
LIFE TEEN PARENT LETTER

Thank you for allowing your teen to join us tonight at Life Teen. Below you'll find some information about tonight's topic. Please dialogue with your teen and encourage them to share what they learned.

LIFE NIGHT: ALIVE

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Sometimes we hear a story, see a movie, hear a song, and it awakens something in us... an ache, a yearning. Beneath our everyday desires to be successful and happy, there's a much deeper desire. We desire to be known, loved, and to be extraordinary.

God is love. To have love, you need three things: You need to have a lover, a beloved, and the relationship between the two.

The Father loves the Son and gives Himself totally to the Son. The Son receives the gift of the Father's love and reciprocates it back to the Father. The love between them is so profound that it is itself the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.

It is out of love that God created us. We are created from love, for love, to love God and others. Only God's love and will for our lives can satisfy our desire to be known, loved and extraordinary.

Jesus Christ came so that we could know the Father and the Spirit and live in communion with the three persons of the Trinity. It is here and only here where we find the fulfillment of all desire.

By believing that we were created from love, for love, to love, we can begin our journey with Jesus to become satisfied in Him and live extraordinary lives.

KEY CATECHISM

"The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find truth and happiness he never stops searching for." (CCC 27)

KEY QUOTE

"It is Jesus in fact that you seek when you dream of happiness; he is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you; he is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is he who provoked you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise; it is he who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it is he who reads in your heart your most genuine choices, the choices that others try to stifle." - St. Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day 2000, Vigil of Prayer.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. What do you desire?
2. What does created from love, for love, to love mean to you?
3. Discuss paragraph twenty-seven of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.
4. Discuss the quote by Saint Pope John Paul II?
5. Are you excited for the upcoming Life Nights? Why or why not?

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LIFE NIGHT: OVERFED YET STARVING

CONTENT OVERVIEW

The Ache

God is love. We were created from this love and we were made to receive this love. By living in a relationship with God, we can be completely satisfied in His love. Without God, we are left with an ache and yearn to be satisfied.

Unfortunately, many of us do not know how to respond to the ache. Instead of turning to God and being satisfied in Him, we turn to lesser substitutes. We consume; we eat, drink, shop, stream TV, and by the end of the day, we find that we are overfed yet still starving.

God Satisfies

In the Gospel of John, we read the story of the Woman at the Well. During Jesus's public ministry, He passed through the town of Samaria and stopped at a well for a drink. There He met a woman. In their conversation, it becomes clear that she had several previous relationships with men that served as substitutes for a relationship with God. This woman struggled with responding to her ache for God and was wounded from living a life without God.

Jesus offers her a solution. He gives her the opportunity to drink living water, "everyone who drinks this water will never thirst again." Jesus offers to fill her with His very self and be satisfied in Him. Like the woman at the well, we must learn how to respond to the God-ache. We respond well through prayer and recreation. (John 4:7-41, CCC 32,33, Romans 1:19-20)

At its core, prayer is the raising of our minds and hearts to God from the depths of a humble, yearning heart. We are beggars before God. (CCC 2559)

The stem of the word, "recreation", is "create." Recreation literally means, re-create. Recreation is differing than consuming. Recreation renews us. Consuming wears on us. We consume in hopes of filling, and because we are trying to fill an infinite desire with finite goods, we find ourselves in an unending cycle that only makes us more tired.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

During the Life Night, the teens set limits on their use of social media, streaming TV, Internet browsing, and then brainstormed recreational and prayer activities to do instead. Ask your teen...

1. What limits did you set for yourself and how can I help you meet them?
2. What recreational and prayer activities are you interested in trying?
3. How do we encounter the presence of Christ when we recreate?
4. How does God satisfy us in prayer?

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LIFE NIGHT: COUNTERFEIT

CONTENT OVERVIEW

The Nuptial Meaning of the Body

God created man, "male and female he created them," and inscribed on their bodies the purpose and the capacity to mirror God's love. (CCC 2331)

The nuptial meaning of the body means the very design of our body orients us toward a marital (nuptial) relationship. The man is obviously meant for the woman, and the woman for the man.

Conjugal love, sex within marriage, mirrors the Trinitarian love of God. It is the mutual gift of self to the beloved and reception of the beloved. It says, with the language of the body, "I give all of me to you, now and forever."

Unfortunately, hurt and confusion surrounds human sexuality and many of us settle for counterfeits of love.

Counterfeit Love

Lust is a counterfeit of love. It seeks to satisfy selfish desires. It is self-take as opposed to self-gift. It turns someone into an object of use for someone else's pleasure, rather than a person to be loved.

Chastity is the virtue of self-mastery over one's sexuality. By having self-control, we govern our passions and find peace. It is also through chastity that we train to give ourselves as a total gift to our beloved through conjugal love within the Sacrament of Matrimony or totally to Christ through the priesthood or religious life. (CCC 2339)

If our teens have already engaged in counterfeit love, they should not give up hope. God loves them and is calling them to live in His love. Reconciliation is available. It is the sacrament of healing. It makes us whole. It also cleanses us from our sin, gives us a new start, and restores our relationship with God.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. What is love?
2. How is lust a counterfeit of love?
3. What is chastity?
4. How can we love now?

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LIFE NIGHT: DANGEROUS

CONTENT OVERVIEW

We Are Dangerous

When we live in the love of God, are satisfied in Him, and reject worldly substitutes and counterfeits of love, we live dangerous lives.

This is also called holiness. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word "Kadosch," holy, means being separated from the worldly. We can see this definition demonstrated by looking at the Jewish Temple.

The Temple held the presence of God; it held holiness itself. Because of this, it had several layers of separation between the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man. There was an outer court, inner court, holy place, and holy of holies. With each layer, fewer people had access. Only the high priest could enter the holy of holies and only once a year.

The holy of holies held the presence of God and was separated from the holy place with a veil. The word "veil" in Hebrew means, a divider or separator that hides. The veil shielded a holy God from sinful man. The whole Temple structure set the holiness of God apart from the sinfulness of man.

St. Stephen - The Dangerous

By being holy and living differently, we cause people to come face to face with how they are living and to ask themselves "am I living right, am I missing something?" If they are missing Christ and aren't willing to change, this question makes them uncomfortable and can lead to persecution.

One of the first people to be persecuted for their faith was St. Stephen. He was dangerous. His preaching made people uncomfortable, and they put him to death for what he believed. He was the first martyr of the faith. (Acts 6-8)

Dangerous Living Is Extraordinary Living

Jesus's sacrificial death on the Cross made holiness available to all, not just the high priest who had access to the holy of holies. When Jesus died, the veil was torn in half, from top to bottom. Only God could have done such an incredible feat because the veil was too high for human hands to reach and too thick for human hands to tear. Modern replicas represent the veil as 60 feet tall, 30 feet wide and four inches thick. As the veil was torn, the holy of holies was exposed. God's presence was poured out to the whole world, to all people.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. How does holiness challenge mediocrity and inspire extraordinary living?
2. What does extraordinary living mean to you?
3. Ask your teen to share their testimony with you. In return, you could share yours.