

Why and how does Jesus Christ want me to make good choices?

FREEDOM

An Edge Night on Moral Freedom

LEADER OVERVIEW

Freedom can be defined as the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint.

What is freedom? According to the definition above, it is to speak or act as one wants without hindrance or restraint. But what this fails to take into account is what happens when the act or words are hurtful or harmful. How does this affect our so-called freedom, especially when it tears apart the relationships in our lives?

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, freedom is defined in much the same way as above: "Freedom is the power, rooted in reason and will, to act or not to act, to do this or that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one's own responsibility." But freedom is further explained a few paragraphs later: "The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. There is no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just. The choice to disobey and do evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to 'the slavery of sin.'" (CCC 1731-1733)

This semester we have considered how the final five of the Ten Commandments help us shape and form healthy relationships with others, exploring the call that we have from Jesus to love our neighbors as ourselves. In doing so, we have also seen that it is far better to be a person of honesty, integrity, and authenticity who builds relationships upon respect, integrity, and the dignity of the human person. When we act in this way, we find true freedom.

The Ten Commandments were not created as restraints to our freedom, but rather, as guidelines to find true freedom. They do tell us what not to do, but they also reveal to us all of the things we should do for others and all of the things we should expect from others. Following the Ten Commandments not only frees us from the slavery of sin, but it also frees us to have true, loving, and authentic human relationships. In building up our relationships in virtue and integrity, we will find more happiness and freedom than if we simply live our lives speaking and acting without hindrance, restraint, or moral guidance.

The Christian life is a life set apart. To be a Christian is not an easy task in our society, but, as we have seen this semester, this is the true way to find what we all seek. It is through the Ten Commandments that freedom will be ours — the freedom that comes when we can say without hindrance or restraint that we truly want the best for each other and expect the best from one another.

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EDGE NIGHT OVERVIEW

GOAL

The goal of this Edge Night is to show the youth how the commandments will lead them to greater freedom. It reinforces the semester's overall message: the Ten Commandments are not rules to hold them back but a way of life that will help them truly love one another and learn how to build healthy relationships where they truly desire what is best for one another.

SUMMARY

The Edge Night begins with a Gather game of different types of tag games that continually change at the sound of a bell. The Proclaim teaches the youth about the freedom that comes from following the Ten Commandments. The Break gives the youth an opportunity to affirm one another, and the Send is a time of prayer where the youth all get to share one prayer intention and one thing that they are grateful for.

MAIN IDEAS

- God asks us to follow Him through the Ten Commandments, but at the core of it all, He also wants something for us.
- God knows us, so He knows the struggles we have in our relationships. Thus, He gives us these guidelines to help us see what is actually possible in our relationships with others.
- The Ten Commandments that we covered this semester are about what He wants for us — to be treated with respect, dignity, and honor and to be truly who we are.

ENVIRONMENT

Add to the basic environment by posting the word "freedom," along with a simple definition like, "the ability to act or not to act," at the front of the room.



CATECHISM

1731-1734



SCRIPTURE

Mark 12:31

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EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

GATHER

Weekly Challenge Follow Up (5 min)

Welcome the youth, introduce any youth there for the first time, and begin in prayer. Ask the youth to raise their hands if they completed the weekly challenge and then ask a few volunteers to share what they fasted from and what their experience was like.

Edge Night Introduction (5 min)

Give a brief overview of the topic of the Edge Night, using the following as an example:

This semester we have been looking at the second half of the Ten Commandments. Who can name all of the commandments we talked about? (Allow the youth to respond and give a prize to the person who names them all.) These commandments have shown us how to build healthy relationships in our lives and how to be the type of people who love one another as Jesus asks us to, but they have also paved the path to freedom for us. The Ten Commandments are not meant to be rules that hold us back, but rather, guidelines that show us how to use our freedom for what is good. When we do this, we actually experience greater levels of freedom. When we treat each other in goodness and truth, we find more freedom to love, trust, and be authentic in our relationships. These commandments are the building blocks for lives of freedom and happiness where we can truly care for one another and desire the best for and from each other.

Changing Rules (30 min)

This game is played in a large group.

1. Set the youth up to play a regular game of tag. Have more than one youth be it if the group is large.
2. Begin with an elimination rule: If you get tagged by someone who is it, you are out.
3. After five minutes, ring a bell, sound a loud buzzer, or ring a gong. Invite all of the youth who are out back in to the game, change the youth who are it, and switch up the rules.
4. Now play with the rules of freeze tag: If you get tagged, you are frozen in place until someone who is not it tags and unfreezes you.
5. After five minutes, ring a bell, sound a loud buzzer, or ring a gong. Announce that the youth who were frozen are unfrozen, change the youth who are it, and switch up the rules.
6. Now play with the rules of caterpillar tag: If you get tagged, link arms with the person who is it and run around with him or her. As people are tagged, they are added on to the line of people with the taggers.
7. After five minutes, ring a bell, sound a loud buzzer, or ring a gong. Instruct all of the youth who were a part of the caterpillar to play as individuals once again, change the youth who are it, and switch up the rules.

8. Now play with the rules of hotdog tag: If you get tagged, you lay on the ground with your legs together and arms at your sides, like a hotdog. In order to be freed, two youth must come and lay down on either side to create the bun for the hotdog (without being tagged themselves).
9. After five minutes, ring a bell, sound a loud buzzer, or ring a gong. Instruct all of the youth who were hotdogs to get up, change the youth who are it, and switch up the rules.
10. Now play with the rules of dead ant tag: If you get tagged, you have to lay on your back with your hands and feet up in the air. In order to get up and resume playing, each limb must be tagged by four different youth.
11. Continue to play with other versions of tag for as long as time allows.

PROCLAIM

“Freedom” Teaching (10 min)

This teaching can be found on pages 106 to 108.

BREAK

6th Grade

- **We have been given our conscience and the law of God to know how to live. Yet sometimes we face other influences or challenges pulling us in the other direction? What are some challenges you face that make it difficult to live in the way God wants you to? What are the things that help you follow God?**
- **It is important to discern which values, peers, and media are harmful and which are helpful. How can you tell the difference? What process do you use for making moral decisions?**
- **Morality provides a foundation to make good decisions, have harmonious relationships, and be happy. Is morality objective or subjective? (Subjective means it depends on one’s feelings, opinions, or perspective while objective removes those and looks for facts that apply to everyone)**

7th Grade:

- **God’s gift of free will makes people responsible for their actions in living a moral life. Has there been an occasion where you have noticed or seen the consequences of free will being misused?**
- **Conscience is a gift from God to help you in making decisions but it is a tool that must be formed to be properly used. Why is it important to form your conscience? How can you or what do you do to properly form your conscience?**
- **When making a judgment about morality it is important to consider the object, intention, and circumstances of an action. Use the following stories to see if you think something is a sin or not:**
 - **Object — the thing which the action is essentially concerned (lying, stealing, helping a blind person cross the street)**
 - **Circumstances — people involved, time, place, occasion, etc. (falling asleep on the job, deliberate lie to avoid getting in trouble)**
 - **Intention — what is the purpose or reason for doing the action (helping a neighbor to show off or impress someone, spreading a rumor out of revenge)**

- **"A friend of yours admits to using drugs. You are worried for your friend and decide to tell a school counselor. The school does a search in his/her locker and finds drugs. He/she is suspended." (What are the object, intention, circumstances? Was this a good decision?)**
- **"A young man goes on a mission trip, serves the poor, donates money to charity, and learns about Jesus. However, he doesn't really believe or want to do this but instead is wanting to add to his college resume; he also knows his girlfriend's parents will think better of him and trust him more if they think he is that kind of person." (What are the object, intention, circumstances? Was this a good decision?)**

8th Grade:

- **When will you have a perfectly formed conscience? (Never on earth it is a lifelong continued process of forming, growing closer to God, understanding His plan, and in fact if you stop or take a break your conscience can go in the wrong direction)**
- **Following God's law and right human reason can help people to make correct judgments. Ignoring God's law and not following right human reason can lead people to make errors in judgment, thereby committing acts of moral evil for which they are responsible. How is a life lived in accordance with God's plan different than one without any concern for Him or His law? What are the benefits or why should someone live according to God's laws?**
- **God has placed in humanity a natural law. When human nature, shared by each and every person, is subjected to rational thought it gives rise to an understanding of fundamental rights and wrongs. Natural law is the indispensable foundation of the moral life for everyone, Christians and non-Christians alike. Do you believe this; that there is such a thing as objective right or wrong? Or do you think morality is determined by the individual?**



SUGGESTIONS

Do not do any sort of anonymous affirmations, as they are harder to control and could be hurtful if someone writes something mean rather than an affirmation. Another option is to give each youth a sheet of paper and some time to think about the good qualities of the other members of the small group. Have them write down one affirmation for each person in the small group and then take turns reading their affirmations for each other aloud.

SEND

The Best (10 min)

Bring the youth back to the large group and have them stand in a circle. One at a time, ask each youth to share one prayer intention for themselves as they strive to live lives of freedom, and then one thing they want to thank God for. Have a Core Member give the youth an example of how to do this.

End the Edge Night with a final group prayer or with upbeat praise and worship music. Challenge the youth to continue to follow these commandments and love one another well.

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TEACHING GUIDE

GETTING STARTED

To cover the basic information, follow along and craft the talk based off of the bullet points. If the youth are ready to take it deeper, incorporate a few of the Going Deeper call out boxes, picking the ones the youth would relate to the most.



GOING DEEPER

Check inside these boxes for tips and ideas on how to take your youth a little deeper with the Proclaim.

THE BELL SET APART

- Reflect on the Gather game. Point out how the sound of the bell, buzzer, or gong told them it was time to do something different — something different was being asked of them.
- Play the video, "The Bell Set Apart," from the Media Suggestions.
- All of the bells in our lives ask different things from us, just like in our tag game. They tell us it is time to wake up, time to go to a different class, or that someone is waiting for a response from us in a text message.
- But the bells that are set apart, as we see in the video, are the bells we hear during Mass — the bells that tell us something miraculous is happening.



GOING DEEPER

Explain to the youth that if their parish does not use bells during the Eucharistic prayer, they might need to pay closer attention to be ready to witness the miracle that is taking place.

- These bells tell us that Jesus is with us. They do not ask anything from us. They do not move us onto a different activity. They catch our attention and let us know something amazing is happening.

FOR YOU/FROM YOU

- Just like the numerous bells we hear throughout our day ask many things from us, we may feel like the Ten Commandments act in the same way — they are constantly demanding something from us.
- Don't steal, don't lie, don't act like that toward him, don't look at her that way, etc.

- God does ask use to follow Him through these commandments, but at the core of it all, He also wants something for us: truefreedom.
- He is signaling to us that there is something amazing here — these are not just commandments saying, “do not do this” but rather, signs pointing us to something even more incredible He has in store for us.
- He wants us to be free; He wants us to be treated with respect, dignity, honor, and to be who we were truly created to be.
- He knows that if we use our freedom to do what is good — not what is bad or just what we want without regard to how it affects others — we will find the greatest freedom and happiness. (CCC 1731-1734)
- God knows the struggles we have in our relationships and thus, He gives us these guidelines to help us see what is actually possible in our relationships with others.

LIVING THE REAL DREAM

- Imagine how incredible our world would be if everyone was treated with dignity and respect, and if everyone acted from a place of integrity, authenticity, and honesty; we would all have the perfect relationships we long and strive for.
- These commandments set us free from our temptations by showing us the ways we might fall into sin.
- They let us know what we need to look out for in our relationships so we can find the happiness we are seeking.
- When we are free, we have the ability to choose to act or not to act, and to make choices without fear of rejection or expectations of what we will get in return.
- This semester we have learned about the second half of the Ten Commandments: you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, and you shall not covet your neighbor’s goods. They have shown us so much more than what we are not supposed to do and have given us the path to treating one another with dignity and respect.
- Jesus sums up all of the commandments for us. He tells us that all of these commandments, and the five that proceed them, can be summed up in two great commandments.
- *Read Matthew 22:36-40.*
- The commandments tell us what not to do, but they also lay the foundation of what it means to be a person who loves God with all your heart, soul, and mind and what it looks like to love your neighbor as yourself.
- This is what Jesus tells us is at the heart of everything we do. He does not want us to follow rules to simply follow rules. He wants us to be people who are truly free because we know what is most important in life.



GOING DEEPER

Hispanic/Latino youth often feel like they are limited by circumstances of their lives — being unwelcome because of their immigration status, being challenged by the reality of living in-between cultures, etc. Offer them hope that Jesus frees us in spite of these challenges.

- We may have heard these words before, but everything you have learned this semester gives you the tools to start living your life in a way that is in line with these commandments.
- In following these commandments, we find the freedom to love one another as Jesus loves us and to honestly say that we truly desire the absolute best for each other.
- Being a person who follows Jesus is not always going to make you popular. It is not the easiest path, but it is the path that leads to happiness, authentic and lasting friendships, and new life both now and in eternity. (Matthew 7:13-14)