

DIVE IN

The Family of God

GOAL

The goal of the session is to invite youth to understand God as their Father, who welcomes them to be a member of his family through the sacraments of the Catholic Church.

Scripture

Matthew 6:9-13, Matthew 7:7-12, Luke 12:29-34, John 1:9-13, John 3:5, Romans 8:14-17, 1 John 3:1

Catechism

CCC 1996, 2598-2619, 2786-2815

Resources

Articles

Fr. Luke Spannagel “Do This in Remembrance of Me, Part 59: The Lord’s Prayer” (eucharisticrevival.org)

Fr. Luke Spannagel “Do This in Remembrance of Me, Part 60: The Lord’s Prayer, Part 2” (eucharisticrevival.org)

Handouts

“Our Father Below the Surface”

“Dive In” Parent Letter

Video

Bishop Robert Barron, “Stop Being a Chicken: Bishop Barron on the Realities of Baptism” (youtube.com)

GATHER

Youth guess who's dad is pictured as a fun way to introduce the theme of God as our Father.

PROCLAIM

The following are the main teaching points of the Proclaim:

- God gives us grace – which is his life within us – through the sacraments.
- In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus invites us to call God our Father and build a personal relationship with him because he cares for each of us.
- The sacraments are how we strengthen our relationship with God and rely on him as our good Father.

BREAK

Youth reflect on their family tree and participate in small group discussion on family and being a member of God's family.

SEND

With their small group, youth offer prayers for their family members, living out our responsibilities as members of the Body of Christ to support one another in prayer.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

When you greet your parents or guardians this week, say a quiet hello to God as well, as a reminder of him as your heavenly Father.

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PREP

Collect all materials needed for the Edge Night.

Prepare a slideshow of celebrity dads likely to be familiar to the youth. Suggestions include Ryan Reynolds, John Krasinski, Dwayne Johnson, John Legend, and Prince Harry. Consider including photos of your parish priest or the dads of core members, as well. Select at least 12 different dads for the slideshow.

Download, print, and copy the “Our Father Below the Surface” handout found online at lifeteen.com.

The fifth Edge Night of this series, “Suit Up,” invites the parents and guardians of youth to join for the closing Send to participate in a Signing of the Senses. Communicate to them well in advance, inviting them to come in for the final 20 minutes of that session and pray with their child. Reassure parents and guardians who cannot attend that their child’s core member will stand in.

SETUP

Follow the environment suggestions for the series.

Test all audio-visual elements of the Edge Night.

Project the environment image and play the “ES - Below the Surface” Spotify playlist as the youth enter.

SUPPLIES

Prepare the following supplies:

Gather

- ☐ Picture slideshow of dads

Break

- ☐ Paper, one per person
- ☐ Pencil, one per person

Send

- ☐ “Our Father Below the Surface” handout, one per person
- ☐ Electric tealight candles, one per person

NOTES

CORE ASSIGNMENTS AND NOTES

This youth minister worksheet provides writing space to detail core member assignments and notes specific to running this Edge Night. Write the names of core members assigned to the roles listed.

Highlights:

- During the Break, keep in mind that not all youth have an ideal family structure. Encourage the youth not to pass judgment on themselves as if they have a “good” or “bad” family but to focus on the gift of who God has placed in their life.

Setup: _____

Opening Prayer: _____

Gather – Who’s That Dad?

- Leader: _____

Proclaim – Dive In: _____

Break – Your Family Tree, Small Group Discussion

Send – Prayer for Family

- Leader: _____

Weekly Challenge: _____

Parking Lot: _____

NOTES

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GATHER

Introduction (5 min)

Welcome the youth and introduce those who are there for the first time. Invite the preselected core member to begin in prayer. Give a brief overview of the Edge Night topic, using the following as an example:

There is nothing better than jumping into the ocean on a hot summer beach day! Below the water's surface is a world new and wonderful, vast and unexplored. In our everyday life of faith, it is easy to keep our heads above water, comfortable with only seeing what lies on the surface. In this new series, we are going to hold our breath and dive deep to explore the vast ocean of God's grace that he has waiting for us just below the surface. Let's dive in!

Who's That Dad? (15 min)

Select two teams of five players each and invite them to stand up front in two lines facing each other, with the game leader standing in the middle. Pick one team to guess first.

Project a slide with a picture of a dad and ask the first player to guess whose dad they think is pictured. They may confer with their fellow teammates but must give an answer within 15 seconds. If the player guesses it correctly, they get one point for their team. If they guess incorrectly, the other team may have the chance to guess to earn a point. Invite audience participation by asking the other youth to loudly chant, "Who's that dad?!" before each picture is revealed. The team that correctly guesses the most dads wins!

Suggestion

Consider playing in a more "Family Feud" style, pitting players from each team against each other in a head-to-head guess off.

Step It Up

Bring in a handful of fathers of youth or core members in your program and mix them up on stage with their children. As a large group, the youth guess who's dad belongs to which person, pairing them up before the correct answers are revealed.

PROCLAIM

“Dive In” Teaching (10 min)

- Imagine you and your entire family have been planning a scuba diving trip to a beautiful coral reef. You have been thinking about and preparing for this trip for months.
- The day has finally come, and you are motored to the reef, but as you dive into the water, you realize that there is a problem. Your oxygen tank is not working. You cannot make it down more than a few feet in the water before you have to return to the surface to get more air. The obvious fact quickly becomes evident – you cannot scuba dive without oxygen.
- We need to have the right equipment to accomplish the task at hand: Cars need gas or electricity to power the engine. Our bodies need food and water to work properly.
- If our goal is to live our lives to the fullest, then grace is our essential equipment. 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 God's divine life in us. We cannot see grace, but we can see some of the ways God gives it to us. For example, we receive grace when we receive Communion at Mass. We cannot see the grace, but we can see the host.
- We can receive words of grace. For example, we receive grace when the priest tells us our sins are forgiven during Confession. We cannot see the grace, but we can hear his words.
- We can see and hear the ways God gives us grace. We can also feel the effects of grace. When we surprise ourselves by being more patient, more loving, or more thoughtful, what we are experiencing is the act of becoming more holy.
- God loves us and desires to give us a fulfilling life filled with his grace. Grace helps us follow God's will and act more like Jesus, keeping us on the path to heaven.
- The most direct way to receive grace is through the sacraments.

Ask the youth to name a sacrament.

- The Catholic Church has seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders. Throughout this Edge series, we will explore each sacrament. **(CCC 1210)**
- The Church categorizes the sacraments to help us understand their purpose. The three Sacraments of Initiation — Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist — bring us deeper into the life of the Church. Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick are Sacraments of Healing. The Sacraments of Vocation are Matrimony and Holy Orders.
- When we look at the ocean from sea level, we see water and maybe some fish or plants that are at the surface, but if we were to look under the water, we would see much more – various sea life and plants that cannot live on the surface.

- When we see a sacrament, we might see the Eucharist or the water of Baptism, which are present, but we do not see the other aspects of forgiveness and grace, which are being abundantly poured out.
- Each time we attend Mass or make a good confession, God is pouring grace into our lives, calling us to go deeper into a relationship with him.
- Jesus taught us how to pray to God in a close and personal way. When we follow his example, we enter into a deeper relationship with God the Father.

Relationship with the Father

Project and read **Matthew 6:9-13**.

- This prayer is familiar because it is prayed at every Mass.
- In this prayer, Jesus specifically tells us to address God as our Father. While that may not sound surprising to us today, in the time that Jesus lived on earth, the concept of calling the Almighty God something as common as Father was surprising – even shocking.
- Jesus revealed his personal relationship with God and instructed us to pray like him, calling God our Father.

Going Deeper

The word Jesus used for Father is “Abba,” which means something close to “papa” or “dad” in English. Not only is Jesus revealing a mere familial tie, but he is also revealing a personal intimacy that God desires with every one of us.

- God is not simply sitting back, hoping we build a relationship with him, but rather, he is constantly seeking us.
- Think of God pursuing a relationship with each of us like Marlin, the dad from “Finding Nemo,” pursuing his lost son Nemo. In the movie, Nemo gets lost far away at sea from his dad, Marlin. Despite sharks, the great depths of the sea, and even people fishing and diving, Marlin will not stop his pursuit until he finds Nemo.
- God, our Father, does this same thing in an even more intense and perfect way. Once we respond to God’s pursuit of love, we can start to build a strong relationship with Him.

Going Deeper

The Church makes a distinction between sanctifying grace and actual grace. We first receive sanctifying grace through Baptism. It affects the soul, making us holy. Actual grace, by contrast, is a supernatural push or encouragement from the Holy Spirit. Actual grace gets the will and intellect moving so we continue to seek God and our path to heaven. **(CCC 1999-2000, 2002)**

Source of Strength

- Our relationship with God is strengthened through grace, which he shares in the sacraments. It is up to us how fully we receive his free gift of grace. When we sit on the side, keeping our toes in the water, so to speak, looking only at the surface, we miss the entire ocean of beauty God has for us in the sacraments.
- Through the sacraments, God invites us to dive deep into his love, receive his grace, and share his grace and love with the world.
- God wants us to be a part of his family and to bring virtue and grace to the household we live in as well. So, through the Sacrament of Baptism, we become his adopted children. He gives us the Holy Spirit, and we receive a mark on our soul that forever identifies us as God's child.
- As God's children, we have ways to encounter God and receive His grace: the more we frequent the Mass and receive Jesus through this sacrament, the holier and more rooted in Christ we will become.
- We can never receive too much grace, so we should seek the sacraments as often as we can.

BREAK

Your Family Tree (10 min)

Divide youth into their small groups. Pass out a piece of paper and pencil to each youth. Ask them to draw their family tree. Project or display an example of a family tree for those who need it. When their family trees are completed, transition into the small group discussion.

Small Group Discussion (15 min)

Use the following questions to foster a discussion within the small group:

- Whip around: If you could only eat one fruit for the rest of your life, which would you choose?
- Briefly share and point out a few of the people on your family tree and a favorite memory with them.
- What are some things that set your family apart from others?
- Who is the family member that you are closest with? What makes you feel close to them?
- What sacraments have you received? How have you experienced God in the sacraments?
- What can you do to strengthen your relationship with God?

Eighth-Grade Adaptation

Use the following questions for a more challenging discussion for eighth-grade youth:

- When you think of God, is it easy to think of him as “Father”? Explain why or why not.
- Have you ever felt like God was working through you? Share.
- How can you be an example of faith to your family?

SEND

Prayer for Family (15 min)

Gather youth in the main meeting space, seated in a circle with their small group. Hand each youth an electric tealight candle. Introduce the time of prayer, using the following as an example:

As the family of God, we have a responsibility to pray for one another. We can bring the prayers of our natural family to our parish and community family here because we are all brothers and sisters in Christ. Take some time with your small group to pray for one another's family.

Within the small group, ask each person what prayer intention they have for their family. After someone shares an intention, the core member leads a short prayer for that youth and their intention, finishing in a Glory Be or Hail Mary before the next youth shares.

Weekly Challenge (5 min)

Pass out an “Our Father Below the Surface” handout to each youth. This handout will give them a preview of what is to come in the following Edge Nights. Ask the youth to post it somewhere at home where they will see it frequently. As the “Below the Surface” series progresses, the sacramental connection to the Our Father will become more apparent.

Invite the preselected core member to present the Weekly Challenge.

When you greet your parents or guardians this week, say a quiet hello to God as well, as a reminder of him as your heavenly Father.

Dismiss the core members preassigned to parking lot safety.

Make announcements related to your program.

Dismiss the youth.