THE ALPHA AND OMEGA
VICTORY IN CHRIST

GOAL
The goal of this Life Night is to express the incredible victory that Christ won over sin and death. Teenagers will celebrate this victory and be challenged to view suffering in their lives through the lens of Christ’s Resurrection.

ABOUT THIS LIFE NIGHT
This Life Night kicks off “The Battle” semester. It begins with the end – teenagers celebrate and learn about the ultimate victory of Jesus Christ over sin and death. The Life Night begins with a victory celebration and a game that showcases teenagers’ best victory dance. The Proclaim provides teenagers with the Gospel message – Jesus has won the victory and because of Him we can be saved from sin and death. Teenagers divide into small groups for the break and begin to build community while discussing the teaching of the Life Night. During the Send, teenagers praise and celebrate Christ through music, and close with a Litany to Our Lady of Victory.

CATECHISM
# 410-412
# 422-424
# 430-432
# 651-655
# 668-672
# 675-677

SCRIPTURE
Deuteronomy 20:4
John 16:33
Romans 8:1-39
1 Corinthians 15:57
Revelation 22:12-13

YOU CAT
# 101
# 107-111

KEY TERMS
Hope

KEY CONCEPTS
• Suffering and sin exist in the world as a consequence of original sin, but God does not abandon us to sin and death. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to reconcile us back to God and free us from the slavery of sin and death.

• Jesus Christ has conquered sin and death by His Cross and Resurrection. The victory is already won in Christ.

• We have great hope for our participation in this victory and eternal life with Jesus Christ. This hope is expressed in the mission of the Catholic Church.

SOCIAL MEDIA
#TheBattleLT
#AlphaOmegaNight
#WeAreVictorious
**GATHER**

VICTORY PARTY
(10 min)

As teens gather for the Life Night, Core Members greet them with high-fives and nametags. Each nametag has the name of a well-known sports team. Allow ample time for the group to socialize and eat. Core Members spread throughout the room to mingle with teenagers. The youth minister gathers everyone together and explains the opening game.

VICTORY DANCE OFF
(10 min)

Teenagers find a partner to challenge to a dance-off. Once everyone is paired off, the youth minister explains that music will play, and the two partners need to do their best victory dance. They must face each other, and they must maintain eye contact throughout their victory dance. When the music stops, each partner must hold his or her position, regardless of what it was when the music stopped. The first partner to lose his or her balance, break position, or laugh loses.

The losing partner must become the “cheerleader” for the winning partner and follow him or her to the next competition. Repeat the dance-off. The winner of subsequent rounds receives the loser’s cheerleaders as his or her own.

Contestants do their best victory dance against a new partner, and the game continues until two contestants are left and have the dance off in the middle.

**WELCOME AND SCRIPTURE PROCLAMATION**
(5 min)

The youth minister congratulates the winners of the dance-off and welcomes all of the teenagers to the Life Night. He or she introduces any teenagers that are attending Life Night for the first time. The youth minister reads Romans 8:31-39 as an opening prayer.
PROCLAIM

TEACHING: THE ALPHA AND OMEGA
(10 min)

This teaching sets up the rest of the semester and challenges teenagers to understand that the ultimate victory in life is not found in success, material goods, or fame, but in a life lived for Jesus Christ. An outline for the teaching can be found on pages 10 to 12.

BREAK

SMALL GROUP DIVISION
(5 min)

Divide the teenagers into small groups using the team name on their nametags. Provide Core Members with a sign with the corresponding name so teenagers can easily find their Core Member. Double-check that all groups are even, with six to eight teenagers in each group.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION
(25 min)

The Core Member leading each group welcomes the teenagers and asks everyone to introduce him or herself. Teens share their name, the school they attend, their favorite sport or hobby, and one “victory” they remember well (it can be from a favorite sports team or personal experience). The Core Member facilitating the small group uses the following questions to facilitate a discussion:

• How do you define victory? Where are areas where you have experienced victory or success in life?

• Does the victory of Christ change how you view suffering and pain in your life? How?

• What would you have done if you encountered the Risen Lord? How would you have reacted to the empty tomb?

• What does it mean for you to be heaven focused rather than earth focused? How do the two views meet in the middle?

SEND

VICTORIOUS PRAISE
(15 min)

Teenagers return from small groups to the main meeting space. Invite your music minister to be present to lead worship music as a closing prayer. Remove the cloth from the cross and place it in a highly visible spot in the meeting space. Invite the teenagers to celebrate the victory of Christ in prayer.

OUR LADY OF VICTORY
(5 min)

Project the lyrics to the “Our Lady of Victory Prayer” found on page 13 (you may also use this page as a handout if you do not have a projector). Explain that Mary is a symbol of our victory in Christ, and we begin the semester by asking for her intercession. Mary’s “yes” to giving birth to Jesus reversed the “no” that was spoken by our first parents, Adam and Eve. Since the beginning of the Church, we have recognized the important role that Mary played in the victory of Christ. Challenge the teenagers to pray through the Litany to Our Lady of Victory every day through the coming week. Close the litany by praying a Hail Mary.

ADAPTING THE LIFE NIGHT

• Play “Victory Dance-off” in the front of the room with a few representatives from each grade rather than as a game for the entire group.

• Search for “Touchdown celebrations” on YouTube or Vimeo and play the videos for inspiration before the game. Be sure to watch the videos prior to the Life Night to confirm that all the celebrations shown are appropriate.
• If your music minister cannot be present for the Send, or you do not have a music minister, play reflective music and invite teenagers to write prayers of praise to Christ during this time. Challenge them to read this prayer daily through the rest of the semester.

UPPERCLASSMAN SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS
Use this section throughout the semester to provide deeper questions for small groups consisting of juniors and seniors:

• Do you live as a person that understands the Resurrection of Christ? Why or why not?

• When you encounter pain and suffering, what is your first reaction? How do you respond to adversity in your life?

• As a disciple, do you feel that you do a good job following Christ? If you never told others that you were a Christian would they know by your attitude and action?
KEY TERM DEFINITIONS

• Hope– The virtue that allows us to want and expect eternal life from God and to desire the grace to attain it.

THAT VICTORIOUS FEELING

• There are few better feelings than the feeling of victory. Whether it is a team victory or a personal accomplishment of a goal – working hard for something and coming out on top feels great.

• Think about the last major victory you won – what did it feel like?

• The feeling of winning is addictive; many people seek it in all things. They become hyper-motivated to achieve great success. We lift up these people for their work ethic and drive. We recognize them as champions.

• We all want to succeed and be victorious. Losing is not any fun, so we strive for the best life has to offer. We want to get into a good school, have a great job, make a lot of money, and be comfortable. We want success.

• Unfortunately, the feeling of victory fades. After we do our victory dance and feel satisfied with our accomplishments, a feeling of longing enters. The victory fades and is forgotten. We need a new “win” in order to feel whole again.

• At the center of this feeling is the reality that something is missing from our lives that we cannot satisfy with these little victories. We need something more – something we cannot achieve on our own.
DESIGNED FOR VICTORY

- This feeling is not an accident; it is a part of our design. We were created in the image and likeness of God – we were made for a relationship with God. Our hearts long for our Creator.

- We know that a separation exists between us and God. This separation is caused by sin, and because of it, our union with God becomes impossible.

- The effects of this separation are apparent in our world. We see suffering and pain caused by sin; there is no doubt that we live in a fallen world.

- This is, perhaps, one reason we seek victory. We want to know that we have some control over the outcome of life, but the truth is that we are not in control of a whole lot. We cannot control the actions of others, our genetics, or the world around us.

- As a result, we face the reality of death. Sin causes death. We can get sick and die. The world around us can turn against us.

- There is a certain helplessness there; we cannot win the ultimate victory. Alone, we cannot win the victory over death. It is a battle we will lose eventually, no matter how long we try to fight it.

THE TRUE VICTORY

- We cannot win the victory over death. We can receive all the championships in the world, achieve every personal goal, but in the end it will not matter.

- There is good news, however. The victory over death is already won. The victory over sin is won. Suffering is not the end – even if it is our reality now.

- God loves us, so God sent Jesus Christ, His Son, to save us from sin and death. This is the heart of our faith: Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose so that we may have eternal life in Him. Jesus won.

- This is worthy of celebration. The resurrection of Christ is the source of our resurrection. Nothing can change that reality or defeat it. When we place our hope and faith in Christ, we share in that victory.

- If we believe this, it has a profound impact on our lives. First, it changes how we approach our relationship with Jesus.

- When we hope in Christ, we want to grow more deeply in love with Christ. We cannot win the victory on our own – but Jesus gives us this incredible gift of life. That reality should motivate us to greater prayer.
• When we hope in Christ, we can put the temporary sufferings and disappointments of this world into perspective – they are not the final word. Yes, they hurt and are difficult, but they are not the end.

• Finally, when we hope in Christ, we realize how our sin separates us from Christ but that Christ has power over sin. We can seek and receive God’s mercy.

**FILLING THE SPACE**

• Following Christ makes us victorious. Suffering and evil are realities in this world, but they do not win. God loves us and does not abandon us to death; instead, God allows Jesus to die in our place.

• This is what will fill our longing for victory, relationship, and joy. When we become followers of Christ, we return to our created purpose. We celebrate our relationship with God because it has been healed through Jesus.
OUR LADY OF VICTORY PRAYER

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy on us.
Christ, hear us. Christ, graciously hear us.
God, the Father of Heaven. Have mercy on us.
God, the Son, Redeemer of the world. Have mercy on us.
God, the Holy Spirit. Have mercy on us.
Holy Trinity, One God. Have mercy on us.

(The response for all of the following is: Pray for us.)
Our Lady of Victory,
Victorious in crushing the serpent’s head,
Victorious over all enemies,
Victorious in your response to the Angel Gabriel,
Victorious in the birth of Christ,
Victorious in the mission of your Son,
Victorious in His passion and death,
Victorious in His Resurrection and Ascension,
Victorious in the message of the prophets,
Victorious in the triumph of all holy women,
Victorious in the faithfulness of the martyrs,
Victorious in your powerful intercession,
Victorious at the moment of death.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Spare us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Hear us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Have mercy, O Lord.
Pray for us, blessed Lady of Victory.
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:
O Victorious Lady! Thou who hast ever such powerful influence with thy Divine Son, in conquering the hardest of hearts: intercede for those for whom we pray, that their hearts being softened by the rays of divine Grace, they may return to the unity of the true Faith. Through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.
ONE MONTH PRIOR TO THE NIGHT:

- Give copies of the Life Night to each of the members of the planning team. Each person should read the Scripture and Catechism references as well as review the planning guide before the brainstorming meeting.

- Get the planning team together for a brainstorming meeting (this should last no longer than 1 hour). The team prays and discusses where the teens are in their faith journey in relation to this topic. Then using this planning guide as a starting point, the team adapts the Life Night to meet the needs of the teens and the parish. Create a detailed outline with any changes and/or adjustments.

- Assign the person responsible for each part of the Life Night:
  - Environment ______________________________
  - Victory Dance Off _________________________
  - Small Group Discussion _____________________
  - Victorious Praise __________________________
  - Our Lady of Freedom _________________________

TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO LIFE NIGHT:

- Turn in a detailed outline of the Life Night to the youth minister. Allow the youth minister to give feedback and make any necessary changes.

- Create a list of needed supplies and materials. Assign a person to be responsible for collecting and/or purchasing the materials needed.

- Decide the people that will be doing the following things. Make sure they have a copy of the script and/or teaching outline. Inform them of any practices and/or deadlines.

Teaching ________________________________

WEEK OF THE LIFE NIGHT:

- Written outline of the teaching is given to the youth minister and practiced.

- Run a dress rehearsal of the Life Night. Youth minister gives feedback.

- Create environment and collect needed supplies.

- E-mail entire Core Team an overview of the night and small group questions.

DAY OF THE LIFE NIGHT:

- Set up the environment. Make sure the room is clean and presentable.

- Set up audio and video. Test the video clips to make sure both picture and sound work.

- Walk the entire Core Team through the Life Night. Make sure all transitions are ready and everyone knows their roles.

- Pray! Pray for the teens attending the Life Night. Pray for God's will to be done through the night. Pray over those involved.
THE ALPHA AND OMEGA EVALUATION

LIFE NIGHT EVALUATION

INSTRUCTIONS:
Use the following questions to discuss and evaluate your Life Night.

1. On a scale of 1-10, how well did this Life Night accomplish the goal we set? Explain.

2. What was the strongest aspect of this Life Night?

3. What kind of follow-up do we need to do after this Life Night?

4. What can we improve for future Life Nights? How can we accomplish this?

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