

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

AN ISSUE NIGHT ON BEING PRO-LIFE

QUICK GLANCE

ABOUT THIS LIFE NIGHT

What does it mean to be pro-life? This Life Night will unpack that question and present a comprehensive understanding of being pro-life that extends beyond the abortion debate. Fueled by a newfound appreciation of the dignity of each person, teens will have a chance to participate in different pro-life activities aimed at supporting the lives of the people in their local community.

MAIN POINTS

1. Every person is made in the image of God; therefore, each of us has an inherent dignity despite our actions or circumstances.
2. Pro-life is more than one side of the abortion debate. Being pro-life entails a lifestyle that actively defends the rights of every human life.
3. When we adopt a pro-life mindset, we witness to the love of God and His concern for every person He created.

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:26-27 | Proverbs 31:8-9 | Wisdom 1:12-15 | Sirach 29:8-11 | Matthew 22:36-39 |
Matthew 25:34-40 | Luke 10:25-37 | John 10:10 | James 1:27

CATECHISM

1702-1703 | 1823 | 1825 | 1878-1879 | 1931-1934 | 2258 | 2270 | 2319

KEY TERMS

Dignity | Image of God

SAINTS

St. Jane Frances de Chantal | St. Teresa of Calcutta | St. Vincent de Paul

RESOURCES

Music

Spotify: “LS - Under the Same Roof”

Prayer

“A Litany for Life” (usccb.org)

Video

The Craft Patch, “How To Make A Diaper Cake” (youtube.com)

GOAL

The goal of this Life Night is for the teens to develop a pro-life mindset and seek to care for and support every person they encounter, especially those most in need.

ENVIRONMENT

As teens walk into the main meeting space, they are inspired by images of the Corporal Works of Mercy on the walls. Jesus' own words from Scripture take center stage at the front of the room. See the Getting Ready section for more details.

GATHER

Facial Recognition

A few teens participate in an upfront game where they must first recognize someone on the opposite team and call them by name. This activity sets up the desire to be known and called by name which is expounded on in the Proclaim.

PROCLAIM

Talk: My Brother's Keeper

The talk for this Life Night breaks open what it means to be pro-life. Every person has inherent dignity because they are created in God's image and called to a relationship with Him. Being pro-life entails defending the rights and dignity of every human person, especially the people we interact with every day.

BREAK

Pro-Life Stations

Teens are presented with a selection of different pro-life activities and have an opportunity to engage with two of them. These activities give them a chance to put into practice what they heard in the Proclaim.

GETTING READY

LIFE NIGHT DATE: _____

FOUR WEEKS BEFORE

- Read through the entire Life Night.
 - Pray with the Scripture and Catechism references.
 - Consult the Resources suggestions.
 - Select a presenter for the Proclaim and contact them this week.
 - Send the Proclaim Teaching Guide to the presenter.
 - Consider reaching out to parents and parishioners to get supplies for the Break activities. If possible, make a parish-wide announcement soliciting resources for these various activities.
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TWO WEEKS BEFORE

- Assign core members to the assignments on the Core Meeting Worksheet.
 - Check in with the Proclaim presenter and ask for an outline and slides, if applicable.
 - Schedule practice time with the presenter if needed.
 - Reach out to a music minister or worship leader to see if they can lead music for this Life Night.
 - Assign core members to facilitate each of the Break activities. Communicate with them so they know what is expected of them, and have them do some independent research on their ministries.
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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 assignments.
 - Encourage the core members to review the Life Night and pray for their small group.
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THE WEEK OF THE LIFE NIGHT

- Advertise the Life Night on the parish youth group's social media channels.
 - Preschedule the Parent Letter email as a follow-up to the Life Night.
 - Make a plan for the Life Night Environment using the suggestions below.
 - Gather the supplies needed for the Life Night.
 - Inform core members of their roles during the session and provide them with the required materials and instructions.
 - Pray for the teens who will be present and experience the Life Night.
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THE DAY OF THE LIFE NIGHT

- Decorate the youth room using the Environment instructions below.
 - Set up all of the stations for the Break activities.
 - Test all audio-video elements of the Life Night.
 - Project an Environment image found on the enclosed USB drive and online at lifeteen.com.
 - Play the "LS - Under the Same Roof" Spotify playlist as teens gather.
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ENVIRONMENT

Write out each of the Corporal Works of Mercy on a posterboard or piece of butcher paper and place them on the walls around the room. Find accompanying images online for each work of mercy and hang them nearby.

On a large piece of butcher paper, write out the following verse so that it forms a backdrop for the front of the room: “And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.’” **(Matthew 25:40)**

SUPPLIES

	Environment supplies
	Large bed sheet
	Supplies for the selected Break activities (see Break section for details)

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.

CORE MEETING START TIME: _____

GATHER

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

Scripture choice: _____

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.

Check-In	1.	2.	3.
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Audio-Visual	
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Opening Prayer	
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Proclaim Presenter	
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Pro-Life Stations	1.	2.	3.
	4.	5.	6.

BREAK

- Review the Life Night Break activities with a core member discussion. Spend about 15 minutes on this section.
- Take questions.

SEND

- Conclude the meeting with a Hail Mary.
- Set up final details for the Life Night.
- Arrive early to the Youth Mass to greet teens as they arrive.

NOTES

GATHER

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER 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.

FACIAL RECOGNITION 5 min

Invite ten teens to the front of the room to play this upfront game. Begin by inviting each volunteer to introduce themselves. Then, have the volunteers line up in two teams, with two core members holding a large bed sheet between them so the opposing players can't see each other. Each round, the teams select one person and have them stand directly in front of the sheet while everyone else stands a few feet back. On the count of three, the core members drop the sheet, and the two players facing each other attempt to say the name of their opponent first. Whoever successfully names their opponent first wins the round, and the opposing player must join their team. Play for a predetermined amount of time, and the team with the most players at the end wins the game.

SUGGESTION

Consider playing as a large group game rather than with just a few volunteers if it better suits the size of your program.

PROCLAIM

GETTING STARTED

This Teaching Guide is not just an outline; it's a tool to help you craft a powerful and personalized talk that will leave a lasting impact. You can make this topic relevant and engaging for your youth group, and this guide is here to assist you every step of the way.

Don't just prepare the main points — unleash your creativity and incorporate media and Going Deeper content to captivate your audience and inspire the teens. Whether you use the suggested media or find your own, make sure it's visually engaging, attention-grabbing, and thought-provoking. Consult the Going Deeper section at the back of this resource and highlight the points that most resonate with your teens.

Beyond these guidelines, the most important thing is to be yourself and let the Holy Spirit guide you. Practice your talk, pour your heart into it, and trust that your authenticity and humility have the power to make a difference in the lives of these teens. If possible, record yourself giving the Proclaim and make notes on what you can improve or avoid. This guide is just the beginning — the rest is up to you!

MAIN POINTS

1. Every person is made in the Image of God; therefore, each of us has an inherent dignity despite our actions or circumstances.
2. Pro-life is more than one side of the abortion debate. Being pro-life entails a lifestyle that actively defends the rights of every human life.
3. When we adopt a pro-life mindset, we witness to the love of God and His concern for every person He created.

KEY TERMS

Dignity - The state or quality of being worthy of honor or respect. Human dignity rests in one's creation in the image of God and the irrevocable call to live in communion with Him. **(CCC 356-357)**

Image of God - The unique characteristics of human beings, bestowed by God at creation, by which they reflect God. The image of God is manifest primarily in the ability to live in communion with others, use reason to follow God, and freedom, which can be directed to eternal beatitude. **(CCC 1701-1706)**

Main Point 1:

Every person is made in the image of God;
therefore, each of us has an inherent dignity
despite our actions or circumstances.

- Every person has a desire to be unique, to be seen as someone who is special and unrepeatable.
- More than that, we all have a deep need to be known as someone, not just another face in the crowd. We have a need to be known and called by our name, because our name evokes our personal identity.
- The Gather game was a fun way to display this truth. Each person is unique — similar to, yet distinct, from those around them. To know a person’s name is to call on this uniqueness.
- As Catholics, we believe that God calls every person by name and that every person is created in God’s image.

SCRIPTURE

Project and read **Genesis 1:26-27** or ask a leadership teen to read it.

SUGGESTION

When presenting in front of a group, use a Bible to read the passage rather than a digital copy or a paper printout.

- The source of each person’s uniqueness lies in God. We have each been created by God and called to relationship with Him. Before anyone else, God desires to know us and call us by name. (**Going Deeper #1: “Creation Continued”**)
- The Church teaches that human beings are “the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake.” In other words, we are valuable simply because of who we are and Who created us. (**CCC 1703**)
- Being created in God’s image and called to relationship with Him gives us a dignity that nothing can take away.
- For this reason, the Church teaches that every human life is worthy of respect and should be protected.

- If God has created every person in His own image, called them to communion with Himself, and given and sustained in them the ability to respond to Him, then our job becomes very simple. We are to respect and protect the life of every person.
- Because we are endowed with freedom and can make our own choices — which means we can choose not to respond to God — the possibility of sin enters the world.
- We all make unfortunate decisions with the freedom we are given. Sometimes, this is more serious than at other times. Nevertheless, there is nothing any human can do to completely remove the image of God within them or to revoke the call to live in communion with God. That means, ultimately, that there is nothing we can do to destroy our dignity.

Main Point 2:

Pro-life is more than one side of the abortion debate. Being pro-life entails a lifestyle that actively defends the rights of every human life.

Ask a few teens to share what the phrase “pro-life” means to them.

- For many of us, the phrase “pro-life” has become identified with one side of the abortion debate. Yes, being pro-life includes the issue of abortion and also extends beyond. It entails defending the rights of every human life, as well as each person’s dignity.
- Most people agree every innocent, healthy person has a basic right to life that shouldn’t be violated. Supporting this proposition is not difficult because almost everyone agrees with it. However, being pro-life is more difficult in situations where people start to qualify another person’s right to life or question their inherent dignity.
- There are many instances where this happens. Modern culture tends to value life to the extent that it is “useful.” Older people who require more assistance from society, those with severe mental or physical handicaps, and the incarcerated are sometimes treated with less respect than younger, healthier people. What does this say about how a culture values life?
- There are social issues like these where we, as Catholics, should use our voices to defend the rights and dignity of each person.
- However, more often than not, our pro-life attitude will be manifest in our daily interactions. We must ask ourselves honestly: Do I view each person as someone created in God’s image? This question can become very practical in our daily lives.

Encourage the teens to think about these rhetorical questions about how they do (or do not) treat those around them as people made in God's image.

Ask, Am I willing to defend the kid in school who annoys everyone and is intentionally frustrating? Do I value him or her beyond his actions?

When I see a homeless person on the street, am I willing to encounter them and treat them with dignity, or do I look away and pretend they don't exist?

When my parents or siblings frustrate me, do I talk about them behind their backs to my friends and vent hateful words, or do I uphold their dignity as I express my frustrations?

- Catholics are called to be pro-life in the widest sense of the word — to take a stand against problematic social issues, to speak the truth even when it goes against common public opinion, and to live our daily lives upholding the dignity of every person we encounter in the smallest and most ordinary of ways.

Main Point 3:

When we adopt a pro-life mindset, we witness to the love of God and His concern for every person He created.

- Jesus exemplifies this pro-life lifestyle in the Gospels. He heals the sick, casts out demons, feeds the hungry, and teaches the ignorant. He cares for sinners and often defends them in the face of those who would condemn them.
- Jesus calls us to show the same concern for others that He did.

SCRIPTURE

Project and read **Matthew 25:34-40** or ask a leadership teen to read it.

- In this parable, Jesus shows us that the simplest acts of love done toward others bear an eternal significance because they are done ultimately for Him.
- Every person we encounter is called to be a son or daughter of God. Every person is created in God's image. When we respect the lives of others, we are ultimately respecting the handiwork of the Master Creator and the Father of every human person.

- Our care and concern for others should remind them of their dignity as people created in God's image and called to share life with Him eternally.
- Regardless of the circumstances in which we encounter someone or the way they treat us, God asks us to see others the way He does. We are to imitate God, whose care and concern for every human person is unbounded.
- God asks us to be our brother's keeper — to care for him when he is in need, to protect him when he is in danger, to rejoice with him when he celebrates, and to remind him of his worth when he can't see it himself.
- When we do this, we become witnesses of God's love in the world and help people live according to the dignity bestowed upon them by God.

BREAK

PRO-LIFE STATIONS 40 min

For this Break, teens will have a chance to participate in some activities to support life and help their brothers and sisters in need. Explain that the teens will be able to visit two stations and spend about 20 minutes at each one. Once they get to the station, they will be given instructions on what to do.

Explain the options. Before sending them out, give the teens a chance to reflect for a moment on which group of people they feel called to help most. Encourage the teens to go to those stations rather than just going to stations with their friends.

Select as many stations as you can get the resources for and that are applicable to your area. Consult with different ministries in your parish, such as the St. Vincent de Paul society or a pro-life group, to come up with other ideas. Consider hosting a drive to collect all the necessary materials for these stations in the weeks prior to the Life Night. Ask individual parishioners to donate, and encourage teens to bring items on the day of the Life Night.

STEP IT UP

At each station, include take-home material with practical information on how teens can get more involved. For example, prepare cards listing the visiting hours at a local nursing home and the contact information of someone who works there. This will equip the teens with the information needed to be active and continue helping long after the Life Night. Make sure the information is specific to your area so that the teens know the steps they can take to stay involved.

Prison Ministry Letters

Materials:

- Plain white paper
- Blue or black pens

Teens write letters of encouragement to incarcerated men and women. Be sure to use plain white paper and blue or black ink pens, as many facilities will not accept letters on different mediums or written with other utensils. Give sample phrases and Scripture verses for the teens to use. Instruct the teens to keep the letter anonymous or signed generally, as in “Teens from [your church’s name].” Pray for the recipients of the letters.

Nursing Home Letters

Materials:

- White or colored paper
- Pens, markers, colored pencils, and other writing utensils

Teens write letters of encouragement to residents of local nursing homes or assisted living facilities. In this case, teens have more liberty in what they can include in the letter as well as the color and writing utensils used. Encourage teens to do their best to communicate hope and care through the messages that they write. Many people in nursing homes struggle with loneliness. These letters should aim to remind them of their dignity and worth and the value they bring to the world. Pray for the recipients of the letters.

Rosary for the Unborn

Materials:

- Rosary for each person

Teens pray the Rosary for all unborn children, as well as those who were never given a chance at life. Encourage teens to hold this intention in their hearts as they pray the Rosary. This should take place at a parish chapel or near a Marian statue or grotto if possible.

Pregnant and New Mothers

Materials

- Diapers
- Rubber bands
- Decorative ribbon
- Cardboard for a base
- Dowels
- Scissors
- Craft supplies for the sign and/or decorations (optional)
- Cellophane or soft tulle (optional)

Teens work together to make diaper cakes. Diaper cakes are a fun way to present a gift of diapers to new or expecting mothers. They consist of progressively smaller tiers of diapers stacked on top of one another like a wedding cake, held together by dowels, ribbon, and rubber bands. For more detailed instructions, see the Resources section in this Life Night. Once the teens construct the diaper cakes, have them decorate the cakes with ribbon and other craft supplies. Pray for the mothers who will receive the diaper cakes and their children. Ensure the core member facilitating this station reserves enough supplies for the second group to use.

Divine Mercy Chaplet for Sick and Suffering

Materials:

- Rosary for each person

Teens pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy for all those who are sick and suffering in the world. Before beginning, give an extended time for each person to state a particular prayer intention out loud. This could be as specific as a friend or family member suffering from a chronic illness or as general as a particular group of suffering people they feel compassionate towards (such as those who suffer from cancer). After everyone states their intentions, proceed with the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

Homeless Ministry

Materials:

- Ziploc bags
- Socks
- Individually wrapped granola bars
- Chapstick
- Bottled water
- Wipes
- Comb
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste

Teens create care bags to give to people experiencing homelessness. The suggested list of materials can be modified based on what's easily available, but be sure to check with trusted sources online or at local shelters to screen everything you include in the bags. Teens should not race through the process of creating the bags, but do it slowly, being mindful of the person who will receive these goods and praying for their wellbeing. Ensure the core member facilitating this station reserves enough supplies for the second group to use.

SEND

LITANY FOR LIFE 10 min

Close the Life Night with the following prayer for life based on 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:8, adapted from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Either project the prayer and pray it out loud together, or select volunteers to read each section.

Begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Litany for Life

Lord, love is patient.

Give to the mother who is tempted to abort her child the patience to endure the suffering that will bring forth new life.

Lord, love is kind.

Give to the new father whose friends tell him to abort his child the gentleness, compassion, and courage to support his wife and child, protect them from all that could harm them, and sustain them against selfishness and hate.

Lord, love is not jealous.

Remove from all human hearts the temptation to trade human life for advantage, convenience, or personal benefit. Deliver us from the expediency that values personal gain and pleasure over the dignity of human life.

Lord, love is not pompous.

Deliver us from the arrogance that sees our needs or wants as superior to the rights of others. Help us to see all our brothers and sisters as worthy of all of our love.

Lord, love is not inflated.

Grant us a share in the humility of your Son, who sought not to be served, but to serve. Help us to see in every human life, rich or poor, young or old, guilty or innocent, a reflection of your image and likeness.

Lord, love is not rude.

Implant a spirit of gentle compassion in the hearts of each of your sons and daughters, Lord, that no person may ever be treated as less than the child of God which you have made them, through the Paschal Death and Resurrection of your only-begotten Son.

Lord, love does not seek its own interests.

Give to all who govern us, Lord, a generous spirit, that our country may not so much seek to be great as to be good, to be rich in possessions as to be rich in mercy, or to be renowned as to be renowned for justice and truth for all.

Lord, love is not quick-tempered.

Grant that by our prudence and patience, we might learn to live that sacrificial love by which your Son died for us on the Cross, that all men and women might know our kindness and willingness to love them unto death after the model of our Lord and Savior.

Lord, love does not brood over injury.

Give us the grace of mercy, Lord, that like your Son, we might forgive those who sin against us, seeking only their redemption and eternal happiness. Forgive those who inflict harm upon human life, especially in its most innocent and defenseless forms. Move their hearts, grant them the grace of repentance, and give all of us a full share in your mercy.

Lord, love does not rejoice over wrongdoing.

Help us to seek only the redemption of wrongdoers, Lord, and remove from our hearts all desire for vengeance and hate. Help us to desire not revenge, but the repentance and happiness of all your children.

Lord, love rejoices with the truth.

Implant deep within our hearts a sense of the joy of the Gospel of Life, and make us joy-filled evangelists of your great gift of life.

Lord, love bears all things.

When we are insulted or reviled for the sake of the Gospel of Life, give us the courage and the innocence of the children of God. Help us, Lord, to suffer for the sake of your truth, and never to seek our own good, even in the good work we do.

Lord, love believes all things

Deliver us from every temptation to despair, Lord. When we are discouraged, give us the grace to trust in your mercy and to know that your love is ever victorious, even in the face of darkness, death, and hate.

Lord, love hopes all things.

As we trust in your infinite love, O Lord, give us the trust that comes from the Gospel, and help us to cling to that sure and certain hope that for those who love God all things come to good.

Lord, love endures all things.

In the face of death, destruction, and a culture of death, never let us lose sight of the beauty of the face of your only-begotten Son, Our Lord, who suffered the torments of his Passion and Death for the sake of our sins. Let us trust that through His Passion, we will have the strength to do your will and to carry each cross that comes our way for the glory of God and the love of his little ones.

Lord, love never fails.

When the crusade for life seems unending and our latest initiatives have failed, when our hearts are filled with sadness or anger or fear, come to our aid, O Lord, and give us the assurance that you are ever with us, that your mercies will not end, and that you, our Creator and our God, will bring victory to all who seek to love as you have commanded them.

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS 5 min

Make announcements for your program, then dismiss the teens.

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

Try to foster a spirit of teamwork and generosity among your core team. One of the fastest ways to a divided core team is for one or two members to neglect cleanup. No one is done for the night until everyone is done cleaning up. If a core member is not helping clean up, presume goodwill on their part. If it becomes a consistent problem, address it with them rather than letting issues fester.

Be mindful of any relational ministry that may be happening or teens that need to talk. Sometimes, teens can be deeply moved by a Life Night and may need to continue to process with a trusted adult. During cleanup, your team should continue to be available and interruptible for any teens. You never want to shove teens out the door for the sake of cleaning up.

SECOND, EVALUATE

After all the teens have left, appreciate what God has accomplished through the Life Night. Share any 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, Cons, Questions, Comments, and 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

The goal of this Life Night is for the teens to develop a pro-life mindset and seek to care for and support every person they encounter, especially those most in need.

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

Optional: Please explain further.

What was the strongest aspect of this Life Night?

Gather

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?
