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LIFE TEEN
Leading Teens Closer to Christ
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QUICK GLANCE

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

An Issue Night on Fatherhood

GOAL

The goal of “Hallowed Be Thy Name” is to help teens recognize the relentless Fatherhood of God by purifying their image of fatherhood, which is limited by their experience of earthly relationships.

KEY TERMS

Humility, Relentless

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 45:5; Proverbs 3:5-12; Psalm 145:8-9, 13-18; Matthew 11:27

CATECHISM

239, 516, 2779, 2781

RESOURCES

Spotify: “LT - Gather Music” (spotify:user:lifeteen)

Spotify: “LT - Break Music” (spotify:user:lifeteen)

Spotify: “LT - Send Music” (spotify:user:lifeteen)

“You Won’t Relent,” Jesus Culture (“Your Love Never Fails,” Jesus Culture Music, 2008)

“Reckless Love,” Cory Asbury (“Reckless Love,” Bethel Music, 2018)

GATHER

The teens will compete in groups to identify quotes from famous fathers.

PROCLAIM

The following are the key concepts of the Proclaim:

- God is our Father because He created us, and cares for and protects us; He faithfully and consistently loves, forgives, pursues, and heals us.
- To understand the Fatherhood of God, we have to purify our distorted and broken images of fatherhood, for God is a Father like no other.
- We can know of God’s Fatherhood through Scripture and the revelation of Jesus, His Son.

BREAK

The teens will identify their image of God the Father, which is often limited, and be challenged to evolve that image to the reality of who God is.

SEND

The teens will engage in a time of praise and worship in celebration of God the Father.

PREP

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SETUP

Prior to the Life Night, search the internet for “printable paper tie” and print enough for every teen and core member. Use a hole punch to make two holes in the top corners. Attach string so that the tie can be worn. Have each teen put on a tie as they enter. Create a photo booth or backdrop for teens to take pictures with their ties and have other photo booth props such as mustaches, beards, hats, and grill spatulas. For an added twist, ask teens the week prior to bring in some “ugly ties” and award a prize for the worst one. Project or post images of “dad jokes” around the room. If providing a meal before the Life Night, serve hamburgers or BBQ.

SUPPLIES

- Paper ties
- Hole punch
- String
- Backdrop
- Paper mustaches
- Costume beards
- Snapback hats
- Grill spatulas
- Paper
- Pens
- Tennis shoes

ASSIGNMENTS

Use the following list to assign core members to specific tasks:

Setup:

Gather:

Proclaim:

Break:

Send:

OUTLINE

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GATHER

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 min)

Welcome the teens to the Life Night, introduce any teens or core members who are attending for the first time, and begin in prayer.

Name That Dad (10 min)

Divide the teens into small groups of six to eight and provide them with paper and a pen (which is only used if backup rounds of the game are needed). Prior to the Life Night, compile a list of quotes from famous fathers. Consider including quotes from the parish priest and other father figures on the core team and in the parish.

During each round of the game, have a different representative from each small group come to the front of the room and form a circle. Place a stereotypical “dad item” in the middle of the circle like a “dad” hat, grilling spatula, or tennis shoe. Explain that a quote from a famous father will be read or projected. The first teen to grab the item and correctly identify the father’s name scores a point for their group. For more difficult quotes, consider giving the teens multiple choices. If the teen who grabbed the “dad item” guesses incorrectly, they lose a point for their team, and the teen to their right guesses until someone guesses correctly or every representative has guessed once. These teens are not penalized for guessing incorrectly.

Backup Round: If no one guesses correctly, allow every small group 30 seconds to write down an answer. Ask them to hold up their answers and award every correct team one point.

Use the following quotes to get started (include more culturally appropriate references as needed to fit your group):

- “Everything the light touches is our kingdom.” (**Mufasa, “The Lion King”**)
- “No, I am your father.” (**Darth Vader, “Empire Strikes Back”**)
- “Yaba-daba-do!” (**Fred Flintstone, “The Flintstones”**)
- “You so totally rock, son! So gimme some fin!” (**Crush, “Finding Nemo”**)
- “I don’t have friends. I got family.” (**Dominic Torretto, “Furious 7”**)
- “English? Who needs that? I’m never going to England.” (**Homer Simpson, “The Simpsons”**)
- “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” (**God the Father, Matthew 3:17**)
- “Claire’s a perfectionist, which sometimes is a good thing, like when it comes to picking a husband.” (**Phil Dunphy, “Modern Family”**)
- “A true hero isn’t measured by the size of his strength, but by the strength of his heart.” (**Zeus, “Hercules”**)
- “No matter how many times you save the world, it always manages to get back in jeopardy again. Sometimes I just want it to stay saved! You know, for a little bit? I feel like the maid; I just cleaned up this mess!” (**Mr. Incredible, “The Incredibles”**)

Suggestions

For an alternate Gather, consider having small groups compile a list of their funniest dad jokes (in place of posting or projecting them as suggested in the Setup section), and have a panel of core members judge the best one.

PROCLAIM

“Hallowed Be Thy Name” Proclaim Teaching (15 min)

The teaching can be found on pages 11 to 15. The following key concepts are covered in the teaching:

- God is our Father because He created us, and cares for and protects us; He faithfully and consistently loves, forgives, pursues, and heals us.

- To understand the Fatherhood of God, we have to purify our distorted and broken images of fatherhood, for God is a Father like no other.
- We can know of God's Fatherhood through Scripture and the revelation of Jesus, His Son.

BREAK

Image of God Reflection (10 min)

Divide the teens into small groups of six to eight, with one core member in each group. Begin the small group with a prayer, and then pass out pens and the "Image of God" handout found at the end of this Life Night. Use the following to explain the time of reflection:

All of us have a particular image of God the Father that is limited. We easily put Him in a box, and it is difficult to understand how He works outside of it. How do you view God the Father? Is He an esteemed teacher you admire and want to impress but will never know well? Is He a strict disciplinarian who you worry about offending? Is He a distant creator who does not care about your daily life? We know through Jesus that God is our Father. He wants to break free from all images that keep you from knowing His relentless love. Let Him out of the box you put Him in. Let God purify your image of Himself so you can see Him with new wonder. Let Him shower you with the love of a perfect and relentless Father.

Small Group Discussion (20 min)

Once teens have finished their reflection, lead the teens in a discussion focusing on their relationship with God the Father. Use the following questions as a guide, but be aware of where the Holy Spirit is leading the discussion:

- Whip Around Question: Who is your favorite fictional dad?
- What box have you put God in? What image did you write down that best describes how you approach Him?
- Why is it difficult to see God as a relentless Father? What obstacles prevent us from knowing Him as such?

- What word (or words) did you choose on your handout? Why did that word stand out to you?
- In what ways has God been a good father to you?
- How can you let God show you His love differently this week? What will you do to be more receptive to Him?

SEND

Celebration of God the Father (15 min)

While the teens are in small groups, prepare the main meeting space or church for praise and worship. Gather the teens in the prepared space and transition into a time of praise and worship to honor the Fatherhood of God. Close the Life Night by praying an Our Father as a large group.

Suggestions

For a parish without a music minister, consider leading the teens in prayer for all fathers during the Send. Begin with a time of thanksgiving by asking teens to state one thing they are thankful for regarding their father or father figure. After each prayer of thanksgiving, say, "In gratitude, we pray." Everyone responds, "We thank you, God, our Father." Then, ask teens to mention one intention for their father or father figure. After each petition, say, "We pray to the Lord." Everyone responds, "God our Father, hear our prayer." For a larger group, have this prayer take place in small groups and allow them to mention more than one prayer of gratitude and petition.

Step It Up

For a deeper Send, consider asking the parish priest to lead Eucharistic Adoration. Invite the fathers of the teens to join the group for the time of prayer.

PROCLAIM

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GETTING STARTED

This teaching is provided to give an example of how to present this topic in an age-appropriate way, making it relevant to high school teens.

KEY TERMS

Humility: The moral virtue that keeps a person from reaching beyond themselves. It is the virtue that restrains the unruly desire for personal greatness and leads one to an orderly love of themselves based on a genuine appreciation of their position with respect to God and their neighbors.

Relentless: The characteristic of being constant, incessant, and perpetual.

TEACHING GUIDE

A DAY TO REMEMBER

In December of 1907, an explosion in Monongah, West Virginia caused the worst mining disaster in the history of the United States. Three hundred and sixty-two men working to provide for their families died in the accident. The following summer, a local Methodist church hosted the nation's first event explicitly for fathers in honor of these men. A year later, a woman in Spokane, Washington wanted to honor her widowed father, who single-handedly raised her and her five siblings. She gained support and organized a statewide Father's Day on June 19, 1910. However, it was not until 1972 that Father's Day was officially recognized as a national holiday. Incredibly, the success of this day in the United States has caused many countries to adopt a similar day to remember this unique and vital role in our lives — fatherhood.

Consider projecting a list of dates Father's Day is celebrated worldwide to show teens the vast honor given to fatherhood.

Today, the word “father” brings to mind a range of images formed by our culture, media, and most especially, our own father figures. The characteristics we associate with this title are equally varied and range from positive — loving, protective, strong, supportive, and loyal — to negative — distant, absent, easily manipulated, unsympathetic, and even abusive. Some of our fathers have been exemplary and pillars in our daily lives. For others, our fathers have fallen short and caused more chaos than stability. No matter where our biological fathers and father figures fall on the spectrum, they influence the qualities we attribute to God the Father.

LIKE NO OTHER

While revealing aspects of God's Fatherhood, even the greatest fathers cannot reflect Him fully. God is the standard for fatherhood, but He also transcends it. He is a Father like no other.

Like our biological father, God is our creator. He gives men and women the incredible gift of participating in His ability to create. Through Him, our parents gave us life. However, unlike God, they are not perfect. They make mistakes. God's fatherhood is perfect, which He desires to reveal to us through His Son. Scripture affirms that we cannot know the Fatherhood of God except through Jesus. (CCC 239, Matthew 11:27, John 5:19-24)

Project and read Matthew 11:27.

It requires humility to recognize that our experiences of fatherhood and motherhood are limited. Whether we have had wonderful parents or ones who were absent or hurtful, God remains perfect. One of the first steps to encountering the relentless love of God the Father is to see our parents for who they are — His children. While our parents are given special authority in our life (which should always be honored), they are also on the same journey to holiness that we are; they too have to learn that God is perfectly faithful, consistent, forgiving, and just.

Project and read Psalm 145:8-9.

God is a relentless Father. The word “relentless” can be defined as being constant, incessant, and perpetual. Those words can seem overwhelming and harsh, but not when we recognize the state we are in because of our first parents, Adam and Eve. We are in grave trouble without God’s intervention. The severity of the cross reveals the horror of our sin and imperfection. It also shows the intensity of God the Father’s love for us. The Resurrection reveals His strength and might. Even death has no power over Him. All of salvation history, the entire story of God revealing Himself to us, shows His consistent and patient pursuit of us. He is relentless in drawing us to Himself.

RELENTLESSLY RELIABLE

It is easy to take for granted how reliant we are on others. But, again, humility is required. We have to admit that we need others and, ultimately, that we need God. For many reasons, relying on others comes easier for some and with more difficulty for the rest. In some way, we have all had the experience of being let down or abandoned. An attribute of God the Father is that He does not forget us. He is relentlessly reliable.

Project and read Isaiah 49:15. Then, share a brief story about God’s reliability from your life.

We all need and desire the security of the Father’s love and care. We need to know that He not only cares and provides for us but completely delights in doing so. It is never an inconvenience for Him to show us the love we desire deep in our hearts. He wants to give us every good thing.

Project and read Luke 11:11 and Matthew 7:9.

The Father is not a distant provider; He is intimately involved in the smallest details of our lives. He is proud of us and speaks the exact words He said to Jesus, “This is my beloved son (or daughter) with whom I am well pleased (Matthew 3:17).” He enjoys teaching us and spending time with us. He is never annoyed by us needing Him or turning to Him; He enjoys the process of our growth, even when we make mistakes. He will never overreact or say, “I told you so.” Even when we have said

or done the worst possible thing or made the biggest mess of our lives, His mercy and love are unrelenting. He still wants us and relentlessly loves us.

Project and read Luke 15:11-24.

Just like the prodigal son’s father, He will always welcome us back with open arms and gives beyond our deserved inheritance. Within our darkest moments and ugliest actions, He does everything in His power (without manipulating our free will) to show us His tenderness and the good He desires for us.

PURIFICATION

Share about a time you were afraid to admit to something you did wrong.

We probably all have memories of a particular moment when we did something wrong and had to confess it to our parents. The fear of how they will respond or the disappointment they may experience can cause us to react differently: we may try to hide it, lie about it, or act like it is not a big deal. It can be hard to admit when we have made a mistake.

God the Father is perfectly merciful and just. He relentlessly offers us mercy, but He is also not a pushover. We cannot just give Him an endearing smile and get away with anything we like. Our actions have consequences for ourselves and those around us, and like a good father, God disciplines us.

Project and read Proverbs 3:11-12. Then, ask the teens to share a moment of discipline that was beneficial for them.

We learn about another attribute of His Fatherhood through God’s discipline: He does not react to us but responds. God sees us and our needs and responds accordingly. Never fear God the Father’s discipline. All of His discipline has a purpose; it helps us to be a person who is whole and mends our brokenness.

If a teen gave a good example of effective discipline, refer back to it as an example. If not, provide a hypothetical example or one from your own life.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

Image of God

As you read through the following words attributed to the Fatherhood of God, circle the ones you relate to positively. Check the ones that invoke feelings of negativity or indifference.

RELIABLE/DEPENDABLE

JUST

CARING

LOVING

CONSISTENT

INVOLVED

PRESENT

AFFECTIONATE

PROUD

Write down examples or memories connected to the words you circled.

Write down any objections you have to the words you checked. Why is it difficult to see this word as a valid attribute of God the Father?

What things in your life have led you to believe, or not believe, that God is a good Father?

If you do not have objections, write down any experiences or memories that make it difficult for you to encounter this attribute of God.

Overall, what image best describes how you approach God the Father (e.g., a loving father, a distant provider, an esteemed teacher, a strict disciplinarian)? Why did you choose that description? How does that description affect your relationship with Him?
