



# MERGE

## LIFE NIGHT PLANNING SHEET

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### GOAL FOR THIS NIGHT

To bring the teens to a deeper understanding of the three Sacraments of Initiation and the permanent change affected by these Sacrament.

### ABOUT THIS NIGHT

Teens generally take the Sacraments of Initiation for granted. They are seen as the "hoops" they must jump through in order to become a full member of the Church, as if God's Family is some type of social club. Not true! The Sacraments of Initiation lay the foundation of our "MERGING" into the Divine Life and into the very Being of God! These are the Big Dogs of all the Sacraments! This Life Night will compare initiation into a country club with initiation into the LIFE of God. The Night starts out with a parody on an initiation process into an elite country club called "Royal Black Hog" or whatever, followed by a fiery talk about the importance of these Sacraments in relationship to our Salvation. The teens will fill out a fake application and questionnaire at the Break portion of the night, and will then receive a membership card at the end of the night.

### ENVIRONMENT

The room should be set up like a country club dining room. Place round tables all over the room with white tablecloths and centerpieces. Give the room an elegant effect with some indirect lighting and candles. Play some piano music over the PA, or ask someone to come play the piano to give it a real feel. At the front of the room place a rectangular table set with a white tablecloth and three plates with silver domes. Add signs that say the country club's name on them to finish the room off.

## LIFE NIGHT TEAM

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## SAINTS

St. John the Baptist  
St. Clare of Assisi  
Blessed John XXIII  
St. John Chrysostem

## CATECHISM

Sacraments of Initiation: 1212  
Baptism: 1229-1274  
Confirmation: 1285-1305  
Eucharist: 1322-1405

## BIBLE

2 Cor. 5:17  
Rom. 6:3-4  
Matt. 3:13-17  
Matt. 28:19-20  
Is. 11:2; 61:1  
Jn. 1: 31-34  
Ezek. 36:25  
Acts 1-2  
Jn. 6

## GATHER | 20 MINUTES

As the teens enter the room they will be greeted by the Core members posing as snobby members of the club and the country club wait-staff. Some should be wearing golf clothes, others tennis clothes, etc.

### WELCOME | 2 MINUTES

After the teens are all seated, the president of "Royal Black Hog" welcomes them all to the club, and especially those who are new. He then explains the long standing tradition at "Royal Black Hog" and the initiation process for the club. He pulls out his clip board and says that there are a few people here tonight that are potential members, and invites three random teens from the audience to start the initiation process.

### INITIATION GAMES | 15 MINUTES

This must be fast paced and high energy to keep everyone's attention. Make sure that there is music playing on the PA, and that the person leading the games keeps them flowing.

- a. First, those who are members must wear sports coats. The president puts some old thrift store sports coats on the three contestants.
- b. Secondly, the members should always eat with etiquette. So, the teens must eat as many hot dogs (with etiquette) as they possibly can. The three plates at the front of the room are unveiled and they must eat as many as they can in one minute.
- c. Thirdly, the members must be good golfers. The teens will then try and putt an egg into a hole. You will need to make or buy a putting green for this game. Whoever gets the egg in the hole with the least strokes wins. Hopefully someone breaks an egg. That's always funny.
- d. Lastly, the members must have good posture. The teens will get a cup full of water to place on their head. They must walk to a designated finish line without spilling the water.

At the end of the games give the winner a polo shirt with the club logo crudely painted or drawn on the pocket.

*These games can be done a number of ways with different variations that might suit your teens better. Maybe consider doing each game with three new teens each time. Or, have all the teens in the room do all the activities. Whatever you do, make sure that it is fun for everyone.*



# MERGE

## GATHER | CONTINUED

### CONFIRMATION VIDEO | 3 MINUTES

See attached video on the sacrament of Confirmation contained on I.V. Loop #3.

## PROCLAIM | 15 MINUTES

SEE ATTACHED TEACHING "MERGE"

## BREAK | 20 MINUTES

After the talk ask the teens to spread out in the room. Then, have the Core members pass out the applications to the teens.

### APPLICATION QUESTIONNAIRE | 10 MINUTES

Pass out the applications and give the teens sufficient time to fill them out and think about the questions.

See attached Application Questionnaire

### LARGE GROUP SHARING | 10 MINUTES

Wrap up the break by bringing up a volunteer to share with the large group some of their answers.



## **SEND | 20 MINUTES**

After the Wrap session go directly into a time of praise and worship, focusing on the MERGE into the Family of God and the LIFE of God Himself.

### **BLESSING WITH OIL | 17 MINUTES**

- 1) Begin by having your musician start playing praise and worship style music.
- 2) Then, the Youth Minister or Core member should challenge the teens to look at the benefits of being a part of God's LIFE and His Family. Being part of a country club gives you benefits like: you can swim there, play golf, have some status, invite friends to dinner. In the LIFE of God, your benefits are Grace and Eternal Happiness!
- 3) Have your priest bless some non-sacramental oil to be used. Invite the teens to come forward to be blessed as a sign of God's love being sealed in them. Have the CORE bless the teenagers on their forehead. As they are blessing the teens have the core recite the following: "May you never forget that you have been blessed as Priest, Prophet, and King."

### **MEMBERSHIP CARDS | 3 MINUTES**

- 1) After all of the teenagers have been blessed, hand out LIFE TEEN Membership cards. SEE ATTACHED MEMBERSHIP CARDS. Give the teens some time to sign the cards.
- 2) End with the Hail Mary and the Ave Maria.

# LIFE TEEN APPLICATION QUESTIONNAIRE

What is your full name?

Do you have a job? If so, what is the name of your employer?

If you were a Kitchen appliance, which one would you be, and why?

How many people in your family have been initiated into the Catholic Church through Baptism and Confirmation?

It says in the Scriptures that when we are Baptized we are baptized into Christ's death. Do you ever have to resist something that you really want to do because you are in God's LIFE? What things?

In Confirmation we receive the graces to be witnesses to the nations. Do you ever find it difficult to stand up for what is right at your school or at home? When?

What is the hardest thing about being a part of God's family?

What is the best thing about being a part of God's family?

What would you say to someone who is not Catholic and has never been Baptized or Confirmed to explain to them the process of initiation so that they might want to become Catholic?

# MEMBERSHIP CARDS

<p>With the help of Christ and the Holy Spirit, I agree to live out my faith in a bold way. I promise to reject Satan and all his empty promises. I promise to live a life that displays my belief that Jesus Christ is my Savior. I promise to call upon the Holy Spirit in times of trial and be challenged by Christ to live a life of service to others.</p> <hr/> <p>Sign Your Name</p>	<p>With the help of Christ and the Holy Spirit, I agree to live out my faith in a bold way. I promise to reject Satan and all his empty promises. I promise to live a life that displays my belief that Jesus Christ is my Savior. I promise to call upon the Holy Spirit in times of trial and be challenged by Christ to live a life of service to others.</p> <hr/> <p>Sign Your Name</p>
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# TEACHING: MERGE

**Note:** This talk launches you into the individual Sacraments. To break up the content a little, we have added break-out centers for this talk, one for each Sacrament of Initiation. You will need to have three different speakers prepared. One can give the opening content and the wrap-up, as well as lead one of the three centers when the group splits up.

Once again we would recommend these books as great background development for your speakers: *Your One-Stop Guide to the Sacraments*, by Fr. Dale Fushek and Bill Dodds, Servant Publications, Ann Arbor, MI; and *Sacraments in Scripture*, by Tim Gray, Emmaus Road Publishing, Steubenville, OH.



*Use the environment of the room to break open the talk – the opening skit and games will add some great humor and levity to the talk.*

## I. The Royal Black Hog Club

### A. Welcome, Royal Black Hogs!!

1. Tonight we are talking about Sacraments of Initiation – which if you're not careful, can sound a little bit like the process of joining some club.

2. But these Sacraments are not like some hoops we jump through to join a club – it's not like the "Royal Black Hog" here tonight, where the members are snooty and stuck up because they have been "initiated" into this elite club – Here's a couple reasons why.

3. First, the Sacraments are open to all who desire them.

4. And second, the Sacraments are in themselves gifts to us, not just hoops we jump through – they draw us more deeply into the very life of God.

5. The Sacraments of Initiation lay the foundation of every Christian life – they are the beginning for every single one of us.



*Once again, try to have this plan memorized – it will make more of an impression if you can rattle it off from memory.*

## II. God's Plan

A. When we talk about the Sacraments of Initiation, we have to go back and look at God's whole plan again – Remember the Plan?

1. God loves us – He made us and created us out of His love for us.

2. Because He loves us, He wants us to participate in His very life.

3. He knew though that we would prefer ourselves over Him, that we would choose to sin, and because of our sin would be eternally separated from Him,

with no way, on our own, to reach Him.

4. So He sent His only Son to take the punishment for our sin, and to reconcile us to Him – Jesus became man to carry out God’s plan.

5. Then Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit to give us the grace, the power, and the strength we would need to follow Him.

6. Jesus also set up the Church as the "vessel" through which the Holy Spirit and all His graces could flow to us.

7. The Church then gave us the seven "Sacraments" as the "channels" of that grace.

B. So, in light of God’s plan, it would make sense that some of these Sacraments would need to serve as the "means of change".

1. The Sacraments of Initiation do just that – they literally change us, and mark us permanently with the life of Christ.

2. They MERGE us into His life – changing us from our humanness and sinfulness and making us more like God.

a. "We are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by Confirmation and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life". CCC #1212

b. These Sacraments change us and give us, in "increasing measure," the treasures of divine life. CCC #1212

C. Let’s take a look at the three Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

1. For this next part of the talk, we’re going to split you up into three groups. The groups will rotate around the room to the three centers – one for each Sacrament.

**NOTE:** The next several sections of the talk are going to take place in "centers" – split the teens up into three groups. Set up your meeting room to allow for three separate areas where groups can gather. You will also need to have three speakers – one for Baptism, one for Confirmation and one for Eucharist. Have each group of teens move to their assigned cen-



*This is the primary point of the talk – make sure it gets through. We become new creatures, we are literally changed and have a new life before us.*



CCC #1212

ter. The centers will rotate every 5-7 minutes. Teens will have worksheets that they can fill out as they travel from center to center. You may want to have a few Bibles and Catechisms in each center. The speakers should be prepared to give the same material three times in a row. The large group will come back together for the talk wrap-up.



### III. It All Begins with Baptism – Center I

A. The primary effect of Baptism is that it makes us a new creature – we are born anew, new creatures, adopted sons and daughters of God, partakers of the divine nature, members of Christ and co-heirs with Him, temples of the Holy Spirit. CCC #1265

1. That is so huge!
2. In Baptism, we literally become a new creation, all sin is washed away and we become a dwelling place for the presence of God of the Universe.
3. And Baptism is the foundation for all the other Sacraments – it's the door which gives access to the other Sacraments.



B. Let's look at the effects of this Sacrament.

1. All sins are forgiven – original sin and all personal sin, including the punishment for sin.



2. Like we said before, in Baptism, we become a new creature.



3. We receive "Sanctifying" grace – which enables us to believe in God, gives us the power to live and act under the prompting of the Holy Spirit.



4. Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ – it incorporates us into the Church.



5. And in Baptism, we are sealed with an indelible (permanent) spiritual mark – we are sealed for and set aside for Christ.

C. Form, Matter and Minister

1. Remember these three "components of a Sacrament" from the first Night? Every Sacrament has these three components. We want to show briefly what they are for each one.

2.The Form, or the words for Baptism are: "In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit".

3.The Matter, the earthly stuff is: water poured over the head.

4.And the Minister can be a Bishop, a Priest or a Deacon.

5.Remember – it is these three components that make a Sacrament a Sacrament – they must be present.



#### D. Institution / Scripture References

1. Jesus' own baptism in the Jordan River by John the Baptist.

2. Jesus' commissioning of the disciples at the end of the Gospels.



#### IV. Confirmation – Center II

A.The Sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. CCC #1285

B.The Effects of Confirmation CCC #1302-1303



1.A special outpouring of the Holy Spirit – like the Apostles experienced on the day of Pentecost.



2.Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace:

- a.Roots us more deeply with the Father
- b.Unites us more firmly to Christ
- c.Increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us
- d.Makes our bond with the Church more perfect
- e.Gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to SPREAD and DEFEND the faith

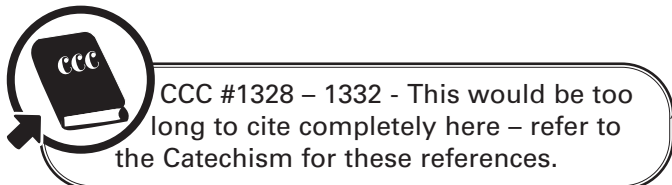
3.Like Baptism, Confirmation makes an indelible spiritual mark – sealing the person for Christ and setting them aside for life with Him.

#### C. Form, Matter and Minister

1.In Confirmation, the Form is: "Be Sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit".

From this fact, Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace:

- it roots us more deeply in the divine filiation which makes us cry, "Abba! Father!";
- it unites us more firmly to Christ;
- it increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us;
- it renders our bond with the Church more perfect;
- it gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross .



2.The Matter is: Anointing with oil on the forehead.

3.And the Minister: A Bishop, or sometimes with special permission from the Bishop, a Priest.

D. Institution / Scripture References

1.After Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, the heavens were opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him – this was the moment of Jesus’ anointing by the Holy Spirit.

2.The Holy Spirit coming upon the Apostles at Pentecost

3.The references to the Holy Spirit in connection with Baptism

V. Eucharist – Center III

A.The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life. All the other Sacraments are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it.

B.The Eucharist is the prime Sacrament because it brings us the life of Christ in a real, tangible way. All the Sacraments bring us the life of Christ – but Eucharist in a unique way because of the real presence.

C.The Catechism gives us many different names for this Sacrament – which begins to open up the incredible depth and mystery of this Sacrament.

- 1.Eucharist
- 2.The Lord’s Supper
- 3.The Breaking of Bread
- 4.The Eucharistic Assembly
- 5.The Memorial of the Lord’s Passion
- 6.The Holy Sacrifice
- 7.The Holy and Divine Liturgy
- 8.The Most Blessed Sacrament
- 9.Holy Communion
- 10.Holy Mass

D. The Eucharist is intimately connected to the Liturgy (Mass) because that is where simple bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Jesus.

E. The Effects of Eucharist

- 1. Connects us more intimately with Jesus
- 2. The Eucharist does for us spiritually what regular food does for our bodies physically.
- 3. Eucharist separates us from sin – cleanses us from past sins and preserves us from future sins.
- 4. Eucharist strengthens our charity, which gets weakened by daily life.
- 5. It preserves us from future mortal sins.
- 6. It unifies us more closely with the entire body of Christ – the Church.
- 7. It commits us to the poor.
- 8. The Eucharist helps bring about the unity of all Christians.

F. Form, Matter and Minister

- 1. In Eucharist, the Form is: The words in the Eucharistic Prayer that repeat the words of Jesus from the Last Supper -called the "institution narrative".
- 2. The Matter is: Bread and wine.
- 3. And the Minister: A Bishop or a Priest.

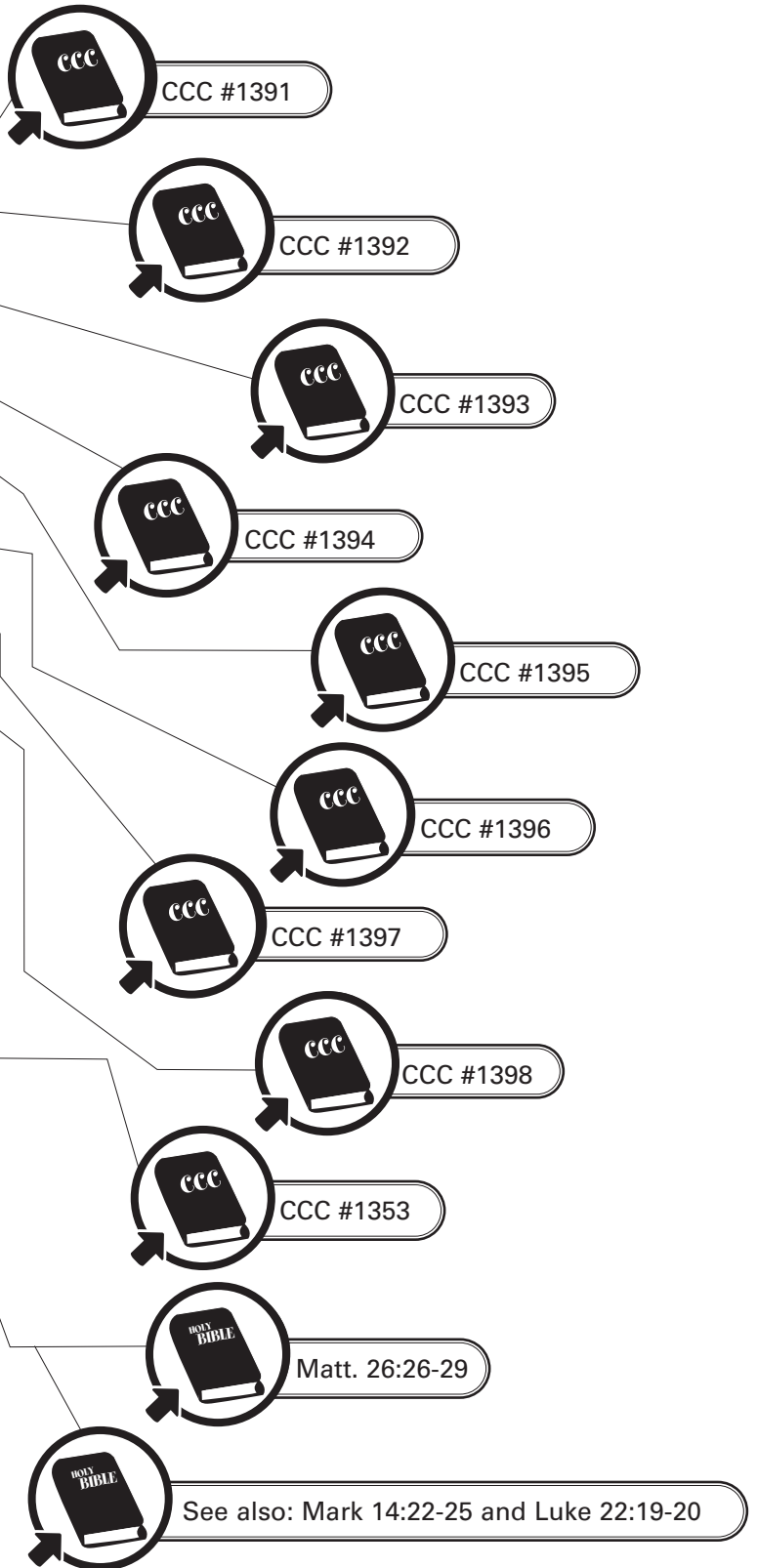
G. Institution / Scripture References

- 1. Jesus instituted this Sacrament with the Last Supper.

VI. Wrap Up (Bring whole group back together)

A. Quick Review

- 1. We've learned about three of the seven Sacraments tonight.



a. Baptism

b. Confirmation

c. Eucharist

2. We've learned about the "Form", the "Matter" and the "Minister" of each

a. Notice the earthly stuff in all three of these Sacraments – regular, ordinary, natural things that Jesus used and then transformed into something extraordinary and holy, and for a holy purpose.

b. And it's this simple earthly stuff. Combined with the "words" (the Form – said by an ordained Minister) that Jesus used when He instituted these Sacraments that brings about this transformation.

B. What's to come

1. We still have the other four Sacraments coming.

a. The Sacraments of Healing: Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick

b. The Sacraments of Service: Matrimony and Holy Orders

C. God's incredible plan

1. From the beginning of time, this was the plan that God had in mind.

2. To fill us with His life

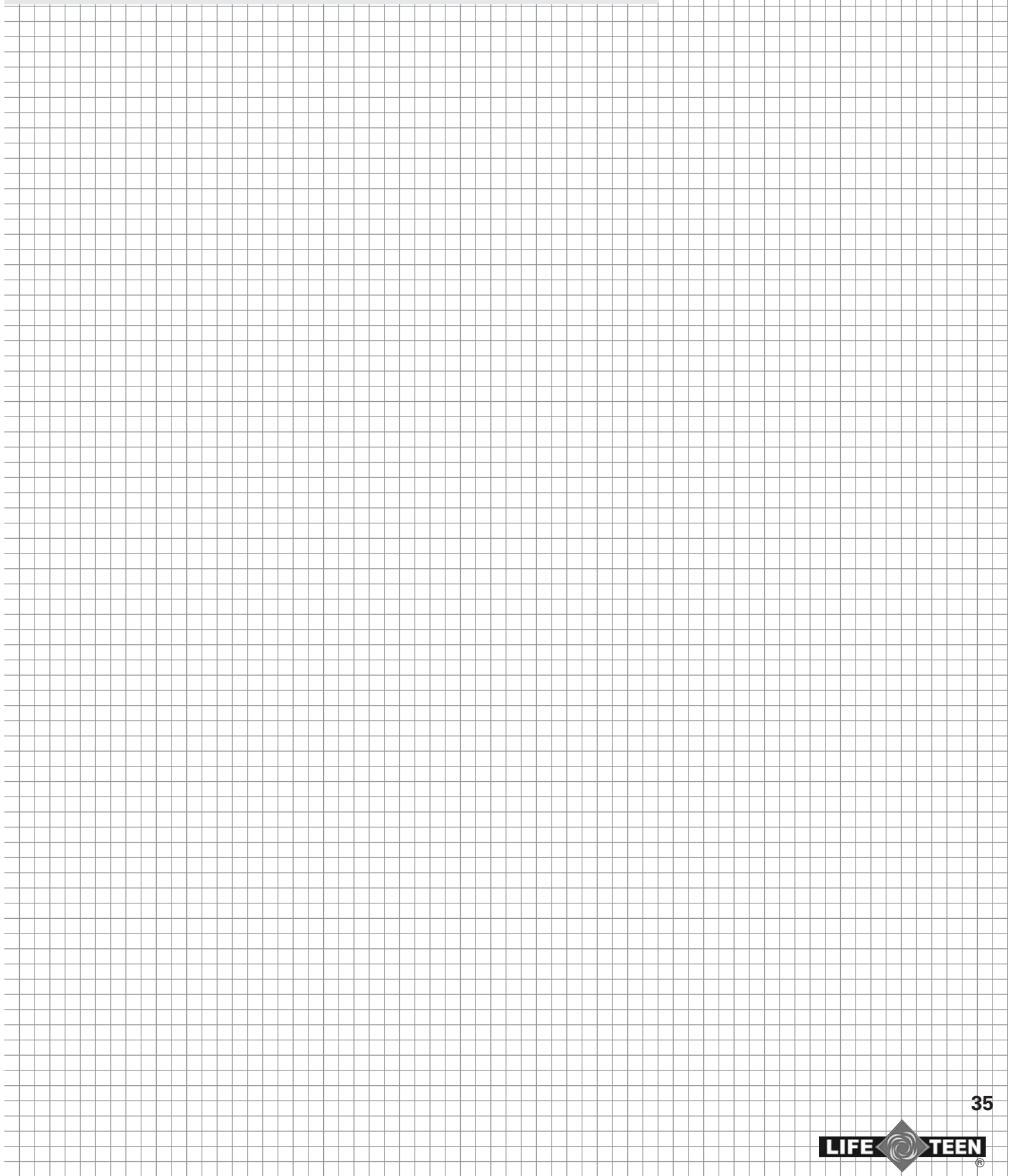
3. To transform us more and more into His life – and it all begins with these three Sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

4. They are the Sacraments of "Change" – they transform us into new creatures and give us the power, strength and nourishment we need to pursue this new life.

WORKSHEET:  
**SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION**

<b>SACRAMENT</b>	<b>MINISTER</b>	<b>THE FORM</b> (words)	<b>THE MATTER</b> (the earthly stuff)	<b>SCRIPTURE CATECHISM REFERENCE</b>
<b>BAPTISM</b>				Matt. 28:19-20, Mk. 16:16 CCC #1239 & 1240
<b>EUCHARIST</b>				Matt. 26:26-29, Mk. 14:22-25, Lk. 22:19-20 CCC # 1353b
<b>CONFIRMATION</b>				Luke 3:22 Acts 2:38 Acts 8:16-17 CCC #1300

# ROOM PLANNING GUIDE





# MERGE

## LIFE NIGHT CHECKLIST

- LIFE Night planning team receives a copy of "MERGE". Each member reads through the LIFE Night, scripture references, and Catechism references before the initial planning meeting.

### 1 MONTH PRIOR TO LIFE NIGHT

- LIFE Night planning team meets, prays, and discusses the LIFE Night. The team assesses where the teens are in their faith journey and makes necessary changes and adjustments to the LIFE Night so it will reach the teens of the parish. The team decides who is responsible for the main elements in the night.
  - Environment \_\_\_\_\_
  - Country Club President Welcome \_\_\_\_\_
  - Initiation Games \_\_\_\_\_
  - Teaching "Merge" \_\_\_\_\_
  - Country Club Applications \_\_\_\_\_
  - Large Group Rap Session \_\_\_\_\_
  - Blessing of Teens with Oil \_\_\_\_\_
  - Membership Cards \_\_\_\_\_

### 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO LIFE NIGHT

- LIFE Night planning team turns in a detailed sheet of the night including any changes and/or adjustments to the Youth Minister, listing everyone on the team and their responsibilities.
- Teens and Core who will be used for skits/teaching should be picked and given scripts/teaching.



## 1 WEEK PRIOR TO LIFE NIGHT

- Prepare Applications to be filled out by teens
- Prepare Membership Cards
- Teachings should be delivered and practiced to the Youth Minister. Youth Minister should give feedback.

## 2-3 DAYS PRIOR TO LIFE NIGHT

- Run a dress rehearsal for the LIFE Night.
  - Who is running lights?
  - Who is running video?
  - Who is running audio?

## 1 DAY PRIOR TO LIFE NIGHT

- Finalize everything for the Environment
- Purchase supplies for Initiation Game
- Purchase Oil (any kind of non-sacramental oil) and have priest bless

## 2 HOURS BEFORE MASS & LIFE NIGHT

- Set up Environment
- Team talks through night to make sure transitions are ready.
- Make sure the room is clean and presentable. Be sure all cords and cables are taped down and hidden out of the way.
- Prep the rest of the CORE on the details of the night.
- Set up prayer stations with small containers of blessed oil for CORE members to use to bless the teens.
- Pray for the success of the night and the teens who will attend the night. Pray over those giving a talk.