

LIFE TEEN

Leading Teens Closer to Christ

www.LifeTeen.com



A TIME SUCH AS THIS
A LIFE NIGHT ON SCANDAL AND
CORRUPTION WITHIN THE CHURCH

GOAL

The goal of this Life Night is to discuss scandal and corruption within the Church, while remaining assured of Christ’s victory over evil. The teens will also be encouraged to rise and become the saints the Church of today needs.

KEY CONCEPTS

- The clerical sexual abuse scandals and following cover up by those in leadership are inexcusable and can be a challenge to our faith. However, it is not an excuse to lose faith.
- Like Esther, we are called to rise into our God-given role “for a time such as this” by praying, fasting, and becoming the leaders and saints the Church of today needs.
- Fasting is a powerful weapon against the enemy.

KEY TERMS:

Fasting
Scandal

SCRIPTURE:

Esther 2-4
Mark 9:14-24
Matthew 16:18
1 Peter 1:16

CATECHISM:

613
823
1434
1969

MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

“Tremble,” Mosaic MSC (*Glory and Wonder*, Essential Worship, 2016)

Ascension Presents: “Repentance and Church Reform” (youtube.com)

Life Teen: “Yours are the Hands” (Edge Support: *March 2015*)

AS YOU GET STARTED...

For greater Core Team preparation, consider meeting with your Core Members before hosting this Life Night to work through the session on scandal in Life Teen’s *Can We Talk?* resource.

For an alternate Send, consider praying the Sorrowful Mysteries of the rosary while meditating on the reflections from Word on Fire in light of abuse.

HISPANIC INCULTURATION

By Stephanie Espinoza

Important Notes for Pastoral Care

In Hispanic/Latino homes, it is not uncommon for mothers and grandmothers to respond to times of crisis with ongoing prayer. When there is an illness in the family, a death of a friend, or someone they know is facing a particularly difficult situation, they often turn to a sacred space in the house and light a candle that will remain burning until there is a resolution. Encourage the teens to partake in this powerful approach to prayer by inviting their families to continue the prayer of the Send throughout the week. The *Oración por la Crisis en la Iglesia*, which includes the Spanish version of the prayer, can be found at the end of this resource.

Cultural Insights

Saint Teresa of Ávila lived in Spain and was a member of the Carmelites during the Reformation. She initiated a reform of her community, hoping to instill a greater adherence to the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in all of its members. She knew that in this way, they could stand as witnesses against the corruptions of the Church and inspire others to pursue radical holiness. She held fast to Christ in the face of such difficult times, knowing that her willingness to be a saint was the best she could offer to Him and His Body.

Saint Teresa’s famous poem-turned-prayer, as well as the brief insight into how she led holy reform above, can be used to open or close the small group processing during the Break:

*Nada te turbe,
nada te espante
todo se pasa,
Dios no se muda,
la paciencia
todo lo alcanza,
quien a Dios tiene
nada le falta
solo Dios basta.*

Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing away:
God never changes.
Patience obtains all things
Whoever has God lacks nothing;
God alone suffices.

ABOUT THIS LIFE NIGHT

The Gather is a small group discussion that introduces the teens to each other and the theme of the Life Night. The Proclaim discusses scandal and corruption within the Church and how we are called to be the leaders and saints the Church of today needs. The Break is a small group discussion that

guides the teens in processing the scandal and helps them make a specific commitment to fasting for the Church this week. The Send is a time of Eucharistic Adoration and prayers of petition for our wounded Church in need of healing.

ENVIRONMENT

Create a simple and welcoming environment with soft lighting, peaceful music, and comfortable seating. Project an image of Rembrandt’s *Crucifixion of Christ*. Have the supplies for Eucharist Adoration available for the Send.

Notes: _____

LIFE NIGHT: A TIME SUCH AS THIS

GATHER

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 min)

Gather the teens in the main meeting space. Welcome them to the Life Night, introduce any teens or Core Members attending for the first time, and begin in prayer.

Small Group Community Building Questions (10 min)

Divide the teens into small groups of six to eight with one Core Member in each group. Use the following questions to help the teens get to know one another and introduce the theme:

- Share your name, grade, and where you go to school.
- If you had to choose one snack food to eat an entire bag of in one sitting, which would you choose?
- How would you describe the current state of our Church? What do you think the Church of today will be known for or marked by?
- What kind of people does the Church of today need?

PROCLAIM

“For A Time Such as This” Teaching (15 min)

The Proclaim Details can be found on pages 10 to 14.

BREAK

Small Group Processing and Commitment to Fasting (15 min)

Instruct the teens to get into their small groups from earlier in the Life Night. Give notecards and writing utensils to each small group.

Part 1 – Small Group Processing

Invite the teens to share their thoughts, feelings, and emotions about the scandal and cover up within the Church. Even if a teen doesn't share, hearing others share can be beneficial because it allows them to see how others are processing and finding meaning in the midst of confusion and darkness.

After a teen shares, thank them and acknowledge what they said with phrases like, “I understand,” or, “That is difficult.”

If a teen has a question and a Core Member does not feel comfortable answering it, ask them to write it down on a notecard so it can be answered at the next Life Night.

Part 2 – Small Group Commitment to Fasting

Have the Core Member leading the small group share their reaction to the scandal and cover up within the Church, as well as their specific commitment to prayer and fasting. Then invite the teens to brainstorm ways to pray and fast this week, like fasting from social media for a day or fasting from their phones at night. Finally, encourage the teens to make a commitment to a particular fast by writing it down on a notecard and sharing it with the group.

SEND

Eucharistic Adoration and Prayers of Petition (30 min)

Gather the teens in the main meeting space and instruct them to remain prayerful and silent. Have Core Members who are Extraordinary Ministers of Communion set up the altar. Have a priest or a deacon expose the Blessed Sacrament.

Inform the teens that they are going to spend a few moments in silence in front of the Eucharistic presence of Jesus. Encourage them to talk to Jesus about their thoughts, emotions, and reactions to the clergy abuse and cover up within the Church, as well as pray for healing for the victims of abuse and for a renewal of those in Church leadership.

Allow for silence.

Use the following, led by either the parish priest, deacon, or youth minister, to transition into the prayers of petition:

Unfortunately, scandal and corruption are devastating the Church. Our Church is wounded and hurting. However, a wounded Church is not a dying Church. Jesus Christ gave His life so the Church might live. Jesus Christ took on sin and died a brutal death on the cross, so that the Church would be made holy.

As members of the Church, we can unite our suffering with Christ's suffering on the cross and pray for healing for the victims of abuse, restoration of the priesthood and those in leadership, and rebuilding of the Church.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Mary, Mother of the Church and our mother, we ask for your intercession. Please bring these intentions to your Son.

We pray for the victims of abuse. We pray that they receive healing of body, mind, and soul.

Hail Mary...

We pray that every victim who was unheard, not believed, or brushed aside, be heard, believed, and welcomed into the Church.

Hail Mary...

We pray that every instance of abuse would come to light and that every abuser be removed from a place of authority.

Hail Mary...

We pray that the offending priests would repent and receive the mercy of God.

Hail Mary...

We pray for the good and holy priests who are bearing the weight of the failures of their brother priests.

Hail Mary...

We pray for a renewal in Church leadership and for trust to be rebuilt.

Hail Mary...

We pray for those who are experiencing a crisis of faith as a result of the scandals, that they may work through their doubt and confusion and be strengthened in faith.

Hail Mary...

We pray for each and every one of us, that we may rise and become the saints the Church of today needs.

Hail Mary...

We seek continual protection from the enemy as we pray...

St. Michael the Archangel...

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



A TIME SUCH AS THIS

KEY TERMS

Fasting: Refraining from food, drink, comforts, or entertainment as an expression of interior penance and powerful prayer.

Scandal: An attitude or behavior which leads another to do evil.

TEACHING

PROCLAIM

Transition into the Proclaim by summarizing the response of your parish and diocese to the recent reports of scandal and corruption within the Church.

SCANDAL AND COVER UP

Scandal and cover up are coming out of the darkness and into the light. Instead of remaining faithful to their vows of celibacy, some priests — in various parts of the United States over the past 70 years — engaged in sexual acts, some of which were non-consensual and with minors. When victims and other clergy reported the abuse, many of their claims went unheard or were ignored. In some cases, those in authority covered up the claims, potentially allowing more people to be hurt or abused.

The clerical sexual abuse and following cover up by those in authority is unacceptable. However, the Church is far bigger than a few bad priests, there are many more good and faithful priests. Although the scandal can be a challenge to our faith, it is not an excuse to lose faith. We cannot give up and surrender to the tactics of the enemy. We belong to

the Catholic Church and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail.

Matthew 16:18

Consider projecting Matthew 16:18.

We must fast and pray for the healing of the victims — body, mind, and soul.

We must fast and pray for the repentance of the offending priests.

We must fast and pray for the renewal of those in Church leadership.

We must respond to our calling and become the leaders and saints the Church needs. We can turn to Sacred Scripture to find a powerful example of how to rise to the occasion.

A TIME SUCH AS THIS

Esther was a woman who responded to God's calling for her life. As a teenager, she and other young women were forcibly removed from their homes and brought before King Xerxes as candidates for queen. When King Xerxes saw Esther, he immediately decided she would be his queen.

Esther 2:1-18

The king did not know that Esther was a Jew. The Jews were under severe persecution at this time, so she needed to keep her faith hidden. Soon after Esther became queen, a close advisor to King Xerxes convinced him to execute all of the people who believed in God. Esther's cousin, Mordecai, heard of this plot and begged Esther to use her influence with the king to intervene. Mordecai believed that Esther was on the throne for a purpose in God's providence "for a time such as this."

Esther 2:19-4-14

Consider projecting Esther 4:14.

No one was allowed to approach the king without an invitation, not even the queen. If Esther approached him and was not received, she would be put to death.

However, Esther rose into her God-given role. She prayed and fasted for three days and asked God's people to join her in prayer and fasting. Then, she approached the throne room of the king. Before entering she said, "If I perish, I perish."

Esther 4:15-17

In the end, she was received by the king and prevented the mass execution of the Jewish people. She accepted her role "for a time such as this."

ANOTHER TIME SUCH AS THIS

In many ways, we are living in another time such as this. God's people are misunderstood and persecuted. Our families and friends may not understand why we are Catholic, or why we can remain Catholic. They may ask us questions about the corruption of our leadership that we are unable to answer.

Maybe you are experiencing confusion and doubt and don't know who to ask for guidance.

Your parents haven't said much about it and you don't feel comfortable bringing it up.

You don't know what to make of the letters and statements from your bishop.

You may be wondering, "If a priest can be unfaithful, why can't I be?"

It may seem easier to just not be Catholic.

This is not the time to fall away from the Church, but the time to rise as the faithful leaders the Church so desperately needs.

Consider projecting and reading the following quote from Edmund Burke. "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."

You can do something. You can answer the questions about why you remain Catholic by remembering that it is Jesus Christ who founded the Church. Jesus built the Church on Peter the rock. He then promised that the gates of the netherworld would not overcome it. Jesus accomplishes this by continuing to make the Church holy every day. It is Jesus' bloody death on the cross that continues to sanctify the Church. We can trust Jesus. We can trust the power of His blood.

CCC 613, 823, Matthew 16:18

You can be honest about your doubt and confusion. But you can also face it head on, overcome it, and strengthen your faith. You can talk about it with your parents. You can talk about it with Jesus in prayer. You will have an opportunity to talk about it with your friends and Core Members later in this Life Night. It is important to talk about it because it allows us to become stronger in faith.

You are still called to be holy. Yes, priests chose to sin, but that does not mean you are no longer called to a life of holiness.

1 Peter 1:16

This is the time to rise as the faithful leaders the Church so desperately needs and we can do this distinctly through prayer and fasting.

THE POWER OF PRAYER AND FASTING

In the Gospel of Mark, we hear the story of a boy who had been suffering from an evil spirit since childhood. The evil spirit would send him into convulsions, make him foam at the mouth, and gnash his teeth. It would even throw him into fire and water trying to kill him.

Mark 9:14-24



CORE TEAM OVERVIEW

A TIME SUCH AS THIS: A Life Night on Scandal and Corruption Within the Church

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GATHER (15 MIN):

Welcome and Opening Prayer: _____

Small Group Community Building Questions: _____

- Share your name, grade, and where you go to school.
- If you had to choose one snack food to eat an entire bag of in one sitting, which would you choose?
- How would you describe the current state of our Church? What do you think the Church of today will be known for or marked by?
- What kind of people does the Church of today need?

PROCLAIM (15 MIN):

“For A Time Such as This” Teaching: _____

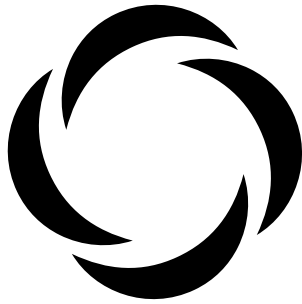
BREAK (15 MIN):

Small Group Processing and Commitment to Fasting: _____

SEND (30 MIN):

Eucharistic Adoration and Prayers of Petition: _____

Notes: _____



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