANCHES” YOUTH TEACHING GUIDE:

- The first practice that the Church gives us to help us grow closer to God during our Lenten journey is prayer.
- Just like a tree without branches is really not a tree at all, a relationship with God is impossible without prayer.
- Prayer is an essential part of growing closer to God because it is the foundation of a relationship with Him.
- Prayer is a conversation with God.
- *To demonstrate how essential communication is for any relationship, call one youth to the front of the room. Start a conversation with the youth, ask about his or her day, and then, as he or she is talking, pretend someone texted you, pull out your phone, pretend to fall asleep, and finally, ignore him or her and walk away.*
- If you want to have a friendship with someone, it is important that you talk with him or her and spend intentional time together.
- *Ask the youth to respond to the following questions raising their hands if they agree.*
- How many of you get annoyed when your friend is on the phone when you are trying to talk to him or her? How many of you would be sad if your friend fell asleep when you were talking? How many of you would wonder if someone was your friend if they walked away and did not want to talk to you?
- If we truly want to turn our hearts to God, we have to have a relationship with Him; and part of having a relationship with another person is communication and spending quality time together.

- That is what prayer is. We set aside time in our day to have a conversation with God in order to learn more about Him and talk to Him about what is going on in our lives.
- There are different forms of prayer (which we will learn more about during the Break) and there are also different ways you can pray.
- Prayer can be as simple as sitting with God. You could also learn more about Him by reading the Bible or praying the rosary and reflecting on His life. You can find great examples of how to follow Him by reading about the lives of different saints.
- Just as you like to have the attention of your friends when you're spending time together, it is important that you are not distracted by your phone or in a place that is going to make you want to fall asleep when you pray.
- *Give the youth a few examples of places they can go to pray, such as the church, an adoration chapel, a special room in their house, and even encourage them to make a prayer corner in their room.*
- Prayer is essential to our relationship with God — and a relationship with God is essential to living a happy life.
- When we know God, and know we are loved unconditionally by Him, we realize how present He is within our lives. Knowing that He saves, protects, and guides us, we cannot help but be filled with happiness, joy, security, and love through all stages of our lives.
- *Share with the youth something you are doing, or plan to do, to deepen your relationship with God through prayer and why you want a deeper relationship with God.*

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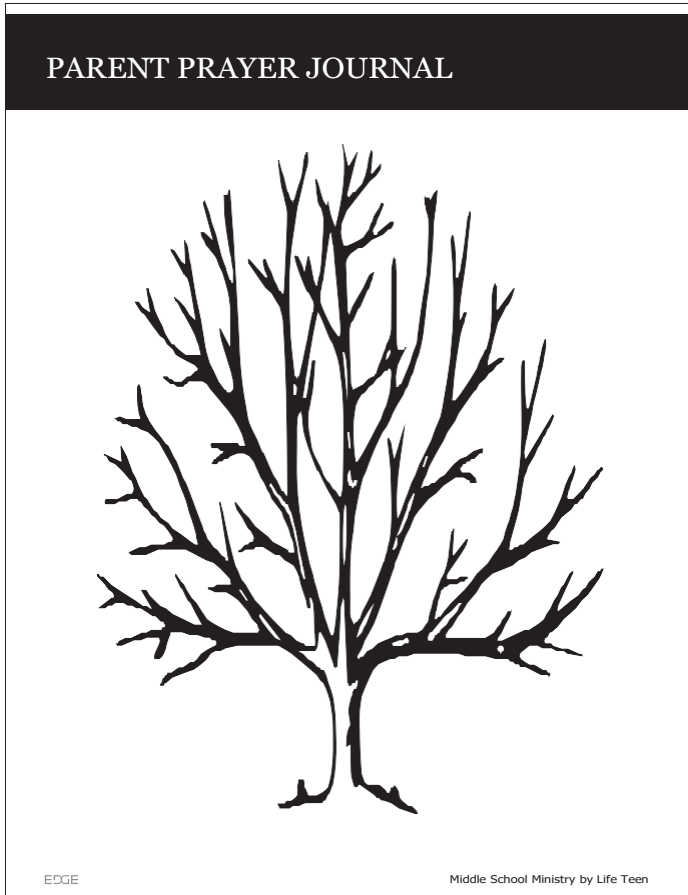
## “THE BRANCHES” PARENT TEACHING GUIDE:

- The example of a tree without branches not really being a tree at all is indicative of the truth that a relationship with God is impossible and unrecognizable without prayer.
- Prayer is the foundation and source of a relationship with God.
- Prayer is defined in many ways in our faith. It can be described as “the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.” It is also “a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.” Prayer is a covenant and communion with God. (CCC 2558-2565)
- Simply put, prayer is a conversation with God. Prayer can be simply sitting before Him, worshiping Him for who He is, thanking Him for the blessings in our lives, asking Him for things in times of trial, and praying for others.
- *Ask the parents: What would happen to any relationship in your life if you stopped talking to that person or never spent time with him or her? Would that relationship be sustainable?*
- There are certain seasons for relationships in our lives and while communication may ebb and flow over the years and seasons — we keep up with the people in our lives who are most important to us.
- In the same way, our relationship with God is not sustainable without prayer.
- This relationship should be the most important relationship in our lives because God is our very source of life. He is our creator and in order to live our lives to the fullest and reach heaven, we are called to follow Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. (John 10:10, John 14:6)
- Prayer is how we come to know God, to know we are loved, and to know what His will is for our lives. Prayer is our source of life for it connects us to God who is the source of all life.

- Jesus states, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing (John 15:5)."
- Not only is prayer the branches that make our relationship with God recognizable, but we are called to be the branches that sprout forth from the vine helping to feed others. We are called to be people who find God in everything.
- If you have not already been in the habit of prayer, Lent is an incredible time to begin. It is important to schedule your prayer time, just like you have to do with everything else in your busy life.
- *Ask some parents to share different prayer practices they have found doable in the midst of busy lives, but also challenge them to pray about doing even more, such as committing to a holy hour, praying a rosary, or participating in a Bible study.*

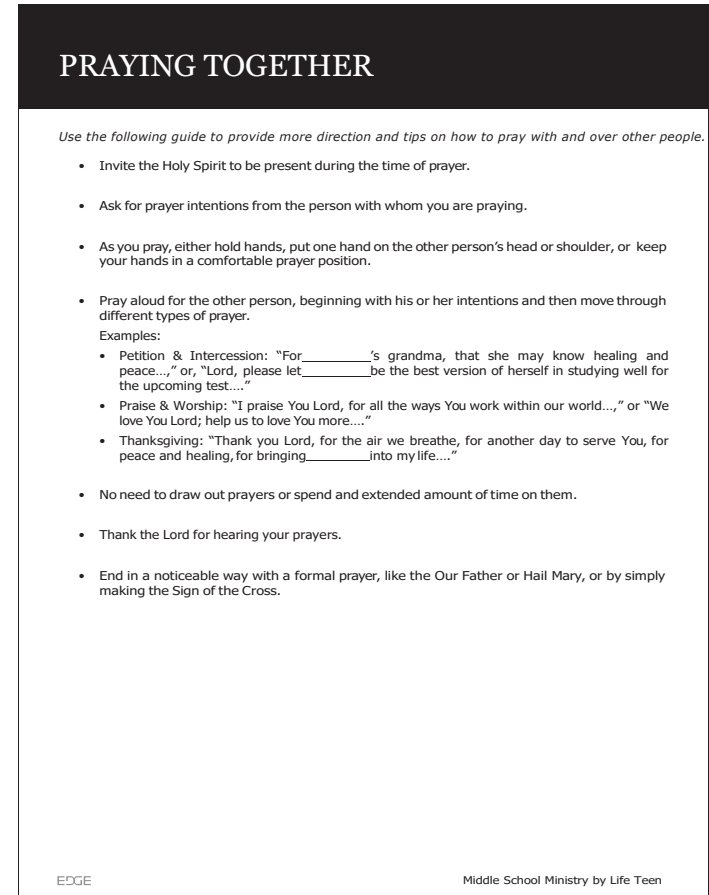
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### PARENT PRAYER JOURNAL PAGES

Print these off and create booklets for the parents to use during the Break. These pages can be found on the *August 2018 Edge USB* and online at [lifeteen.com](http://lifeteen.com) under Edge Support: *August 2018*.



### PRAYING TOGETHER HANDOUT

Use this handout during the Send for more direction in praying for each other. This handout can be found on the *August 2018 Edge USB* and online at [lifeteen.com](http://lifeteen.com) under Edge Support: *August 2018*.