

LIFE NIGHTS: GATHER, PROCLAIM, BREAK, AND SEND

TYPES OF LIFE NIGHTS

There are three basic types of Life Nights: Doctrinal (a.k.a. Catechetical), Issue and Social. Doctrinal nights follow the semester theme and break open a particular tenant of the faith. Issue nights deal with specific “real-world issues” that teens deal with (i.e. drinking, gossip, chastity, etc.). These nights help the teens see how their Catholic faith is relevant to every aspect of their lives. Finally, social nights build Christian community and friendships.

When planning your semester on Scripture, it is recommended that you combine doctrinal Life Nights with issue and social Life Nights as well. Typically, a Life Teen parish doing Life Nights every week will have 2 doctrinal, 1 issue, and 1 social night during the course of a month.

It is important to pay attention to the calendar when planning out your semester. Be sure to connect the Life Nights with what is going on in the teen’s life as well as the life of the Church. For example, if there is Homecoming or Prom during the semester have a night addressing morality or modesty. Similarly, if Advent or Lent begins during the semester, have a night helping teens enter into the liturgical season.

The Life Nights that come from the Life Support Shipment are not designed to work “straight out of the box.” These are planning guides that can serve as starting points in the planning of your Life Nights. In your planning, you must always take into consideration the needs of your teens and the resources of your parish.

FLOW OF AN INDIVIDUAL LIFE NIGHT

GATHER

This part of the Life Night welcomes the teens, captures their attention and interest, and sets the tone for the night. It is important that the Gather is varied from week to week. The environment of the room is also very important in setting the tone and theme of the night.

Examples of Gathers:

- Video
- Skit
- Game
- Contest

PROCLAIM

This is the teaching portion of the night, making the Word of God relevant to teens. It should not always just be one person standing up and talking.

Studies show that when teens process and present to their peers, they are more likely to remember the content. A teaching for teens should be no longer than 15 minutes - any longer than that, and you WILL lose their attention.

Examples of Proclaims:

- Tag team talk
- Debate
- Video
- Skit
- Witness / testimony

Check out the Presenting to Teens training: lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos/presenting-teens/

BREAK

This is the opportunity for the teens to process the topic of the nights. It gives them a voice and allows them to explore how the topic applies to their lives.

- Examples of Breaks:
- Small Groups
- Partners
- Silence
- Questionnaire
- Journaling

Check out the Small Group Facilitation training on [lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos:](http://lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos/)

- Small Groups Part 1: Basics
- Small Groups Part 2: Example
- Small Groups Part 3: Going Deeper

SEND

This is the wrap-up of the night. It usually gives the teens practical, concrete ways to live out the message of the night. It always brings the teens into a time of prayer and an encounter with Christ. It is important that we use this time to expose teens to many different types and forms of prayer.

Examples of Sends:

- Accountability
- Challenge for the week
- Intercession, Petition, Adoration and Praise
- Rosary, Liturgy of the Hours, Lectio Divina, etc.
- Something to take home

CALENDARING A LIFE TEEN SEMESTER

When it comes to calendaring your first Life Night Semester, we often ask, “Where do I start?” While our eight-semester curriculum gives a solid framework, each individual semester still needs to be planned out. It is important that you ask some important questions of your current, or sometimes non-existing, youth ministry program when planning your semester calendar. Each question has a purpose and should be discussed with your Core team and, at times, your teens.

WHAT FORMATION HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY COVERED AND WHAT IS LACKING IN THEIR FORMATION?

You need to recognize how your teens have been formed and what formation needs to be provided. If the majority of your teens have not been catechized since preparation for second grade First Communion, your needs will be different from a parish that has had continual catechesis for their

teens in the middle school years. This question will help you determine which catechetical semester you would like to start with and where you want to go.

WHAT WILL BE THE OVERALL SEMESTER GOAL?

What is the goal of the semester, or possibly the year, of formation you are planning for your teens? If your goal is to help them know Christ and begin to have a personal relationship with Him, you would select the Person of Christ semester. If your goal is to help them dive into Scripture, you would want to start with the Scripture semester. Or mix in a few of the new series to fit the needs of your teenagers.

WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE LIFE OF YOUR TEENS (DURING THE MONTHS YOU ARE CALENDARING)?

This question will help you select the “Issue” Life Nights you will cover. Determining what is going on in their lives will help you address issues and topics that are relevant and important to your teens. Think about sports, school midterms and finals, dances, college applications and acceptances, anything that would be considered “big” in a teen’s life.

WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE LITURGICAL AND COMMUNITY CALENDAR (DURING THE MONTHS YOU ARE CALENDARING)?

This question will help you think ahead to special seasons in the Church year and prepare your teens for each season. Is your semester during Advent, Lent, Christmas, Easter or Ordinary Time? What about national holidays? What about cultural celebrations that your community celebrates like Our Lady of Guadalupe? We have Life Nights to help you celebrate all these special times of the liturgical year.

CREATING YOUR SEMESTER CALENDAR

Once you have asked these important questions, it is as simple as 1-2-3:

1. Get a blank calendar and write out which nights you are holding a Life Night. Cross out the Sunday’s you are not having a regular Life Night because of holidays, Super Bowl, retreats or parish celebrations that conflict.
2. Pick two series or a Catechetical Semester to follow such as Person of Christ or Vocations. If you are having weekly Life Nights, you will select the following monthly:
 - a. 2 Catechetical Life Nights
 - b. 1 Social Life Night
 - c. 1 Issue Life Night
3. All Life Nights are listed online by Life Support Shipments. Based on the time you have for any given semester (typically 3-4 months for each semester) you will select various Life Nights that help you achieve your goal for the semester. You will not use all the Life Nights listed. Typically, you will select between 5-8 nights in any given semester curriculum or use an entire series.
4. Download individual PDF files for each Life Night. You can then either:
 - a. Print, copy and place them in a binder for your Core Members
 - b. Email downloaded PDF file copies to your Core Members
 - c. Provide Core Members with a calendar listing all the Life Nights in the semester and then provide them with your parish username and password so they can access the resources online.

5. Hold a Core meeting to discuss the semester. Assign 2-3 Core Members to each night and maintain contact with them in their preparations.

It is important to sit down and plan out your semester with a Core team so everyone is able to share the gifts and talents that God has given them with the teens of your parish. In addition, it ensures that each week, the teens are growing in their understanding of Christ and His Church in a systematic, intentional way.

PLANNING A LIFE NIGHT

Below is a “checklist” that can be used when adapting Life Nights for your parish. This helps the youth minister and Core team work together to plan educational and transformational Life Nights for the teens.

Share the Life Night training videos with your Core Team to help them in the planning process.

- Life Nights Part 1: Planning
- Life Nights Part 2: Great Life Nights • Life Nights Part 3: Feedback
- Life Night INGs
- Presenting to Teens

ONE MONTH PRIOR TO THE NIGHT

Give copies of the Life Night to each of the members of the planning team. Each person should read the Scripture and Catechism references as well as review the planning guide before the brainstorming meeting.

Get the planning team together for a brainstorming meeting (this should last no longer than 1 hour). The team prays and discusses where the teens are in their faith journey in relation to this topic. Then using this planning guide as a starting point, the team adapts the Life Night to meet the needs of the teens and the parish. Create a detailed outline with any changes and/or adjustments.

Assign a person or group of people to be responsible for each part of the Life Night.

TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO LIFE NIGHT

Turn in a detailed outline of the Life Night to the youth minister. Allow youth minister to give feedback and make any necessary changes.

Create a list of needed supplies and materials. Assign a person responsible for collecting and/ or purchasing the materials needed.

Decide the people that will be doing the individual parts of the Life Night (i.e. skit, video, etc.). Make sure they have a copy of the script and/or teaching outline. Inform them of any practices and/or deadlines. Be sure to involve teens whenever possible.

WEEK OF THE LIFE NIGHT

Written outline of the teaching is given to the youth minister and practiced.

Run a dress rehearsal of the Life Night. Youth Minister gives feedback.

Create environment and collect needed supplies.

Email entire Core team an overview of the night.

DAY OF THE LIFE NIGHT

Set up the environment. Make sure the room is clean and presentable.

Set up audio and video. Test any video clips to make sure both picture and sound work.

Walk the entire Core team through the Life Night Make sure all transitions are ready and everyone knows their roles.

Pray! Pray for the teens attending the Night. Pray for God's will to be done through the night. Pray over those involved

LIFETEEN.COM/CYM

Lifeteen.com/cym is a very helpful resource for planning your semester and finding the right Life Nights and Edge Nights for your teens. Life Teen and Edge subscribing parishes have access to thousands of pages of resources with just a few clicks of a mouse.

Here is a brief description of all the search features found on the "Youth Ministry" page (you must use your parish's username and password to access this part of the website).

LITURGY PLANNING GUIDES - Written to help priests, musicians, lectors, and liturgists bring the Mass to life for teenagers. You can download the individual guide for each Sunday.

LIFE NIGHT PLANNING GUIDES - Provide a great starting point for planning Life Nights. On this website there are over 15 years worth of Life Night ideas! All three varieties of Life Nights are available including Catechetical, Issue and Social Life Nights.

DOWNLOADABLE VIDEOS - Past Life Support Video resources are available for download and can be accessed with your Life Teen user name and login.

RETREAT PLANNING GUIDES - Made to help your ministry team plan for a weekend long retreat with a central spiritual theme. Inside you'll find talk outlines, skits, small group discussion questions, and prayer guides.

GRAPHICS AND LOGOS - Available for use in your parish bulletins, newsletters, banners, letterhead, and for printing on T-shirts.

YOUTH MINISTER AND CORE TRAINING VIDEOS AND RESOURCES - Quick, easy, professional training resources are at the click of a button for youth ministers, priests, Core Members, music ministers and liturgical ministers on a variety of topics from how to lead a small group, to creating a youth ministry vision, to training your lectors for your youth Mass. New trainings are being developed on a continual basis and uploaded monthly.

