



MIDDLE SCHOOL
YOUTH MINISTRY



FALL 2010 SEMESTER
“Discover the Sacred”

AUGUST:

22nd: Parent meeting/teen concert with Once Jacob

29th: No EDGE, LIFE TEEN Fall Kick Off

SEPTEMBER:

5th: No EDGE, Happy Labor Day!

12th: Lights Out Dodge Ball (Fall Kick Off)

19th: Mystery Revealed (Educational, God reveals Himself to us in Scripture)

26th: Give it Away Now: Thirst for Change Edition (Issue: clean drinking water for Africa)

OCTOBER:

3rd: FAQ (Educational, Basic Understanding of Scripture)

10th: Capture the Bible (Social)

17th: Into the Garden... (Educational, Creation and Original Sin)

23rd: CMU @ Millersville (CORE training Day)

24th: Holy-Ween (Social/Issue: All Saints Day Origin)

31st: No EDGE, Happy Halloween!

NOVEMBER:

7th: Trust Me... (Educational, Covenants in the Old Testament)

14th: World Cup Crab Soccer (Social)

21st: Fake Out! (Issue: Popularity)

28th: Old Made New (Educational, Jesus and the New Testament) [1st Sunday of Advent]

DECEMBER:

5th: House Divided (Issue: Divorce)

12th: You'll Shoot Your Eye Out Kid! (Social)

19th: Mafia: the Game (Social)

26th: No EDGE, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

JANUARY:

2nd: Minute to Win it! (Social)

7th – 8th: EDGE Retreat , “On Location!”

9th: NO EDGE due to retreat

16th: Unstoppable! (Educational, St. Paul and the Epistles)

23rd: No Matter How Small (Issue: Pro-life rights)

24th: March 4 Life?

30th: The End or the Beginning? (Educational, Book of Revelation)



MYSTERY REVEALED

September 19th, 2010

GOAL: The middle school youth will understand that we can know God because He has revealed Himself to us through the gift of Sacred Scripture, Tradition and the person of Jesus Christ.

ENVIRONMENT: Think mystery! The room will be completely dark. CORE members will be dressed as detectives walking around asking the teens random questions. There will be mysterious music playing.

GATHER: LIMITED SENSES (7:00 pm – 7:15 pm)

Four teen volunteers will be asked to play this game. Underneath four boxes there will be four mystery items (4 hunks of spam on a plate). The teens will have to choose one sense to allow them to guess the mystery item. The teens are not allowed to use sight. Also, once a sense has been used, the other teens cannot choose that sense to use. The teen who guesses the item correctly will win a gift card to McDonalds.

PROCLAIM: MYSTERY REVEALED (7:15 – 7:25 pm)

See attached talk. The talk will cover how we know God is revealed in Sacred Scripture.

BREAK: SMALL GROUPS (7:30 pm – 7:50 pm)

In small groups, teens will talk over the following questions:

1. Do you believe that God created you and knows you perfectly? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think that God wants a relationship with you?
3. What is keeping you from a closer relationship with God right now?
4. What do you want to know about God? What questions would you ask Him tonight?

SEND: VENERATION OF THE WORD (8:00 pm – 8:15 pm)

Teens will be taken over to the Church. They will see the Bible enthroned on the Altar. The music minister will be playing some soft music. In front of the altar will be Bibles stacked according to small groups. Each Bible will have a set scripture verse unique to each small group. The teens will be invited one small group at a time to come and get their Bible and read the passage marked in it. They will be told that God wants to reveal something to them powerfully through that verse and in the coming weeks, they will have time to talk about the verse with their small groups. Challenge the teens to memorize their verse.

Close with a Hail Mary.

MYSTERY REVEALED

Semester introduction, God's revelation to man

LIFE NIGHT OUTLINE

Goal for the Life Night

The goal of this night is to set up the semester on Scripture by helping teens understand that God desires to be known by us. This night will remind teens that they are already perfectly known by God, but in a desire for relationship with us - he has chosen to reveal himself to us.

Life Night at a Glance

This night will be the foundation for the remainder of the semester. We have the challenge of creating excitement and interest among the teens to dive into Scripture this semester. The entire night should be shrouded in mystery to pique the teens' curiosity. It will start with a game demonstrating how difficult it is to guess what an object is without using all the senses. This will be followed by an interactive talk on God's revelation. Small group discussion will flow into an opportunity for teens to ask their questions about God to a priest or deacon. The night ends with an invitation for the teens to enter into the story.

Teen Bibles

The end of this night calls for each teen to receive a Bible. As part of your planning, ask other ministries in the Church if they would like to help cover the cost. Find a Bible Outlet store or online distribution where you can buy in bulk or at a discounted rate. Once the teens have Bibles, encourage them to bring them to every Life Night this semester.

Environment

There is nothing better than a mystery to get someone's attention. The environment for this night should do just that. But this type of mysterious setting is less like Halloween and more like a suspense movie. Make the room as dark as possible using black fabric or black plastic. Have the room dimly lit with a couple of large spotlights (these will be used during the Proclaim as well). If possible, use a fog machine to create an added sense of secrecy. Have mystery-movie music playing as the teens enter. Have some of the Core members dressed as detectives. They can interrogate the teens as they enter. The front of the room will also need to be set for the game during the Gather.

GATHER 15 Minutes

Welcome & Introductions (2 min)

Gather all the teens into the night and welcome them to Life Night but leave what the night is about a mystery. Ask all the new teens to introduce themselves.

Limited Senses Game (13 min)

The game will test the sensory skills of your teens. At the front of the room you will need four large cardboard boxes to cover the four mystery items. The game's host will choose four teens to be the contestants. Each of the contestants will be blindfolded and stand behind one of the boxes. The goal is for the teen to guess the item in their box. The catch is they can only use one of their senses. They can choose to taste, touch, smell or listen to the object (sight is not an option). The first contestant will choose a sense to use and then their item will be revealed to the crowd. After using their chosen sense, they get two guesses. Then the next contestant goes, but they cannot use the same sense the first teen used. So when the fourth person goes, they have to use whichever sense is left. To make this game really work - you will need to gather four crazy, gross and large (so everyone can see it but the person guessing) objects. The object is to get the teens laughing, but also to realize how difficult it is to know something when you can't fully connect with it.

Items you will need for the game:

- Four different items (i.e. - a mound of Spam, large fish, pinecones, etc.)
- Boxes to cover the items
- Blindfolds

PROCLAIM 15 minutes

This talk should help the teens understand that #1 God knows them perfectly and still loves them and #2 in order to have a loving relationship, God desires that we know Him as well. It will use the contrast of light and dark as a good reinforcement to the message - just ensure that it is done in a way that adds to the teaching rather than takes away from it. (See teaching on page 8.)

CATECHISM REFERENCES:
27-35
51-53
65-67
74-95

SCRIPTURES:
Exodus 3:13-15
Jeremiah 29:11-14
Matthew 16:13-20
John 8:25-30
Hebrews 1:1-2

BREAK 30 minutes

There are two different options given for the break of this night. Depending on the size of the youth group and the resources available, decide which would work best for your group. Due to time constraints of the night, there is not time for both.

Option #1 - Small Groups (30 min)

In a small group setting have the teens discuss the following questions:

1. Do you believe that God created you and knows you perfectly? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think that God wants a relationship with you?
3. What is keeping you from a closer relationship with God right now?
4. What do you want to know about God? What questions would you ask Him tonight?

Option #2 - Large Group Q&A (30 min)

Teens will be given an opportunity ask questions about God in a safe, non-judgmental environment. Ask your priest or deacon if he can be present to answer questions during this night. If that is not possible, have a panel of three people who are qualified to answer the teen's questions. The answers to the teen's questions do not need to be long or overly complicated - they simply need to hear the truth about who God is and how He has chosen to reveal Himself to us.

The large group format is simple. Teens can either ask the question out loud or they can write down a question anonymously. Make sure to have slips of paper and pens available for the teens to write down their questions. Have a Core member facilitate the discussion.

SEND 15 Minutes

Revelation video (5 min)

To help wrap up the night play *Revelation* (excerpt from T3) which can be found on Video Support #1.

Bible Challenge (10 min)

Pass out Bibles to each teen and challenge them to enter into the semester by bringing their Bibles to each Life Night. In each Bible, have Jeremiah 29:11-14 highlighted. Close by having the teens turn to that passage and one teen reading it out loud followed by a prayer asking for God to continue to reveal Himself to us this semester. Finish the night with the Hail Mary and Ave Maria.

Community Connection

- Part of our role as youth ministers is to work with parents and help them in the formation of their young people. Open and constant communication is the key to making this happen. At the beginning of this semester, send out a letter or e-mail to all your parents outlining the topics that will be covered as well as ideas on how the parents can be part of this journey into Scripture.

- Ask your priest and/or deacon to be involved in this night well in advance.

Making It Work

- If you can't have the large group Q&A during this night, try to plan a time within another Life Night or event where the teens can ask questions about their faith.

- In order to follow up on the challenge of the night, send out weekly e-mails with a Scripture verse for the teens to pray.

- If you cannot get Bibles for each teen for the semester, see about having Bibles available at every Life Night this semester for the teens to use.

MYSTERY REVEALED

Semester introduction, God's revelation to man

LIFE NIGHT TEACHING

(Start the talk in a completely dark room)

How do we know who God is? God created us, but did He create us with no ability to know who He is? If God created us to be in communion with Him, it seems unlikely. Since the creation of man, there has been a desire to know more about our Creator. Ancient texts from Egypt and Ur reveal a curiosity about the spiritual world.

The curiosity about the spiritual world in early human history led to a false concept of God. God for early man existed in the sun, moon, stars and the seasons. Unless God Himself revealed who He was to us, our ability to understand Him would have been like an ant trying to understand the inner workings of the human mind and soul. To put it bluntly, the smaller intellect cannot understand a greater one.

Just as we could not know what this room fully looks like without lights, we could not know God without Him revealing Himself to us.

What happens when we find ourselves reaching for God? We find God looking for us! How does God reach to us and try to help us understand who He is? Through something we call Revelation or specifically, the ways that God reveals Himself to us.

There are three ways that God reveals Himself to man:

1 Scripture, which is the inspired Word of God in human language

(As you start talking about Scripture, have one spotlight or large flashlight in the room turned on).

As Catholics, we believe that the Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God. The word "inspired" comes from a Latin word meaning "breathed in." We believe that the human writers of the Scriptures wrote the Bible in their own ways, languages and styles. However, they wrote what God intended and nothing more. Not only are the Scriptures "inspired" but they are also "inerrant." So the Scriptures are not only inspired by God, but they always teach truth, never something that is contrary to who God is.

Going Deeper

If you have not taken a chance to read Frank Sheed's "Map of Life" then you are missing out on a real gem of Catholic literature. His style is simple and he makes everything incredibly clear. Also, CCC #120 - 130 and the Vatican II document "Dei Verbum" refer specifically to the subject matter of this night.

CCC #35

Man's faculties make him capable of coming to a knowledge of the existence of a personal God. But for man to be able to enter into real intimacy with him, God willed both to reveal himself to man and to give him the grace of being able to welcome this revelation in faith.

Dei Verbum #11

Those divinely revealed realities which are contained and presented in Sacred Scripture have been committed to writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For holy mother Church, relying on the belief of the Apostles (see John 20:31; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-20, 3:15-16), holds that the books of both the Old and New Testaments in their entirety, with all their parts, are sacred and canonical because written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author and have been handed on as such to the Church herself. In composing the sacred books, God chose men and while employed by Him they made use of their powers and abilities, so that with Him acting in them and through them, they, as true authors, consigned to writing everything and only those things which He wanted. Therefore, since everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings for the sake of salvation.

MYSTERY REVEALED

Semester introduction, God's revelation to man

LIFE NIGHT TEACHING

What are the Scriptures exactly? They are 73 separate books that give us the history of God's plan for the salvation of the human race. It begins with the creation of the world and ends with the beginning of the Catholic Church. The Scriptures don't just tell us the teachings of the Church, the Scriptures tell us what we need to know in order to be saved. While there are many books, they tell one complete story of the history of our faith.

Since the Scriptures are ancient literature, we have to understand how these authors saw the world 2000-3000 years ago. They didn't see history the way that we do today, as a simple reporting of the facts. For them, history was held together by religion. History expresses God's relationship with his people. We can see this in Scripture because it is about ordinary people. The ones who have an influence on the relationship of God with his people are commoners, not the rich and famous that we would expect.

This way of looking at history is called "salvation history." It is the history of God saving his people. God in the course of human history has made covenants with mankind in order to bring us into communion with Him. For all time, God had a plan to save us from our sin. This plan is laid out in salvation history and the covenants.

Some people define a covenant as a contract or an agreement, but it is much deeper than that. A contract is an agreement that two people will exchange money or goods, while a covenant is an agreement that two people will exchange their very persons! A covenant is much more intimate than a contract. This is why marriage is referred to as a covenant. In a very real way, a husband and wife give each other their very persons. Coincidentally, God refers to his relationship with man as a marriage more than any other way in the Bible.

The Bible is our flashlight that helps us to see what is in the room. The more we can see, the more we can know, the more we know, the more we can recognize God and be at home in Heaven when we get there. Since we are called to be like Christ, we better know his Scriptures!

MYSTERY REVEALED

Semester introduction, God's revelation to man

LIFE NIGHT TEACHING

2 Tradition, which is the living transmission, or passing on of the message of the Gospel in the Church.

(As you start talking about Tradition, have a second spotlight turned on in the room)

Tradition is different but closely connected to Scripture. It is the living voice of the Holy Spirit moving through the Church. Through Tradition, the Church passes on all she believes from generation to generation.

There is a difference between tradition with a small "t" and tradition with a capital T. Small "t" traditions are things we do simply because it was done in the past. Examples of these would be your family traditions during Christmas. But we are talking about big "T" Traditions. These are the teachings of the Church that have been passed down along with Scripture. Examples of these include the teaching on the Trinity, etc.

3 Jesus Christ. When God became man, we had the most intimate and most REVEALing moment in human history. We quite simply could not know more about God than through Jesus.

(As the grand finale - when you talk about the fullness of revelation in the person of Christ - turn on ALL the lights in the room)

God desired us to know him so much that He took on flesh and dwelt among us. This is why the person of Christ is fullness of God's revelation. Everything points to Christ - if we want to know God, we must start by knowing Christ.

Since Jesus is the pinnacle of revelation, we need to know the Scriptures and Traditions of the Church because these are the ways we come to know Jesus. St. Jerome, who translated the entire Bible into Latin from Hebrew and Greek was quoted as saying, "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ."

So what does this mean for you?

1. God created you and knows you perfectly
2. God loves you and desires you to know Him
3. Scripture, Tradition and the person of Jesus were given to us so that we could know God.

"So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter."

- **2 Thessalonians 2:15**

"In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world."

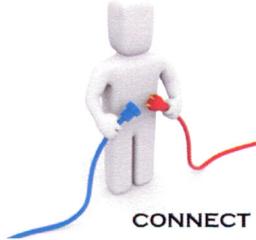
- **Hebrews 1:1-2**

In giving us his Son, his only Word (for he possesses no other), he spoke everything to us at once in this sole Word and he has no more to say... because what he spoke before to the prophets in parts, he has now spoken all at once by giving us the All Who is His Son. Any person questioning God or desiring some vision or revelation would be guilty not only of foolish behavior but also of offending him, by not fixing his eyes entirely upon Christ and by living with the desire for some other novelty. St. John of the Cross, The Ascent of Mount Carmel, 2, 22, 3-5 in The Collected Works, tr. K. Kavanaugh OCD and O. Rodriguez, OCD (Washington DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1979), 179-180

Dei Verbum #12

CCC #54-64

PARENT



MYSTERY REVEALED

September 19th, 2010

GOAL: To introduce teenagers to the semester on Scripture by helping the teens to understand that God desires to be known by us. This night will remind teens that they are already perfectly known by God, but in a desire for a relationship with us, He has chosen to reveal himself to us.

SUMMARY OF THIS NIGHT: This life night is set to have a mystery theme to get the teenagers thinking about discovering something. Teens will play a game that uses sensory deprivation to try and make them realize how you can figure out what an object is without seeing it. The night will then move into the talk focusing the teens on three key points:

- God knows us perfectly and still loves us despite our sinfulness.
- God desires that we know Him.
- God has revealed His presence to us through Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition and the person of Jesus Christ.

The teens will then break into assigned small groups by grade and discuss the talk and how it pertains to their lives. The night will close with the teens each receiving a Bible, with a Scripture verse marked in it. Every small group will receive a unique Bible verse. The verses to be used are: John 1:1, Matthew 11:29-30, Matthew 4:19, John 1:14, John 10:10, John 15:16, John 17:22

KEY VERSES: CCC# 27-35, 51-53, 65-67, Exodus 3:13-15, Jeremiah 29:11-14, John 8:25-30

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE WEEK:

- 1) How do we know that God is out there if we can't see Him?
- 2) Why do you think that God wants a relationship with you?
- 3) What Scripture Verse did you receive tonight? Why do you think God gave you this verse?