

# STANDALONE YOUTH NIGHT

## Goal of the Night

**To Know:** For youth to know that all human life is sacred.

**To Do:** Take one step to 1) taking better care of yourself and 2) to reaching out to someone on the margins i.e. a loner at school, serving at a local shelter, etc.



## Of Note:

After the opening activity, the bulk of the night is made up of three 20-minute sessions, comprising a 5 minute video (or teaching/witness) and 15 minutes of small group discussion. To help manage time, here are a few suggestions:

**Suggestion 1:** Have youth remain in their small groups when the video is played so that they can just bounce back and forth between the video and discussion. (Offer a brief stretch break or short activity in between each 20 minute period).

**Suggestion 2:** Divide the youth into 3 groups (this could be the 3 small groups you have; or if you have 6+ small groups, combine 2-3 small groups together for 'traveling purposes.'). Have youth rotate between 3 different rooms for each of the 20-minute sessions (and allow for a few minutes of travel time between each).

**Suggestion 3:** Assign each small group their own room with capability of streaming the videos and discussing at their own pace.



(10m) **Social, Welcome, Opening Prayer** *Actual Run Time (i.e. 7:00 - 7:15 p.m.)* \_\_\_\_\_

Gather your young people into space. Set the environment with music, lighting, etc. Use the time to engage them in conversation - How are they doing?

(15m) **The Body of Christ** *Actual Run Time* \_\_\_\_\_

**Set-Up:** Prepare a large rope by tying it into a circular ring. The rope will need to be large enough for students to hold on to it with appropriate social distancing. If you have a large group, you may only want to use some of your students (or have them do this activity in their small group).

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**Leader** -- In 90 seconds give an overview of what tonight is all about, for example: Tonight's focus is on "Life is Sacred." All life, from conception to natural death. Your life is sacred, as is the person sitting next to you, behind you; as are the lives of those in forgotten places, like the streets and prisons. All human life is sacred. We hear this repeatedly throughout Sacred Scripture starting with Genesis when God creates human persons in HIS Image & Likeness. The psalmist talks of the intimacy God shares with each human person (Psalm 139). Jesus spoke to the sacred life when He said He came to give us life in abundance (John 10:10) and that we are called to "love your neighbor as yourself." (Mark 12: 31). It begins with recognizing that we are Christ's beloved and that we are called to love ourselves so that we can come to see the unique and sacred person that we were created to be. This allows us to go out and share the love we've experienced from God by loving our neighbor as ourselves... to see the sacredness in those around us, especially those who are marginalized.

To help us understand the sacredness of each life and how we all need each other, we have to understand how we all fit together. In a moment, I am going to ask you to form a circle and grab hold of this rope with two hands. Then I would like each of you to lean back enough to where you are creating tension on the rope and are a little off balance. I need everyone to remain silent while we do this because as you lean back, I am going to read something. If I tap your shoulder, please sit down and drop the rope.

[The goal here is to have only one person left standing holding the rope alone when the reading is finished.]

## **A reading from the first letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.**

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. Now the body is not a single part, but many. If a foot should say, "Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. **(tap)** Or if an ear should say, "Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. **(tap)** If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? **(tap)** If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? **(tap)** But as it is, God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body as he intended. **(tap)** If they were all one part, where would the body be? **(tap)** But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body. **(tap)** The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you," nor again the head to the feet, "I do not need you." **(tap)** Indeed, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are all the more necessary, **(tap)** and those parts of the body that we consider less honorable we surround with greater honor, **(tap)** and our less presentable parts are treated with greater propriety, whereas our more presentable parts do not need this. **(tap)** But God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to a part that is without it, **(tap)** so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another. **(tap)** If [one] part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy. The Word of the Lord.

**R. Thanks be to God.**

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**Leader Cont.** What did you experience as people let go of the rope? Were you able to maintain your balance as people let go? What does this say to us about the Body of Christ? (We need each other to create God's Kingdom here on earth)

(5m) **Video Reflection #1: Sacred Life** Actual Run Time \_\_\_\_\_

Play video (or offer a talk in its place that emphasizes the content from the video).

(15m) **Small Group Discussion #1** Actual Run Time \_\_\_\_\_ Begin in prayer, then discuss the following:

- Who do you think knows you the best? Do you trust that that person loves you? Why?
- Based on the talk/video, why do we know that God values us as human beings?
- This means we have a dignity above all other creatures from the moment of conception until natural death. How is this belief different from ways we as a society may treat some people? In what ways have you seen some people being given a different level of dignity by our world today? (You can talk about abortion, assisted suicide, the elderly, those with disabilities, racism)
- What are some ways or situations where you struggle recognizing the value and worth of some people, whether in a small or big way?
- How can your small group/church community/youth group support you in efforts to do better? How can you invite God to help you do better?

(5m) **Video Reflection #2: Your Sacred Life** Actual Run Time \_\_\_\_\_

Play video **OR** Have an adult (or youth) share a testimony about a time when they came to recognize their identity as founded in Jesus. How did that make them recognize the Sacredness of their own life? How did that experience help them to then see the sacredness in other human persons? Make sure the testimony includes some of the pieces from Video Reflection #2 that will help answer the small group discussion questions.



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(15m) **Small Group Discussion #2** Actual Run Time \_\_\_\_\_

Begin in prayer, then discuss the following:

- What struck you from the video? Why?
- What did you think about the opening activity?
- Where does society tell us that our worth and our identity come from?
- Are there any ways to combat these lies and falling into these traps?
- What part of your identity is important and easy for you to embrace? (i.e. I am a girl, I am a boy, I am from Italian descent) Which key point from tonight (about you and your identity) is the hardest for you to believe? Why?
  - Your life is sacred and valuable. You are unique and unrepeatable.
  - Through your Baptism, your identity has been firmly established as a Beloved Son or Daughter of the Father; no one and nothing, not even sin, can take that away from you.
  - Jesus came for YOU, that you might have an abundant life (John 10:10).
- Is there a part of your identity that you have denied or altered in order to win the approval of others? (i.e. your faith, friendships, family)
- What thing(s) are keeping you from living the abundant life Jesus wants for you? Where is Jesus inviting you to take a step toward healing or getting help?
- How do you think Jesus sees you?
- How does understanding your own sacred identity help you to see the sacredness of every human life?

(5m) **Video Reflection #3, Sacred Margins** Actual Run Time \_\_\_\_\_

Play video **OR** Have someone share a personal testimony about what it is like to be marginalized and how he/she found his/her call as a disciple of Jesus. (Someone with disabilities, socially marginalized, racially marginalized, etc). *Make sure the testimony includes some of the pieces from Video Reflection #3 that will help answer the small group discussion questions.*



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(15m) **Small Group Discussion #3** Actual Run Time \_\_\_\_\_

Begin in prayer, then discuss the following:

- What struck you from the video? Why?
- God calls the most unlikely. He calls the lowly, like these fishermen. Jesus called them to follow and be His disciples. Think of a person whose life didn't seem to have much potential, and what they've done with their life because of God's call. Share.
- Read these words from Pope Francis' new encyclical Fratelli Tutti:

"Some parts of our human family, it appears, can be readily sacrificed for the sake of others considered worthy of a carefree existence. Ultimately, "persons are no longer seen as a paramount value to be cared for and respected, especially when they are poor and disabled, 'not yet useful' – like the unborn, or 'no longer needed' – like the elderly."

- What human characteristics do we value as a society?
- What human characteristics make a person "less valuable" to our world?
- Who are some of the people in your parish/school/community that are marginalized and treated as "less worthy?"
- When we people are not valued or included, how does that affect the Body of Christ?
- Jesus implores us through His teaching of the Great Commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself." Last week we spent time focusing on our Sacred Self. How can we show others who are marginalized that they too are sacred and have an important role to play in creating God's kingdom?

(10m) **Closing Prayer, Announcements & Wrap-Up** Actual Run Time \_\_\_\_\_

## Wrap with Closing Prayer...

Eternal God, creator and sustainer of life, bless us with the courage to defend all life from conception to natural death. Bless us with the strength to respect all peoples from east to west, from north to south, so that we may truly follow the call of Jesus to be neighbor. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

