



LIFE NIGHT PLANNING SHEET

DATE _____

GOAL FOR THIS NIGHT

To help teens to realize that we cannot and do not "earn" a way into heaven, but that it is a freely given gift of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As a natural extension of that gift, however, it vital that we encourage all Catholics to be good stewards of the blessings that God gives us, sharing them in good work, with the world.

ABOUT THIS NIGHT

The theme of this LIFE Night is based on the "The Science Guy" show. There are all sorts of scientific reactions that we see happen around us when things combine. The purpose of this night is to help teens see the connection between "faith" and "works." When combined properly, there is a magnificent reaction that brings all sorts of power and energy into our walks with Christ. Yet one or the other, without the combination, leaves you empty and void – they simply go together.

ENVIRONMENT

The room is set up to resemble a science lab. Place beakers and test tubes around the room. A periodic table is hanging in the front of the room, with a large cross hanging in the back. Play an audio loop with the sounds of things boiling, and flames burning through your PA system. As the teenagers enter the room, give each teen an extra thick rubber band and ask them put it around their wrist. The rubber band will be used in the Send portion of the night. On one wall in the room, hang a large sign reading "FAITH" and another sign on the other side of the room reading "WORKS".

LIFE NIGHT TEAM

SAINTS

St. Ignatius of Loyola,
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
St. Martin de Porres
St. Peter Nolasco
St. Julian of Norwich
(Blessed Mother Teresa)

BIBLE

Jas 2:14-26, 3:13
Acts 26:20
1 Pet 1:17
Rom 2:6-7, 16
Eph 2:10
Phil 2:13
Gal 3:2, 5
1 Tim 6:18
2 Tim 1:9
Ti 3:8, 14
Heb 10:24

CATECHISM

CCC 153 - 155, 1996
-1997, 2002, 2007 - 2010

GATHER | 20 MINUTES

WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS | 5 MINUTES

The two mad scientists (CORE members) invite new teenagers to introduce themselves to the group and welcome them to LIFE TEEN.

MAD SCIENTISTS | 15 MINUTES

The CORE members will play the part of two mad scientists - Dr. Heckle and Mr. Jive. The Gather starts with the mad scientists playing in the lab with their limited understanding of what happens when certain things are combined. The demonstration is wacky and wild. Below are ideas for reactions certain combinations:

- Bread rises when yeast is added. Show a loaf of risen bread, then a wheat pita.
- Manganese burns extra bright when flames hit it.
- Vinegar and baking soda causes an over flow. (add food coloring and backlight it for a dramatic effect)
- The incredible taste you get when you combine peanut butter and jelly. One of the scientist brings out a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and eat it. This serves as a foreshadowing of the snack at the end of the night.

Be creative with the demonstration and use your own ideas that you come up with. At the end of the demonstration, the youth minister or CORE member who is leading the proclaim, interrupts the scientist and removes them from the lab in order to begin the talk.

PROCLAIM | 15 MINUTES

PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY

See attached talk outline



BREAK | 20 MINUTES

LAB JOURNALS | 10 MINUTES

Give each of the teens a small notebook to use as a lab journal. Teens will take time individually to journal their experience of the combination of faith and works – particularly how faith comes alive in works. Ask them list specific times in their lives when they did something for someone and it ended up strengthening their own faith.

LAB PARTNERS | 10 MINUTES

After they have completed writing in their lab journals, ask them to get a partner to discuss what they have written.

SEND | 20 MINUTES

ACTION / REACTION SHARING | 5 MINUTES

A teenager shares about a time in their life when someone showed them unconditional love and they, in turn, shared that same unconditional love with someone else. For example, feeling loved by friends made them respond lovingly to their parents. Most teenagers have felt the love of Christ on a retreat that prompted them to respond with love to those around them. Be sure to choose a teenager who has a good example that they have shared with you in the past.

GIVE IT AWAY (RUBBER BAND EXERCISE) | 10 MINUTES

Ask the teenagers to meet again with their lab partners. Give each teen a Bible and a pen. Ask each teenager to stretch the rubber band around the Bible and write on the rubber band what words of love they think the Lord would say to their partner. For example, "You are my precious child that I love with all my heart" or "I would leave the 99 others to come after you" or "I carved you in the palm of my hand and knit you in your mother's



SEND | CONTINUED

womb." They will also write on the rubber band these words... "Love isn't love, until you give it away." As the teens are writing, play the song "Give It Away" by Michael W. Smith. They should then exchange the rubber bands and put them around their wrist. Encourage them to read their rubber bands daily and allow the love of God to overflow to others. Remind them not get their rubber bands wet because the ink will smear off.

CLOSING PRAYER / SNACK | 5 MINUTES

Hand out another blank rubber band to each teen and challenge them to repeat the exercise for another person who was not at the LIFE Night (e.g. parent, sibling, friend) by writing on the band and giving it away. Close by praying the Hail Mary and Ave Maria.

As the teenagers leave the LIFE Night room, hand out prepared peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for a snack.

TEACHING: PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY

Note: Here's another whopper! Who would have ever thought we'd be giving talks to teens about salvation and justification? You may be doubting it is possible, but after looking through the outline will be convinced. It is daunting material, and may even seem a bit beyond teens. However, we have tried to make it straight-forward and honest, yet down-to-earth and not too heady. Read through the material several times, read through the references – take some time to get immerse yourself. The more you speak from a deep understanding, the better. If you want to pursue other research, you can look to some of the main apologetic websites under the topics: "Solo Fide," "Faith Alone", or "Justification".

Because the content is so complex, you want to pour a lot of effort into the environment and humor in the rest of the night. Take advantage of every opportunity to milk any fun you can – you will need it and it will go a long way to balancing out the night as a whole package.

I. How are we saved?

A. Tonight we are looking at "salvation" – so what does that mean, exactly?

1. Ever heard the question, "Are you saved?" – maybe from a Protestant friend, or a street preacher?
2. It is a term that we don't use as much as Catholics – but it does capture what we believe
3. We believe we are saved – so your answer if you are ever asked can be, "YES I AM!"

B. This is where we have another stumbling block for non-Catholics

1. As Catholics, we are accused of believing we have to "earn" our salvation
2. This accusation comes because of our belief that we are saved by "faith" and "good works"
3. Protestants believe that we are saved by our "faith" alone

C. But really, the stumbling block is not great – and is one that can be easily explained

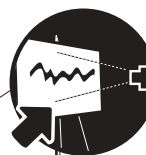
II. Understanding the Terms

A. I hope this doesn't seem too much like school – but there is no way to talk about this without clearly defining the terms used in these arguments.

1. Faith – lets start with this and see how the Church would define faith



It is good to start with a quick rap about what teens have experienced from their friends regarding salvation. Have their friends questioned whether they are saved? Or have they been accused of believing we have to earn our salvation? It is a good launching point.



You will refer back to these terms throughout the night – put them on some large newsprint, or print them in a very large font and blow up to poster size. Have the three terms in the front where you can refer back to them as you go through the talk.

a. A gift of God - before faith can even be exercised, man must have the grace of God to move and assist him. CCC #153

b. It is also a human act – Trusting in God and cleaving to the truths He has revealed are contrary neither to human freedom nor to human reason. CCC #154

c. In faith, the human intellect and will cooperate with divine grace. CCC #155

2. Justification – the term both Catholics and Protestants would use to say "salvation"

a. Don't get thrown by the big word – it's just the word we use to describe salvation

b. "The grace of the Holy Spirit has the power to justify us, that is, to cleanse us from our sins and to communicate to us the 'righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ.'" CCC #1987

c. So when we refer to "justification" or "being justified", we are talking about salvation – being cleansed of our sins and being saved.

3. Grace – another term that is important in this whole discussion

a. Grace is the free, undeserved help that God gives to help us respond to Him CCC #1996

b. It is a participation in the "life" of God – God's life in you! CCC #1997

4. Merit – Another term we probably need to deal with is merit

a. Merit refers to what is "owed", or maybe better, what is "deserved"

b. For example – do we "merit" salvation the same as do we "deserve" salvation

c. Merit is an important word in all this because it is at the heart of the misunderstanding between Catholics and Protestants on this issue

d. Remember the main argument is that we can't "earn" heaven – right? Meaning we can't "deserve" heaven because of our good works. That would be



When St. Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus declared to him that this revelation did not come "from flesh and blood", but from "my Father who is in heaven". Faith is a gift of God, a supernatural virtue infused by him. "Before this faith can be exercised, man must have the grace of God to move and assist him; he must have the interior helps of the Holy Spirit, who moves the heart and converts it to God, who opens the eyes of the mind and 'makes it easy for all to accept and believe the truth.'" CCC #153



Believing is possible only by grace and the interior helps of the Holy Spirit. But it is no less true that believing is an authentically human act. Trusting in God and cleaving to the truths he has revealed is contrary neither to human freedom nor to human reason. Even in human relations it is not contrary to our dignity to believe what other persons tell us about themselves and their intentions, or to trust their promises (for example, when a man and a woman marry) to share a communion of life with one another. If this is so, still less is it contrary to our dignity to "yield by faith the full submission of . . . intellect and will to God who reveals", and to share in an interior communion with him. CCC #154



In faith, the human intellect and will cooperate with divine grace: "Believing is an act of the intellect assenting to the divine truth by command of the will moved by God through grace." CCC #155



Our justification comes from the grace of God. Grace is favor, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life. CCC #1996



Grace is a participation in the life of God. It introduces us into the intimacy of Trinitarian life: by Baptism the Christian participates in the grace of Christ, the Head of his Body. As an "adopted son" he can henceforth call God "Father," in union with the only Son. He receives the life of the Spirit who breathes charity into him and who forms the Church. CCC #1997

the primary argument of the Protestants

e. So just understand that's what we mean when we use the term "merit"

III. The nitty gritty, the bottom line – the whole thing in a nutshell

A. How the Catholic Church looks at "Justification"

1. How are we justified – How are we saved? It is very clear – we are saved by God's grace – by the free, undeserved favor of the Father CCC #1996

2. The gift is free, we don't deserve it, and there is nothing we could ever do to deserve it or earn it

3. So, this is very similar to the Protestant understanding. But, as Catholics, we take this understanding a step further and speak of our "Response"

4. "God's free initiative demands man's free response . . ." CCC #2002

5. Because of God's free gift, the Church is simply acknowledging that there must be tangible evidence in our lives that demonstrates our response to this free gift – it is not enough to just say we believe in it.

B. Understanding the Controversy

1. So what's the issue here – what is the main difference in what we believe?

a. The Catholic emphasis on our response is the primary issue. We are criticized by non-Catholics that somehow because we say that the human response is important, that human response is now somehow trying to "earn" God's free gift

b. The argument is that if we place too much emphasis on our response – on what we do, on our good works – then we are taking the emphasis off of the free gift that God is giving

2. The bottom line

a. The Catholic Church believes that you just can't separate the two things

b. Faith is the free gift that brings us justification, that saves us – there is nothing we can do to earn it or deserve it



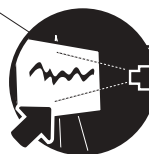
This is the crucial material of the talk. You want to ask some questions to ensure that you are getting the point across.



Our justification comes from the grace of God. Grace is favor, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life. CCC #1996



God's free initiative demands man's free response, for God has created man in his image by conferring on him, along with freedom, the power to know him and love him. The soul only enters freely into the communion of love. God immediately touches and directly moves the heart of man. He has placed in man a longing for truth and goodness that only he can satisfy. The promises of "eternal life" respond, beyond all hope, to this desire: If at the end of your very good works . . . , you rested on the seventh day, it was to foretell by the voice of your book that at the end of our works, which are indeed "very good" since you have given them to us, we shall also rest in you on the sabbath of eternal life. CCC #2002



As you go through this section, refer back to the terms posted on the wall as they are used in the talk.

c. Our free response then, is what gives evidence to our faith – in our works

d. We believe that it is just not possible to believe in, and have faith in the Truth of Christ and the redemption He offers without the fruit of that belief changing your life and leading to good works

e. How can that transformation happen without a human response – without human activity – without "good works"? It's impossible

IV. One last jewel for the crown – Merit

A. Before we close up shop here – we have to talk about the issue of merit

1. Remember "merit" from before – what is owed, or what is deserved?

2. So with everything we have heard – what do we merit in terms of salvation?

a. Give time for some answers from the teens – you want to make sure they get the concept that we don't merit salvation at all – it is the free, undeserved gift of God

b. Once you are sure that this is clearly understood, you can move on – if isn't, take more time to get it across before moving forward

c. The next concept is a little hard to get your mind around – so you want to make sure they grasp the foundation.

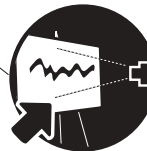
3. "With regard to God, there is no strict right to any merit on the part of man." CCC #2007

a. God's gift is free, we don't deserve it, we can't earn it

b. We can't "merit" it in any way

4. Here's where the concept of merit blows you away – the only merit we have is the fact that God, for some mysterious reason, likes, and has freely chosen to let us participate in the work of His grace. CCC #2008

a. Whoa there – don't get lost on me – I know I just said that there is nothing we can do to earn salvation – nothing we do to deserve it.



Refer back to the merit term



With regard to God, there is no strict right to any merit on the part of man. Between God and us there is an immeasurable inequality, for we have received everything from him, our Creator. CCC #2007



The merit of man before God in the Christian life arises from the fact that God has freely chosen to associate man with the work of his grace. The fatherly action of God is first on his own initiative, and then follows man's free acting through his collaboration, so that the merit of good works is to be attributed in the first place to the grace of God, then to the faithful. Man's merit, moreover, itself is due to God, for his good actions proceed in Christ, from the pre-dispositions and assistance given by the Holy Spirit. CCC #2008

b. But, God has freely chosen to allow us to participate in His life – it is His ultimate longing and desire, for us to be in full communion with His life in heaven.

c. And this choice on God's part has opened the door to all kinds of awesome realities. CCC #2009, 2010

- We can pray and offer up suffering to "merit" grace for ourselves or someone else
- We can pray for more graces to be poured out in our life or in the lives of others
- We can even offer up suffering and pray for the salvation of ourselves or others – and our "works" can merit these graces!

d. So does this mean then that we deserve it – that because of our prayers, or our suffering, that we actually "merit" the graces we have obtained?

e. Not at all – "our 'merits' are gifts of divine goodness." CCC #2009

f. They are only merits to us because God "allows" us to participate in His work



Filial adoption, in making us partakers by grace in the divine nature, can bestow true merit on us as a result of God's gratuitous justice. This is our right by grace, the full right of love, making us "co-heirs" with Christ and worthy of obtaining "the promised inheritance of eternal life." The merits of our good works are gifts of the divine goodness. "Grace has gone before us; now we are given what is due. . . . Our merits are God's gifts." CCC #2009



Since the initiative belongs to God in the order of grace, no one can merit the initial grace of forgiveness and justification, at the beginning of conversion. Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, we can then merit for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification, for the increase of grace and charity, and for the attainment of eternal life. Even temporal goods like health and friendship can be merited in accordance with God's wisdom. These graces and goods are the object of Christian prayer. Prayer attends to the grace we need for meritorious actions. CCC #2010

IV. The Big Picture

A. Remember one of our first nights this semester? We talked about the BIG Picture of God's plan – and how everything is rooted in LOVE?

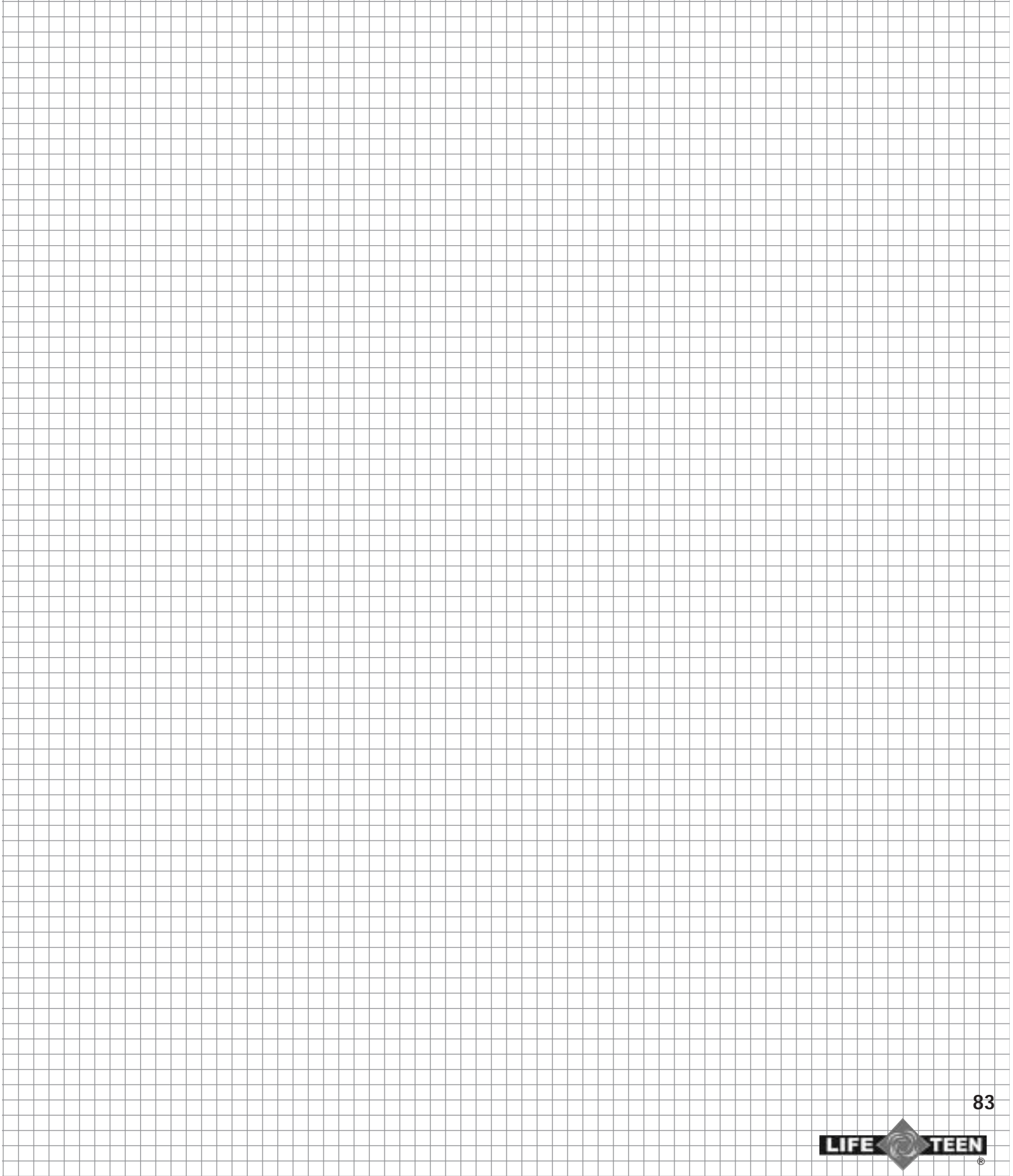
1. Our whole understanding of salvation is rooted in that same love
2. Because of God's incredible love for us, he wants us to share in His life for all eternity with Him in heaven
3. And He allows us to participate in that life even now, living here on earth

4. "God truly reveals himself as one who desires to communicate himself, making the human person a participant in his divine nature. In this way God accomplishes his plan of love." GDC, #36



General Directory for Catechesis, #36

ROOM PLANNING GUIDE



PEANUT BUTTER & JELLY

LIFE NIGHT CHECKLIST

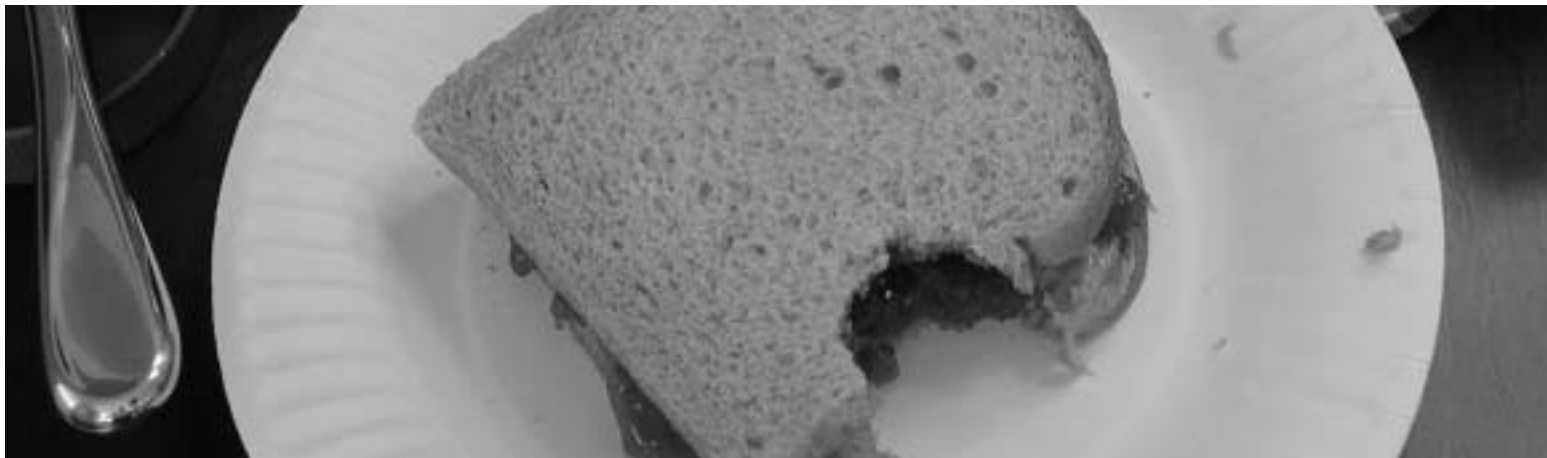
- LIFE Night planning team receives a copy of "Peanut Butter & Jelly." Each member reads through the LIFE Night, scripture references, and Catechism references before the initial planning meeting.

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 appropriately reach the teens of the parish. The team decides who is responsible for the main elements in the night.
 - Environment _____
 - Welcome / Introductions _____
 - Mad scientists _____
 - Talk " Peanut Butter and Jelly" _____
 - Lab journals _____
 - Action / Reaction sharing _____
 - Give It Away (rubber band exercise) _____
 - Closing prayer / Snack _____

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 members selected for skits/talks are chosen and given scripts/talks.
- Meet with teen giving the Action / Reaction sharing.



1 WEEK PRIOR TO LIFE NIGHT

- Meet with teen giving sharing to them practice.
- Talks are practiced and delivered to the Youth Minister. Youth Minister gives 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 food for the peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the end of the LIFE Night
- Have lab journals and pen/pencils ready for BREAK.
- Purchase extra wide rubber bands for the night.

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. All cords and cables should be 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 the teens who will attend the night. Pray over those giving a talk.