



WHAT IS LOVE?

SACRAMENTS OF SERVICE EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

CATECHISM

621

1534

1627

1585

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 19:4 -6

John 13:34

Acts 6:6 -7

KEY CONCEPTS

YOUCAT

248 - 249

257

402

GOAL OF THIS NIGHT

The goal of the night is to help the youth understand that they are called to love fully. The night will discuss how the two Sacraments of Service are intended to aid us in learning to love and serve as we are called. An emphasis will be placed on the graces received in these sacraments and how each sacrament is lived out in being a selfless gift to others.

ABOUT THIS NIGHT

The night will begin with a few fun high-energy games where the youth will be challenged to find their “match.” It will then transition to a talk about the Sacraments of Service and the sacrificial love that is at the heart of both of these sacraments. During the Break the youth will be separated into guys and girls groups for a time of Q&A. The night will conclude with the washing of feet as a true sign of sacrificial love.

Before the Night

Cut paper into strips and put different animal names on each strip of paper for the Gather activity; make sure to have two strips of paper with the same animal name on it. Pick out the people you want to participate in the girls and guys Q&A Session about vocations; make sure to have an array of married, single, and consecrated men and women to represent each vocation. Pick out a few people to take part in the washing of the feet for the Send activity.

PARENTAL NOTICE

During Edge we discussed the two Sacraments of Service: Matrimony and Holy Orders. We saw that although the two are different in many ways, the two Sacraments have a similar foundation in that they specifically create a venue for everyone’s vocation to love. Taking Jesus’ New Commandment, “love as I have love you” (John 13:34), the Church understands that Jesus gives love a new meaning and that we are called to serve one another. We also discussed that we must look at Jesus and His cross as our constant model of self-giving love.

We had an open Q&A with both married and religious men and women. This would be a great opportunity to ask your youth some questions about where they see God them in the future. Here are a few questions:

- Is the media’s idea of love the same as what Christ teaches us about love?
- What was interesting to hear about each vocation?
- What are your thoughts about the priesthood or religious life?
- What is something new you learned about marriage?

ENVIRONMENT

When decorating for this night think of Valentine’s Day. The room should be decorated with hearts,

cupids, and other love-related decorations. Make sure to have a large crucifix visible in the front of the room. Also, on a large piece of paper write the words "What is Love?" and put it in the front of the room, or project it on a screen.

GATHER

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

(5 min)

Gather in all the youth; recognize any new youth or birthdays. Have the youth minister lead the group in an opening prayer and give a brief overview of what the night is about.

FIND YOUR MATE

(10 min)

On slips of paper, write down the name of a dozen different animals that make obvious noises (for example: a cow, cat, dog, elephant). You can also have fun and see what noises the youth would come up with if you gave them a flamingo, fish, or rhino. Separate the youth into girls and guys and give each youth a slip of paper with an animal name on it. Make sure that you give the same animal to both a girl and a guy.

Instruct the youth to walk around the room making the noise of the animal they were given. They must find someone of the opposite sex making the same animal noise. They are not allowed to talk or say what animal they are to each other; they have to find each other by making their noise.

If you want to make the game more challenging, have the last people to find their partner sit down and play this game as an elimination game until you are down to two youth as winners.

WHOSE SHOE?

(5 min)

Instruct each youth to take off one shoe and place it in the middle of the room. Once they have all done this and there is a pile of shoes in the middle of the room instruct the youth to all stand with their backs against the wall. Have some fun music ready to go and as soon as you turn on the music instruct the youth to run to the middle of the room and pick a shoe out of the pile. They must then find the person whose shoe they picked up, and they also must find their own shoe.

Continue to play this game as time allows.

PROCLAIM

"WHAT IS LOVE" TEACHING

(15 min)

Scripture Proclamation

John 13: 4-5, 13-16, 34

CALLED TO TRUE LOVE

Throughout all of history man has always asked and wondered what love is. Shakespeare wrote about it, men have died for it, and princesses in every Disney movie have sung about it at the top of their lungs as they skip through fields. Our culture today also asks what love is, but the answer remains undiscovered. We are constantly in search of love, and it is something we deeply yearn for. The world has constantly portrayed love in various ways in movies, TV shows, and especially in music; but nothing that media offers ever seems to be enough. So what is love? Is it just an emotion? Where can it be found?

To find what true love is we do not need to go any further than Jesus Christ. Christ teaches us what real love is through His words and deeds. In the Gospel of John He tells us, “I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another” (13:34). In order to find true love and to love properly we must love each other as Christ has loved us. In the Scripture Proclamation we can see a perfect example of this love, for Christ reveals Himself as a servant to others in the washing of the feet of His apostles. He reveals what the YouCat defines love to be, which is, “the free self-giving of the heart” (402). Christ did not come to this earth to see what He could get from us; rather, He came to give to us. In the same way love is not about a feeling or what we can get from each other but it is about making that choice to give to and serve one another.

John 13:34

THE SACRAMENTS OF SERVICE

Since love is not about what we can get from other people, but rather how we find true love in the gift of self, Christ has left for us two specific ways to live out this love. The two ways of living out this love are through the Sacrament of Matrimony and the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Both of these Sacraments are “directed towards the salvation of others; if they contribute as well to personal salvation, it is through service to others that they do so” (CCC 1534). As we strive to love and be loved we must remember, “both vocations imitate the full gift of self that Christ models, both are calls to love fully” (YouCat 248).

CCC 1534

THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

The Sacrament of Matrimony is one of the Sacraments of Service. In this Sacrament the spouses are called to reflect this self-sacrificial love that Christ had for His Church: “Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for her” (Ephesians 5:25). In the same way that Christ gave the entirety of Himself on the cross for His Church, husband and wife are called to give the entirety of themselves to each other. The Catechism explains this special moment: “The consent consists in a human act by which the partners mutually give themselves to each other: ‘I take you to be my wife’ — ‘I take you to be my husband.’ This consent that binds the spouses to each other finds its fulfillment in the two ‘becoming one flesh’” (CCC 1627). It is through making this commitment to each other and in the complete self-gift of becoming one flesh that the spouses live out this self-sacrificial love. This commitment to love is lived out in their everyday life and especially through the openness to children.

Ephesians 5:25

CCC 1627

The Sacrament of Matrimony is so important for a couple of reasons. First of all, it is a covenant between one man and one woman, which is made before God. This covenant is a binding promise that cannot be broken — hence the spouses proclaim, “till death do us part.” Also through their commitment to God and each other the man and woman vow to be open to life. The ability to participate in the creation of new life reflects in a very specific way God’s love, which produces all life. Also in this Sacrament the man and the woman are given the graces that they need to properly live out their vocation in their everyday lives and struggles. Jesus Christ wants them to succeed in their marriage, thus through this Sacrament He gives them the special help and grace to truly love each as He has loved His Church. Marriage is a call to serve unto the end as Christ did, and to lay down one’s life for one’s friend.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS

The call to true love continues through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, also known as the priesthood. As priests, men are called to lay down their lives for their flocks — which are the people of the Church they are called to serve. In an ordination, men are called forth by name and promise obedience to the bishop. Then the bishop lays hands on them and says the prayer and blessing. Spiritually, they are given a sacred character to take the place of Christ as teacher, shepherd, and priest. They are also given the

graces to put into practice the gifts of sanctification, teaching, and ruling, which they receive from the Holy Spirit. Priests are also given the power of Christ to carry out all the Sacraments from the moment they are ordained.

It is through this laying on of hands and conferring of the gifts of the priesthood that the priesthood has been passed down for 2,000 years; it stems all the way back to the apostles. Since Christ Himself appointed men to be His apostles, so too the Church continues to choose only men to be priests (YouCat 257).

Just like the other Sacrament of Service, priests are called to lay down their lives in self-sacrificial love. In a very concrete way they give up their whole lives for the Church, just as Christ did on the cross. Priests dedicate their lives to the people whom they serve, wherever they are. They are called to serve in a very specific and beautiful way and to represent Christ on this earth. St. John Vianney says, “The priest continues the work of redemption on earth [...] If we really understood the priest on earth, we would die not of fright but of love [...] The Priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus.”

THE CALL OF A VOCATION

A vocation (in Latin, *vocare*) means “a calling.” We are all called to love, and we can feel that calling within us as we search for love. As Christians we are given the true meaning of love that nothing in this world can compare to; this love is shown on the cross. The cross of Christ is the greatest reference point of true love. We all seek to love and serve; the Church guides us and gives us grace in these Sacraments in order to live out this love in whichever path we choose. You do not have to wait until you are grown up to figure out your vocation. You can start now by growing in charity and prayer asking God what incredible adventure He has in store for you.

BREAK

GUY AND GIRL Q&A

(20 min)

Break up the youth into male and female groups. Send them to separate rooms so that they can have a time to discuss and ask questions about the different vocations for men and women. As they enter the rooms, give them all a slip of paper and a pen to write down any questions they may have.

Have the parish priest available to talk to the guys, along with a few other men who are married, single, engaged, or religious brothers.

For the women have an array of married women, single women, and (if possible) have a religious sister available to talk about the call to consecrated life. If there is not a sister available, make sure to explain to the girls the vocation of consecrated life for women.

Start off the Q&A time with each adult explaining briefly who they are and what their vocation is. While they are doing this encourage the youth to start thinking of any questions they may have. Collect their slips of paper at the beginning and also give them an opportunity to ask questions at the end that may have come up.

SEND

WASHING OF THE FEET

(15 min)

Bring the youth back into the main room. Set up a few chairs in the front of the room. Place a medium-sized bowl in front of each chair. Have the people who were chosen to have their feet washed sit in the chairs and take off their shoes and socks. Give the people who were appointed to wash feet a pitcher of water and a towel.

Proceed to wash the feet of the people sitting down. This action is a representation of the sacrificial love that Christ showed His apostles and the sacrificial love we are all called to live out. So make sure that this is a time of reverence and prayer; it may help to have some quiet music playing in the background.

WRAP UP

(5 min)

Wrap up the night with a prayer for guidance for the youth to find their calling and vocation and to truly live out their lives as examples of the self-sacrificing love of Christ.

SUMMARY CHALLENGE

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

- All of us have a calling to love others as Christ has loved us.
- We live out this love through the Sacraments of Service.
- Each Sacrament of Service is a unique way to live out this love, and each Sacrament gives us the grace to love like Christ did.

CONCLUSION

ADAPTING THIS NIGHT

Depending on how large your group is, have the youth minister and Core Team wash the feet of all the youth.

GOING DEEPER