

# BUT...WHY?

## THE SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST LIFE NIGHT OUTLINE

### CATECHISM

# 279-281  
# 1333  
# 1359-1372  
# 1384-1390  
# 1406-1419

### YOUCAT

# 208-212

### KEY TERMS

Epiclesis  
Institution Narrative  
Transubstantiation

### SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1, 2  
Matthew 28:20  
Mark 14:22-26  
Luke 23:44-49  
John 6

### CHURCH DOCUMENTS

*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*,  
Encyclical, Pope St. John Paul II

### KEY CONCEPTS

- The Eucharist is the sacrament that re-presents in the Mass the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ. When consecrated by the priest, by the Holy Spirit, the Eucharist is truly the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ.

- The Eucharist unifies us with Christ and the Church, brings forgiveness from venial sin, provides us with the grace to avoid grave sins, and commits us to service of the poor. It is not simply a ritual, but an act of love.
- We can worship Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament through Eucharistic Adoration. This prayer increases our love of Christ and our desire to receive Him in the Eucharist at Mass.

### GOAL

The goal of this Life Night is to provide teens a deeper understanding of the gift that Jesus Christ gave to us in the Eucharist. The Life Night challenges teenagers to reflect on this incredible gift and center their lives around the sacrament.

### ABOUT THIS LIFE NIGHT

This Life Night begins with a game revolving around the question, "Why?" After teenagers play several rounds of the game, the Life Night moves

into the Proclaim, which includes a challenging teaching on the Eucharist and a testimony from a teenager. During the Break, teens have the opportunity to journal with several Bible passages and reflect on their attitude toward the Eucharist. The Life Night closes with a time of prayer in Eucharistic Adoration.

### PARENTAL NOTICE

This week at Life Teen we dove into the source and summit of our Catholic faith, the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is not simply a symbol or tradition, but is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ. When we receive the Eucharist, we receive Christ himself. We often take this reality for granted, especially if we grew up in the Catholic Church. We challenged teenagers to evaluate their belief and understanding of the Eucharist and to recommit themselves to making the Eucharist the center of their lives. We spent time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and your son or daughter may have several things to talk about and process with you from this Life Night. Use some of these questions to get the conversation started:

- What was your experience of Eucharistic Adoration like? Have you ever experienced that kind of prayer? What stands out to you from the experience?
- Why is the Eucharist important for us? How can we make the Eucharist more important within our family?

## ENVIRONMENT

The theme for the Life Night is questions. Create a large poster out of butcher paper that says the word "Why?" and hang it in the front of the room. Make several question marks of various colors and sizes and post them all over the room. There also needs to be an environment setup for the transition into Eucharistic Adoration. If you have Eucharistic Adoration in your main meeting space, you will need to have an altar, candles, and a monstrance ready for the transition during the Break. If you have Eucharistic Adoration in the sanctuary space of your Church, these materials should be set up and ready for the Send of the Life Night.

## MEDIA SUGGESTION

Life Teen Video: "Created to Adore" (Life Teen Video Support: Sacraments)

Life Teen Video: "Our Spiritual Food" (Life Teen Video Support: Sacraments)

# GATHER

## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

*(5 min)*

As teens enter the Life Night, Core Members pass out pens and notecards. These will need to be ready for the opening game.

The youth minister welcomes teenagers to the Life Night and introduces any teenagers that may be attending for the first time. He or she leads an opening prayer and transitions into an activity.

## THE QUESTION IS 'WHY'

*(15 min)*

The youth minister instructs teenagers to write one sentence on the card that states their favorite hobby, food, clothing store, who their best friend is, etc. The card should be a statement that could be explained if someone asked them why they liked that thing.

Instruct the teenagers to find a partner and assign themselves the number one or two. The teen with the number "one" will share his or her sentence first. Then teen number two will respond with the question "Why?" The first teen must respond to the "why" question immediately without starting with the word, "because," "um," pausing or repeating responses. After the response, teen two will again ask, "why?" The goal of the game is to continue asking the question "why" until teen one responds with a statement that begins with "because," "um," has a long pause, or repeats himself or herself. When teen one responds in any of these ways, his or her turn is over. Teen one notes how many "why" questions he or she responded to successfully; this will be his or her score. Teen number two then reads his or her statement and the game repeats itself.

You can play this game "tournament style," where the teen that loses each round sits down and the teen that won finds another winner to challenge. Continue this process until two or three teens are left to play the final round in front of the group.

You can also play this game by having teens switch partners every two minutes (allowing teens each one minute to ask their questions and give responses) and instruct teens to keep track of their overall score. This game keeps more teenagers involved and will also have more winners.

# PROCLAIM

## TEACHING: BUT...WHY?

(10 min)

The teaching for this Life Night challenges teenagers to re-examine their understanding and belief in the Eucharist. It provides a sacramental understanding of the Eucharist as the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ.

An outline for the teaching can be found on pages 58 to 62.

## TEEN TESTIMONY

(5 min)

Invite a teenager to share about the importance of the Eucharist to him or her. Be sure to listen to this testimony before the Life Night so you can empower the teenager to succeed and stay on topic.

# BREAK

## JOURNALING REFLECTION

(15 min)

Move the teenagers into the sanctuary space of your church, or to the space that you will have Eucharistic Adoration. Pass out the journaling handout found on page 63 along with pens. Invite the teenagers to take time reflecting on the words of Christ and their belief in the Eucharist. They may continue to pray through the journal prompts during Eucharistic Adoration.

## VIDEO: CREATED TO ADORE

(5 min)

Show teenagers the video titled, "Created to Adore" on Life Teen Video Support: Sacraments. This video challenges teenagers to dive more deeply in their understanding and love for the Eucharist through Eucharistic Adoration and provides a valuable transition into prayer.

# SEND

## EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

(20 min)

Invite your parish priest or deacon to be present to lead Eucharistic Adoration and to expose the Blessed Sacrament. If your teenagers have never experienced this form of prayer, you may need to provide some additional instruction for them after the video. If possible, invite your music minister to be present to lead a few worship songs, alternating them with times of silence.

Encourage teenagers to continue to reflect on their journaling and connect with Christ through prayer. At the close of the prayer, ask the priest or deacon to offer Benediction, recite the Divine Praises, and close the Life Night by praying the Hail Mary and Ave Maria.

## ADAPTING THE LIFE NIGHT

- Invite parents to this Life Night and replace the journaling with a longer period of Eucharistic Adoration. This Life Night can provide some great discussion for both parents and teenagers and encourage them to enter into the Eucharist more fully as a family.
- For larger groups, divide the teenagers into small groups at the beginning of the Life Night for the game. Each group can declare a winner. If you have time, you can have the winner of each group playoff for an overall winner.

## GOING DEEPER

- This Life Night can be adapted to resemble an event called an "XLT." An XLT includes worship music, a message, and Eucharistic Adoration. To do this, replace the opening game with worship music led by your parish music minister and replace journaling with a longer period of Eucharistic Adoration. For more training on how to facilitate an XLT, go to [store.lifeteen.com](http://store.lifeteen.com) and purchase the XLT Training Resource DVD.
- Lead a bible study through John 6 as a mid-week activity for the teenagers. This can help strengthen their belief and understanding in the Eucharist, as well as provide a format for deeper discussion and community.

Notes

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NOTES

BUT...WHY?

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## TEACHING

### KEY TERM DEFINITIONS

- Epiclesis – The prayer during Mass that asks God to send the Holy Spirit so the bread and wine offered at Mass become the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ.
- Institution Narrative –The words of Christ at the Last Supper are spoken and through the words and action of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, the Body and Blood of Christ are sacramentally present in the bread and wine.
- Transubstantiation – The change of substance of bread and wine into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity when consecrated validly with the words of institution by a Catholic priest during Mass.

### BUT...WHY?

- It is a common occurrence for many parents and those of us with younger siblings; at a certain age children are going to start to ask questions. The questions come from a desire to understand the world around them – and they often go on, and on, and on. The most popular question, “Why,” is simple yet demands a sufficient response.
- Even as teenagers you likely ask the same question – “Why do I have that time as a curfew?” “Why can’t I go out on Wednesday night?” “Why do we need to eat dinner as a family?” We ask the question “why” because we want to understand the rules we follow and the world we live in.
- We all know the most unsatisfying answer to that question, as well – “Because I said so.” It doesn’t work for kids and it doesn’t work well for us. Unfortunately, when it comes to our faith, our response to “why” we do things is often, “Because we just do – it is what we have always done.”
- Nothing in our Church happens “just because,” and one of the sacraments that we can take the most for granted is also the most important – the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

## GOD THE GIFT GIVER

- Have you ever asked yourself why we receive Eucharist every Sunday, or why it is so important, or perhaps how or why we believe that it is actually the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ? Those are great questions – and they all have an answer.

**CCC 1093-1098**  
**CCC 1333-1334**

- The Eucharist is the greatest gift that Christ has given the Church because the Eucharist is Christ. This kind of gift is not something that just happened, but God prepared humanity to receive it for centuries. We find this preparation throughout the Old Testament.

**Genesis 14:18-20**  
**CCC 1333**  
**CCC 1350**

- After a battle, Abraham meets a priest named Melchizedek. This priest offers a sacrifice of bread and wine – the two elements of the Eucharist – and blessed Abraham after the victory. This priest pre-figures, or foreshadows, Christ and the Eucharistic meal as well as his victory over sin.

**Exodus 12:1-11**

- During the Exodus, God commands that the Israelites celebrate a meal called the “Passover,” to commemorate God’s saving action and their liberation from slavery. As part of the meal, the Israelites are to sacrifice an unblemished lamb and consume the meat of the lamb.

**John 1:29**  
**CCC 1339-1340**

- Later on, John the Baptist would identify Jesus as the “Lamb of God.” Jesus is the new Passover lamb that will be sacrificed so we may be free from the slavery of sin and death. Just as the Israelites consumed the lamb at Passover, we consume Christ in the Eucharist.

**Mark 14:22-26**  
**John 6:30-33**  
**Luke 23:44-49**

- Finally, in the Old Testament, we find the Israelites wandering in the desert without proper food. God gifted the Israelites with manna, heavenly bread, when they were traveling through the desert. This foreshadowed the ultimate gift that He would later give us, the Bread of Eternal Life, the Eucharist.

- God prepared us to receive and understand the Eucharist as Jesus Christ’s Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity – and as the sacrament that is tied deeply to Jesus’ death and resurrection.

## BUT...IS IT REALLY JESUS?

- God gives us all of these signs that point to the institution of the Eucharist, but can we really be confident that the Eucharist is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ? We trust what Christ says and hold it to be true.

**John 6:16-21**  
**Mark 6:34-44**  
**Matthew 9:23-27**

- Jesus has power over nature and creation, because Jesus was present at the moment of creation. Jesus calms storms, walks on water, and multiplies loaves of bread and fish.

**Luke 22:14-16**

- At the Last Supper, Jesus took bread and wine and instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist. When Jesus takes the bread, he says: “Take this, all of you, and eat of it, for this is my Body, which will be given up for you.”

• Jesus also takes the wine, and again, blesses it: “Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me.”

**Luke 22:17-20**

• Through Jesus’ words, the Eucharist is instituted and given to the disciples to continue to celebrate. To “do this in memory” is more than simply remembering the way that we commonly think of it, but to “re-present” the sacrifice that Jesus was about to offer. The Eucharist and cross are tied together – that is why Jesus institutes the Eucharist on Passover, the night before he is crucified.

**CCC 1330  
CCC 1341-1344**

• If those words were not enough, Jesus also reveals the Eucharist to his disciples in the Gospel of John. Though the disciples did not fully understand, they trusted Jesus’ words. Jesus tells them, “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day.”

**John 6:54**

• This was a challenging statement and many of the people following Jesus questioned it, but Jesus was firm in the truth of the Eucharist. Many people left; instead, Peter responds, “Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

**John 6:68**

## THE SOURCE AND SUMMIT

• It is for these reasons that the Catholic Church has always believed that the Eucharist is Jesus Christ’s Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity – it is the true presence of Christ. Since the Eucharist is Christ, we call it the “source and summit” of our Catholic faith.

**CCC 1324**

• We celebrate the Eucharist at Mass; as Catholics we are obligated to attend Mass every Sunday. Missing Mass is a grave matter; if we intentionally skip Mass we commit a mortal sin that we need to confess – and the reason for this is because when we attend Mass we are in the presence of Christ. Skipping Mass for other things is deliberately telling Jesus, “I don’t have time for you.”

**CCC 2181**

• When we are at Mass, we can know the moment that Christ is made present through the Eucharist by paying attention to the priest. After singing the “Hosanna,” the congregation will kneel and the priest will pray the Eucharistic Prayers. This includes two important things – the epiclesis and the institution narrative.

**CCC 1353**

• The **epiclesis** is when the priest moves his hands over the gifts of bread and wine and asks the Holy Spirit to transform the gifts of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

**Key Term**



**Key Term**  
**CCC 1376-1377**  
**Key Term**

- The **institution narrative** is when the priest says the words of Christ at the Last Supper – these are the exact words, they cannot be re-arranged or changed. During this time, an incredible event takes place called “**transubstantiation**,” which means the substance of the bread and the wine are physically and spiritually changed into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ. Though the gifts still appear as bread and wine, their substance has been changed and they are now fully Christ.

**CCC 1342-1345**

- We trust this truth because the Church has believed it from the beginning and Christ instituted it. This reality – that the Eucharist is Christ – has tremendous implications for us.

**CCC 1374**

- The Eucharist is the sacrament that all the other sacraments flow from and flow toward. It is one of the Sacraments of Initiation, and it is the only Sacrament of Initiation we can receive more than once. The reason that we can and should receive the Eucharist often is because of the effects the sacrament has on us.

**CCC 1392**  
**CCC 1396**

- The Eucharist brings us into a deeper union with Christ and the Church. We may refer to the Eucharist as “communion” for this reason; we are united with Christ and with our brothers and sisters in faith that also receive the sacrament. It also binds us spiritually to the entire Body of Christ.

**CCC 1393-1395**

- The Eucharist gives us grace that forgives us of venial sins and offers us protection from committing grave sins. It strengthens our resolve to live like Christ.

**CCC 1397**  
**John 13:1-15**

- The Eucharist also commits us to service of the poor. St. Paul spoke harshly against those who received the Eucharist but did not care for the poor and broken. We must be mindful that, at the Last Supper, Jesus served the disciples by washing their feet. When we celebrate the Eucharist, we must be ready to serve as well.

### **WHY GET READY?**

**CCC 1398-1400**

- When we receive the Eucharist, our hearts must be ready. Only a baptized member of the Catholic Church that believes in the real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and transubstantiation may receive. This is not meant to exclude other brothers and sisters of other Christian denominations, but because our beliefs about the nature of the Eucharist differ.
- Since the Eucharist is a Sacrament of Initiation, we re-affirm our faith in Christ and in the Catholic Church when we receive. A person of a different Christian denomination would not be able to make this profession. They are welcome, though, to participate in prayer at Mass and to make “spiritual communion” by praying with us as we receive Eucharist.



- The second condition for the reception of the Eucharist is that we are free from mortal sin. We cannot bring Christ into a place that has closed the doors on him. When we commit a mortal sin, we deliberately reject God. We must receive Reconciliation if we are in a state of mortal sin before we can receive the Eucharist.

**CCC 1385-1386**

- If you do receive the Eucharist in a state of mortal sin, you seriously diminish or even completely negate the grace you receive. It doesn't mean that grace wasn't given to you or that the Eucharist was any less Christ, but that grace couldn't take root in your soul.

- It would be like trying to pour water into a cup that had a cover over it. Mortal sin is the cover – even if water is poured out, none goes inside. Knowingly receiving the Eucharist in a state of mortal sin is a serious matter; it would be like showing up to a wedding in dirty clothing. It demonstrates a lack of respect for Christ.

**Matthew 22:11-13**

- Finally, to prepare ourselves to receive the heavenly food of the Eucharist, we must fast from food and drink at least one hour prior to receiving the Eucharist. This prepares our minds and hearts to receive and reminds us that the Eucharist is not something ordinary, but extraordinary.

**CCC 1387**

- We are a Eucharistic people; everything that we do should point to and flow from the Eucharist. When we receive Jesus in the Eucharist at Mass, we are receiving Him in the most intimate way that we can.

- When we receive the Eucharist at Mass we are nourished and strengthened by Christ, himself. The Eucharist has been called “medicine,” it brings comfort in our afflictions, strengthens us against sin, and empowers us to be disciples.

- We can also pray in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament during Eucharistic Adoration. This is when the consecrated host is reserved and then displayed for people to pray in front of. This prayer is powerful; we don't need to wonder if Christ is with us because we know through faith that he is there in the Blessed Sacrament.

- Frequent reception of the Eucharist and adoration in front of the Blessed Sacrament help us conform to Christ. It gives us strength for the trials we face and a place for us to rejoice in the blessings God gives.

- This is a long answer to “why” we celebrate the Sacrament of the Eucharist and believe it to be the true presence of Christ. The short answer is simple: Because God loves us too much to ever be apart from us. It is the greatest gift God has given us, the gift of himself.

## JOURNALING HANDOUT

"...behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." Matthew 28:20

Jesus' promise is fulfilled in the Eucharist; He is always with us. If you were to meet Christ, face-to-face, what would you say?

"Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.'" John 6:35

Where in your life are you feeling empty or unsatisfied? Where do you need Christ to bring healing and new life?

"Jesus said to them, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many.'" Mark 14:24

Jesus gave his entire life for us; how would you express your thankfulness for this incredible gift?

# LIFE NIGHT CHECKLIST

**CORE PLANNING TEAM:**

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**DATE OF LIFE NIGHT:**

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**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 \_\_\_\_\_

The Question is "Why?" \_\_\_\_\_

Teen Testimony \_\_\_\_\_

Journaling Reflection \_\_\_\_\_

Video \_\_\_\_\_

Eucharistic Adoration \_\_\_\_\_

**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.

CHECKLIST BUT...WHY?



# 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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