

MORNING STAR

Mary, Star of Hope

GOAL

The goal of this session is for youth to understand Mary as the prime example of hope and to trust in her guidance to lead them closer to Jesus.

Scripture

Luke 1:39-56, 1 Thessalonians 5:8

Catechism

CCC 144, 148-149, 494, 2634-2636, 2674

Resources

Encyclical

“Spe Salvi,” 49-50 (vatican.va)

Handouts

“Hope Star”

“Morning Star” Parent Letter

Video

“Don’t Lose Hope: Level 3” (lifeteen.com)

GATHER

Youth play a lively large group game themed around Mary's words and actions.

PROCLAIM

The following are the main teaching points of the Proclaim:

- Mary is called the Star of Hope, interceding for us in times of trouble and shining as a light to guide us home to heaven with God.
- In Mary's Magnificat, we see how she hoped in God's promises for her and his people to show them mercy and raise up the lowly.
- We can turn to Mary to pray for us when we are in need, comfort us in darkness, and ultimately lead us closer to her son, Jesus.

BREAK

After a brief small group discussion about Mary's example of hope, the youth fill in stars with prayer intentions.

SEND

The prayer intentions completed in the Break are displayed for the youth to see and pray for each person's intentions, asking particularly for Mary's intercession.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Take three star intentions that are not your own home with you. Every day this week, say a Hail Mary for each one of the intentions.

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PREP

Collect all materials needed for the Edge Night.

Download, print, and copy the “Hope Star” handout found online at lifeteen.com.

SETUP

Follow the environment suggestions for the series.

Set up blacklights around the perimeter of the room for the Send. If you do not have access to blacklights, set up electric votive candles that provide just enough light to read without being overwhelmingly bright.

If the meeting space allows, pre-hang the invisible strings in an area set apart for the Send. Hang the strings so that there is room to walk among them. At the bottom of each string, hook a paperclip or clothespin so the stars can be attached.

Test all audio-visual elements of the Edge Night.

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

SUPPLIES

Prepare the following supplies:

Break

- ☐ Bibles, one per person
- ☐ “Hope Star” handouts, three to five per person
- ☐ Pens, one per person
- ☐ Highlighters or glow-in-the-dark pens, one set per small group
- ☐ Scissors, two or three sets per small group

Send

- ☐ Invisible string or fishing line cut into four- to five-foot pieces, in the same number as the “Hope Star” handouts
- ☐ Paper clips or clothespins, three to five per person
- ☐ Blacklights or electric votive candles

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:

- In the Gather game, any core members not assigned to a role should play the game along with the youth.

Setup: _____

Opening Prayer: _____

Gather – Mary Mandates

- Game Leader: _____
- Secondary Referee: _____

Proclaim – Masterpiece: _____

Break – Small Group Discussion, Hopes in Heaven

Send – Stargazing

- Leader: _____

Weekly Challenge: _____

Parking Lot: _____

NOTES

MORNING STAR

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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:

Following Jesus can sometimes feel like trying to find our way in the dark. Without light ahead of us to follow, it is hard to find the way. There is no greater guide for us in following Jesus than the person who was with him from the beginning until the end of his earthly life: his mother, Mary! Mary put all of her trust in God. Her life set an example for us to follow, and her eternal presence in heaven lights the way to our heavenly home.

Mary Mandates (15 min)

The leader calls out a “mandate from Mary” that players must complete as quickly as possible.

Demonstrate each action with volunteers while giving the instructions. Begin with a few practice rounds so the youth can learn the actions. The Mary Mandates Actions are listed on the next page.

After the practice rounds, begin elimination play. Youth are eliminated if they are in the last group to complete an action or do not have enough people to complete an action. Keep the energy high by calling actions quickly, but not so fast that the youth do not have time to complete the action. Clearly announce which youth are out and ask them to stand in a designated area.

Restart the game with all players back in at least one time. Play as many rounds as time permits.

Step It Up

Provide costume items for the “Census” action, like a brown shirt for Joseph, a blue shirt for Mary, and a duffle bag for the donkey. Keep the items at the front of the main meeting space and remove one set before calling “Census” so that one group of three is always eliminated.

Mary Mandates Actions

- **Glorify the Lord** (individual) - Stop and raise both hands in the air while looking up.
- **Be It Done** (two people) - Find a partner. One person stands with arms flapping like angel wings, the other kneels.
- **Census** (three people) - Gather in a group of three, with one boy representing Joseph, one girl representing Mary, and the third person on all fours as a donkey.
- **Do Whatever He Tells You** (three people) - Gather in a group of three. One person is a “jug” sitting on the floor, holding their arms in a circle. The remaining two are wedding stewards who pretend to pour water into the “jug.”
- **Build a Church** (four people) - Gather in a group of four. Two people raise their arms in the air to form a steeple. One person sits between them, praying in the “church.” The remaining person stands straight and tall behind the steeple and makes ringing bell sounds. They are the bell tower.
- **Sunrise** (individual) - Run to the left side of the room.
- **Sunset** (individual) - Run to the right side of the room.

PROCLAIM

Don't Lose Hope: Level 3 (5 min)

Invite the youth to be seated. Show the “Don't Lose Hope: Level 3” video and then transition into the teaching.

“Morning Star” Teaching (10 min)

Wayfinding

- The stars are one of the oldest tools for navigation. You might say it is the first GPS! Ancient civilizations saw the repeated pattern of stars, identified constellations, and used the star's movements to track time and their position on the globe. The Polynesian people memorized complex star maps and “star paths” to navigate the oceans and find their way home.
- Even today, despite advanced technology, stars still help guide aviation and ship travel. The stars stand as an eternal image of the possibility to always find our way home, even when we are lost.
- The beauty and wisdom of the Catholic Church give us the stories of saints who lived lives of hope. Their holy examples light our way of faith, like stars in the sky.
- Many saints throughout history endured intense sufferings while clinging to the profound hope found in God.
- The one who stands above and shines brighter than the rest is Mary, the Mother of God. She is our prime example of hope, and one of her many titles is the Star of Hope.

Going Deeper

Another title for Mary is Stella Maris, Latin for “Star of the Sea.” This name for Mary comes from an old hymn. Many people, particularly those who live near or work on the oceans, ask for her intercession under this title. Her feast day under this title is celebrated on September 27th.

- Mary stands apart from the other saints for many reasons.
- She was preserved from the stain of sin and lived sinlessly her whole life. **(CCC 722)**
- Another is that she was chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus, our Savior, giving her a special role in salvation history. **(CCC 723)**
- Even after her death, Mary has appeared in numerous places worldwide — events called apparitions — always bearing a message of hope.

Ask the youth if they know or have heard about any Marian apparitions, such as Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of Fatima, or Our Lady of La Salette.

- While Mary is very important and deserving of high regard, she takes none of the glory for herself, always pointing to God, who deserves all honor and worship.

My Spirit Rejoices

- Mary knew what it meant to hope in God. She expressed this in her own words in the prayer she proclaimed when she visited her cousin Elizabeth.
- The angel Gabriel told Mary of Elizabeth's pregnancy in her old age, and Mary quickly went to visit Elizabeth. **(Luke 1:36, Luke 1:39)**
- When Mary arrived and greeted Elizabeth, the child in Elizabeth's womb leaped for joy, prompting Elizabeth to bless Mary, saying, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" **(Luke 1:41-43)**
- Mary responded with a song of praise to God called the Magnificat, after the first words of her prayer saying her soul magnifies the Lord. **(Luke 1:46)**

Going Deeper

Mary's Magnificat is reminiscent of the song of Hannah from **1 Samuel 2:1-10**. Hannah prayed for many years for a child, promising to give him to God in service. God granted her request, and she gave birth to Samuel, who would become a great prophet and advisor in Israel. Read aloud **1 Samuel 2:1-10** and **Luke 1:46-55** to compare the songs of the two women.

- In this song of praise, Mary recalls what God has done. These acts are the reasons for her hope and trust.

Project and read aloud **Luke 1:46-55**.

- Mary recounted that she would be called blessed not because of what she did to deserve it but because God is so good and holy.
- She told of the many ways that God has been good throughout history, not just to her but to his people, raising them up when they were low and bringing down their enemies.
- Mary knows exactly in whom she places her trust and why.
- We, too, should know and recall often the reason for our hope, following Mary's example. **(1 Peter 3:15)**

Guiding Light

- Mary knows what it is like to follow Jesus, as she followed him all the way to the cross.
- She is not only Jesus's mother but also ours because Jesus gave her to us at his Crucifixion. **(John 19:26-27, CCC 2674)**
- Just as we ask our earthly moms for guidance and comfort, we can ask the same things of Mary through prayers of intercession.
- Intercession is a form of prayer where we ask for help for the intentions of others. **(CCC 2634-2636)**
- We ask people to intercede for us when we ask them to pray for us. We do this as an extension of a special prayer in Mass. There is a part of the Mass called the Prayer of the Faithful, where the community offers intentions for its members and the world.
- We can ask Mary and all the saints to intercede for us because they are alive in heaven with God, constantly praying and worshipping him. **(CCC 956)**
- Mary is a unique intercessor, reigning as the Queen of Heaven, enthroned next to her Son, Jesus. **(Revelation 12:1-2)**

Going Deeper

We may think of queens as being the spouses of kings, but in ancient Israel and during a time when the king had many wives, the mother of the king, or “queen mother,” was regarded as holding that title. We see this in the Old Testament with King Solomon and his mother, Queen Bathsheba, one of the wives of King David. She held a place of authority and influence for Solomon during his rule. In a similar way, as Jesus is the King of the everlasting kingdom in heaven, Mary is honored as the queen. **(1 Kings 2:19-20)**

- Mary faithfully brings all of our prayers to Jesus. We can rely on her motherly intercession when we need light in dark times. We can pray the Hail Mary or the Rosary, which have been handed down in the Church and have been prayed by Catholics for centuries.
- All of our prayers through Mary ultimately bring us closer to her Son, Jesus.
- As St. Maximilian Kolbe once said, “Never be afraid of loving Mary too much. You can never love her more than Jesus did.”
- May we cling to Mary as the bright morning star who guides us home to heaven.

BREAK

Small Group Discussion (15 min)

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

- Whip Around: What is something you absolutely must take with you on a trip or vacation?

Choose one of the following Scripture passages to read together: **Luke 2:22-35, Luke 2:41-51, John 2:1-11**. Then ask the following questions:

- What does Mary say and do in this story?
- How do Mary's words or actions display her hope in God?
- Here, or elsewhere in Scripture, what difficulties did Mary encounter?
- In what ways do you or your family practice devotion to Mary (e.g., praying Marian prayers together, venerating Marian images)?

Eighth-Grade Adaptation

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

- In your opinion, what was the hardest thing that Mary endured?
- Who in your life speaks or behaves like Mary?
- Much of Jesus' early life with Mary and Joseph is unknown. What do you think Mary felt during the time "waiting" for Jesus to begin his ministry?

Suggestion

If time allows, read all of the selected Scripture passages.

Hopes in Heaven (10 min)

Pass out copies of the "Hope Star" handouts and pens to each youth. On each star, youth write a prayer intention for themselves, someone they know, or a situation in the world that needs hope. Youth do not need to write their name on the star.

Once they write down their prayer intentions, they can decorate the star with highlighters or glow-in-the-dark pens. After decorating, cut out the stars and bring them to the main meeting space at the conclusion of the Break.

Step It Up

Offer UV ink pens for youth to draw designs. These designs will only be revealed under a blacklight.

SEND

Stargazing (20 min)

Gather the youth in a large group. Introduce the deacon or priest. Explain that he is As small groups return to the main meeting space, gather their prayer stars and hang them around the room on the invisible strings or fishing line.

Gather the youth on the floor and introduce the time of prayer, using the following as an example:

If you have ever been on a night hike or a camping trip, you know that one of the best parts is how many stars you can see in the night sky. Even in the darkest of nights, they shine extraordinarily brightly. Just as many ships have used the stars to guide their way home, so we can look to Mary as a guide to lead us home to God in heaven. Mary is our loving mother, always ready to step in and intercede for us unceasingly, even in the darkest nights.

Around the room are all of our prayer intentions. As you walk through the room, read each prayer intention, reflect on it for a moment, and quietly say a Hail Mary for that person's intention before moving to the next. This is not about rushing through them or competing to see who finishes first. This is a time to exercise our responsibility as members of the Body of Christ and lift up our prayers for one another and the world in a powerful way.

Invite the youth to stand and move around the room, reading each intention. Play soft instrumental music to encourage a prayerful environment and project the words of the Hail Mary on the screen as a reference for anyone who needs it.

Hail, Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

When youth appear to be done, invite them back to their spots on the floor, staying in a prayerful attitude and posture while others finish. Conclude the time of prayer by offering all intentions placed on the stars and those still on their hearts.

Suggestion

Alternatively, tape the stars on the wall or go into the church or chapel and place them on the steps of the sanctuary.

Step It Up

Give each youth a small blacklight flashlight to walk around with to read all of the stars.

Weekly Challenge (5 min)

Invite the preselected core members to present the Weekly Challenge.

Take three star intentions that are not your own home with you. Every day this week, say a Hail Mary for each one of the intentions.

Dismiss the core members preassigned to parking lot safety.

Make announcements related to your program.

Dismiss the youth.