

QUANTUM LEAP

Why Do I Have to Stand and Kneel So Much?

EDGE NIGHT AT A GLANCE



Scripture

1 Corinthians 6:19-20



Catechism

362-368, 1145-1162, 1179-1186, 1369, 1372



Resources

Spotify: “ES - Now and Forever” (spotify:user:lifeteen)

Life Teen: “Mass Fitness” (youtube.com)

Edge Support: November 2017: “A Bell Set Apart” (lifeteen.com)

GOAL

The goal of this Edge Night is to inspire middle school youth to actively participate in the Mass and see how the physical and visual elements involved in the Mass draw us deeper into prayer.

GATHER

The youth watch videos of dances from different decades and learn how to do those dances. The game concludes with a dance-off between two volunteers. This game encourages the youth to use their bodies to express themselves, helping them see how we use our bodies to express reverence at Mass.

PROCLAIM

The following are the main teaching points of the Proclaim:

- The Mass is not a form of entertainment, and the whole Catholic community participates in the Mass as the Body of Christ.
- During the Mass, our bodily movements and actions have specific meanings that allow us to enter into prayer with our whole selves.

- The Mass uses many signs and symbols to help us enter into prayer through the physical world.

BREAK

The different postures we take during the Mass are explained. After each posture is explained, the youth do each action and prayerfully consider its meaning.

SEND

The youth participate in a worship service using the different postures they learned about to pray.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Which of the prayerful postures we learned about was the most meaningful to you? Next time you attend Mass, focus on doing that posture as prayerfully as possible.

Notes: _____

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EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

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:

A quantum leap or quantum jump scientifically signifies when there is an abrupt transition of energy in an atom or molecule. Sometimes when we are at Mass, all the different motions we go through can feel like an abrupt transition, especially when we don't really know why we are doing each action. The Mass includes many signs, symbols, and movements because God knows humans need physical things to help us connect to spiritual things. This week at Edge, we will explore the physical and visual elements in churches and in the Mass and learn how they can help us connect to God.

Weekly Challenge Check In (5 min)

Ask the youth to share about their experience with the weekly challenge from the previous Edge Night: When we visited the different stations, what action or phrase from the Mass stuck out to you? Next time you attend Mass, pay close attention for when that word or phrase comes up.

Decades Dance-Off (10 min)

This game is played as a large group.

1. Gather the youth together, and play one of the dance move videos and encourage the youth to try to do the dance move.
2. Do this for each of the viral videos you have chosen for your youth. If there are any youth who feel like they are pros at the dance move, ask them to come to the front to teach the rest of the youth or consider having them try to teach a youth minister or core member who typically struggles with dancing.
3. Call up the two youth volunteers who were chosen ahead of time to compete in a dance-off.
4. Let everyone dance and cheer as the two youth face off!



Suggestions

If meeting on a digital platform, the youth might feel awkward learning a dance on camera. Instead, consider playing songs from different decades and challenge the youth to guess which decade the song is from. Then, ask the youth who guesses correctly how they think someone would dance to that kind of music.



Hispanic Inculturation

Dancing is a very big part in the Hispanic/Latino communities and Hispanic music has its own dance and style to it. During the dance-off, add some Latin music to better connect with your Hispanic/Latino youth. Some examples of genres can be Banda, Cumbias, Salsa, Bachata, Reggaeton, and Merengue.

PROCLAIM

“Quantum Leap” Proclaim Teaching (10 min)

The teaching can be found on pages 72 to 75. The following main points are covered in the teaching:

- The Mass is not a form of entertainment, and the whole Catholic community participates in the Mass as the Body of Christ.
- During the Mass, our bodily movements and actions have specific meanings that allow us to enter into prayer with our whole selves.
- The Mass uses many signs and symbols to help us enter into prayer through the physical world.

BREAK

Prayerful Postures (10 min)

Divide the youth into their small groups. Begin in prayer, and then turn on quiet instrumental background music. Provide each small group leader with containers of holy water, water, oil, and a copy of the *Prayerful Postures* handout found on the *March 2021 Edge USB* and online at lifeteen.com under Edge Support: *March 2021*.

Encourage small group leaders to remind the youth of how the Mass engages our bodies in order to engage our minds and souls. Then, lead them through different postures from the Mass. First explain each posture and allow the youth to reflect on its purpose and then invite the youth to do the posture as a group. Slowly go through all of the postures on the *Prayerful Postures* handout.

Small Group Discussion (10 min)

Use the following questions to foster a discussion within the small group:

- *Whip Around Question:* If you had to stay in one prayer position for a whole hour, what would you choose?
- Which of these prayer postures was the most confusing to you before we discussed it?
- Which of these prayer postures stands out to you the most now, why?

SEND

Prayerful Postures Praise and Worship (20 min)

Bring the youth to the church, and ask them to spread out away from one another, so they will not be distracted, and to sit down quietly. Remind them of the postures they learned about during the Break. Invite the youth to participate in a time of praise and worship using the prayer postures.

Use the following as an example to lead the prayer and for suggested songs for the music minister:

We begin with the Sign of the Cross. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Sign of the Cross reminds us that we are beloved children of God. In this first song, reflect on being God’s beloved child and feel free to make the Sign of the Cross at any point if you feel moved to do so.

Worship musician plays *No Longer Slaves* by Bethel Music.

During this next song, we will kneel as we humble ourselves before our almighty king, Jesus Christ.

Worship musician plays *King of My Heart* by Bethel Music.

Now, let us stand cruciform. We stand to show God that we are alert and attentive to how He is moving among us. We open our arms to say that we are ready for God to work in powerful ways.

Worship musician plays *The Stand* by Hillsong United.

We’ll end by folding our hands and bowing our heads — or, if you feel comfortable, you can open up the palms of your hands. With this closing song and this posture, let’s wonder at the might and beauty of our God and remember our complete dependence on His goodness and love.

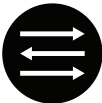
Worship musicians play *Wonder* by Bethel Music.

Close the Edge Night by praying a Hail Mary as a large group. Following the prayer, give the youth their weekly challenge.



Suggestions

If you have enough room where you are meeting for praise and worship, have the youth lay prostrate for the last song.



Suggestions

If you are unable to find a musician or if you are not able to have congregational singing, play pre-recorded praise and worship songs rather than having live music.



Step It Up

If possible, include Eucharistic Adoration during the Send. Use this as an opportunity to teach the youth about postures we should take during different parts of Adoration.

Weekly Challenge (5 min)

Which of the prayerful postures we learned about was the most meaningful to you? Next time you attend Mass, focus on doing that posture as prayerfully as possible.

Notes: _____

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EDGE NIGHT PROCLAIM

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

Are You Not Entertained?

Ask the youth to share: what is the last movie you saw in theaters or what is your favorite movie? Why? Then share some of the things you love about going to the movies or your own favorite movie and why it is your favorite. Write your thoughts here:

- There is something relaxing about sitting in a comfy semi-reclining chair, grabbing some popcorn, having the lights go out almost entirely, and focusing all our attention for two hours on nothing but a movie.
- Watching a movie requires no action on our part; we just sit back and let it happen.



Going Deeper

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many churches were unable to have a congregation present during Mass. While watching Mass on a computer or TV, it is much more tempting to think of Mass in the same way we think of watching a movie. We sit on our couch. No one is watching us except maybe our family. It feels silly to keep standing and kneeling in front of a TV screen, so maybe we decide to just sit back and watch the entire Mass while sitting down instead. *Share a few suggestions on how to make Mass at home feel more like Mass at church, and encourage them to still fully participate even at home.*

- What makes going to Mass different than going to a concert or a movie theatre?

- The goal of the Mass is not to entertain us. The Mass is a movement, an action that requires us to be involved and participate in it. It is a prayer that requires our full participation.
- The Mass is primarily God's action. By the power of the Holy Spirit, He makes present His own voice in the readings. Through the priest, Christ Himself is present offering His own Body and Blood as a sacrifice for us.
- Just because God is the one blessing us during the Mass does not mean that our role is to just sit there and watch it happen. The Church calls all of us to "active participation" in the Mass. This means that every person has his or her own "part" within the Mass.
- Why? The Mass is not just a celebration of Christ's sacrifice, but it celebrates our sacrifice as well. In the Mass, we give ourselves completely to God, offering up our entire life to Him.
- In the Mass, we offer our whole life, all of our joys, our sorrows, our sufferings, and our praises, and give them to God. We offer them to God as prayers of thanksgiving for all that we are grateful for, trusting that He will provide for us in all our hardships. (CCC 1368)
- The Mass, then, isn't just about receiving the Eucharist; it is also about offering our whole selves up to God. While our sacrifice never outdoes Christ's sacrifice, the Mass is still the place where we can choose to love God with all our heart, soul, and strength.

Full Body Experience

- One of the ways that the Church invites us to full and active participation in the Mass is through our bodies.
- The Church teaches that every human being is made up of two components: a body and a soul.
- Tangible physical elements make up our bodies: our hands, our legs, our face, etc. We receive our bodies from our parents, and what gives us physical attributes that resemble our parents and grandparents.
- Our soul is the innermost aspect of our being, and we receive it from God. The soul sets us apart from all other creatures and allows us to enter into a special relationship with God that other creatures, like dogs and birds, cannot have with God. (CCC 357, 363)
- Our body and soul are not separated from one another; they are intimately connected. Everything we do with our body affects our soul and vice-versa. (CCC 365)
- God made our bodies to be good, and He actually made us with bodies so that we can worship Him more fully than if we did not have them.
- Saint Paul tells us this in his first letter to the Corinthians. He writes about our bodies being temples of the Holy Spirit where God dwells within us and teaches us how to use our bodies to give Him praise.
- *Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.*
- The Mass involves specific actions to teach us to glorify God in our bodies. We don't just sit in our pews and watch but move around quite a bit! (CCC 1153)



Hispanic Inculturation

Growing up as a Hispanic/Latino youth, it can be normal to hear “no tientes nada” (don’t touch anything), “portate bien” (act good), and “sientate y no digas nada” (sit down and don’t say anything). Hearing this growing up can be harsh and discouraging not only when wanting to participate in high energy activities but also when it comes to being charismatic and prayerful in Mass. Often clapping, singing, and praising can be seen as irreverent, yet it can be used to praise and glorify the Lord. Use this time to teach and guide the youth that our bodies are a temple, to be used to praise to the Lord. It is not only when we bow or kneel that we are reverent, but when we are using our entire body to honor Him.

- These motions are not arbitrary; they are meant to affect the way we pray and remind us of things that would be easy to forget if the Mass was something we all just sat through.
- When we first walk into the Church, we approach the holy water font and make the Sign of the Cross, reminding us of Christ’s sacrifice for us on the cross, our own baptism, and the Trinity.
- When we get to our pew, we genuflect on one knee toward the Tabernacle to remind ourselves that we are in the presence of Christ, who is our king.



Going Deeper

The Christian practices of the Sign of the Cross and genuflection go back to the first 500 years of the Church. The Sign of the Cross was first mentioned as Christians were being executed in the Coliseum in Rome. They desired to let everyone in the stands know that they were dying as martyrs for Christ, so they made the Sign of the Cross in a way that was noticeable for everyone to see. Genuflection goes back to the practice of kneeling before a king. If you’ve ever seen a movie from the medieval era, you might have noticed that when the king arrives somewhere everyone gets on one knee until the king greets them or passes by. The same thing happens when someone is being installed as a knight. In the same way, Christians in medieval times recognized Christ’s presence in the Eucharist and would genuflect toward it, recognizing Christ as the true king of the universe.

- Throughout the Mass, there are moments when we sit, kneel, and stand to show a certain reverence, receptivity, or solemnity to the type of prayer we are participating in.
- These actions are not arbitrary; they are meant to affect the way we pray.



Going Deeper

During the Mass, the priest operates *in persona Christi capitis*, which means that he acts “in the person of Christ, the head” (CCC 1142). Therefore, the priest’s actions look different from our own because they are meant to show forth Christ’s action in offering Himself. The deacon has a special place in assisting the priest at the altar, and altar servers play a role in showing reverence as the movements of the Mass proceed onward. (CCC 1143)

The “Bells and Whistles”

- Another way for us to fully participate in the Mass is to understand the use of other signs and symbols used within the Mass.
- All of the signs and symbols intricately woven into the Mass have deep meanings. God works through these visible and tangible things to draw us deeper into the action of the Mass and help us understand what God is actually doing during the Mass. (CCC 1145)
- For example, the incense is not to make the Church smell better, but it is meant to symbolize our prayers rising up to God in the smoke that rises up. This helps us remember that God hears the prayers we offer up to Him.
- There are more efficient lighting methods than simple candles, but the candles lit around the altar and around the ambo, where the Scriptures are read, represent Jesus Christ who is called the light of the world. They remind us that He is present in the Scriptures, the Word of God, and in the Eucharist on the altar. Christ enlightens our minds and hearts to save us from the darkness of sin and death through each part of the Mass.
- All of these signs and symbols are gifts from God, who knows that we, as humans, struggle to see the invisible ways His grace is working in the Mass. He gives us these physical signs to help us understand what He is doing behind all of the motions and movements of the Mass.
- Every motion and image used in the Mass is a gift from God. In them, we see the invisible realities in the Mass. It is a blessing that our God speaks to us in ways that we can understand and gives us ways of expressing ourselves back to Him through our bodies.

Notes: _____
