

How does the grace from the sacraments of initiation deepen my love for Jesus?

WHAT'S THE CATCH? SACRAMENTS AND GRACE EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

SCRIPTURE

John 1:12-14
John 10:10
Romans 5:15
1 Corinthians 2:8-9
Ephesians 2:7-10
Hebrews 4:16

CATECHISM

1996-1999
2000-2003

YOUCAT

172-174
338
339

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- Random articles of clothing/ accessories
- Boxes to wrap
- Wrapping paper
- Tables

- Audio/Visual Projection Equipment
- Ice cream
- Ice cream scoop
- Ice cream toppings
- Bowls, spoons, napkins

GOAL

The goal for this Edge Night is to give the youth an appreciation for the wonder and awe of the Sacraments. They should come to a deeper understanding that grace is a free gift from God that is offered to us and is necessary for us to live lives to the full. This night is also an introduction to the Sacraments and will briefly introduce the idea that each Sacrament has graces to help us at each stage of our lives.

EDGE NIGHT AT A GLANCE

This night should be a fun first night of the semester. It will hit on the main theme for the semester, which is the role of grace in the Sacraments and the importance of that grace. Emphasize the fact that we get excited to open presents on our birthdays and on Christmas and should be even more excited to receive the gift of grace in the Sacraments.

This night will begin with a fun relay race and some funny YouTube videos of kids opening presents. Then there will be a teaching on the importance of grace and how we receive it in every Sacrament as free, undeserved help from God. Then there will be a time for small groups and the night will end in prayer and an ice cream sundae party.

BEFORE THE NIGHT

Wrap clothes and accessories for the relay race at the beginning of the night. You need to have at least one item for each youth in attendance so be sure to collect enough things either from donations or a thrift store. Buy all the supplies for an ice cream sundae bar. Make sure to have the tables set up and all the toppings and ice cream put out before the youth are sent over at the end of the night.

ENVIRONMENT

The theme for the night is free gifts. Decorate the room with wrapped presents, wrapping paper, bows, or “winning” lotto tickets. Put up posters that just say “Free” on them.

MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

YouTube: "Cute Little Girl Cries From Happiness On Her Birthday" by Mario Polo
YouTube: "Wii Cry Baby" by ViralWatch

GATHER

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

(5 min)

As the youth enter, have fun, upbeat music playing in the background.

The youth minister should gather all the youth together, welcome them to Edge Night, and lead an opening prayer. He or she should introduce any youth at Edge Night for the first time. Begin with a prayer and present a brief overview of the session.

PRESENT RELAY RACE

(10 min)

Break the youth into small groups. Set up a table of presents for each small group at one side of the room. Instruct the small groups to line up on the opposite side of the room directly across from one of the tables of presents. The presents on the table can be random pieces of clothing, sunglasses, hair ties, head bands, shoes, etc.; just make sure that they are all wrapped.

This will be a relay race. Instruct the small groups to pick one youth from their group to stand by the table to be dressed up. The relay race begins with the first person in line. He or she will run to the opposite side of the room where the present table is set up. Instruct him or her to pick one present, unwrap it, and put it on the youth standing by the table. After he or she has completed this task, he or she runs back to line and the next person in line does the same. The first team to unwrap all their presents and dress up their small group member wins.

FUNNY GIFT REACTION VIDEOS

(5 min)

Play one of the funny videos from the Media Suggestions.

PROCLAIM

SCRIPTURE PROCLAMATION

(5 min)

John 10:10

“WHAT’S THE CATCH?”

TEACHING

(10 min)

People like free things, and everyone loves receiving gifts. Sometimes, though, gifts have a catch; even Santa hangs the naughty list or a stocking full of coal over your head if you don’t behave. Or things are only free if we buy something else. Sometimes we have to do a task in order to get a gift. For example, our parents will only give us ice cream if we do our chores. Even on game shows after people receive these huge fancy “free” things they usually have to pay taxes on them, which are usually very expensive. There are very few times in our lives that we are given free gifts with no strings attached.

What we are talking about this semester is the Sacraments. The Sacraments are visible signs of something deeper, of something God is doing in our lives, which is invisible. For example, the visible sign of Reconciliation is a confessional and a priest but

what is invisible is our soul being cleaned
as we are absolved of our sins.

Grace

One of the invisible things that happens in every Sacrament is receiving grace. Grace is the free, undeserved help from God and is one of the greatest gifts we will ever receive (CCC1996). Grace is God stepping into our lives and helping us in our greatest times of need, especially in helping us to avoid sin and grow in holiness. There is no catch; God loves you so much that even though we don't deserve it He will give us grace (Romans 5:15). But there is also grace that comes from every Sacrament called "sanctifying grace," which is a participation in the life of God. Sanctifying grace gives us the ability to live and act in keeping with God's will for us, and it perfects our souls and enables us to live with God (CCC 1997, 2000).

So What?

You might be wondering why you should care about grace. Well, first of all, if we want to be happy, if we really want to live life to the full, we need grace. God created us to be filled with His love and His help; He created us to be filled with grace and we won't ever find true happiness without it (CCC 2001). Grace is a participation in God's life and having God's life within us (CCC 1997). Grace is a free gift from God that we do not deserve. Grace is the one gift in our lives that does not have fine print, we do not have to do anything but be open and receive. God loves us so much that He does anything He can to help us so that we can make it to heaven and live in eternal happiness with Him! So, shouldn't we be more excited about receiving grace than any Christmas gift?

Sacramental Graces

So how do we receive this grace? Where can we find these free gifts of God? In every Sacrament! Every single Sacrament has a different grace to help us along the way depending on what stage we are at in our lives. In the Sacrament of Baptism we receive sanctifying grace for the first time, which allows the possibility for us to make it to heaven and opens us up to receive all other graces in our lives. The Sacrament of the Eucharist gives us the grace to be in greater communion with God and to have a fuller life, and it sustains us throughout our lives. The Sacrament of Reconciliation restores our relationship with God and gives us the grace to avoid sin. In the Sacrament of the Anointing of the

Sick the person receives the grace to make it through suffering and pain. In the Sacrament of Confirmation we receive the grace to live out our faith fearlessly, and in the Sacrament of Holy Orders and Matrimony we receive the graces needed to live out our different vocations, or states of life (CCC 2002-2003).

At Baptism you become a new creation – in the **Sacrament of Baptism** you become a new creation as a child of God. Baptism is unique because it is the first **Sacrament of Initiation**, and it is the foundation for all other sacraments. Without Baptism, we would not be able to receive any other sacraments in the Church.

Baptism is a foundation, and it also brings us into a **covenant** with God, which gives us the ability to enter into heaven. Because it is a covenant you have to say, "yes" to it. (*Ask the youth how many of them were baptized as an infant.*) Most of you were infants when you were baptized, so your parents said "yes" on your behalf and promised to raise you in the faith.

When we are baptized, we are forgiven of all the sins that have been committed up until that point. After our Baptism, we are then able to go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the forgiveness of sins we commit over the course of our lives. For infants they are just forgiven of **original sin**—the sin all humanity inherited from Adam and Eve, since they are not at an age of reason and not able to commit sin. But if you are baptized at a later age, then you are forgiven of original sin and all sins you have committed up until that point. As we said before you are also made a new creation, you are now an adopted son or daughter of God. Baptism also makes us members of the Church and brings us together in a bond of unity with all other Christians. In our Baptism we are sealed with an indelible mark—a permanent mark on our souls that claims us for Christ. We can never undo our Baptism. We are forever children of God and by our Baptism we are given the promise of salvation.

Confirmation completes our Baptism, meaning that when we are confirmed the graces that we received in our Baptism are stirred up within us – and we are given a new strength to live out our faith.

Confirmation brings us into an even closer relationship with Christ and deepens our bond to the Church. It also increases in us the gifts of the Holy Spirit so that we can courageously live out our faith and share it with others.

What to Do?

In order to receive these gifts we have to be present; you cannot expect to get all your Christmas presents without going over to the tree. In the same way you have to show up and receive, you have to go to the Sacraments in order to receive grace (CCC 2002). So what are you going to do? Jesus is standing with His arms open wide stretching out to you with the greatest gift of life with Him and eternal happiness (which is way better than a Wii). Are you just going to ignore Him and walk away? Or are you going to show up and receive the gift and live the most incredible life you could ever imagine? The choice is yours.

BREAK

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

(20 min)

Break the youth into their small groups. Begin in prayer and discuss the following questions:

- What is the best Christmas or birthday present you have ever received?
- Have you ever given someone a present they didn't like or want? How did that make you feel?
- In your own words describe what grace is. Why is it important?
- Why are the Sacraments so important? What graces do we receive in each Sacrament?
- Why do you think God gives us grace?

- How do you think Jesus feels when we complain about receiving the free gifts He wants to give us?

• 6th Grade

1. God's grace is present in the sacraments which confer the grace they symbolize. Have you ever felt God's grace in your life?
2. Jesus is present in a special way in each sacrament. How is he present in Baptism and Confirmation? (In the priest, in the Trinity acting out what is promised)
3. If a sacrament is an outward sign of God's presence in one's life. How does the Church act like a sacrament?

• 7th Grade

1. What happens at Baptism? Why is it so important? (cleanses sin, welcomed into God's family, new creation, foundation for other sacraments)
2. Baptism uses Chrism a consecrated oil which symbolizes that which it is rubbed on being dedicated to God. How is this true with baptism? With Confirmation? With Holy Orders? On the Church walls? On the altar in our Church?
3. How can I be more open to the sacraments in my life?

• 8th Grade

1. Sacraments are efficacious, meaning they have an effect (something happens). How is this true for baptism and Confirmation?
2. What do you think the following means: "With baptism comes discipleship"?
3. Jesus is also known as the original sacrament because He is the best way God is revealed in that God became flesh in Jesus. What can we learn from Jesus about the way we can encounter God?

SEND

CLOSING PRAYER

(5 min)

We will have a renewal of our baptismal promises as our closing prayer for this Sunday.

SUMMARY CHALLENGE

Before the middle school youth are sent home, they will be challenged to remember:

- Grace is a free gift from God.
- We receive grace in the Sacraments.
- Grace is a participation in the life of God.
- “I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

TO THE PARENTS OF

Tonight we talked about grace and how it is a free gift of God that is given to us to help us throughout our lives and to bring us into a deeper union with Him. We also discussed how graces are given to us through the Sacraments and how each Sacrament has graces to help us in each stage of our lives, with the Eucharist being the summit. Here are some questions to ask your youth:

- What is grace?
- How do we receive grace?
- Why are the Sacraments so important?

Baptismal Promises Renewal

INSTRUCTIONS

Have your priest or deacon lead the youth in renewing their Baptismal Promises.

Deacon/Priest:

Dear friends, through the paschal mystery we have been buried with Christ in Baptism, so that we may rise with him to a new life. Having learned more fully what the Sacrament of Baptism means, let us renew the promises we made at Baptism when we rejected Satan and his works. I invite you to say, "I do" after each question.

Do you reject sin so as to live in the freedom of God's children?

Middle School Youth:

I do.

Deacon/Priest:

Do you reject the glamour of evil, and refuse to be mastered by sin?

Middle School Youth:

I do.

Deacon/Priest:

Do you reject Satan, father of sin and prince of darkness?

Middle School Youth:

I do.

Deacon/Priest:

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

Middle School Youth:

I do.

Deacon/Priest:

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

Middle School Youth:

I do.

Deacon/Priest:

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

Middle School Youth:

I do.

Deacon/Priest:

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and forgiven our sins. May God also keep us faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ forever and ever.

Middle School Youth:

Amen.