
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: ENCOUNTER

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Jesus is human and divine. In the Incarnation, the Son of God assumed human nature and became man. (John 1:1-14, CCC 461)

Jesus was human like we are human. He enjoyed meals, experienced loss and grief, and needed alone time. Human emotions that we experience - hunger, sadness, stress, needing to be alone, love, joy, peace - Jesus has experienced too. He knows us and is present to us. We are called to turn to Him in our times of need. (Mark 2:13-17, John 11:35, Luke 5:16)

Because of His dual nature, Jesus was able to infuse our humanity with divine life or grace. He healed our bodies and restored our souls. (Mark 5:25-35, John 8:1-11, Luke 23:39-43)

Jesus with the Holy Spirit continues to work in our lives today. It is through the Church's sacraments, a continuation of the Incarnation, that Christ enables His Spirit to nourish, heal and send us forth to witness the Good News. (CCC 739, 1127)

The sacraments are outward signs of divine life or grace and ensure our participation in the life of God. (CCC 1131)

Because of His human nature, Jesus instituted each sacrament with elements to which our human nature could respond. The first is matter. Matter is the visible sign of each sacrament. Baptism has cleansing water, Confirmation and Anointing of the Sick have oil that strengthens, the Eucharist has bread and wine that nourish, Reconciliation has the priest as Christ to offer words of forgiveness, Holy Orders has laying on of hands to transfer power and Marriage has the union of the spouses for union and procreation.

The second element is form. These are the words that form the matter. The words of Baptism, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The words of Reconciliation, "I absolve you of sin...." The words of consecration that change the substance of bread and wine, "This is my body given for you."

The sacraments are the ordinary means of salvation, the path God paved for our journey home. It is best to walk on the path. It is when we go off the path that we are more likely to trip-up and fall. When we do find ourselves off the path, we can always return to it. (CCC 1129, Mark 1:15, Acts 2:38)

CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. How do I need God?
2. How has Jesus been present to me in my emotions?
3. How can I be better at allowing Jesus into my emotions?
4. As a family do we attend Mass and participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation believing we will encounter Jesus? How can we?

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LIFE NIGHT: BELONG

CONTENT OVERVIEW

When it's the Super Bowl, we wear our team jersey. This act communicates, "I belong, I am part of this." The Church has the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. When we receive Baptism and Confirmation, we don't get a jersey but something more permanent. We receive an indelible mark on our soul. An indelible mark is a spiritual mark that communicates, "I belong to Christ." (CCC 1212, 1272 - 1274)

Baptism - We are all born with the stain of original sin and struggle with concupiscence. Jesus came to take on our sin, pay our debt, and through Him we receive redemption. (Genesis 3, Romans 3:23, John 3:16, CCC 402, 547)

When we are born, we are born into a human family. However, we also belong to a divine family, God's family. We are made in His "image and likeness" and are created for communion with God. (Genesis 1:27)

Jesus says to receive redemption and adoption into God's family we must be reborn of water and Spirit and do this today through Baptism. (John 3:5, John 4:2)

Confirmation - We need help living and sharing the life of God. Before His Ascension, Jesus promises to send us the help we need, the Holy Spirit. He promises a "Counselor, to be with us for ever." (John 14:15)

Like Baptism, which it completes, Confirmation imprints an indelible mark that communicates, "I am empowered by Christ." (CCC 1304, Luke 24:48-49)

After Confirmation, we have the courage it takes courage to swim against the cultural current. We are no longer timid, but are living in "spirit of power, and love, and self-control." (2 Timothy 1:7)

Eucharist - Just as we provide food to keep our children healthy and strong, God provides spiritual food for His children. Jesus is truly present to us in the Eucharist; Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. The Eucharist keeps us from getting spiritually malnourished.

Baptism communicates, "I belong to Christ." Confirmation communicates, "I am empowered by Christ through the Holy Spirit." Eucharist communicates, "I am sustained by Christ."

Through the Sacraments of Initiation, we are truly members of the family of God and receive what is necessary to be loving members of this family.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. Do you belong to any clubs or teams? How do you show that you belong?
2. What traditions or special events do you celebrate as a family together?
3. What is appealing to you about the sacrament of Baptism? Confirmation? Eucharist?
4. How can we be better members of the family of God?

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LIFE NIGHT: RESTORE

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As parents we are concerned about our children and their physical well-being. We have kissed their “ouchies” and sat by their beds at night when they were sick. We are also deeply concerned about their spiritual wellness as evidenced by our encouragement and support of our parish Life Teen program.

We are sons and daughters of God. We have a loving Father who is just as interested in our physical well-being and even more so our spiritual health. God knows that we get sick and wounded both physically and spiritually. This is why He gives us the Sacraments of Healing; Anointing of the Sick and Reconciliation.

The Anointing of the Sick can be administered to anyone who is in danger of death because of illness or old age. In the past, it was mostly given to those who were in imminent danger of death. Today, many receive the sacrament before going into surgery or when an illness such as cancer is progressing. (CCC 1520-1523)

Jesus, the Healer, is always present in the sacrament and dispenses healing graces. Sometime it will be a physical healing, often it will provide a spirit of comfort or peace to heal anxiety and worry, always there is spiritual healing to continue our journey back to God. (CCC 1500-1503)

The Sacrament of Reconciliation heals our souls. When we sin, we hurt ourselves, others, and separate ourselves from God. These relationships need to be restored. Jesus continues to forgive our sins today as He did for the people in His time. (CCC 1424, Mark 2:1-12 Matthew 9:28)

Jesus is truly present to us in the priest who sits in persona Christi (the person of Christ.) When we receive absolution, grace is dispensed, and we divine life returns to us.

Just as earthly parents want health and well being of body and spirit for our children, so too does God want for us. He wants us to be in relationship with Him and gives us the needed tools so we can follow Him and live our lives to the fullest.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. Share a time when your family has been concerned for a loved one either spiritually or physically.
2. How do the members of your family reconcile with each other when one has been hurt?
3. Do you encourage other family members to take advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

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LIFE NIGHT: GIVE

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The Sacraments of Holy Orders and Matrimony are called the Sacraments at the Service of Communion because they are directed toward the service of others. (CCC 1534)

The Sacrament of Matrimony and Holy Orders mirror the self-giving love of our Trinitarian God. The Father loves the Son and gives Himself totally to the Son. The Son receives the love and returns it to the Father. In their love is another person, the Holy Spirit. In Matrimony, the spouses love and give themselves to each other. Their love can be so powerful that another person comes into being. In Holy Orders, the priest gives Himself to His Bride the Church as another Christ.

We all share a desire to give of ourselves. The Sacraments at the Service of Communion help us fulfill this desire. Through Matrimony, we give of ourselves totally to our beloved. Through Holy Orders and the Religious Life, we give of ourselves in service to the entire Body of Christ. As with all of the sacraments, Christ is present and grace is dispensed that allows us to selflessly give.

Priests are called to defend and guide the Church, to proclaim the Gospel, and lead the way to sanctification as a father would his family. Christ is uniquely present through the priest. The world cannot see Christ, but they can see the priest. (CCC 1548- 1549, 1586)

The Sacrament of Holy Orders gives the priest the graces needed, the divine life needed, to fulfill the mission to bring Christ to the world.

The Sacrament of Matrimony is a covenant by which a man and woman establish a permanent partnership working together, and giving of themselves for the good of their spouse and children. (CCC 1601, Ephesians 5)

The Sacrament of Matrimony dispenses grace to help strengthen the spouses to remain faithful and generous in living out their vows. (CCC 1615-1641)

Jesus' love is made present in the spouse's love for each other. Jesus is present when a spouse forgives. Jesus is present when the spouses lay down their lives for one another. Christ dwells with the spouses and gives them the strength to forgive one another, to bear one another's burdens, and to love one another with a supernatural, tender, and fruitful love. (Ephesians 5, CCC 1642)

Both of these sacraments are vocations. A vocation is different from a career. A vocation is a way of holiness. A career is how we support ourselves. As parents, we should introduce and provide information for all of the different vocations to our children.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. What discussions have you had as a family regarding your teen's college choice? Regarding a possible vocation?
2. What expectations did you have approaching your marriage? What would you like your teen to consider when thinking of marriage?
3. As a family, how do you support your parish priest? How could you?