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# LIFE TEEN PARENT LETTER

*Thank you for allowing your teen to join us at Life Teen. Below you'll find some information about this Life Night's topic. Please dialogue with your teen and encourage them to share what they learned.*

## LIFE NIGHT: SHATTERING NIGHT

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

Think back to the first time you fell in love or even met your spouse. There was a process that you probably experienced in which you met that person, was in some way attracted to them, physically or personally, and desired to begin a relationship with them. In the beginning of that relationship, there was a good amount of time spent 'getting to know' one another. This might have taken the form of endless phone conversations, meeting at coffee shops, going on dates, and perhaps even writing letters to one another expressing the ever-deepening love that was being developed. You were also getting a glimpse into the depths of that person; their desires, their dreams, who they are inside, their struggles, and their joys. In a sense, that person was revealing themselves to you.

In a very similar way, God, too, chooses to reveal Himself to us. We can get a glimpse of God's heart, who He is and what He desires, by simply opening a Bible and reading the pages of Sacred Scripture. God's self-revelation to us has taken place throughout all of salvation history, has been recorded in Sacred Scripture, and is referred to as 'divine revelation.' (CCC 52)

Many of us, however, can be somewhat challenged when it comes to reading Sacred Scripture. There are many passages in the Bible that may seem confusing or even contradict other passages in the Bible. To those points, we need to remind ourselves of a few things:

- God is the true author of Sacred Scripture (CCC 105)
- He inspired human beings to write it (CCC 109)
- God speaks to us through Scripture (CCC 1777, 2708)
- Sacred Scripture has been inspired by the Holy Spirit (CCC 107, 136)
- Scripture is one of the best places that we can get to know God (CCC 108, Hebrews 4:12)

Taking these points further, whenever we read the Bible, we can dig so much deeper. We can ask: Who wrote this particular book? Who is the audience that it was written for? What is the author wanting the people to gain from reading the passage? And, what does God want to reveal about Himself to us in this passage?

God personally reveals Himself to us through the pages of the Bible. God shares His heart with us...the Bible is God's love letter to us.

### CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. How many Bibles do we have in our house? Do we have 'decorative' Bibles on display for people to see, but also 'working' Bibles in which we use on a daily basis? Are there any 'special' Bibles or Bibles from childhood?
2. How often is the Bible read in our home? Do we ever read Sacred Scripture together as a family? Why or why not?
3. How can we, as a family, start reading the Bible, either together or in supporting one another as we read it individually?
4. Would it benefit us to read the Sunday readings prior to attending Mass together?

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## LIFE NIGHT: CARRY THE FIRE

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

Every family seems to have a variety of stories. Some of these stories are funny; some of them are sad; some of them may even communicate a specific point or 'moral' that lead to some type of 'lesson learned.' We tell stories in our family about growing up, summer vacations, sports, school, military/war experiences, struggles, joys, and triumphs. We tell stories about our parents, our grandparents, and our great grandparents. The stories in our own families are passed down through generations, from our parents and grandparents to our kids. They are stories that have played a role in our own development and our own personalities, making us the people we are today.

In our faith, we have an even deeper story that tells us about who we are, and that is the story of our salvation. The story of our salvation has been accurately passed down to us for over 2000 years, and the Church takes the responsibility of passing down this story very seriously.

The passing down of the story of our salvation, our faith heritage, is called the 'deposit of faith.' The deposit of faith begins at the creation account, in the book of Genesis, grows throughout the Old Testament, is fulfilled in Christ in the Gospels, and continues in the life of the early Church through Acts of the Apostles and a variety of epistles and letters. (CCC 126)

The Old Testament lays the foundation for the New Testament and Jesus, as the central figure and fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. The Gospels are the stories and accounts of Jesus' life; what He taught, how He lived, what He said, where He traveled, and the countless people whom He healed.

The Acts of the Apostles outlines the joys and challenges of the early Church (which almost would be similar to listening to stories from our families members about life 'back in the day' and how they 'got by' with what little they had). The epistles and letters from authors like Paul, Peter, James, and Jude were specific instructions and challenges to the early Church, but ones in which the Church today is still challenged by.

This is the deposit of faith that the Church gives to us as a gift. While many people throughout the centuries have done their best to alter this story, by wanting to remove or add books to the Bible, the Catholic Church has remained strong and true in not only protecting this story, but carrying it into the world as a beacon of fire and light. (CCC 120, 138)

### CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. What are some of the good stories that you tell repeatedly in your family? Is there anyone in your family who is a good story teller?
2. What are some of your favorite Bible stories? Why?
3. Is it important in our own family to 'carry the fire' of our faith story? What are some specific ways we make this important in our family?

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## LIFE NIGHT: ILLUMINATION

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It is said, and perhaps well known, that great relationships are built upon trust. Trust is something that takes time to establish with anyone, be it a friend, co-worker, or even a spouse. Perhaps one of the quickest ways to build trust in a relationship is through the making of, and more importantly the keeping of, promises.

The opposite, however, is true as well. When promises are made and not kept, the barrier of trust is broken and feelings of suspicion and fear may then guide the relationship.

God, too, understands the importance of promises in our relationship with Him. This is because God wants us to trust Him with our lives; everything we have and everything we are. Because God's promises are much deeper and more binding, and because they contain God offering Himself to us, we refer to them as covenants. The word covenant has deep, Biblical meaning because it refers to the relationship, or bond, that God has with His people throughout salvation history. (Genesis 15:10-18)

The Old Testament is filled with stories of God making covenants with people and nations. God makes covenants with Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, the Israelite people, and David, just to name a few. God's ultimate covenant, however, was fulfilled in the person of Jesus. (CCC 212)

Jesus fulfills God's promise, or covenant, to Adam and Eve by restoring our relationship with God and allowing us to have freedom from our sins. But, the story does not end there, as Jesus, too, makes a covenant with us, as He speaks some of His final words on this earth, "... and behold, I am with you always till the end of age." (Matthew 28:20, CCC 1364-1365)

This covenant 'to be with us always' is fulfilled every time we approach the altar and receive the Eucharist. Christ becomes present to us in the form of bread and wine and we have the chance to encounter the God who made this covenant to us, to never leave us. We, then, are sent from the Mass as people who are called to live as Christ in this world, bringing the light and life of Christ to everyone we meet as we strive to 'glorify God with our lives' each day, thus fulfilling our part of God's continuous covenant of love.

### CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. Is it easy or difficult to trust people? Why or why not? How do you think trust is formed in your relationships?
2. Have you ever made a promise with anyone that was not kept? How did that make you feel? How did it affect the relationship?
3. How important is it to us, as a family, to receive the Eucharist together at Mass each week?
4. How is God's covenant lived out in our day-to-day family life?

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## LIFE NIGHT: TRIUMPHANT LIGHT

### CONTENT OVERVIEW

The Star Wars saga is arguably the best story to ever be portrayed on the big screen. It is filled with unforgettable characters, dramatic storylines, interesting and unique places, and of course, the proverbial 'good conquerors evil,' 'light overcomes darkness,' and 'hero defeat villains' themes.

But it is the story of our salvation that is the greatest story. This story, too, has unforgettable figures, dramatic storylines, interesting and unique places, heroic characters, and flawed individuals. The story of our salvation is filled with action, times of great joy, and times of sadness and struggle.

The difference between the story of our salvation and a story like Star Wars is that each and every one of us are part of the story of our salvation. Now, we may think we are in the Star Wars, but no matter how much we think we are a Jedi or a Stormtrooper, it is still just a fictional story. The story of our salvation is real, and it is still being written today!

Think about your own life for a moment. We are each a unique masterpiece, formed and fashioned by the very hand of God. God is our Father and has an incredible amount of love for us and desires us to love Him back. We have experienced times in our lives that we have felt close to God; times in which we are focused on our prayer lives, listening to God, and opening up to the Holy Spirit working within us. We also have experienced times in our lives in which we, perhaps, have turned away from God; times in which we thought our way would be better than God's ways. (Philippians 2:6-11, 2 Corinthians 5:21, John 10:10)

God constantly loves us and draws us back to Him. Moments like these, both the good ones and the not-so-good ones, can be found, and related to, in the pages of the Bible. People have gone before us and have experienced many of the things we still experience in our own faith journey today. (Job, 2 Samuel 12:1-23)

The story of salvation history, the story of the Bible, is one that is not just historical, that ended over 2000 years ago, it is a story that continues in our lives today. We can reflect on, and learn from, and are still challenged by those who are in the story's past. We celebrate our story and recognize that it is still unfinished, that God is still writing this story through us, and that it will continue to be alive in our world today.

### CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. What was one of your favorite movies growing up? Why did you watch this movie over and over again?
2. What are some of your favorite stories in the Bible? Are these the same as they were when you were younger? What makes these stories your favorites?
3. Is there a Bible story that spoke to you when you were going through a hard time? How so?
4. How does it make you feel that you are currently part of God's story of salvation? Have you ever thought about how you are part of God's story? Why or why not?