

ROAD WORK AHEAD

LIFE NIGHT PLANNING SHEET

DATE _____

GOAL FOR THIS NIGHT

The goal is to give the teens the broad understanding of what a Sacrament is and the incredible power available to us in each individual Sacrament.

ABOUT THIS NIGHT

Many Catholic teens don't really know what sacraments are or understand what they are all about. But, the Catechism clearly states "the Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation" (CCC#1129). The sacraments are central to our life of grace. They are the primary channels that Christ instituted for us to receive His grace. One of the greatest tasks of any Catholic youth ministry program is helping teens to know, love and live this truth.

This LIFE Night unpacks the definition of a sacrament through an exercise designed to show the difference between imaging an event and actually experiencing an event with our senses. Once the teens have realized the vast difference between these two experiences, it will be clear why Christ instituted the sacraments, and help them see why we have concrete signs and symbols to receive God's grace.

ENVIRONMENT

Set the room up to look like a road construction zone. Have a large detour sign at your normal entrance and re-route the teens into the room another way. Have the Core members dress up like road construction workers with orange vests and hard hats. Make the entrance into the room like a road with black paper and with white paint on the sides with dotted lines down the middle. Fill the room with lots of construction equipment including cones, orange fencing and caution tape. (You can use caution tape at the opening detour, also.) Finally, find or make lots of signs to place all around the room including Stop, Yield, Hospital, On Ramp, Fuel/Food Ahead, etc.

LIFE NIGHT TEAM

SAINTS

St. Thomas Aquinas
St. Agnes
St. Augustine
St. Leo the Great

BIBLE

Mt 28:18-20
Luke 6:19
John 9:1, 6-7
2 Cor. 6:1
Phil. 2:6-1
Titus 2:11-14
2 Peter 1:4

CATECHISM

CCC #1076, 1113-1134

GATHER | 15 MINUTES

INTRODUCTIONS | 5 MINUTES

Introduce new teens. Have the new teens share what make, model, and color of car they would drive if they could pick from any kind and money was no object.

RED LIGHT - GREEN LIGHT | 10 MINUTES

This is based on the original childhood favorite game! Have a construction worker "character" introduce the game. The character should be loud, like they've been working road construction (around jackhammers) for thirty years. Really ham it up.

Have the teens all gather at one end of the room. Have a clear start and finish with the teens lined up at the start and the construction worker standing at the finish. When the construction worker turns his back to the group and yells "Green Light," everyone runs forward. When he turns around and faces the group, he yells "Red light" and all teens have to stop moving. If any of the teens are still moving when the leader turns around, they are eliminated. The trick for the teens is to go quickly enough to cover a lot of ground, but not too fast to where they can't stop abruptly. This pattern of "green light" (teens move forward) and "red light" (teens stop) continues until someone crosses the finish line to win. The further the distance the teens can go, the better the game. The game will vary depending on the size of group. For a large group, you could have each grade level compete. The final four winners compete in a final competition. Or you could play a couple of times to have a few winners. Have prizes such as LIFE TEEN shirts, hats, or have some auto accessories such as fuzzy dice, cheesy steering wheel covers, or gift certificates to a drive-in fast food restaurant (like Sonic).

PROCLAIM | 25 MINUTES

"GOING ON A TRIP" ACTIVITY | 10 MINUTES

to be a part of talk; see attached activity

TALK | 15 MINUTES

See attached outline.



ROAD WORK AHEAD

BREAK | 20 MINUTES

ROAD WORK AHEAD - SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Share a time when you experienced God's grace in the sacraments. Explain.
2. Which of the seven sacraments has had the greatest impact on your life? Which Sacrament do you think will have the biggest impact on your life in years to come?
3. Would your life be different without the sacraments? Would your relationship with God be different? If so, how? If not, why not?
4. What things distract or keep you from more fully receiving Christ in the sacraments?

SEND | 15 MINUTES

WRAP-UP

Youth minister wraps up by transitioning into prayer. A popular worship song the teens enjoy that helps break open this topic further is I Want to Know You (In the Secret) by Sonic Flood, where we call out that we want to touch God, to hear God, and to see His face. You might want to try it.

We are so blessed as Catholics not to worship things about God, but actually and literally GOD, in such a physical way through the sacraments. Experiencing Christ in the sacraments begins with a desire from our heart to know. Lead the teens into singing I Want to Know You (In the Secret) and as they sing, invite them to open or raise their hands as an outward sign of their desire to know God more...

CLOSING PRAYER

See attached prayer. You can use it or write your own. It should be fundamental, personal, and practical, a prayer that the teens will really understand and enter into mind, body, and soul. Hail Mary, Ave Maria...

TEACHING: ROAD WORK AHEAD

Note: Sacraments – one of the crucial elements of our Catholic faith, yet not fully understood by most Catholics. This semester, we hope to break open the riches and give a much deeper understanding of the Sacraments. This first talk paves the way by laying a foundation of the "Theology" behind Sacraments. There may be some parts of the talk that go beyond where you think your teens are. Feel free to adjust as you need – leave sections out if necessary. However, because this talk is laying groundwork for all the other talks in the semester, we would encourage you to keep track of what you leave out and try to work it in during future talks.



The Going on a Trip Activity will be a great set up for this talk. Move right into the definition of a Sacrament and tie it back into the experience the teens just had.

I. Laying the Groundwork

A. So what are Sacraments anyway?

1. The formal definition of a Sacrament would be: "An outward sign, instituted by Christ, to give grace"

a. An outward sign – God knows that we are human, that we need real things that we can touch, can see, can taste – so He designed the Sacraments to be real and tangible – made of earthly "stuff"

b. Just like this activity we just experienced – when your human senses are involved – when you can feel the wind, hear the construction, smell the dust, the whole experience seems more real

c. That's the way it is with the Sacraments – we can feel them, touch them, taste them – and because we can, they are more real to us

2. Instituted by Christ

a. All seven Sacraments that we believe in as Catholics, we believe were instituted directly by Christ

b. Which means that Jesus created them – He took the human, earthly, natural "stuff" and turned them into something supernatural

c. Simple water becomes new life, bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus, simple oil becomes a holy seal, human hands become the source of grace and spiritual healing

3. To give grace

a. And what is grace? Grace is GOD'S LIFE

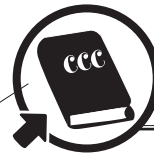
b. Jesus created the Sacraments so that we could get God's LIFE



CCC #1997

B. Taking it a little deeper

1. To see the Sacraments for what they really are – we have to step back and look at God’s whole plan as one big, huge Blessing!



CCC #1079

a. Throughout all of time, God has had a plan, a plan that would ultimately bring us into full communion with Him, which means, into Heaven with Him for all eternity

b. God knew that we could not and cannot attain this on our own, so He created a plan to help us reach our goal - Heaven

4. Want to know God’s plan – in a nutshell? We’ve talked about it before – it’s pretty simple

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

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

c. 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

d. 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

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

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

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



You may want to read CCC #1077 – 1109 – The whole Sacramental Economy before giving this talk. It will help give you a broad understanding of the foundation we are laying here.



As much as possible, try to have "God's plan" memorized so you can rattle it off quickly – it will be more impressive.

B. There you go – the whole plan, in a nutshell!

1. Remember – A Sacrament is the way that God gets His grace to us. And what is Grace again? GOD’S LIFE!



CCC #1996



This is the HEART of this talk – drive it home with passion and conviction!! Christ in You!

2. Get It?! God wants us to participate in His very Life – so He has to create a way for that Life to come "into" us



Colossians 1:26-27

3. Colossians talks about it this way:

a. Colossians 1:26-27

b. What is the MYSTERY? It is, "CHRIST IN YOU!!" – that's the whole point of God's plan – to get His LIFE INSIDE us



Titus 2:11-14

4. And the Sacraments are the way He does it



II Peter 1:3-4

II. THE "Sacrament"

A. When we see God's whole plan, we can see that the Sacraments are a crucial part



CCC #1116

1. Each Sacrament becomes a certain power that comes forth from the person of Jesus Christ – the Sacraments are literally the "life of Christ" given to us

2. In each Sacrament we have His LIFE communicated to us, delivered to us and opened up for us



Luke 6:19

3. And, in God's plan, He uses the Church as the "vessel" to bring the Sacraments to us

B. So, the Church really is THE Sacrament

1. If Jesus left us His life, and established the Church to be the vessel to bring us that life . . .

2. And if a Sacrament is defined as a vessel that communicates and brings God's life to us . . .

3. Then it makes sense that the "Supreme" Sacrament is the Church itself

a. As the Supreme Sacrament, the Church takes all the grace she has – all the LIFE of God – and "dispenses" it to us in seven different ways – using the seven sacraments

III. Breaking it Open

A. How the Sacraments are broken down

1. The Sacraments of Initiation

- a. There are three Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist
- b. These Sacraments lay the foundation for every Christian life
- c. We're going to talk more about these Sacraments in another LIFE Night, coming up soon



CCC #1420-1421

2. The Sacraments of Healing

- a. There are two Sacraments of Healing: Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick
- b. These Sacraments are there to bring us healing when the new life we have received in the Sacraments of Initiation is weakened, or even lost by our sin
- c. We're going to have a whole night on these Sacraments coming up soon



The Lord Jesus Christ, physician of our souls and bodies, who forgave the sins of the paralytic and restored him to bodily health, has willed that his Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit, his work of healing and salvation, even among her own members. This is the purpose of the two sacraments of healing: the sacrament of Penance and the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick.

3. The Sacraments of Service

- a. And finally, there are two Sacraments of Service: Holy Orders and Matrimony, or Marriage
- b. These Sacraments are directed towards the salvation of others – they serve to build up the People of God
- c. We also have a night planned to go into these Sacraments in greater depth



CCC #1534

C. So, that's SEVEN! in those three Sacrament "types": Initiation, Healing and Service we receive seven "channels" through which the Church allows the LIFE of God to flow to us

- 1. And we believe these "channels" were established by Jesus Himself – these were the means that HE instituted to bring us His LIFE



This section would be one that could be cut if you think there is too much material for your teens. In each future talk, there will be a section devoted to the form, matter and minister. You can move through this pretty quickly – it's just meant to set up this material in future talks. The most important point is that when Jesus instituted the Sacraments, He used these three components – He is the one who made them important.

IV. What makes a Sacrament a Sacrament?

A. There are three things that every Sacrament has – three key components that must be present for a Sacrament to be authentic: the matter, the form and the minister



Use the environment here – point to the signs around the room, to the construction equipment, to the CORE dressed up like construction workers. When people walked in, it "felt" like a construction zone. Point back to the activity done at the beginning – it was more real when you could "feel" the activity – tie it all in.



John 9:1, 6-7



This is another section that could be cut – it all depends on where your teens are. If there are potential questions in future talks about the authority a bishop or priest has to administer a Sacrament, then we would encourage leaving it in – it helps lay the foundation.



Matt. 16:18-19



Matt. 16:18-19



CCC #77



CCC #861-862



For more, check out CCC #1086-1087

1. The matter – This is what we talked about at the beginning – an outward sign. Every Sacrament that Jesus instituted, he used very simple, "earthly" stuff – natural things that we as humans could easily relate to and understand: water, bread, wine, oil, etc. The matter may be different for every Sacrament, but each Sacrament uses this earthly, natural stuff

2. The form – every Sacrament has certain words that are said as the Sacrament is administered. "Be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit," "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit," etc.

3. The Minister – and for every Sacrament, there must be an ordained minister to celebrate the Sacrament

4. When an ordained minister, uses the defined words, combined with the earthly matter, you have a Sacrament. All three components MUST be present, and when they are, the Sacrament becomes a vehicle of the very life of Jesus

D. A Final Word

1. It's important to note here that the "Ordained" minister is a crucial component

2. Looking back again at God's plan, we can see that He provided for EVERYTHING that we would need to participate in His life

3. This everything included even the "authority" in giving out His life. Jesus wanted to give us His life Himself, to give it to us directly

4. In order to do this, He established the Priesthood – He gave His authority, first to Peter, and through Peter to the rest of the Apostles

5. And what is more, he gave Peter and the Apostles the authority to PASS ON His authority to others after them – so His authority would never be lost. The Church calls this "Apostolic Succession"

6. Every Pope, every Bishop, every Priest has had hands laid on them by someone who has had hands laid on them, by someone who has had hands laid on them by one of the first Apostles, who had hands laid on them by Peter, who had hands laid on him by Jesus – there is an unbroken line of SUCCESSION, all the way back to the person of Jesus

7. And because every Sacrament is administered by an "ordained" minister (with the exception of Matrimony, which we will explain later when talk more about that Sacrament), the authority of Christ, His power, and His very LIFE are present in each and every one

IV. Wrapping Up

A. Back to God's Plan

1. God's plan was to show us how much He loved us, and to provide us a way to get to Him

2. The Sacraments are the "channels" of all His life and grace – all that we need to respond to His generous love

3. It's His free and undeserved help

B. Looking forward

1. This semester we are going to be breaking open each of these seven Sacraments and looking at them more deeply

2. We want to unwrap them, and dig into the mystery of each one as much as we can

3. And as we understand the Sacraments in greater depth – hopefully we will understand more and more that God's grace, offered to us, provides the WAY, provides the STRENGTH, provides the TOOLS – but the choice is still ours

4. The provision of God's grace demands our "free" response. Think about that this semester – what is YOUR response?



ACTIVITY: GOING ON A TRIP

The following activity is intended to portray the same event in two very different ways. The first time the following segment is read, the teens just hear the event spoken in a very plain, "mellow" way. Once again, make "Take 1" very unimpressive. The second time will use many outward signs to make it a completely different experience. Go all out! Find great sounds and make the music loud with lots of bass. Check out websites like www.sounddogs.com for a great selection of sounds. Get big fans for the wind. Find lots of spray bottles for the water. Make it completely experiential so that the difference between "Take 1" and "Take 2" is drastic. This is a great activity to have teens help you with and be involved in, from downloading the music, to reading the meditation, to helping with the fans, water, etc.

Take 1

Invite the teens to get comfortable and to close their eyes. Then lead them in the following:

Imagine you are driving down the road in your new convertible. The sun is out, the sky is blue, and the top is down. You don't have a care in the world as you cruise along. You feel the wind blowing in your face and you rejoice at being alive. Suddenly, you see a lot of traffic ahead of you. You have to slow down as you realize there is roadwork ahead. One of the lanes is closed off, and traffic comes to a halt. Cars begin to stack up. You look ahead to see where they are tearing up part of the road. You hear the jack hammer and see the heavy machinery. Dirt is flying everywhere. The people in the cars become irritable and impatient. They begin to honk their horns and yell. You begin to sweat from the sun beating down and the heat from the other cars. You wonder if you will ever be out of this traffic jam. Suddenly, the cars in front of you begin to move. Slowly you make your way down the road. Then the rest of the cars clear out. Finally, before you, there is nothing but open road and as you speed up you feel the wind blowing in your hair.

Then invite the teens to keep their eyes closed and imagine this scenario again, as you try to make it more real for them. This time, as you read it, have your Core do things so that they experience it, not just hear about it.

Take 2

Imagine you are driving down the road in your new convertible. The sun is out, the sky is blue, and the top is down. You don't have a care in the world as you cruise along. You feel the wind blowing in your face and you rejoice at being alive. (Have your Core turn fans on high and blow in the face of the teens.) Suddenly, you see a lot of traffic ahead of you. You have to slow down as you realize there is roadwork ahead. (Turn the speed of the fans to low.) One of the lanes is closed off, and traffic comes to a halt. (Turn off the fans.) Cars begin to stack up. You look ahead to see where they are tearing up part of the road. You hear the jack hammer and see the heavy machinery. (Play sound clips of a jack hammer and machinery sounds, LOUD.) Dirt is flying everywhere. (Have your Core throw sand onto the teens.) The people in the cars become irritable and impatient. They begin to honk their horns and yell. (Play sound bites of honking horns and have your Core members yell.) You begin to sweat from the sun beating down and the heat from the other cars. (Have your Core spray the teens with water misters.) You wonder if you will ever be out of this traffic jam. Suddenly, the cars in front of you begin to move. Slowly you make your way down the road. Then the rest of the cars clear out. Finally, before you, there is nothing but open road and as you speed up you feel the wind blowing in your hair. (Turn on the fans again.)

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS : ROAD WORK AHEAD



SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS Road Work Ahead

1. Share a time when you experienced God's grace in the sacraments. Explain.
2. Which of the seven sacraments has had the greatest impact on your life? Which Sacrament do you think will have the biggest impact on your life in years to come?
3. Would your life be different without the sacraments? Would your relationship with God be different? If so, how? If not, why not?
4. What things distract or keep you from more fully receiving Christ in the sacraments?



SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS Road Work Ahead

1. Share a time when you experienced God's grace in the sacraments. Explain.
2. Which of the seven sacraments has had the greatest impact on your life? Which Sacrament do you think will have the biggest impact on your life in years to come?
3. Would your life be different without the sacraments? Would your relationship with God be different? If so, how? If not, why not?
4. What things distract or keep you from more fully receiving Christ in the sacraments?

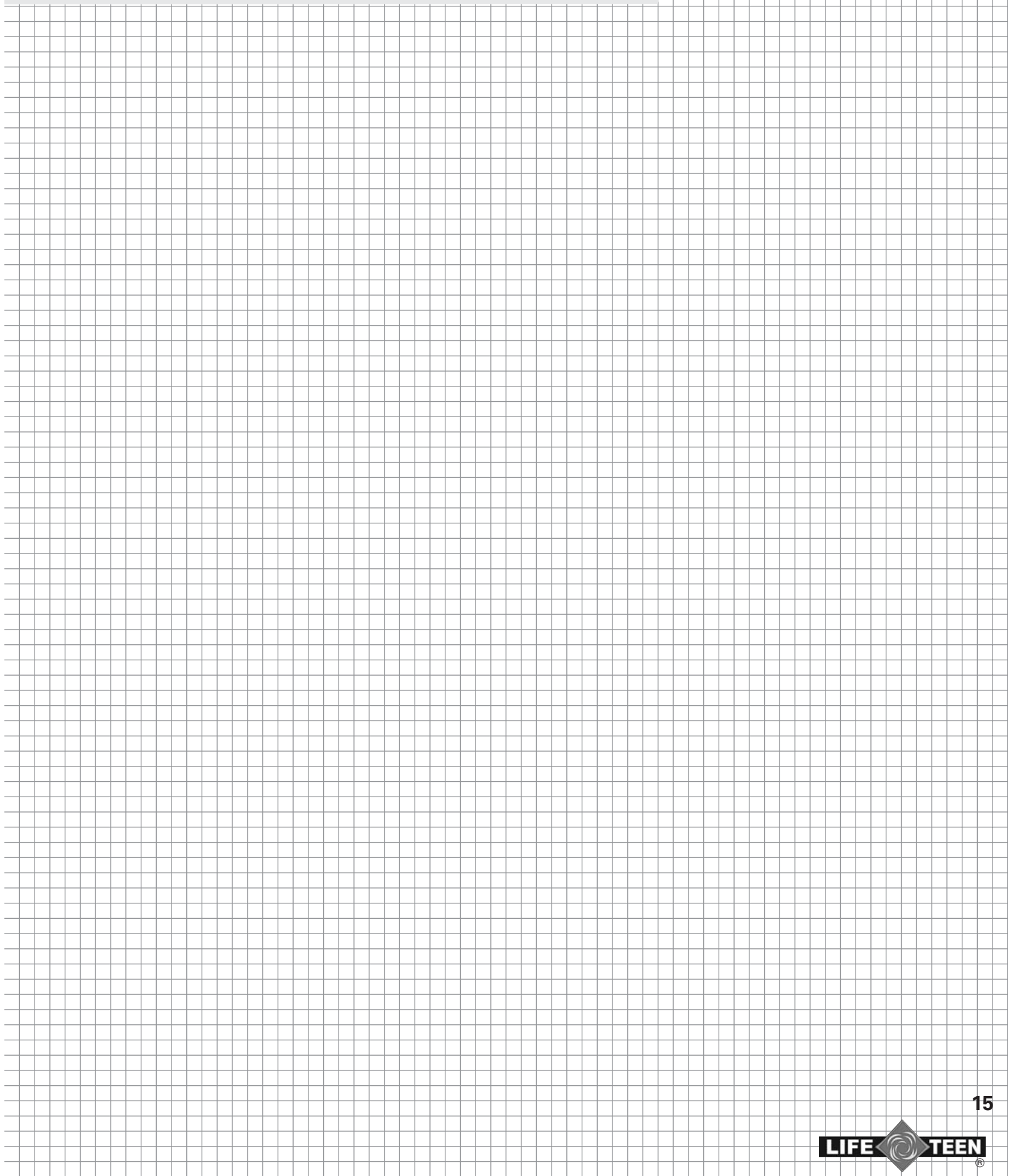


SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS Road Work Ahead

1. Share a time when you experienced God's grace in the sacraments. Explain.
2. Which of the seven sacraments has had the greatest impact on your life? Which Sacrament do you think will have the biggest impact on your life in years to come?
3. Would your life be different without the sacraments? Would your relationship with God be different? If so, how? If not, why not?
4. What things distract or keep you from more fully receiving Christ in the sacraments?



ROOM PLANNING GUIDE





CLOSING PRAYER: ROAD WORK AHEAD

Dear Jesus,

You are all-powerful, all-loving, all-knowing.
You know my every thought, my every fear. You know every hair on my head.
You understand my failings, my weaknesses.
Make up for what is lacking in my human nature.
I need you to quiet my fears, to calm my frustrations, to dispel my doubts.

Help me to be more aware of you in my everyday life, and especially in the sacraments, as my friend and comforter. I offer you my body, my senses, may they be channels through which I experience you, in the beauty of your creation, in the faces of the people I see around me, in the music and sounds that I hear, in all that I smell, taste, and touch. May everything that you have created be a revelation to me of your majesty and love.

I will never be able to comprehend all your glory until I am home with you in Heaven. But help my spirit be awakened to you in the little things of this world. You choose to come to me in humble ways in the sacraments. I want fireworks. I want you to be here in person. I want a supernatural experience of you. But you want me to have great faith to seek you. God, grant me that faith, to see and hear with my soul more than my eyes or ears.

Where I have doubt, increase my faith, Lord.
Where I have fear, fill me with your love.
Help me to be open to you, truly present in the sacraments.
Humble me, Lord.
Help me to be on fire and filled with zeal and excitement for this gift of you in the sacraments.
Allow me to hunger for you, Lord.
May I seek you with my whole heart in all of the ways that you have provided.
I want to know you more, Lord.
I believe you are here.
Help me to let you in.
Amen.



ROAD WORK AHEAD

LIFE NIGHT CHECKLIST

- LIFE Night planning team receives a copy of "ROAD WORK AHEAD". 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
- Introductions
- Red Light – Green Light Game
- "Going on a Trip" Activity
- Teaching "Road Work Ahead"
- Convert witness
- Small Groups
- Closing Prayer (Teen reader)

2 WEEKS PRIOR TO LIFE NIGHT

- LIFE Night planning team turns in a detailed sheet of the night including and 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 Small Group Questions
- Prepare the "Going on a Trip" Activity
- Teaching should be delivered and practiced in front of 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
- Print out small group questions
- Print out closing prayer for selected teenager to read

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.

Pray for the success of the night and for the teens who will attend the night. Pray over those giving a talk.