- LIFE NIGHT -

UUM?

A Life Night on the Triduum

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LIFE NIGHT OUTLINE

GOAL

The goal for this night is to immerse the teens into the celebration of the Triduum through prayer and reflection of each day—Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. The teens will experience the richness of the traditions of the Church that will help them enter more fully into the three days of the Triduum.

ABOUT THE NIGHT

This Life Night is broken up into three different parts—Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Each part will have a structure of a shorter Life Night. Instead of the normal 75 minutes, this night is written to last about 90 minutes. The atmosphere for this night should remain quiet, prayerful and reflective.

The night begins with Holy Thursday in a small room. After a Scripture reflection, the teaching will help the teens understand what the Triduum is and how Holy Thursday celebrates the institution of both the Eucharist and the priesthood. The teens will move into short a time of Eucharistic Adoration to give thanks for these gifts. After Adoration the teens will move into the Good Friday environment where they will start with a Scripture reflection about the Passion and death of Jesus. The teaching helps the teens understand the free gift of salvation won for them on the cross. After the teaching, the teens will have a time of veneration of the cross. After they venerate the cross, the teens will move into the Holy Saturday environment. After a scripture reflection, the teaching will focus on what it means to wait in hope. The night will end with a time of individual, silent prayer and reflection.

ENVIRONMENT

The environment for this night will be split into three—one for each day. If possible, use three different rooms for these environments—a smaller room, the regular meeting room, and the church or chapel. If three separate rooms are not possible, divide the main room into three separate parts using pipe and drapes or sheets.

Holy Thursday

The environment for this session should be in a tight space. The space should be large enough for the group to fit into but just barely. This environment should resemble the room the apostles were in for the Last Supper. Have a table in front of the room set with a white tablecloth draped over the sides. Have fresh bread and a chalice of wine set on the table as well. The room should be softly lit and kept at a reverent tone.

Good Friday

The environment for this session should be in the regular meeting room. The room should be softly lit. Mark off a pathway from the door of the room. Create an eight-foot circle in the middle of the room with paper bag luminaries. The paper bags should be white and filled with sand. Place a votive candle or tea light in the bag and light the candle. All of these supplies can be found at a local superstore or craft store. Inside the circle have a stand that will hold a large wooden cross. Off to the side have the following available to bring into the environment: large wooden cross, crown of thorns, a red cloth long enough to drape around the cross, and four or five smaller crosses that can be used for veneration. Ask a few parents in the community to help with the construction of the crosses.

Holy Saturday

The environment for this session should resemble a garden tomb with a large stone. If possible, have this environment set up in the church or chapel. To build the environment use items like boxes, tables or things that will stack. Spray paint canvas or cloth different shades of brown to create a sand/stone look. The canvas can be bought at any hardware or paint store. With the same colors paint a piece of cardboard to create a large stone. Drape the canvas over the boxes or tables and create what looks like a tomb. Place the stone to look like the entrance to the tomb. Around the tomb have plants and greenery. Ask around the office or call a few parents to borrow the plants. Be sure to put a name on the bottom of the plants so they can be returned after the night. Fake plants and greenery can also be purchased at a craft or hobby store.

HOLY THURSDAY

GATHER *8 Minutes*

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS (3 min)

Gather all the teens into the room. Ask them to keep a spirit of prayer and reverence. The youth minister should introduce the night and welcome any teens at Life Night for the first time. The youth minister should explain that this Life Night is going to look and feel a little bit different from a normal night.

CATECHISM REFERENCES:
CCC 1168-1169
CCC 599-618
CCC 624-628
CCC 1337-1344

SCRIPTURES:
Matthew 26, 27:57-61
Mark 14
Luke 22-23
John 13, 19
1 Corinthians 11:22-34

LAST SUPPER SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (5 min)

Turn down the lights in the room and begin the first session by proclaiming the Last Supper discourse from the Gospel of Luke. If possible, have teens and Core members act out the Gospel as it is read.

Luke 22:1-13
Now the feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death; for they feared the people. Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve; he went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. And they were glad, and engaged to give him money. So he agreed, and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of the multitude. Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it." They said to him, "Where will you have us prepare it?" He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house which he enters, and tell the householder, 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I am to eat the Passover with my disciples?' And he will show you a large upper room furnished; there make ready." And they went, and found it as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover. And when the hour came, he sat at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you I shall not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after supper, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

PROCLAIM *10 Minutes*

What is the Triduum?

The word "Triduum" means "three days." In the Church we have a three-day commemoration of Jesus' Passion, death and Resurrection. We call this commemoration the Triduum. The Triduum starts with Mass on the Thursday before Easter (Holy Thursday) continuing all day Friday (Good Friday) and Saturday (Holy Saturday) and culminates with the Easter Vigil celebration.

History

- Christians have been remembering and celebrating the death and Resurrection of Jesus since the time of the apostles. This celebration we know as Easter is the highest and most central celebration in Christianity. Easter is more important than any other feast in the liturgical year—even Christmas. Like the Eucharist, every other feast day points to and flows from the Easter celebration.

- This celebration was so important that the early Christians extended it to a three-day celebration. These three days we know today as the Triduum—Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. The Easter Vigil ends this three-day commemoration. The Latin word "vigilia," from which we get the word vigil, means "awake." It is at the Easter Vigil that we celebrate Christ's awakening from the dead. Over time the Easter Vigil received less emphasis but the celebration of the Triduum remained important. In recent years, the Easter Vigil and the Triduum have regained their place as the central mystery in Christianity.

Holy Thursday

On Holy Thursday we celebrate three great events in our Church—Passover, the institution of the Eucharist and the institution of the Priesthood. These events are remembered within the celebration of Holy Mass in the proclamation of the Scriptures.

- Passover- In Exodus, we hear about the first Passover when Moses instructed the Israelites to apply blood of a sacrificial lamb to the door of every house. The angel of the Lord would pass over that house and not bring death to their families. The Jewish people continued to celebrate this great feast of the Passover for many centuries. On Holy Thursday Christians remember this Passover and celebrate Christ as our sacrificial lamb. Christ's blood was shed so that death might "pass over" our lives. We remember Christ as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."

- Eucharist and Priesthood- Saint Paul reminds us of the words Jesus spoke to His apostles at the Last Supper while celebrating the great Jewish feast of Passover: "This is my body…this is the new covenant in my blood" (1 Corinthians 11:25). At the Last Supper Jesus gave the bread and wine to His apostles, not as a symbol or sign of love, but as His actual body and blood. We celebrate this moment as the institution of the Eucharist. In this same moment, Jesus charged His apostles to, "Do this in remembrance

of me" (1 Corinthians 11:24). He instructed His apostles to continue what He did by celebrating and remembering Him in this specific way. He gave them the authority to make bread and wine into His body and blood. This is the institution of the priesthood.

- Washing of the Feet- At the Last Supper, Jesus gave His disciples a new commandment: Love one another (John 13:34-35). After Jesus gave them the new commandment, He showed them how to love one another—He washed their feet. At Mass on Holy Thursday we remember this commandment and our call to love and serve each other by humbling ourselves and loving each other as Christ does.

- Thanks be to God!- During Holy Thursday we are called to give God glory and thanks for the gifts of the Eucharist and the priesthood. We are made aware of our own role and responsibility to live out our call to be a Eucharistic people—giving thanks for all the blessings in our lives and bringing life to all we meet.

SEND *12 Minutes*

EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

The youth minister should come forward after the teaching and explain to the teens that at the end of Holy Thursday Mass, the Blessed Sacrament is taken to a chapel so that the community can sit with the Lord. In the meantime, the sanctuary is stripped of all the decorations and left empty as a sign of the death of Christ. The celebration of Holy Thursday does not end but continues until the community gathers again the next day—Good Friday. This time of Eucharistic Adoration gives the community a chance to give thanks for the gift of the Eucharistic and the priesthood. It is also a time of prayer to continue to prepare for the events in the days ahead.

The youth minister should open the time of adoration in prayer and direct the teens to sit with the Lord and give thanks for such a wonderful gift. He/She should encourage those who do not believe that the Eucharist is truly Christ's body to ask God for the faith to believe. The priest or deacon should process in with the monstrance and allow the teens to pray in silence for a few minutes. After about 10 minutes, he should close the time of prayer and process out. A few Core members should then come forward and remove all the decorations as a sign of the death of Christ.

GOOD FRIDAY

GATHER *10 Minutes*

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (10 min)

The Core should escort the teens into the meeting room and have them sit outside the lighted circle. Have four teens (pick them ahead of time) come forward to proclaim the Scripture reflections. During each reflection have a Core member bring one element of the environment into the room.

1. Agony in the Garden
   - Proclaim Luke 22:39-46
   - Bring the cross into the room

2. Betrayal of Peter/Arrest of Jesus
   - Proclaim Luke 22:54-65
   - Set the cross in the stand

3. Jesus before Pilate
   - Proclaim Luke 23:13-16; John 19:2-16
   - Bring in the crown of thorns and place on the cross

4. Way of the Cross/Crucifixion
   - Proclaim John 19:17-28
   - Drape red cloth around the cross

PROCLAIM *8 Minutes*

- Imagine that you are one of Jesus' disciples. You've spent the last few years learning, witnessing miracles and traveling with Jesus. You left your job and family because you knew deep in your heart Jesus is who He says He is. You've grown to trust and love Him. He gave you hope and promised that He would be with you always. Now, He's dead—killed for a crime He didn't commit.

- How are you feeling? Scared? Foolish? Disappointed? Fearful? Hopeless?

- On Good Friday we are a Church in mourning for our savior. We commemorate the Passion and death of Jesus Christ—a death that was freely chosen for you and me. Every scourge, every step on the way to Calvary, every nail that pierced Jesus' skin was for each one of us and our sin.

- So how can this day be so good? Isn't there a contradiction to what we are celebrating? How can death be good? St. Paul tells us that "the wage of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). This day is GOOD because we, for the first time since Adam and Eve, have gained access to the Father in heaven and eternal life.

- The Father sent Jesus Christ, His only Son, to earth to pay our debts—what we owed for our sin. Jesus' death was that of an innocent man. He bore not only the weight of the cross, but the weight and wage of all the sin of all mankind. He literally died for you and me.

- His death is a free gift—a gift that we didn't earn or deserve. It is a gift of deep, unconditional love of a Father for His children. He desires so deeply for us to be with Him in heaven that He would submit to anything, "even death on a cross" as St. Paul tells us in Philippians (2:8).

- Good Friday is a celebration of not only the great victory over death but the promise and hope that death is not the end.

SEND *12 Minutes*

VENERATION OF THE CROSS (12 min)

After the teaching the youth minister should come forward to explain the act of venerating the cross. The following is an example of a brief description:

During the Good Friday service, after the Liturgy of the Word, we have a tradition called the Veneration of the Cross. The word "veneration" means "to esteem or honor." This time is a time for us to worship God and thank Him for sending a source of redemption. As Christians we venerate the cross as sacred because it is the instrument of our salvation. The challenge for us is to embrace those areas in our own lives that at first can seem like a burden but in reality help us in our salvation. We are called to carry those crosses in our lives, just as Jesus did for us.

After the explanation, a few Core members should come forward with the smaller crosses and stand around in the circle. Invite the teens to come forward to venerate the cross when they're ready—kiss, touch, genuflect—however they are comfortable. After the group has had a chance, instruct them to move into the Holy Saturday meeting space.

HOLY SATURDAY

GATHER *5 Minutes*

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (5 min)

Once everyone has gathered into the meeting space, a teen should begin by reading Matthew 27:57-61:

"When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulcher."

PROCLAIM *10 Minutes*

WAITING IN HOPE (8 min)

This teaching should be interactive, arousing the thoughts and reactions of the teens and leading them in a conversation about hope and waiting.

- What must it have been like? Jesus who you love and trust, who said He would rise, who you believe is the Messiah is now dead and in the tomb.

- How do you think these women felt? How would you feel?

- We know how the story ends. But, what if we didn't? What if we were the ones at the tomb?

- Holy Saturday is a day of waiting in hope. The women waited at the tomb for Jesus to rise. Their waiting was not out of disbelief or fear but out of confidence and trust that Jesus, their Lord, was going to rise.

- The Good News is that although the tomb is a place of death, it is also a place of life. It was in the tomb that Jesus rose from the dead. The tomb holds the fulfillment of Jesus' promise that He would rise from the dead. The women at the tomb knew this deep in their hearts.

- Are we living our lives with this same hope? Do we really believe that Jesus rose and is now in heaven? Are we living a life that reflects that hope? Or have we given up hope and given into the deception that this life is the end?

SEND *15 Minutes*

After the Proclaim, the youth minister should come forward to challenge the teens to spend a few minutes in prayer reflecting and praying for the coming of Christ on Easter. Specifically, ask the teens to bring before God anything they feel they are waiting for. Give them a reflection sheet on the importance of hope to read and pray through. The prayer time should be in silence. The youth minister should explain that the teens can stay as long as they need to pray and when they are ready, they are free to go. He/She should open the time with prayer. Be sure to have a few Core members stay as long as there are teens praying.

The reflection sheet can be found on page 37.

UUM?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Spend a few minutes praying and reflecting. Use the following Scripture verses, questions and quotes from Pope Benedict XVI to help you in your reflection.

Imagine that you are sitting at the tomb of Jesus. Are you filled with hope or despair? Do you believe that Jesus will rise from the dead? What does hope mean to you? What do you hope for? Are you living your life to reflect the hope of the Resurrection? Do you believe that Jesus will fulfill His promises in your life?

"For you have need of endurance, so that you may do the will of God and receive what is promised."

– Hebrews 10:36

"I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope."

– Psalm 130:5

"For through the Spirit, by faith, we wait for the hope of righteousness."

– Galatians 5:5

"Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us."

– Romans 5:1-5

"The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of new life."

–*Spe Salvi*, Paragraph 2

"God is the foundation of hope: not any god, but the God who has a human face and who has loved us to the end, each one of us and humanity in its entirety. His Kingdom is not an imaginary hereafter, situated in a future that will never arrive; his Kingdom is present wherever he is loved and wherever his love reaches us. His love alone gives us the possibility of soberly persevering day by day, without ceasing to be spurred on by hope, in a world which by its very nature is imperfect. His love is at the same time our guarantee of the existence of what we only vaguely sense and which nevertheless, in our deepest self, we await: a life that is "truly" life."

– *Spe Salvi*, Paragraph 31

Thoughts:

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