



LIFE NIGHT PLANNING SHEET

DATE _____

GOAL FOR THIS NIGHT

To help teens to better discern the loving call of Christ, and offer tangible ways to alleviate fears in order to better follow Him.

ABOUT THIS NIGHT

The Night begins with funny activity on the Top Ten uses of Q-tips® and then a demonstration using two small paper cups to reflect how God speaks quietly in our lives. The youth minister/ CORE member shares how healthy discernment—rooted in discovering God’s passionate, personal love for each of us—can alleviate fears and guide our lives closer to Him. The youth minister/ CORE member will explain discernment and the two types of discernment. Teens then break into groups and discuss questions. The night ends with a slow walk through the Lord’s Prayer as a practical guide for discernment.

ENVIRONMENT

Can You Draw
A Word Bubble?



The environment for the room will be provided by the teenagers on conversation bubbles. Cut out as many conversation bubbles as there are teens and CORE. As the teenagers are entering the room ask them a random question (i.e. What color is your toothbrush? If you had a choice between meatloaf and lasagna, which would you choose?). After the teenagers answer the question, have them write their answers on conversation bubbles and have them stick them to the wall of the main room. You might need to attach 10-20 conversation bubbles to the wall before the teens enter so that they get the idea. The funnier the quotation on the bubble, the better the environment. Have fun with this and make the bubbles as random as possible. You can add a life size Q-tip® and large speakers playing loud music.

LIFE NIGHT TEAM

SAINTS

St. John Vianney
St. Frances Cabrini
St. Kateri Tekakwitha
St. Dominic Savio

BIBLE

Gen 3:61
1Pet 5:81
1Kings19:9-13
Eph 6:12
Eph 2:1-5
Jn 10:1-16
Jn 15:18-19
Rom 7:23-25

CATECHISM

CCC # 2803 – 2805, 2847

GATHER | 20 MINUTES

TOP TEN LIST | 10 MINUTES

Break the teenagers up into ten groups and pass out one Q-tip per person. Then have them brainstorm as many bizarre ways that they find a Q-tip useful (i.e. Cleaning dirt between your toes, wiping out morning “eye booger”). Encourage them to be funny and different, the more bizarre the better. Give them 2 minutes to come up with as many as possible and then have them share in a large group.

CUP ACTIVITY | 10 minutes

Transition into Proclaim using Cup Activity based on **1 Kings 19: 11-13**. Ask for several volunteers and give each two empty paper cups—small Dixie Cups work best. Have each drop the first cup inside the second cup, letting the first nest loosely inside the second. The challenge is to get the top cup out of the bottom one without turning the cups over and without touching the top cup. Suggest that vibrations may help and have them start by shouting at the cups to see if that can vibrate the top cup out, using different tones and volumes. After they have tried this for a minute or so and failed, show them how to blow across the lips of the cups. The first cup nested inside the second cup will lift and float upward and out (master this activity before trying it at the LIFE Night).

PROCLAIM | 10 MINUTES

CLEAN OUT YOUR EARS

See attached proclaim entitled: Clean Our Your Ears. Make sure that the person giving the talk has practiced and feels confident.

BREAK | 20 MINUTES

SMALL GROUPS | 20 MINUTES

Break into the same 10 small groups that you did in the beginning of the night for discussion. Maybe reread **1 Kings 19: 9-13** or **James 1:5-8** also might be fruitful for discussion. Then have the CORE members facilitate the small groups with the the following questions:



BREAK | CONTINUED

1. Shouting at the cups didn't get the desired response. Does shouting at you motivate you to do things? Why or why not?
2. If you could hear God's voice, how do you think it would sound? Describe it.
3. What do Scripture and the Church tell us about God's voice, God's power and how He uses it?
4. What would you have to do differently to hear God's voice more clearly this week?

SEND | 20 MINUTES

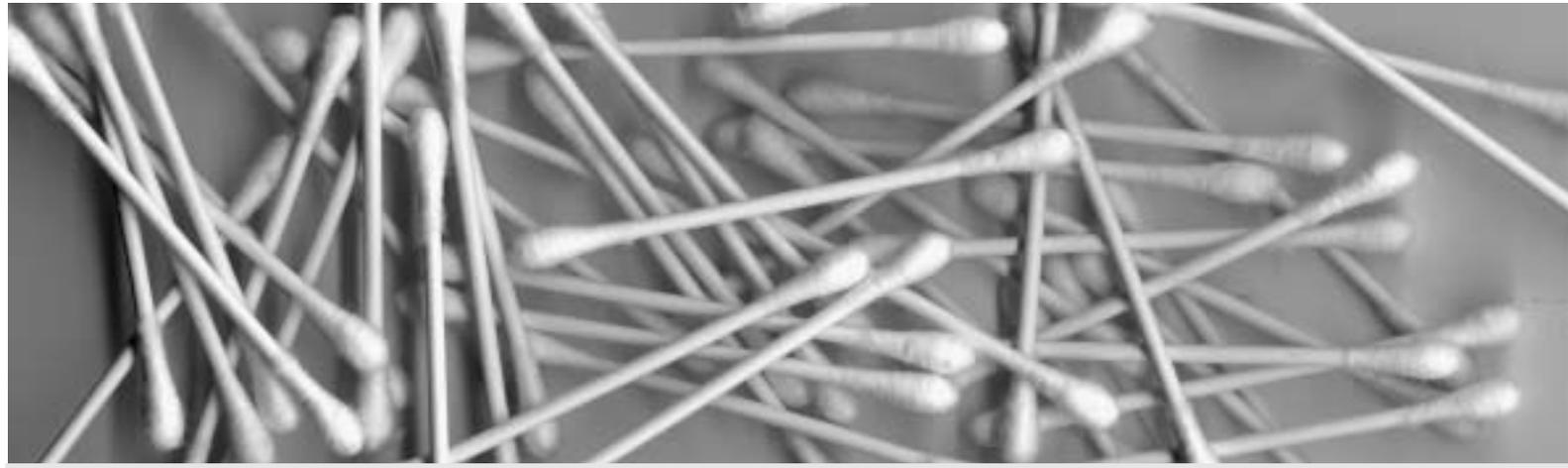
PRAYER PAIRS | 15 MINUTES

Based on the form/flow of the Lord's Prayer, pair up teens or make this more personal. If pairing up teens, you could take a number of approaches: 1) get with a good friend that you can be honest with; 2) get with someone else who is discerning a vocation 3) pair up with someone who is discerning a similar situation that is huge in your life right now, i.e. school choice, relationship, vocation, major change with an activity/how you spend your time, etc.

This process is roughly based on CCC: 2803-2805. It is a tool for discernment and a way of praying for help with discernment. Slowly say the Lord's Prayer, pausing at each section for personal reflection or shared prayer if paired up.

1. "Our Father who art . . . be thy name"
Have I tuned into Christ...what other things take priority over Christ?
2. "Thy Kingdom . . .it is in heaven"
What decisions have I not invited God's will into?
3. "Give us . . . daily bread"
What do I need from God to get me through my daily life?
4. "Forgive us . . . as we forgive . . . deliver us from evil"
What baggage do I need God to forgive me for and who is God calling me to forgive?
5. "For thine . . . now and forever"
How can I declare with my actions, who I follow?

This process could be put on wallet size cards and given to each teen at the end of the prayer—maybe even handed out by parish priest(s) and/or Youth Minister and CORE, with words of affirmation and encouragement.



SEND | Continued

CLOSING PRAYER | 5 MINUTES

Close the night with the musician leading the teenagers with the song *Breathe*. Have a group close by praying the Lord's Prayer slowly and deliberately together. Then conclude by praying the Hail Mary and Ave Maria.

TEACHING: CLEAN OUT YOUR EARS

Note: Hint, hint – do NOT give this talk exactly as outlined below! Not unless you want to bore your teens to tears. There is way more material here than you could hit in 10 minutes or so. This outline was designed to be torn apart – highlight it, cross things out, dig in to the stuff that you think will really connect with your teens. Make it your own, and practice keeping it in a time frame that fits with your night.

One idea that may help break up the talk a bit is to have characters for the world, the flesh and the devil who can act out a little right in the middle when you get to that section of the talk. You might also use video clips that would help bring the struggle with the world, the flesh and the devil to life.

I. Hearing Trouble

A. What are some of the things YOU do to clean out your ears – let's share!



Maybe have several CORE bring in some "used" Q-tips for visuals

B. You can get pretty graphic here for effect. Let's face it, the stuff that sometimes comes out of our ears is gross!

C. And how about the things we DON'T want to hear – what do we do?

1. We plug our ears, we use ear plugs, use ear muffs, we sing – "la, la, la, la, la, la – I can't hear you!"



Let the teens go on this for a bit. Have teens pair up. Have one try to communicate to the other, but the other has to do anything possible to NOT listen or hear the first one says.

II. The Ears – Hearing – A Basic Gift

A. Where would we be if we couldn't hear?

1. Think about the ramifications.
2. Think about how many things about hearing you take for granted.



You will have to be sensitive here if you have a teen who has hearing loss – maybe have them share some of what their experience is like to bring this point home

B. Hearing – a fundamental gift that most of us would be completely lost without – yet something we can take for granted. And with lack of proper care, we can even suffer partial, even total hearing loss.

III. Cleaning Out Your Ears

A. We've talked about our ears, about Q-tips, and a few ways we clean out our ears.

1. What about a different type of hearing – hearing God?
2. Our "Spirit" has ears too – a receiving posture that is critical to us knowing God's and understanding His will for our life.
3. In the same way that regular hygiene requires a periodic Q-tip to the ears, regular spiritual maintenance requires some simple, yet critical exercises to ensure that our "hearing" capacity is at top form.

B. Let's look first at what the "hearing" problems are – what keeps us from hearing God as we should?



Ephesians 2:1-5

1. The easiest way to identify what keeps us from hearing God clearly would be to look at what our struggle is against – the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.

2. The World

a. The things of this world, the materialism, money, things, possessions, etc.

b. Success in the eyes of the world, popularity, ability, etc.

c. These worldly things can be a huge distraction to us hearing God. In fact, they can even prevent us from seeing any need for God – our lives can be so saturated in things, that we don't see why we need God.



John 15:18-19 "If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you."

3. The Flesh

a. Lust, greed, pride, sloth, gluttony, envy, anger – the seven deadly sins – all sins of the flesh.

b. And particularly with teens today, lust – sex, pornography, etc.

c. You can't even watch TV without being tempted.



Romans 7:23-25 "So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?"

4. The Devil

a. "Our enemy – who is prowling like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour"



1 Peter 5:8 Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour.

b. There are spiritual forces at work to bring about our destruction, demons, evil spirits and other powers are at work against us.

c. It gives you the chills sometimes to think of the clear strategy that Satan has for the destruction of every single one of us.



Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

C. So HOW do we "Clean Out Our Ears?"

1. Prayer

a. It may sound too simple, but prayer is the primary way we get our ears cleaned out. Look at it as the big Q-tip!

b. When we pray, we learn to hear God's voice, we learn to distinguish God's voice from other things, and the only way we can learn to recognize His voice more successfully is to keep spending time with Him.



John 10:1-16 "I know my sheep, and my sheep know my voice"

c. And in prayer, it is particularly important to spend time LISTENING! It is an art that needs to be developed and nurtured in us

2. Guidance

a. We need to have mentors in our lives – people who are older and wiser, who can help us discern the voice of God, help us understand what He is saying to us, and hold us accountable to act on His words.

b. Mentors who really know us and who we agree to be totally honest with – even transparent, where they begin to see the motives behind our actions. When someone knows you that well, it sometimes hurts – and that's a good thing!

3. By Discerning

a. Ultimately, that's what this whole "EAR" thing is all about – discerning... check out this quote from the Catechism: CCC #2847.

b. Our daily "struggle" to follow God, to hear God's voice, to make the right choices, is all a part of our call.

c. The temptations we face are "sometimes necessary" for our growth.

d. Every time we discern, and make the right choice, it leads us one step closer to God.

e. And every time we discern and make the wrong choice – if we are truly trying to follow God, it becomes a powerful learning experience that helps us know the right choice to make in the future

IV. Hearing God

A. It's important before we end to make sure we understand how God speaks to us.

1. God can speak to us in all kinds of ways.
2. He speaks directly to us in our hearts – through our personal relationship with Him, and the individual time we spend with Him in prayer.
3. He speaks to us through our community – the people around us, our mentors, our leaders, etc.
4. He speaks to us through our human experiences – going to Mass, receiving sacraments, feeling loved by another, being provided for, etc.

B. Most importantly, God speaks to us through the ordinary. Let's look at this story from scripture:

1. I Kings 19:9-13:
2. God's voice was not in the strong wind, not in the earthquake, not in the great fire – His voice was in the sheer silence, in the whisper.
3. Many of us fail to hear God because we spend much of our time trying to find Him in the big, outlandish things. We want the sparks and flames, we want the dramatic entrance – the booming voice from Heaven.
4. But, for the most part, God does not speak to us that way. He is in the simple, ordinary things of our every day, in the simple, ordinary people around us each day.

C. So clean out your ears! Get your Q-tip and get the wax out!

1. It is the beginning of a great journey – you and God are going together!
2. God speaking, and you listening, and able to HEAR Him!



A great resource to recommend, "What God Wants", by Fr. Michael Scanlan.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS :

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ROOM PLANNING GUIDE

A large grid of graph paper for room planning, consisting of a 30x30 grid of small squares. The grid is intended for drawing and planning a room layout.



LIFE NIGHT CHECKLIST

- LIFE Night planning team receives a copy of "CLEAN OUT YOUR EARS". Each member reads through the LIFE Night, and Scripture references, and Catechism references before the initial planning meeting.

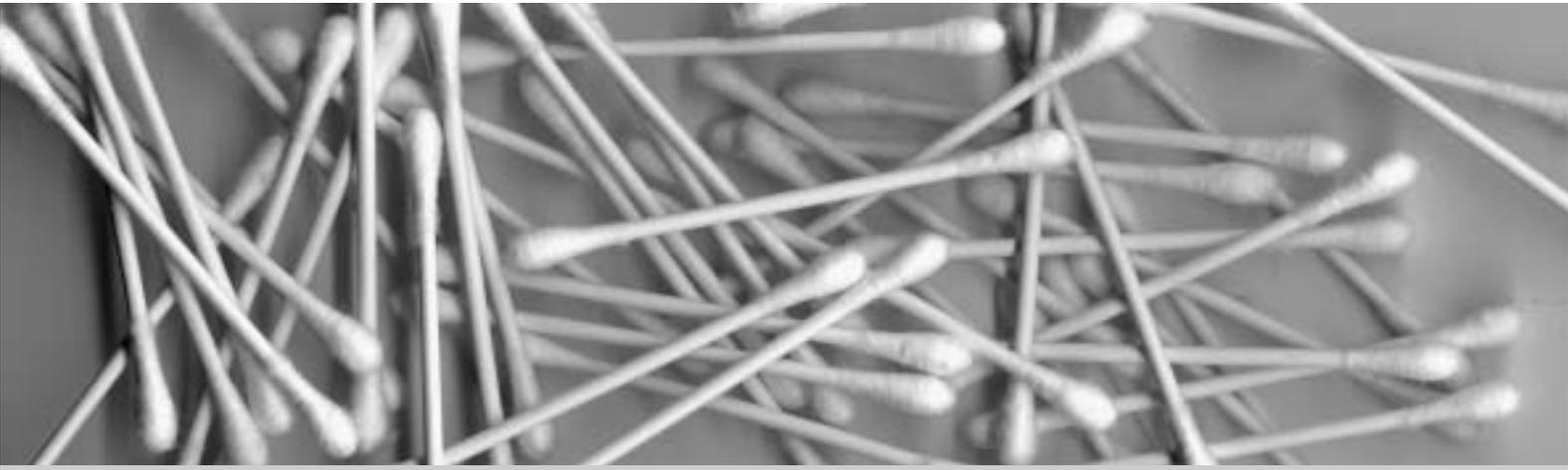
1 MONTH PRIOR TO LIFE NIGHT

LIFE Night planning team meets, prays, and discusses the LIFE Night. The team assesses where the teens are at in their faith journeys and makes the necessary changes and adjustments to the LIFE Night so that the LIFE Night will reach the teens of the parish. The team decides who is responsible for the main elements in the night.

- Environment _____
- Conversation Bubbles and markers _____
(Cut and passed out at beginning of night)
- Sticking conversation bubbles to the walls after teens have written on them _____
- TOP TEN LIST (passing out paper & pen/pencils) _____
- CUP ACTIVITY _____
- Talk _____
- Small Groups _____
- PRAYER PAIRS _____

2 WEEKS PRIOR TO LIFE NIGHT

- LIFE Night planning team turns in a detailed sheet of the night including and changes and/or adjustments to the Youth minister, listing everyone on the team and their responsibilities.
- Teens and CORE who will be used for skits/talks should be picked and given scripts/talks.



1 WEEK PRIOR TO LIFE NIGHT

- Rehearse Cup Activity.
- Talks should be delivered to and practiced with the Youth Minister. Youth Minister should give feedback.

2-3 DAYS PRIOR TO LIFE NIGHT

- Run a dress rehearsal for the LIFE Night.
 - Who is running lights?
 - Who is running video?
 - Who is running audio?

1 DAY PRIOR TO LIFE NIGHT

- Finalize everything for the Environment.
- Purchase Paper and Cut out for Conversation Bubbles.
- Copy small group questions for the CORE.

2 HOURS BEFORE MASS & LIFE NIGHT

- Set up Environment.
- Do final run thru Cup Activity.
- Team talks through night to make sure transitions are ready.
- Make sure that room is clean and presentable. Be sure all cords and cables are taped down and hidden out of the way.
- Prep the rest of the CORE on the details of the night.
- Pray for the success of the night, pray for the teens who will attend the night, and pray over those giving a talk.