

SUN, SAND, AND SANTA (A BEACH SELFIE)

**A LIFE TEEN SOCIAL NIGHT
CHRISTMAS PARTY**

QUICK GLANCE

ABOUT THIS LIFE NIGHT

The goal of “Sun, Sand, and Santa (A Beach Selfie)” is for the teens to enjoy themselves, get to know each other better, and strengthen their community while celebrating Christ’s birth with a tropical-inspired twist.

SAINTS

St. Nicholas

RESOURCES

Music

Spotify: “LT - Gather Music” ([spotify:profile:lifeteen](https://open.spotify.com/profile/lifeteen))

Spotify: “LT - Break Music” ([spotify:profile:lifeteen](https://open.spotify.com/profile/lifeteen))

Spotify: “LT - Send Music” ([spotify:profile:lifeteen](https://open.spotify.com/profile/lifeteen))

GOAL

For the teens to enjoy themselves, get to know each other better, and strengthen their community while celebrating Christ's birth with a tropical-inspired twist.

ENVIRONMENT

Break out all your Christmas decorations and beach gear for this Life Night! Set up the space with as many beach-themed elements as possible, incorporating Christmas decor throughout. More detailed instructions are included in the Get Ready section of the Life Night.

GATHER

Crazy Crab Crawl

The Life Night begins with a multi-stage race. The teens are divided into teams, each team member handling one leg of the race that ultimately ends with the teens putting words of a Bible verse in order.

PROCLAIM + BREAK

Blizzard Beach Volleyball

In the Proclaim and Break, the teens play beach volleyball — with a twist! Teens on the sidelines of the beach volleyball tournament can eliminate players by hitting them with “snowballs” (i.e., marshmallows) during the game.

SEND

Message in a Bottle

For the Send, the teens will reflect on what they can give Jesus this Christmas. They will then write their offerings on paper and place them in a glass bottle.

GETTING READY

LIFE NIGHT DATE: _____

FOUR WEEKS BEFORE

- Read through the entire Life Night.

TWO WEEKS BEFORE

- Assign core members to the assignments on the Core Meeting Worksheet.

ONE WEEK BEFORE

- Distribute the Life Night outline to the core members.
- Pray with the core members over the Life Night.
- Review the highlights for the Life Night.
- Explain the core member assignments.

WEEK OF THE LIFE NIGHT

- Gather all the decorations needed for the environment.
 - Gather all the items and supplies needed for the Life Night.
 - Ensure you have access to a volleyball net for the Proclaim + Break and know how to set it up.
 - Invite Life Teen parents and parishioners to contribute glass bottles for the Life Night (no bottles that previously held alcohol).
 - Invite your pastor to stop by during the Life Night to wish the teens “Merry Christmas!”
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DAY OF THE LIFE NIGHT

- Test all audio-video elements of the Life Night.
 - Play the “LS - Interconnected” Spotify playlist as teens gather.
 - Set up all the decor for the environment.
 - Set up each step of the race for the Gather.
 - Set up the volleyball net for the Proclaim + Break, and ensure other Proclaim + Break items are available and ready.
 - Set up the prayer space for the Send, and secure the other Send items are available and ready.
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ENVIRONMENT

Get out your Christmas decorations and beach supplies! Set up beach chairs, towels, umbrellas, floaties, and a kiddie pool. Decorate a Christmas tree with beach ornaments or a palm tree with Christmas ornaments. Set up a selfie station with a combination of summer and Christmas-themed props. Serve Christmas drinks (e.g., eggnog, hot chocolate, cider) with tiny umbrellas. Decorate the prayer space for the Send by setting up the bottles in front of where the teens will sit. Consider staging the bottles in front of a nativity scene. Ask the youth and core members to wear a mix of summer and Christmas clothes. Ask your pastor to visit at the start or end of the Life Night, dressed as “Vacation Santa” if possible.

SUPPLIES

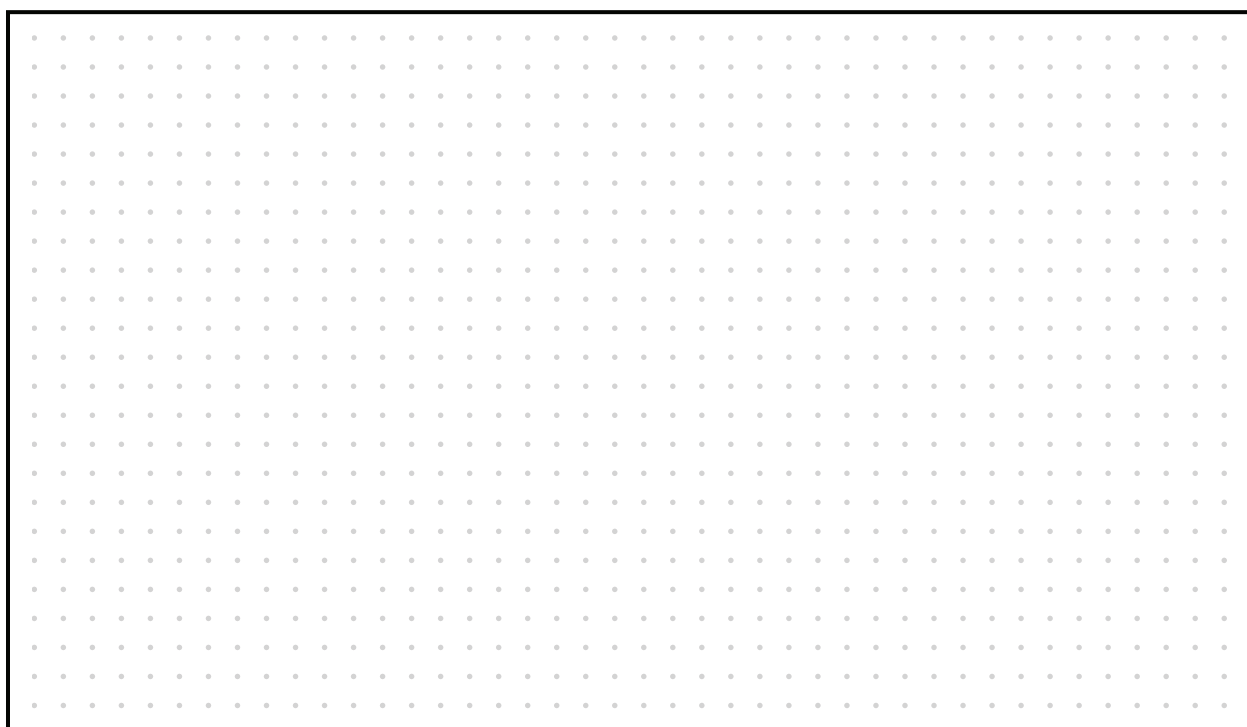
	Small sports cones
	Kiddie pool
	Packing peanuts or other sand substitute
	Gift boxes and wrapping paper
	Swim fins
	Index cards
	Zippered plastic bags
	Magnets
	String
	Yardsticks
	Mittens
	Volleyball net and volleyball
	Marshmallow shooters (optional)
	Bags of marshmallows
	Towels (optional)
	Winter coats (optional)
	Variety of glass bottles
	Slips of paper, one per teen
	Writing utensils, one per teen

LIFE NIGHT PLANNER

SCHEDULE

TO-DO

ROOM LAYOUT



CORE MEETING WORKSHEET

Use this outline for your core team meeting before the Youth Mass. The core meeting follows the Gather-Proclaim-Break-Send structure.

GATHER

- Begin with a brief social time and rapid high/low of the week report from each core member.
- Pray with your core team and include one of the Scripture passages from the Life Night.

PROCLAIM

- Review the Life Night outline.
- Assign core members to the assignments for this Life Night and write their names here.

Setup:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Audio-Visual: _____

Opening Prayer: _____

Check-in:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Proclaim + Break Leaders:

1. _____
2. _____

Closing Prayer: _____

GATHER

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION 5 min

Gather in the main meeting space, and welcome the teens to the Life Night. Introduce any teens or core members attending for the first time, and begin in prayer.

CRAZY CRAB CRAWL 10 min

The many steps in this Gather require preparation well before the Life Night. Start by estimating how many teams you will have, considering there will be about six teens per team. Then, collect all the supplies needed for the Gather.

Write out the following Bible verse on index cards, putting only one word on each card: “Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach” (John 21:4). Repeat until there is one set of Bible verse index cards per team. Then, place each team’s Bible verse cards into a zipped plastic bag with a small magnet. Put each zipped bag into a gift box, wrap the gift boxes, and label each wrapped gift with a number to designate which gift belongs to which team. Lastly, create a “fishing pole” by attaching one end of a string to a yardstick and tying the other end to a small magnet.

Immediately before the Life Night, set up the remaining parts of the race. Put out traffic cones for the crab crawlers and flipper friends to weave through. Place the wrapped gift boxes in a kiddie pool, and then fill the pool with packing peanuts (or an alternate sand substitute), ensuring the boxes are covered. Place pairs of swim fins next to the kiddie pool, providing one pair of fins per team. Finally, set up the tables where the teams will unwrap the gifts, fish out the index cards, and assemble the Bible verses, ensuring each team has a pair of mittens at their table for unwrapping gifts.

At the Life Night, divide the teens into teams of approximately six players and designate the teams as “Team 1,” “Team 2,” etc. Explain how the teens will participate in this multi-stage race, with each team member handling one leg of the race for their team. Explain the following steps of the race to the teams:

1. Crab Crawler - Teen 1 will crab crawl through a set of traffic cones and tag Teen 2, who is waiting at the end of the traffic cones.
2. Gift Grabber - Teen 2 will run to the kiddie pool after being tagged by their Crab Crawler. They will dig through the “sand” to retrieve the wrapped gift labeled with their team’s number and pass it along to Teen 3, waiting outside the kiddie pool.

3. Flipper Friend - After receiving the gift from the Gift Grabber, Teen 3 will slip on a pair of swim fins and race the gift to Teen 4, who is waiting at a table.
4. Mitten Master - Once the Flipper Friend delivers the gift to the table, Teen 4 will put on a pair of mittens, unwrap and open the gift, and pass it to Teen 5, who is waiting nearby.
5. Fisher - After the Mitten Master unwraps and opens the gift, Teen 5 must use the magnet on the “fishing pole” to attract the magnet in the zipped plastic bag to remove the bag from the gift box. They will then use the fishing pole (no hands!) to transfer the bag to Teen 6, waiting nearby.
6. Scripture Scholar - After the Fisher transfers the bag to Teen 6, Teen 6 will open the bag, take out the index cards, and arrange the cards so the words of the Scripture verse are in the correct order. Once they believe they have the proper order, the Scripture Scholar must call over a core member to confirm they are correct. The first team to correctly arrange the cards wins!

Assign each teen a leg of the race or let the teams choose roles among themselves. Once everyone has a role, instruct everyone to find their specific places for the race. When everyone is in place, review the steps again to ensure each teen knows the rules for their part of the race. Then, begin the race and see who correctly arranges the Bible verse cards first!

SUGGESTION

For a larger group, ensure all the teens can participate by adding more steps to the race or doubling up on teens for some legs of the race when possible. Make sure you get extra supplies for any steps you add!

STEP IT UP

Come up with creative ways to make the legs of the race more complicated. (E.g., Use string to make mazes that the Crab Crawlers and/or Flipper Friends must navigate through. Blindfold the teens arranging the Bible verse index cards, pairing them with another teen who must verbally explain how to arrange them properly.)

HISPANIC INCULTURATION

In many Latin American cultures, community and family are highly valued, often with a strong emphasis on working together to achieve common goals. For the Crazy Crab Crawl, you could incorporate Hispanic/Latino cultural elements by using a traditional Spanish Bible verse instead of the English one. This would provide an opportunity for Spanish-speaking students to take a leadership role in their group and share their linguistic skills with their peers. If the students are comfortable doing so, you could also invite them to teach the rest of the group how to pronounce the verse in Spanish.

PROCLAIM + BREAK

BLIZZARD BEACH VOLLEYBALL 40 min

Before the Life Night, gather all the supplies for the Proclaim + Break, and set up the volleyball net.

At the Life Night, divide the teens into teams — Team Sand and Team Snow — and start a “beach” volleyball game, calculating points as you would for a typical game of beach volleyball. After playing the first round of beach volleyball, announce that the next round will be “blizzard beach volleyball.”

Have each team divide in half. Have one-half of each team return to the volleyball court. Send the remaining half of each team to the opposite side of the court, instructing them to sit outside the boundaries surrounding the opposing team. Tell those on the court that while they continue to play volleyball, they will also have to avoid the “snowballs” (i.e., marshmallows) thrown by the opposing team members sitting on the sidelines. If someone on the court gets hit with a snowball, they are “out” and must join their team’s snowball throwers. Also, designate some teens from each team to be blockers. Give Team Sand blockers each a towel and Team Snow blockers each a winter coat, instructing them to use those items to deflect the snowballs thrown by the opposing team. (Make it clear that the blockers cannot make physical contact with the snowball throwers.) Distribute marshmallows (and, if you are using them, marshmallow shooters) to the snowball throwers, and begin the volleyball game. Play until one team gets the points agreed upon to win or is the only team with players left standing. Then play another round of blizzard beach volleyball, switching so that the starting players from the last round become the snowball throwers and vice versa. Keep track of which team wins each game and, at the end of these three rounds, declare either Team Sand or Team Snow the winner!

SUGGESTION

Add more volleyballs mid-game for a little extra fun (and chaos)! Give a point to the team every time a volleyball hits the ground within bounds on the opposing team’s side.

STEP IT UP

Throughout the blizzard beach volleyball round(s), announce new rules to make things more challenging for the snowball throwers. (E.g., All snowball throwers must take two steps back. Snowball throwers must keep their eyes closed for the next two minutes.)

HISPANIC INCULTURATION

Volleyball is a popular sport in many Latin American countries, making this activity naturally engaging for many Hispanic/Latino teens. Consider adding Latin American music to the game. This could include popular genres like salsa, merengue, bachata, or reggaeton. Not only would this create a festive atmosphere, but it would also offer an opportunity to discuss the rich diversity of Hispanic/Latino cultures and music. If some teens know traditional dances associated with these genres, they could be encouraged to share and teach these dances during breaks in the game.

SEND

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE 15 min

Gather the teens in a large group, and lead them to the prayer space. Invite the teens to sit down, facing the bottles. Ask them to take a few deep breaths and enter a moment of silence to prepare for prayers. Once the teens appear more settled, give each a slip of paper and a writing utensil.

Read Matthew 1:23. Lead the teens in a reflection on this verse, using the following as an example:

God is Emmanuel, always with us on the sandiest, sunniest beach or the snowiest, coldest mountaintop. Because God is always with us, He is near to us when things are difficult.

The holidays are supposed to feel joyful, but they can be stressful too. From things at school like exams and concerts to all the holiday events with friends and family, we can find ourselves feeling overwhelmed rather than merry.

God wants something from us this Christmas but not in a way that adds to our stress. God, who is always with us and knows our hearts, asks for very little from us and wants us to find our rest and hope in Him. When we let go of the everyday stresses we hold so tightly, we can open our hands for God to take those pains and fears and leave us with empty hands to receive whatever good things He wants to give us.

After sharing these thoughts with the teens, invite them to write down what they want to let go of and give Jesus this Christmas. Tell the teens that they can slowly get up and place their prayers inside a glass bottle after writing down their prayers. Once all the teens have placed their prayers inside the bottles, close with the prayer below.

GOD WITH US PRAYER

Jesus, you are Emmanuel. You are always with us, even in the most challenging moments of our lives. As we enter this Christmas season, help us keep our eyes on you. When we struggle with the expectations placed on us amid all our busy holiday events, give us your peace.

Lord Jesus, we offer you what we have written on these papers. We offer you all of our joys and all of our sorrows, all of our strengths and all of our weaknesses. Take these things from us and give us open hands and hearts to receive your grace. Help us to share your love with all we encounter this Christmas, reminding them that you remain within each of us. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER AND ANNOUNCEMENTS 5 min

Give God praise for the glory of this concluding semester, highlighting some of the memorable moments in prayer.

Wish the teens a wonderful Christmas break and pass out the schedule for the upcoming semester. Consider projecting or distributing a handout with the parish Christmas Mass times.

STEP IT UP

A well-placed song increases energy and makes everyone feel great. Empower the core member tasked with audio-video support to prepare an upbeat Christmas song (e.g., Christmas trap music) to play as the teens leave the Life Night and start their week.

AFTER THE LIFE NIGHT

Most core members are tired at the end of the session, but be sure to do two things upon the completion of a Life Night.

FIRST, CLEANUP

(aka, “Be your maintenance team’s favorite ministry.”)

You can guide the core team to this time with the following prompt:

Do not rush the teens out the door, but as relational ministry naturally wraps up, let’s all work together to clean up the main meeting space and put things away.

Set a timer and work for ten minutes, ensuring everyone sticks around. The fastest way to a divided core team is for one or two members to neglect cleanup.

SECOND, EVALUATE

After all the teens have left, appreciate what God has accomplished through the Life Night. Share the praise reports. Identify who or what needs follow-up. Set a timer and invite the group to share in these five categories of the Life Night: Pros, Con, Questions, Comments, Concerns. Remind the core team that evaluations are intended to improve the teens’ experiences at Life Teen and are not critical judgments of a youth minister’s or core member’s performance. As you discuss, encourage the core team to consider each of the Life Night movements of Gather, Proclaim, Break, and Send, or pass out/ email the evaluation forms. Conclude your time together in prayer and praise to God.

LIFE NIGHT EVALUATION

GOAL

For the teens to enjoy themselves, get to know each other better, and strengthen their community while celebrating Christ's birth with a tropical-inspired twist.

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

Did not accomplish

Nailed it

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What was the strongest aspect of this Life Night?

Gather

Proclaim + Break

Proclaim + Break

Send

Environment

Optional: Please explain further.

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

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