

# ENDGAME

How Do I Live a Virtuous Life?

## EDGE NIGHT AT A GLANCE

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### Scripture

Proverbs 11:3; Wisdom 8:7; Galatians 6:7-10; 2 Peter 1:5-11



### Catechism

1810-1811



### Resources

Spotify: "ES - A Great Marvel" (spotify:user:lifeteen)

## GOAL

The goal of this Edge Night is for the youth to realize that they are called to embody all four cardinal virtues and begin to foster those cardinal virtues in their lives, with God's help.

## GATHER

The youth play a superhero-themed game where heroes and civilians team up in different groups throughout the game. The purpose of this game is for the youth to have fun and connect to the theme.

## PROCLAIM

The following are the main teaching points of the Proclaim:

- Each of us, as Christians, is called to develop each of the four cardinal virtues by asking God to help us practice them in our daily life.
- As we get older, we become more aware of our strengths, weaknesses, and personality, and it is important to recognize where we need each virtue to help us choose what is good and follow God's will for our lives.

- With the grace of Jesus Christ and our own free choice, we can practice and grow in the virtues and imitate what is best about superheroes.

## **BREAK**

The youth break into small groups and share about virtuous people and saints they look up to, and who in their life will support them as they grow in virtue. The purpose of this is for the youth to see real life examples of virtuous people, be inspired to live virtuous lives, and recognize who is there to help them.

## **SEND**

The youth minister leads the youth through an examination based on the four cardinal virtues. The goal is for the youth to be able to see where they can grow, but also where they are already living out these virtues in their lives.

## **WEEKLY CHALLENGE**

At the end of every day this week, take five minutes to reflect on how you lived out a virtue and where in your life you can work harder to live out that virtue.

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## EDGE NIGHT SET UP

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### SET UP

Gather the materials needed for the Send activity. Add to the set environment for the semester by adding cutouts or posters of the Avengers or any other Marvel superhero characters.

### SUPPLIES

The following is a list of supplies needed for the Edge Night:

- S: Blank sheets of paper, one per youth
- S: Pens or pencils, one per youth

### ASSIGNMENTS

Use the following list to assign core members to specific tasks:

**Set Up:** \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

**Gather:**

- Opening Prayer: \_\_\_\_\_
- Game: \_\_\_\_\_

**Proclaim:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Break:** All small group leaders

**Send:**

- Closing Prayer: \_\_\_\_\_
- Weekly Challenge: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
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## EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

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### GATHER

#### Edge Night Introduction (5 min)

Welcome the youth, introduce any youth who are there for the first time, and begin in prayer. Give a brief overview of the topic of the Edge Night, using the following as an example:

*Over the past couple of weeks, we have been talking about the virtues and how living out these virtues is good and can lead us to happiness. The four virtues we specifically discussed are called the cardinal virtues, and they are prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude. This week we are going to dive into the simple question, “how do I live a virtuous life?” It might seem simple at first — and we can see how the superheroes we have been talking about exemplify these virtues very well — but living the virtues is not always easy. This week we will dive into how we can continue this journey of growing in these virtues.*

#### Weekly Challenge Check In (5 min)

Ask any youth who are willing to share about their experience with the weekly challenge from the previous Edge Night: Using your handout from the Break activity, choose one thing to do to grow in each of the virtues this week and have the courage to actually do it.

#### Endgame (10 min)

This game is played as a large group.

1. Instruct the youth to break into groups of three. Within those groups, choose two youth to be the heroes and one to be a civilian. Choose one core member to be the game leader.
2. The heroes create a forcefield around the civilian by reaching out their arms and touching hands over the civilian creating a sort of roof.
3. Ask all the groups of three to “get into position,” forming their forcefield above the civilian.
4. When a core member at the front of the room shouts “hero,” all of the heroes must find another hero to create a forcefield with over a different civilian. The civilians do not move.
5. The last group of three to form is out.

6. When the leader says “civilian,” all of the civilians must find a new pair of heroes to protect them. The heroes do not move.
7. The last group of three to form is out.
8. When the leader says “endgame,” everyone runs and finds a new pair of three.
9. The last group of three to form is out.
10. Continue with any random pattern of hose commands until there are two groups of three left as the winners.

## PROCLAIM

### “Endgame” Proclaim Teaching (10 min)

The teaching can be found on pages 86 to 89. The following main points are covered in the teaching:

- Each of us, as Christians, is called to develop each of the four cardinal virtues by asking God to help us practice them in our daily life.
- As we get older, we become more aware of our strengths, weaknesses, and personality, and it is important to recognize where we need each virtue to help us choose what is good and follow God’s will for our lives.
- With the grace of Jesus Christ and our own free choice, we can practice and grow in the virtues and imitate what is best about superheroes.

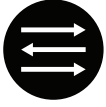
## BREAK

### Who’s on Your Team? (15 min)

Break the youth into their small groups, begin in prayer, and then give each youth a piece of paper and a writing utensil. Ask them to reflect and write down their answer to the following questions.

1. Who is one person you do not personally know (e.g., celebrity, musician, public figure, influencer) that you think has, at some point in their lives, reflected one of the virtues?
2. Who is someone you know personally that you have seen living out the virtues in their daily life?
3. Who is one saint that you look up to for the virtuous way he or she lived?
4. Who are some people in your life that you know will support you as you strive to live virtuously?

After the youth have reflected and answered these questions, ask them to share their responses and why they chose the people they did with the rest of the small group. Close by asking them how they think all these different people who inspire, influence, and support them can help as they strive to live out the virtues.



## Suggestions

Ask the core members to answer the questions for themselves prior to the Edge Night so they can give the youth their own examples to help them reflect.

## SEND

### Reflecting on Virtue (20 min)

Gather the youth back to the large group. Create a prayerful atmosphere by dimming the lights and playing soft reflective music in the background. Use the following as an example to lead the youth through this time of reflection:

*In order to grow in virtue, it is important for us to reflect on how we have acted and the decisions we have made in the past. If we can recognize the ways that we are succeeding in these virtues, then we can ask God for the grace to continue doing them. If we recognize where we are struggling to practice one of these virtues, then we can ask God for the grace to be attentive to the opportunities we have to practice these virtues. It is OK to know that we are not perfectly living out all of the virtues because recognizing our weaknesses is a stepping stone to growth.*

Give the youth sheets of paper and writing utensils to help them write and reflect as you walk through the following questions. Also, consider printing off the questions and allowing the youth to follow along highlighting, or underlining things that they want to work on.

Begin with the Sign of the Cross, and then read each of the following questions slowly, allowing for some time of silence between each question so you can pray and reflect.

#### Examination of Prudence:

- Have I made good choices this week?
- When did I take the time to think about a decision before making it?
- When did I act out of what I know is right and not simply out of how I felt?
- When did I take the time to figure out how to act lovingly towards others in specific situations?
- When did I choose to make sacrifices out of love for my family and friends?
- When did I let my emotions or stress control my decisions?
- When did I exercise prudence in any other way I can remember this week?

#### Examination of Temperance:

- When did I say “no” to myself and what I wanted and “yes” to something someone else wanted this week?
- When did I spend time praying this week?

- When did I spend time reading Scripture this week?
- When did I choose to spend time with family and friends without distraction?
- When did I exercise self-control this week with social media, video games, or TV?
- When did I give up what I wanted for the sake of something greater?
- When did I exercise temperance in any other way I can remember this week?

Examination of Justice:

- When did I help others this week?
- When did I share my food or anything I own with others this week?
- When did I stand up for or comfort someone who was feeling alone or hurt this week?
- When was I aware of how my words and actions can affect others?
- When did I forgive someone who harmed me this week?
- When did I ask for forgiveness from those I hurt with my words or actions this week?
- When did I serve others who were in need in any specific way this week?
- Have I exercised justice in any other way I can remember this week?

Examination of Fortitude:

- When did I do something difficult this week?
- When did I persevere through any challenges that initially scared me?
- When did I stick to any projects, commitments, or tasks even if they seemed difficult?
- When did I conquer a fear this week?
- Have I exercised fortitude in any other way I can remember this week?

After the youth have had time to reflect on the questions, allow any youth who are willing to share about one of their answers to the questions.



**Hispanic Inculturation**

Throughout the series, the Hispanic/Latino youth have been given the Spanish translation of each of the virtues. As you send the youth home with the examination of conscience, encourage them to recite virtues and definitions in Spanish. This will allow them the openness to speak about what they have learned with their parents not only in English but also in Spanish.



**Closing Prayer for Virtue (5 min)**

Close the Edge Night by praying the following prayer for an increase in virtue.

*Lord teach me how to be more prudent. Teach me to see the good and to choose it more often. Teach me to better know what I should not do and to avoid it.*

*Lord, teach me to practice temperance more. Teach me to better control my wants and desires. Teach me to avoid filling my life with distractions and pleasures. Teach me to make more room for you in my life.*

*Lord teach me to be more just. Teach me to see the dignity of others and to uphold it. Teach me to see others as you do and to treat them accordingly. Teach me to love every person as my brother and sister.*

*Lord, teach me to have more fortitude. Teach me to see through my fears and to do what is right. Teach me how to persevere through trial. Teach me to approach obstacles and temptations with courage.*

Following the prayer, give the youth their weekly challenge.

**Weekly Challenge (5 min)**

At the end of every day this week, take five minutes to reflect on how you lived out a virtue and where in your life you can work harder to live out that virtue.

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## EDGE NIGHT PROCLAIM

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### GETTING STARTED

This teaching is provided to give you an example of how to present this topic in an age-appropriate way, making it relevant to middle school youth. If the youth are ready to take it deeper, incorporate a few of the Going Deeper call-out boxes, picking the ones the youth would relate to the most. If there are Hispanic/Latino youth in the youth group, incorporate the applicable suggestions from the Hispanic Inculturation call-out boxes.

### TEACHING GUIDE

#### Called to Greatness

- Over the past few weeks, we broke open all four of the cardinal virtues. Let's take a second to review them.

*Ask the youth to summarize what they learned about each virtue. Allow a few of them to share for each virtue. Write your own thoughts here:*

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- Prudence is the ability to see rightly, to distinguish between right and wrong, and to choose the best option in a given situation. It helps us to know what is good, and works with our conscience. (CCC 1806)
- Temperance is the virtue of freedom. It helps us to overcome our excessive desires and attachments so we can be free and available to do what is most important, and free to receive the good that God wants to give us. (CCC 1807)
- Justice is all about giving God and others their due. We owe literally everything to God, so we try to follow Him with everything we have. Other people are created in His image and have God-given rights, so we have to treat them accordingly. (CCC 1808)
- Fortitude is the strength of the virtues. It helps us to persevere in difficulties and to stick with things even when it is hard or we don't really want to. It also helps us to be courageous and to overcome our fears. (CCC 1809)
- It is easy to talk about the virtues, but it is a lot harder to actually live them out. If we set out with only our own strength to live a virtuous life, we will fail. But luckily we don't have to do it alone.

## The Endgame

- It is our ultimate goal to live a virtuous life because when we seek what is good, we will bring about a greater good in our lives and in our world. Ultimately the virtues will lead us to live a holy life and achieve our true end goal of heaven and a perfect relationship with God.



### Hispanic Inculturation

Many Hispanic/Latino families are known to go above and beyond with birthdays, graduations, weddings, baby showers, and even parties that have no real significance. Although there is nothing wrong with having large spectacular celebrations, it can become an expectation rather than something that is simply done to enjoy. For Hispanic/Latino youth, it can be easy to distract themselves with completing a big accomplishment and forget to celebrate the little accomplishments along the way. There can be a lot of pressure too from their families to go above and beyond what they have done rather than just wanting their children to do what is good. Take time to reflect with your Hispanic/Latino youth on all the virtues throughout the Edge Night and how important it is to recognize and celebrate even the small things. Remind them that each small thing is seen and loved by their heavenly Father regardless of what those on the outside might see or believe.

- But along the way, it won't be easy. Just like every story of every superhero is filled with struggle, action, hope, joy, sadness, and fear, we too will be faced with a lot of obstacles and adventure.
- If we look at the stories of superheroes, most of them do not work alone. In many cases they work together as teams or duos in order to achieve the greatest good — just look at the example of the Avengers.

*Ask the youth to share some of their favorite groups or teams of superheroes.*

- In a similar way, we are not alone, and we are given many people along the way who will journey with us as we grow in holiness and walk the paths that God lays out for us. We will find friends, family, teachers, coaches, youth ministers, core members, peers, and many others on our journey who will become a part of our story, as we continually seek to follow God and live the virtues.
- We also need God's help. The help that He gives us is called grace. Grace is God's life within us. It is a great gift that He shares with us that makes us capable of responding to Him. Grace helps us to be more than what we could be just on our own. (CCC 1996)
- The good news is that God wants to share this grace with us. He knows that we will be the best version of ourselves when we live according to the virtues, and He wants to help us get there. But we will only have the strength to grow in the virtues if we ask for His grace every day.
- Right now, you may feel overwhelmed at the prospect of growing in each virtue or may not even know how to begin to grow in them, and that is OK. The truth is you are probably already exercising them without even knowing it.

*Take a few moments to recall different ways you and the rest of the core team have seen the youth live out virtue at the Edge Nights throughout the semester. Write your thoughts here:*

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- The key to growing in virtue is to pay attention to where we are already exercising the virtues, as well as to where we need to grow in them. Are there any areas in your life where it is hard to do the right thing? Of course there are! That is probably the exact area that God wants to help you grow in.
- We all have strengths and weaknesses— things we are good at and things we struggle with a little more. The same is true of the virtues. The more we try to recognize our own strengths and weaknesses, the more clearly we can see the areas we need to grow, the areas we are already strong in virtue, and even the areas we need help and support from others.



### **Going Deeper**

Saint Ignatius of Loyola is known for something called a “particular examination of conscience.” Basically, it is a way to grow in a particular virtue or eradicate a particular vice. Instead of a general examination of conscience that focuses on all your thoughts, words, and deeds, a particular examination focuses on one specific thing. In short, it is about picking one virtue you want to grow in or one vice you want to get rid of and reviewing each day through the lens of how you either grew in that virtue or failed in it. After your examination, you ask for God’s grace to improve, and resolve to do better the next day. This is a great tool for cultivating virtue.

### **Grace and Choice**

- The first step in growing in the virtues is simple: we have to ask God to help us. However, that doesn’t mean we just magically become virtuous because we asked God for help. Just like so many other things in life, we have to put in the work if we want to receive the reward.
- Grace, or God’s help, is essential for growth in the Christian life, but we also have to commit to trying to grow in the virtues. This is where our own freedom comes into play. We have to choose to live virtuously. Remember that virtue is really a habit of doing good, and habits are only formed with constant action over time.
- The most practical thing for us to grow in the virtues is to pick one, and then actually make the effort to grow in it. This means, when the situation arises for exercising that virtue, we actually have to put in the effort to do it.
- If we want to grow in temperance, then it will require us to say “no” to certain things. If we want to grow in justice, then when the situation presents itself, we have to uphold another person’s dignity and not just go along with the crowd. It is only by choosing to live into the virtue that we can form a habit of it.

- God doesn’t expect us to be perfect or to change everything overnight, but He does ask us to be willing to change and to put in the effort needed to become a more virtuous person. This is a lifelong process, but we can begin today. Little by little we can continue to grow in the virtues, exercising prudence when we have to make a decision, being just in the way we treat others and the way we respond to God, and being steadfast in our pursuit of what is good.
- The choice to live a virtuous life is a heroic one. It requires great strength, the ability to discern between good and bad, the freedom and discipline to say “yes” and “no” to your own desires, the choice to love and serve God and to treat others according to their dignity, the willingness to fight for the common good, and the perseverance to commit yourself unceasingly to what is good, no matter the cost.
- This is what real heroes do. They don’t parade around in capes with fancy powers fighting off supervillains. They change the world one choice at a time, one person at a time, and one moment at a time for the better. The only superpower we need is the grace God so eagerly desires to give us. With His help, the help of the people around us, and our own willingness, we can really be like the heroes we adore and live as the heroes He created us to be.

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