

SUBMERGED

Living in Grace

GOAL

The goal of this session is for youth to know the sacraments and practices of faith are more than rituals and become inspired to live a grace-filled life of love.

Scripture

Deuteronomy 31:8, John 1:1-14, John 10:10, Hebrews 1:1-2, Ephesians 1:9-10, 2 Peter 1:4

Catechism

CCC 51-53, 1996-2005, 2012-2016, 2566-2567, 2846-2856

Resources

Article

Fr. Hugh Barbour, O.Praem., “The Gift God Gives Himself” (catholic.com)

Handouts

“Submersion Plan”

“Our Father Below the Surface”

“Submerged” Parent Letter

Media

Hungry SciANNtist, “The Cartesian Diver | Experiment & Explain | Bottle Diver Experiment | Air Pressure | Buoyancy” (youtube.com)

GATHER

Youth play a version of The Floor Is Lava, working together as a team and using symbols of the sacraments as the path to the finish.

PROCLAIM

The following are the main teaching points of the Proclaim:

- Through the sacraments, God gives us the gift of himself, the ultimate desire of our hearts.
- Receiving the sacraments and living a good, moral life are connected. Doing both honors God and fulfills our purpose.
- Through daily prayer and reception of the sacraments, we are strengthened to live out our identity as children of God in service and love.

BREAK

Youth engage in a grade-level roundtable discussion that includes discussion about the Edge Night topic and a brainstorm of ideas for continuing to live connected to the sacraments. The ideas are illustrated in a handout and activity to take home.

SEND

Youth share their top ideas from the grade-level roundtable discussions. Then, the youth reflect on the “Our Father Below the Surface” handout provided at the beginning of the series as a bookend to what they have learned throughout it.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Pray with the “Our Father Below the Surface” handout this week. Highlight the words or sentences that stick out to you the most.

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PREP

Collect all materials needed for the Edge Night.

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

SETUP

Follow the environment suggestions for the series.

In the main meeting space, use tape or cones to mark the start and finish lines. Place the start and finish lines as far apart as you can within your space.

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

- ☐ Tape or cones
- ☐ Paper, seven pieces per small group

Break

- ☐ Supplies for Cartesian Diver, one set per person: water bottle, flexible straw, three paperclips, a sheet of blank paper
- ☐ “Submersion Plan” handout, one per person
- ☐ Pens, one per person
- ☐ Set of colored markers, one per small group
- ☐ Scissors, two pairs per small group
- ☐ Clear packing tape, one roll per small group

Send

- ☐ “Our Father Below the Surface” handout, 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:

- Review the steps for making the Cartesian Diver experiment using the video found in the Resources section. Practice making one.

Setup: _____

Opening Prayer: _____

Gather – Stepping Stones

- Leader: _____

Proclaim – Submerged: _____

Break – Cartesian Diver, Grade Level Roundtable Discussion

- 6th-grade Roundtable Leader: _____
- 7th-grade Roundtable Leader: _____
- 8th-grade Roundtable Leader: _____

Send – Our Father Reflection

- 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:

Did you know that humanity has mapped more of Mars than the oceans? There is so much unexplored territory to discover and learn about – now that we know it's there, how could we forget?! Our curiosity spurs us forward to go deeper and deeper. As we wrap up our series, how can we stay “underwater” and continue to go deeper in our relationship with God? Our love for him, powered by his grace, is like oxygen, allowing us to stay submerged in his love.

Stepping Stones (10 min)

This game is a small group competition in which each team races from the start line to the finish line, using sheets of paper as stepping stones to cross the playing field.

Gather the youth into small groups behind the start line. Provide each small group with seven pieces of paper. Small groups must reach the finish line without touching the floor (because the floor is the ocean abyss). Players can only stand on the pieces of paper.

The first small group to have all group members cross the finish line wins!

Step It Up

Substitute the pieces of paper for floor dots or play stepping stones.

PROCLAIM

“Submerged” Teaching (10 min)

With Purpose

Share a short story about a time you took a trip with a purpose. It could be as simple as buying a particular toy you saved up for or as big as checking something off your bucket list. Take notes here:

- When we set out on a journey, there is always a purpose. If there were no reason for our getting up and going, then we would not go at all!
- Throughout this series, we have taken a journey to see and explore the depth found in the sacraments. We did not take this journey without a reason. Our faith is not just about knowing more for the sake of knowing more. God is the desire of our hearts. Saint Augustine once wrote, “Our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”
- In coming to a deeper understanding of the sacraments, we increase our capacity to know, love, and serve God, who created us for that purpose.
- Ultimately, knowing, loving, and serving God fulfills our purpose and satisfies our desires. **(CCC 52)**
- Knowing, loving, and serving God is more than “checking boxes” or ensuring we say the right words and attend the right services. The relationship God invites us to extends beyond the ritual practices of our faith. As Jesus taught, what we do for others is connected to what we do for God.

Project and read **Matthew 25:31-40**.

- Here in the Gospel, Jesus talks about judgment at the end of time. The ones at the King’s right hand are those who have acted rightly and will receive the reward of eternal life.
- The ones who acted rightly were those who treated others well – feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, and visiting the sick.
- The King identifies himself with the poor and weak in the world, and the righteous who served them, ultimately served him.
- Jesus is saying how we treat others is a reflection of our love for God.
- For us to receive our eternal reward and be with God in heaven, we need God’s grace and to cooperate with it.

On Purpose

- Receiving the sacraments and living a good, moral life are connected, as we heard in Jesus' teaching.
- In order to live a good life and treat others well, we need the grace of the sacraments.
- Grace is God's divine life in us. It transforms our natural capabilities to be more like God's supernatural ones.
- It is through grace that we can love and treat others well, even when we reach our natural human limits.
- Cooperating with grace means that we allow God's divine life to show more through our actions and how we treat others.
- The transformation of grace is not only for our benefit but also enables us to serve others, glorifying God.
- Treating others well honors God. As Jesus said, when we do good deeds for our brothers and sisters in need, we do them for God.

Share an example of a time when you were motivated to perform an act of kindness as a result of receiving grace through the sacraments. Take notes here:

- Even when we might not feel the effects of grace or feel pulled to treat others well, that does not mean God's grace has "worn off."
- The transformation of grace takes a lifetime to finish, and by receiving the sacraments repeatedly, we invite God to mold us little by little.
- Rather than having the sacraments be "one and done," we consistently receive more and more of his grace throughout our lives.

For a Purpose

- If you watch competitive swimming, you may notice that the swimmers stay underwater for an extended time before coming to the surface. It makes them faster because there is less drag when their entire body is under the water. If the swimmers did not have to come up for air, they would swim entire races below the surface!
- Our natural environment is above water, and humans breathe air – it would be a much less fair race if humans swam against fish!
- To thrive, we have to live in our natural environments: fish in the water, and humans on land.
- But in the spiritual life, our natural environment is deep below the surface with the sacraments. This is where God wants us to be, swimming deeply in the waters of his grace.

- If we have one foot in the water and the other on land, we are truly like a fish out of water, disconnected from that which gives us life.

Going Deeper

Pope Benedict XVI wrote that the foundation of our faith is a relationship with a person. Knowledge and truth are powerful motivators, but the “facts” of our faith are not as compelling as the person of Jesus and the love he shows us.

(“Deus Caritas Est,” 1)

- Our lives are better for having received his grace – more full of joy, holiness, and virtue because of what we receive. The grace we receive through the sacraments makes us more capable of loving others in the way that God loves – not holding back and without asking for anything in return.
- Complete and entirely selfless love is what we are made for. Jesus lived selfless love by accepting the Cross. We become more loving and less selfish through the grace in the sacraments.
- Staying deep in our prayer and using the sacraments as our guide, we will keep our end goal in mind and make it through our journey of life, receiving God as our reward.

BREAK

Cartesian Diver (20 min)

Gather youth into their small groups. Pass out a “Submersion Plan” handout and pen to each youth. Review the questions together and ask the youth to fill in their responses for approximately ten minutes. At the bottom of the handout, youth draw a diver to include in the following experiment.

Instructions:

Watch the instruction video in the Resources section for visual directions.

Cut the flexible straw one inch from the bend on both sides. Keep the portion of the straw with the bend and fold it in half. Insert a paper clip into the holes of the straw so that the paper clip holds both sides of it together, creating a “U” shape with the straw. Attach two more paperclips to the first, holding the straw as an upside-down “U” with the paperclips hanging below it.

Instruct each youth to cut out their diver from the “Submersion Plan” handout. Seal the diver between two pieces of clear packing tape to make it waterproof. Attach the diver to the straw.

Completely fill the bottle with water. Insert the diver into the bottle, making sure to keep the “U” of the straw upside down so that air is trapped within it. Seal the bottle with the bottle cap.

Squeeze the bottle and watch the diver sink!

Troubleshooting

This experiment works by increasing the air pressure within the trapped air in the straw. If the trapped air in the straw escapes and the diver only sits on the bottom of the bottle, remove the diver and place it back right-side up. If the diver does not sink when the bottle is squeezed, add an additional paperclip.

Step It Up

Put a few drops of blue and green food coloring in the water to make it look more like the ocean.

Grade Level Roundtable (10 min)

Gather into large groups divided by grade level. The preselected core member presents the following question to the group. The youth brainstorm responses and select their top choices to present to the large group.

- God's grace we receive in the sacraments makes us more like him. How can we reflect God's grace in our words and actions?

Sample answers include: Daily prayer, speaking kindly, practicing forgiveness, avoiding gossip, going to Mass every week, preparing for Mass ahead of time, carrying a rosary or other sacramental.

SEND

Grade-Level Roundtable Presentation (5 min)

Invite two representatives from each grade level to present their top three choices for living out the sacraments.

Our Father Reflection (10 min)

Introduce a time of prayer, using the following as an example:

Over this series, we have explored the great depth of the sacraments. As we conclude our dive and come back up for air, let us recall all that we learned and discovered. When you hear this prayer in Mass, allow God to remind you of the beauty that lies just below the surface.

Pass out a copy of the "Our Father Below the Surface" handout. Invite the youth to read over it while the leaders reads it aloud slowly, reflecting on a newer and deeper understanding of the prayer.

Weekly Challenge (5 min)

Invite the preselected core members to present the Weekly Challenge.

Pray with the "Our Father Below the Surface" handout this week. Highlight the words or sentences that stick out to you the most.

Dismiss the core members preassigned to parking lot safety.

Make announcements related to your program.

Dismiss the youth.