

FEARLESS

AN EDGE NIGHT FOR LIFE TEEN'S ANNUAL THEME

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AN EDGE NIGHT FOR LIFE TEEN'S ANNUAL THEME EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 37:27-36; 39:1-6;
41:1-41
Exodus 3-4:17
1 Samuel 17
Esther 3:8-5:8; 7:1-6; 9:1-2
Psalm 27:1-3
Isaiah 41:10
Matthew 14:22-31
John 14:27
Acts 16:20-40
1 Corinthians 16:13-14
2 Timothy 1:7

CATECHISM

164
222
227
1520
1765

YOU CAT

470
476

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- Biblical Images (See Environment description)
- Large Crucifix
- FearFactor Banner
- Aquarium and Screen Lid
- Live Crickets
- Plastic Snakes and Frogs and Bugs
- Pie Tins
- Whipped Cream
- Gummy Worms
- Crushed Oreos
- Honey
- Hot Dogs
- Ice Water

- Large Bowl
- Paper Plates
- Chair
- Mats
- Plastic Tub
- Milk
- Red Dye
- Brussel Sprouts
- Corn Syrup
- Index Cards – Blank
- Index Cards – With Bible Verses
- Writing Utensils
- Candles
- “Fearless” Handout
- Bibles

GOAL

The goal of this Edge Night is to bring the middle school youth to a deeper understanding of their personal fears and anxieties, but, even more than that, of God's greatness that overcomes any fear they may have. By the end of the session the middle school youth will have a more concrete comprehension of what trusting in God can do to dispel fears and help them stand firm in faith.

EDGE NIGHT AT A GLANCE

What does it mean to be fearless; to lack fear? Fear is a common and universal emotion that no one is exempt from. Middle school is a time when fears seem more and more real especially since teens are growing up in a society that seems to get more fearful every day with many different terrifying events and issues. Thus this night is designed to help show the teens how they can deal with and overcome their fears with the help of God. The night will help explain the role of faith and reiterate God's constant presence

in the midst of our fears. Then the night will expand on how, if we let go of our fears and trust in God, he can work in the midst of our fears to do marvelous things. The night will provide the youth with the understanding of how we are called to live fearlessly and a visual reminder of how faith brings light in the darkness of our fears.

The night will begin with introductions of new teens and prayer. Then in small groups the teens will rotate around the room to complete various Fear Factor activities. Once each group has completed the activities a winner will be announced and the night will proceed into the teaching on being fearless. The teaching will conclude with a witness on overcoming fear. The youth will then get back into small groups to discuss and share their thoughts on their own fears and how faith can help them in those situations. After a time for discussion, each small group will act out a story from the Bible in which an individual achieved greatness by overcoming his or her fear. The night will conclude with a time for personal reflection, and time for prayer on overcoming fear.

BEFORE THE NIGHT

- At the Edge Night prior to this one make and hand out an Edge FearFactor invitation card to each youth.
- Make a big Edge FearFactor sign for the environment.

- Collect all the items you will need for the FearFactor activities and have the tables set up before the youth arrive.
- Have Bible verses written on notecards to hand out to the teens at the end of the night. Suggestions for Bible verses: Isaiah 41:40, Matthew 14:27, John 14:27

ENVIRONMENT

Have a large Edge FearFactor banner at the entrance or front of the room in a place that the youth will see it as a focal point upon entering the room. On the walls place images of times in the Bible where men and women stood up fearlessly for their faith (ie. Moses in front of Pharaoh, Joseph in jail, David fighting Goliath, Esther in front of King Xerxes, Christ in front of Pilate, Paul in jail). Have a large crucifix underneath the FearFactor banner in the front of the room surrounded by various objects that may invoke fear in people (ie. clown doll, plastic snake, plastic spider, a microphone, etc.). Put the various tables around the room for the FearFactor activities.

MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

Song: "Fearless" – Building 429 (*Rise*)
Song: "Let Nothing Trouble You" – Bob Rice (*I Shall Be Healed*)
Song: "Set the World on Fire" – Britt Nicole (*Say It*)
Song: "Your Love Never Fails" – JesusCulture (*Your Love Never Fails*)

GATHER

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

(10 min)

As the middle school youth are entering the room have some upbeat music playing pertaining to the theme of the night (*check out Media Suggestions for ideas*). Greet everyone and introduce any new teens there for the first time. Pray an opening prayer that ties into the theme of being fearless and having faith and trust in God.

FEAR-FACTOR ACTIVITY

(20 min)

Have each of the small groups compete in FearFactor inspired games to test and see who in the group is fearless. Different teens in the small groups will have to take turns volunteering to participate in each of the activities. Those who aren't participating in the actual event should be in charge of cheering on their teammate. Depending on how many small groups and stations there are, time at each station will vary. Have the Core Members keep score of each group,

at each station, so that at the end of the activity you can announce a winning team!

Worm Pie

Place three gummy worms at the bottom of a pie tin (you'll need to make one for every competitor). Next, fill the pie tin with whipped cream. On the start of go all players must place their hands behind their back and retrieve all three gummy worms with their mouth. The first player to retrieve all three worms and eat them wins. To make the worms more like real earthworms you can cover them in honey and crushed Oreo cookies (*make sure to have paper towels for them to wipe off their faces*).

Iron Toes

Fill a large bowl with freezing ice water. Add small round hotdog slices. Place the freezing cold water bowls on the floor and have the youth remove one shoe and sock in order to use their foot to remove the hotdog slices from the bowl and place them on the paper plate. Time them each for 60 seconds and keep count of how many slices are collected.

Fishing for Eyeballs

Fill a plastic tub full of milk, red food coloring, a cup or two of corn starch to make it thicker, and raw Brussels sprouts for the eyeballs. Let each player have 30 seconds to a minute to retrieve as many "eye balls" as they can with one hand. (*make sure to have plenty of paper towels for them to wipe off their hands, babywipes would also help to get the food coloring off their hands*)

Cricket Test

This game will take a little preparation. You'll need to purchase some live crickets from your local pet store. Place them in an aquarium or clear, large tub, make sure you have a screen on top so the crickets don't escape. Then put in a bunch of rubber frogs and snakes. Players must reach in the tank and pull out as many snakes and frogs as they can, one at a time, in 30 seconds. The crickets will actually jump out of the way when you stick your hands in but its the mind's aversion that will make this challenge hard.

PROCLAIM

SCRIPTURE PROCLAMATION

(5 min)

Matthew 14:22-31

"FEARLESS" TEACHING

(10 min)

Did you know that fear is referenced HUNDREDS of times in the Bible? And over 100 of those times, the message is NOT to be afraid? Fears come in a wide range of ways and not everyone shares the same fear. Some fears are more "rational" than others – meaning that they have a greater basis of truth in reality – but every fear evokes a feeling of unsettledness in us and often prevents us from reaching our full potential.

God did not create us to be fearful people, but yet fear is something that is part of our human nature. Think back to all the stories of the prophets and people of the Bible: Moses approaches Pharaoh and demands the freedom of the Hebrews, Joseph is sold into slavery and later placed in jail, David fights and kills Goliath with a single stone, Queen Esther stands up to the king and advocates on behalf the Jewish people, Jesus Christ stands in front of Pilate and faces his horrible death, and Paul after his conversion, is captured and imprisoned. Take a look at any of those stories and you will find that those individuals faced some very serious life or death situations and grappled with incredible fear. Even Mary was troubled when the angel Gabriel appeared to her to tell of God's plan for her to bear his Son and had to be reassured by the angel, "Do not be afraid, Mary..." (Luke 1:30).

All of those situations are examples of what might be justifiable fears, but all of these people possessed the same trait that helped them to overcome these fears. What do you think that trait was? (*Let the youth share some thoughts.*)

It's easy to think that the opposite of fear would be courage, but it isn't. The opposite of fear is more than courage; it's faith. Faith is what gives us the strength and the courage to face our fears. We can have courage when we know that God holds

us all in the palm of His hand. Think about the Scripture passage we read at the beginning about St. Peter. He was brave enough to get out of the boat and walk on the water, but the moment he began to doubt and lose trust in God, the moment he became fearful, he started sinking. Christ's response to Peter is the same response he has to us every time we don't trust that he will take care of us. When Peter began to sink "*immediately* Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him and said to him, 'O you of little faith, why did you doubt?'" (Matthew 14:31).

We could spend all day locked at home living in fear, but God wants us to trust Him and have faith that He is going to be there every step of the way as we face our fears and live out our lives for Him. God knows that if we trust Him and follow Him, no matter what may happen to us here on this earth, there is nothing that will keep us from Him. Jesus will always be there to reach out and catch us when we are sinking. Even when we face the greatest fear of death we have no reason to be afraid. Jesus already won the battle over death when he died on the cross and rose again. If Jesus lived and died for us so that not even death is something to fear, then what do we have to be afraid of?

According to the Catechism, having faith implies some pretty hefty stuff; "It means trusting God in every circumstance. A prayer of St. Teresa of Jesus wonderfully expresses this trust:

Let nothing trouble you, let nothing frighten you
Everything passes, God never changes
Patience obtains all
Whoever has God wants for nothing
God alone is enough." (CCC 227)

God is telling us that He is constant and that we must remain steadfast in faith. Faith can move mountains, faith can dispel fear, and, just think, it was with faith that Peter was able to walk on water.

(Share a brief personal experience of a moment during which you found yourself afraid and how faith in God brought you peace.)

So what would we do, if we could let go of our fears and hold tight to God instead? What would it be like to be completely fearless?

BREAK

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

(10 min)

Start out in prayer before beginning and discuss the following questions:

- Think about some fears that many people seem to relate to or share. What fears might you have?
- Where do you feel those fears are coming from (ie. a movie, scary stories you heard from a friend, a traumatic experience at the circus)?
- How do you think that your fears hold you back in life? What is one thing you would do that you haven't done, or won't do, because you have been afraid?
- What do you think is the difference between being fearful and being cautious? If you're called to be fearless does that mean you should not worry about being cautious? Why or why not?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

(5 min)

Hand out an index card and pen to every youth; give everyone time to think over the talk, and the discussion they just had. Then have each middle school youth answer the following question on their index card and hold onto it until the closing prayer:

What is one big fear that you feel holds you back from living life to the fullest?

FEARLESS ACTING

(10 min)

As a small group choose one of the Bible stories on the "Fearless" Handout (page 42) and read the Scripture passages (*make sure that each Core Member is familiar with the Bible story so that they can summarize and simplify if need be*). Have the youth think about what fears the person in that story may have had to overcome and how the

story ended because of their ability to overcome that fear.

Next have each small group come up with a way to act out the story with a different genera spin such as have them act it out like it is an opera, a silent film, a western, a musical, a foreign film, etc. *(each small group will be called up at the end to present their skit to the whole group try to keep each skit to two minutes so everyone has time to present).*

SEND

LARGE GROUP

(10 minutes)

Have each small group come up and share their version of their specific Bible story in front of the large group.

CLOSING PRAYER

(10 min)

In prayerful silence have each youth walk up individually and exchange his or her index card from the small group with their greatest fear written on it for a candle and an index card with a Bible verse written on it about courage in the face of fear. As they get a candle tell them that it serves as a reminder of faith and light in times of darkness and fear, and encourage them to pray with the Bible verse.

Once everyone has exchanged their index card conclude with a prayer for strength and protection from fear, ending with a Hail Mary.

Take the basket of fears and as a Core Team make it a point to pray for each youth and their specific fear and let the youth know that you are praying for them.

SUMMARY CHALLENGE

Before the middle school youth are sent home they will be challenged to remember:

- Fear can be overcome by faith.
- That faith gives us strength and courage to accomplish anything even if we are afraid just like the people in the stories from the Bible.
- That we are each called to offer our fears to God and not be ruled by them.

TO THE PARENTS OF

During today's Edge Night we talked about fear and what it means to be fearless (more faith-filled = fearing-less). Emphasis was put on the fact that nothing is greater than God and, therefore, there is nothing that we should fear. In our gather activity we tested our fearlessness with various Edge FearFactor activities. The teaching and discussion focused on the presence of fear in all of humanity — from biblical times up through today — and the ways in which we can combat fear by trusting in God and having faith. At the end of the night the youth received a candle with a Bible verse to serve as reminders of how our faith serves as a light in the darkness of fear.

It is important that the youth understand that while there are many dangers in the world, God is greater than all of them. We cannot control everything or everyone around us and that makes the world a frightening place to be in, but we can control the amount of trust we place in God. It can be powerful for a middle school youth to see his or her parent pray in the midst of their own troubles or fears. If possible, try to sit down one night this week and say a prayer with your son or daughter offering up your fears and acknowledging the trust you have in God's greatness.

Here are some questions you can use to help start a conversation about this Edge Night:

- What does the candle symbolize?
- Does your faith outshine your fears? What fears do you have (if any) that outweigh your faith?
- What biblical character did you discuss in your small group? What happened in the story?
- Have several groups work with the same Biblical character and just have different presentation styles or choose some of your own favorite stories of faith and overcoming fears from the Bible as options.
- For the activity at the end of the night have several students come up simultaneously to Core Members standing with baskets in the front of the room, rather than having them each walk up one by one

ADAPTATION IDEAS

- Adapt the FearFactor activities to your group size, if need be have the teens go to at least three stations if you don't have time for them to do all the activities.

Notes

FEARLESS

INSTRUCTIONS:

Choose one of the Bible stories below and read the corresponding Scripture passages. Think about what fears the person in that story may have had to overcome and how the story ended because of their ability to overcome that fear.

Joseph

Genesis 37:27-36; 39; 41

Joseph is sold into slavery, earns a good position with his master but is then falsely accused, thrown in jail, and only later remembered and honored for his ability to interpret dreams, which leads to a position of honor under Pharaoh.

Moses

Exodus 3-4:17

Moses is called to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt but experiences major anxiety over having to speak and his doubt in the Hebrews' trust of him, which leads to Aaron serving as the speaker for Moses.

David

1 Samuel 17

The Philistines are in fear of Goliath, David steps forth to fight with only five stones in his bag and wearing no armor. He bravely declares that the Lord is on his side and proceeds to battle and kills Goliath with a single stone hurled from his sling.

Esther

Esther 3:8-5:2

After becoming queen, the Jews are endangered and Esther must approach the King and advocate for her people. She prays and fasts before God and when she presents her request to the King to save the Jews he agrees and the Jews become victorious over their enemies.

Paul

Acts 16:20-40

Paul and Silas are beaten and thrown into prison, they have the opportunity to escape when there is an earthquake but they remain in prison, leading to the conversion of the jailer and his family, before they are allowed to be released.

EDGE NIGHT CHECKLIST

CORE PLANNING TEAM:

DATE OF EDGE NIGHT:

ONE MONTH PRIOR TO THE NIGHT:

- ☐ Give copies of the Edge Night to each of the members of the planning team. Each person should read the Scripture, Catechism, and *YOUCAT* references as well as review the planning guide before the brainstorming meeting.
- ☐ Have the planning team meet for a brainstorming meeting (this should last no longer than 1 hour). The team prays and discusses where the youth are in their faith journey in relation to this topic. Using this planning guide as a starting point, the team adapts the Edge Night to meet the needs of the youth and the parish.

- ☐ Assign the person responsible for the following:

Environment -----

Before the Night (when needed) -----

Audio/Visual Needs -----

Opening Prayer -----

Scripture Proclamation -----

Proclaim (discuss with YM) -----

Summary Challenge -----

TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO EDGE NIGHT:

- ☐ Turn in your notes for the Edge Night to the youth minister. Allow the youth minister to give feedback and make necessary changes.
- ☐ Create a list of needed supplies and materials. Assign a person to be responsible for collecting and/or purchasing the items needed.
- ☐ Discuss with the youth minister who will be giving the Proclaim/witness for the Edge Night. Be sure that this person is given the script and/or teaching. Inform them of any practices, time limits, and/or deadlines.

WEEK OF THE EDGE NIGHT:

- ☐ Person giving Proclaim checks in with youth minister.
- ☐ Check that all supplies have been obtained/purchased.
- ☐ Create/collect items for environment. Have volunteers ready to help if needed.
- ☐ Email Core Team an overview of the Edge Night.

DAY OF THE EDGE NIGHT:

- ☐ Set up the environment. Make sure the room is clean and presentable.
- ☐ If needed, set up audio/visual equipment. Test the video clips to make sure both picture and sound work.
- ☐ Pray! Pray for the youth attending the Edge Night. Pray for God's will to be done through the night. Pray over those involved.

EDGE NIGHT EVALUATION

INSTRUCTIONS:

Use the following questions to discuss and evaluate your Edge Night.

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

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

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

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

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