

CREATIVE RIGHTING

CREATION AND THE FALL EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1
Genesis 2:1-3
Genesis 3:1-6
Genesis 3:15
Sirach 25:14-15
John 8:44-45
Romans 6:22-23

CATECHISM

290-294
316
319

YOU CAT

2
42-50
368

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- Bibles for small groups
- Jars of Play-Doh for each small group
- Bed sheet or blanket
- Table
- Sign that reads "Time Machine"

- Copies of "Creation Time Machine" skit for actors
- Copies of *Litany of the Love of God* for each youth
- Building blocks (not Lego's, but any other type of wooden building block that can be stacked)
- Markers (to write on the building block)

GOAL

The goal of this Edge Night is for the middle school youth to understand how creation is an expression of God's love. The youth will also discuss humanity's fall and our need for redemption.

EDGE NIGHT AT A GLANCE

The creation story in Genesis is not a science book or a history book. In fact, the Bible is not a science or history book in general. The creation story — creation of man and his subsequent fall from grace — is less about how, or even the "what, where, or when," so much as it is about why and who. The creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2 give us great insight into who God is. God is love. God did not create man because He was

lonely or had some need to fill. Genesis 1 and 2 help us to understand God as creator and that He created out of love. When we look at the account of creation in the Bible, we discover a loving God who set man at the pinnacle of creation and said man is "very good." Not only do we read about God and creation, but we also read about man's fall from grace — Adam and Eve's temptation by the serpent to become like gods so as to know just as God knows and decide what is right for their lives.

After the introduction, the middle school youth will break into small groups as part of the Gather. During the Proclaim, a video clip will set up a talk about how creation tells us who God is, leading into a skit depicting the fall from grace. The

Proclaim will re-emphasize God's unending love in His creation, connecting it to how He still longs for us despite the fall of man. This will lead into a small group discussion on creation, the fall and God's grace. The Send for the night is longer than that of most Edge Nights; the youth will reflect on God's enduring love for humanity and our response to this love.

ENVIRONMENT

This environment is a pun. Think fall, as in the season (a.k.a. autumn). Grab rakes, leaves (a few fake ones will work, but if it's the right season, have at it), a bale of hay, corn stalks, pumpkins, and other "harvest" things. Use fall colors, such as brown and orange, to make signs around the room with quotes from Genesis 1 and 2. Make it smell like fall by brewing spicy scents in a potpourri pot and/or bake a fresh pumpkin pie in

the kitchen before the night. Be sure to mention the pun in the environment at some point during the night.

MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

Song: "All of Creation" by MercyMe (*All of Creation*, Ino/Columbia)

Song: "Garden" by Matt Maher (*Alive Again*, Provident)

Song: "How He Loves" by David Crowder Band (*Church Music*, sixstepsrecords)

Video: "All of Creation - Mercyme" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkdniYsUrM8>)

Video: "Creation" by BlueBoxMedia (<http://vimeo.com/18896047#>)

Video: "What Images of God are in the Old Testament?" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FTZ4KAmriM&feature=plcp>)

GATHER

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

(10 min)

As the youth enter, have fun upbeat music playing in the background.

The youth minister should gather all the youth together, welcome them to Edge Night, and lead an opening prayer. He or she should introduce any youth at Edge Night for the first time and present a brief overview of the session.

A PLAY-DOH ON CREATION

(10 min)

Each small group will receive two to three containers of Play-Doh (use different colors) and be given one day of creation to form with the Play-Doh. Be sure every member of the small group participates in the sculpting. Assign the following to each group:

- Day 1 — Light (day) and darkness (night)
- Day 2 — Arrangement of water

- Day 3 — Dry land and vegetation
- Day 4 — Sun and moon
- Day 5 — Fish and birds
- Day 6 — Animals and human beings

Assign multiple groups the same creation day, if necessary. Give small groups ten minutes to work on the their creation and then allow time for groups to share.

PROCLAIM

SCRIPTURE PROCLAMATION

(5 min)

Genesis 2:4-9; 16-25

*Consider having two different Core Members read these two sections from the second story of creation.

CREATION VIDEO CLIP

(2 min)

Before the talk, consider showing the video "Creation" by BlueBoxMedia from the Media Suggestions to set to tone for the talk.

"CREATIVE RIGHTING"

TEACHING

(10 min)

Created in Love

After six days of creating, God decided to rest. He was joyful at His creation. After each of the days of creation we hear in Genesis chapter one, "God saw that it was good." He rested peacefully, knowing He had accomplished a good creation. Moreover, He was doing what God does best — love. We hear over and over again, "God is love," but do we truly consider what that means? And do we consider how the very beginning of the Bible teaches us that God is love? If you gain nothing else from the night, know this: "God is love." It's not just a phrase or something we hear as small children to make us feel good. It's a description of who God is.

The whole of the creation story is about who God is. You could say all of Scripture teaches us who God is — and the answer is love. God loves us. Stop and think for a second — why did God create? God did not create because He was lonely. God did not create because He needed to. God did not create because He was bored and needed something to do. God created because He loves. Creation is an expression of God's love. God is love.

This is important for each of us to know because so often our world is more concerned with solving problems and proving or disproving whether God exists. We have a culture often more concerned with why or how God could exist — why or how or *if* the creation story could be true. But they're missing the point. As Catholic Christians, what makes our God unique is Who He is: God is Love. When we read Genesis 1 and 2, we do not read it as a science book or history book. The Bible gives us deep insight into who God is and how much He loves us. The stories of creation teach us that God created things in an orderly fashion. Each day built upon the next — and every day God said it

was good. Notice it is not man who says it is good, but God. When God created man, he made man and woman in His divine image and He said they were "very good."

In answering "Why did God create us?" the *YouCat* says: "When a man loves, his heart overflows. He would like to share his joy with others. He gets this from his Creator. Although God is a mystery, we still think of him in a human way and say: Out of the 'surplus' of his love he created us. He wanted to share his endless joy with us, who are creatures of his love" (*YouCat 2*).

Fall from Grace

But love does not force its creation to love. In other words, God does not force us to love Him. We are not robots who walk around and can only say, "I love God." Because of this, man does not always choose to love. Love is freely given by God; and we must freely receive God's love and freely reciprocate that love back to God. Although things were "good" after six days and God rested on the seventh, we quickly learn that humanity — in Adam and Eve — did not obey. Man decided not to reciprocate God's love, falling to pride. This pride is sin and we call this moment the Fall of Man. The Core Team has prepared a short skit to remind us of how this story went.

Have the Core Team come forward to perform the skit "Creation Time Machine." This is a light-hearted way to give a quick visual of the story of the fall of man. You'll need five actors for the skit. Have a table and sheet or blanket ready ahead of time for a quick transition into the skit.

While that was a somewhat accurate retelling of the story, let's take a look at how the Fall of Man is presented in Genesis 3:4-6. After the serpent questions the woman in the beginning of the chapter by asking whether God *really* said they could not eat the tree's fruit, Scripture says: "The serpent said to the woman: 'You certainly will not die! God knows well that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, who know good and evil.' The woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and the tree was desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it."

The fall of humanity happened because we chose not to love. We chose, through our first parents Adam and Eve, to reject love and pridefully put ourselves above God. Fortunately, through Jesus Christ, we are offered redemption and our sins can be forgiven. Love wins. We just have to believe in the One who is Love. We have to show this by responding to His love in going to Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation, receiving the Eucharist, and participating in the Sacraments, especially frequent Reconciliation. We have to pray.

Love is the Answer

In the end, the answer is love. It's the "why" and "who" of creation. It ultimately answers all those questions — who, what, when, where, why — and, yes, even the "how." The *YouCat* calls creation a "community project" of our Trinitarian God (#44). It calls the Father the Creator, the Son the heart and meaning of the world, and the Holy Spirit holds everything together — "gives life." In other words, the Trinity was at work in all of creation, and God created everything out of love.

As the first Vatican Council said: "The world was made for the glory of God." In explaining this, the *YouCat* says: "There is no other reason for creation than love." There you have it: love. It continues though: "In (love) God's glory and honor appears. To praise God, therefore, does not mean applauding the Creator. After all, man is not a spectator on the sidelines to creation — we are called to be an active participant" (#48).

I want to leave us with a quote to ponder from our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI: "We are not some casual and meaningless product of evolution. Each of us is a result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, and each of us is necessary."

BREAK

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

(15 min)

As your small group begins, say a prayer for the group and the activities for that session.

Re-read the story of the fall (Genesis 3:1-9) as a group and discuss the following:

- What do the stories of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 that we've heard tonight teach us about God? (God is love, God creates with order and purpose, God sees creation as good, God creates not out of want or need, but out of a desire to share His love, etc.)
- How do Adam and Eve react when approached by God about their sin? (They try to blame each other and are somewhat defensive.)
- How does God react to Adam and Eve's sin? Is God's reaction what you would expect? Why or why not?
- How do Adam and Eve feel when God confronts them?
- Have you ever felt like Adam and Eve when confronted by something you've done wrong?
- Why does God want us to obey him?
- How is your relationship with God affected when you disobey Him?
- What should our response to God's love be? Name one tangible way you plan to show this response to His love this week.

BUILDING BLOCKS

(10 min)

Give each youth two to three building blocks and a marker (if the markers will not mark the wooden block, you may want to use tape — write on the tape and then place it on the wooden block).

Ask the youth to take a minute and reflect on those things that they put before their relationship with God (like friendships, school, fitting in, social media, sports, etc). Remind the youth that these things may not be bad in and of themselves, but when we put them before our relationship with God, we're not growing in our faith.

After the youth have had a minute to reflect, allow them to write these distractions on the blocks and then begin building a structure by placing the blocks one on top of the other (one single column). Then take one of the Bibles and attempt to stack it on top of the blocks — the column will not be able to support the Bible.

Questions to process:

- Why didn't the blocks support the Bible?
- What can we learn about how sin affects our ability to see God?
- How can we fix the problem (placing God first)?

SEND

CLOSING PRAYER

(10 min)

As the youth gather back into the main space, ask them to find a spot in the room where they will not be distracted. Play the song "All of Creation" by MercyMe from the Media Suggestions. You can play the YouTube video from the Media Suggestions to add a visual or display/print the lyrics to help the youth better visualize the words and meaning.

After the video, ask the youth to silently reflect for about a minute. Break the silence by asking them to pray together the *Litany of the Love of God*, composed by Pope Pius VI, found on page 14. Have a Core Member lead the litany (bolded) and the youth respond with the italicized responses.

SUMMARY CHALLENGE

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

- God created the world out of love, not because He was lonely or needed to fill some void.
- We are given to choice to freely accept God's love. He will not force His love upon us.
- Adam and Eve sinned because they rejected God's love. As a sign of God's love, He sent His only begotten son, Jesus.
- This week our challenge is to accept the love of God and show it in a tangible way by loving another person, perhaps an enemy.

TO THE PARENTS OF

God is love. This is the message of all of Scripture, and it's apparent right from the beginning in Genesis. Tonight, the middle school youth learned how the Creation story expresses God's unending love for humanity and how it teaches us who God is — His nature is to love us. As Catholic Christians, we do not look at the Bible as a science or history book but rather, as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches, "Scripture presents the work of the Creator symbolically as a succession of six days of divine 'work,' concluded by the 'rest' of the seventh day. On the subject of creation, the sacred text teaches the truths revealed by God for our salvation, permitting us to 'recognize the inner nature, the value and the ordering of the whole of creation to the praise of God" (337). Creation teaches us that God created man out of love and to love. However, God does not force His love upon us and does not force us to love Him in return — it is our choice to accept it and reciprocate it. Although humanity fell from grace, we are redeemed through Jesus; God has never and will never stop loving us. Following are some questions for discussion:

- What does the creation story teach us about who God is?
- Do you think we express love enough in our family? How could we express it better?
- Who is one person you know who you consider a model of God's love?

ADAPTATION IDEAS

- Have a Core Member or parishioner make Play-Doh for the night, or do it as a Core Team for bonding.
- If you're running short on time, hand the litany out and challenge the youth to pray it on their own in the coming week.
- Instead of a skit, consider pre-recording it as a video.
- If your group is small enough, you could have the youth act out parts in the skit.

CREATION TIME MACHINE

CHARACTERS:

Core Member 1
Core Member 2
Snake
Adam
Eve

*(At the front of the room, set up a table with a sheet over it and a sign attached that says "Time Machine." **Core Member 1** should be dressed in magician's clothing or something absurd that makes him/her stand out.)*

CORE MEMBER 1

(yelling) Step right up! Step right up!

CORE MEMBER 2

Why are you yelling? Can't you see we're in the middle of an Edge Night?

CORE MEMBER 1

Sir, I don't know what an Edge Night is, but I've got something here that people need to try. *(Turns away and begins yelling again.)* Step right up! Step right up!

CORE MEMBER 2

Hold it! Would you please stop yelling? So, what is it you have that is so special?

CORE MEMBER 1

This! *(He points to the "time machine.")*

CORE MEMBER 2

You don't actually expect me to believe that is a —

CORE MEMBER 1

— Time Machine. Yes, sir, it is a time machine.

CORE MEMBER 2

It looks like a sheet thrown over a table with a sign someone threw together before Edge Night. And, wait, _____ *(use Core Member's real name)*, is that you?

CORE MEMBER 1

(Using his real name) _____ *(name)*? I don't know any, uh, _____ *(name)*. I have here a time machine that can take you to any point in history.

CORE MEMBER 2

So, I guess, naturally, I should go in this time machine and go to the Fall of Man in Genesis 3, since that's where our youth minister left off? I'm in if it gets this ridiculous distraction from the best talk ever to end.

CORE MEMBER 1

Now, all you need to do is go right in here. When I say to come out, you'll be in a new era.

CORE MEMBER 2

This makes no sense. *(Shrugs his shoulders and goes under the sheet/table.)*

CORE MEMBER 1

Now, please wait until I say to come out of the time machine.

(In the meantime, several other Core Members come to the front of the room to play characters from the Genesis account of the Fall. You'll need an Adam, Eve, and snake. If possible, have the Core Member playing the snake carry a stuffed animal snake and talk behind it. Otherwise, they should act like a snake by continuously weaving around while talking.)

CORE MEMBER 1

You can come out now. *(He quickly runs away from the front of the room so Core Member 2 can't see him.)*

CORE MEMBER 2

(Coming out from under the table, he has a puzzled/frustrated facial expression.)

C'mon, are you guys serious?

(He calls out the name of each Core Member playing the parts of Adam, Eve and the snake, i.e. "Jason? Julie? Jerry?")
C'mon we're still in the youth room *(use the name of your gathering space)*. Alright, I guess I'll just go along with it.
So, I'm here at the Fall of Man — wow.

(The three actors ignore Core Member 2's claim and act out the Fall, acting overly dramatic. Core Member 2 looks on, scratching his/her head on occasion, but not distracting from the main acting.)

SNAKE

Oh Eve, my dear.

EVE

Wait, is that a snake talking?

SNAKE

Yes. I have a question for you.

EVE

Oh, fine. What is it?

SNAKE

Did God really tell you not to eat the fruit of the trees in the garden?

EVE

Yes. Wait, I mean no. God just said we couldn't eat the fruit of the garden's middle tree.

SNAKE

Why not?

EVE

Well, if I do I will die.

SNAKE

Die? Oh no, my dear, you certainly will not die.

EVE

Are you sure?

SNAKE

Oh, yes. You see, God knows that if you eat that fruit, you'll know good and evil. You will be like gods — you won't need him anymore.

EVE

But I love God.

SNAKE

But that's not in the bible. Stick to the script, Eve.

EVE

Well, I better eat the fruit then. Oh, and Adam, you better come here because you're going to have to eat it too.

(Adam and Eve take turns biting into the apple, look at each other and say: "Oh no, we're naked. We better hide in shame." The youth minister interrupts and tells them the skit was a nice try, but they can please sit back down. The rest of the Proclaim proceeds.)

LITANY OF THE LOVE OF GOD

Infinite Love, Have mercy on us.

Creator who first loved me, Have mercy on us.

Lord God who commands me to love You, Have mercy on us.

With all my heart, **I Love You, O My God**

With all my soul, **I Love You, O My God**

With all my mind, **I Love You, O My God**

With all my strength, **I Love You, O My God**

Above all possessions and honors, **I Love You, O My God**

Above all pleasures and enjoyments, **I Love You, O My God**

More than myself, and everything belonging to me, **I Love You, O My God**

More than all my relatives and friends, **I Love You, O My God**

More than all men and angels, **I Love You, O My God**

Above all created things in heaven or on earth, **I Love You, O My God**

Because of who you are, **I Love You, O My God**

Because You are the sovereign Good, **I Love You, O My God**

Because You are infinitely worthy of being loved, **I Love You, O My God**

Because You are infinitely perfect, **I Love You, O My God**

Even You had not promise me eternal life, **I Love You, O My God**

Even You had not set hell against me, **I Love You, O My God**

Even if I am endure misfortune and lack my wants, **I Love You, O My God**

In wealth and in poverty, **I Love You, O My God**

In prosperity and in adversity, **I Love You, O My God**

In health and in sickness, **I Love You, O My God**

In life and in death, **I Love You, O My God**

In time and in eternity, **I Love You, O My God**

In union with that love of all the saints and all the angels love You in heaven,

I Love You, O My God

In union with that love our Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary has for you,

I Love You, O My God

In union with that infinite love of the Trinity eternally, **I Love You, O My God**

Prayer

My God, who possesses in endless mystery all that is perfect and worthy of love, rid in me all guilty, sensual, and undue love for creatures. Kindle in my heart the pure fire of your love, so that I may love nothing but you, until being so entirely consumed by holy love of you, I may go to love you eternally with the elect in heaven, the country of pure love. Amen.

LITANY OF THE LOVE OF GOD

Infinite Love, Have mercy on us.

Creator who first loved me, Have mercy on us.

Lord God who commands me to love You, Have mercy on us.

With all my heart, **I Love You, O My God**

With all my soul, **I Love You, O My God**

With all my mind, **I Love You, O My God**

With all my strength, **I Love You, O My God**

Above all possessions and honors, **I Love You, O My God**

Above all pleasures and enjoyments, **I Love You, O My God**

More than myself, and everything belonging to me, **I Love You, O My God**

More than all my relatives and friends, **I Love You, O My God**

More than all men and angels, **I Love You, O My God**

Above all created things in heaven or on earth, **I Love You, O My God**

Because of who you are, **I Love You, O My God**

Because You are the sovereign Good, **I Love You, O My God**

Because You are infinitely worthy of being loved, **I Love You, O My God**

Because You are infinitely perfect, **I Love You, O My God**

Even You had not promise me eternal life, **I Love You, O My God**

Even You had not set hell against me, **I Love You, O My God**

Even if I am endure misfortune and lack my wants, **I Love You, O My God**

In wealth and in poverty, **I Love You, O My God**

In prosperity and in adversity, **I Love You, O My God**

In health and in sickness, **I Love You, O My God**

In life and in death, **I Love You, O My God**

In time and in eternity, **I Love You, O My God**

In union with that love of all the saints and all the angels love You in heaven, **I**

Love You, O My God

In union with that love our Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary has for you,

I Love You, O My God

In union with that infinite love of the Trinity eternally, **I Love You, O My God**

Prayer

My God, who possesses in endless mystery all that is perfect and worthy of love, rid in me all guilty, sensual, and undue love for creatures. Kindle in my heart the pure fire of your love, so that I may love nothing but you, until being so entirely consumed by holy love of you, I may go to love you eternally with the elect in heaven, the country of pure love. Amen.

EDGE NIGHT CHECKLIST

CORE PLANNING TEAM:

DATE OF LIFE NIGHT:

ONE MONTH PRIOR TO THE NIGHT:

- Give copes of the Edge Night to each of the members of the planning team. Each person should read the Scripture, Catechism, and *YOUCAT* references as well as review the planning guide before the brainstorming meeting.
- Have the planning team meet for a brainstorming meeting (this should last no longer than 1 hour). The team prays and discusses where the youth are in their faith journey in relation to this topic. Using this planning guide as a starting point, the team adapts the Edge Night to meet the needs of the youth and the parish.
- Assign the person responsible for the following:
 Environment _____
 Before the Night (when needed) _____
 Audio/Visual Needs _____
 Opening Prayer _____
 Scripture Proclamation _____
 Proclaim (discuss with YM) _____
 Summary Challenge _____

TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO EDGE NIGHT:

- Turn in your notes for the Edge Night to the youth minister. Allow the youth minister to give feedback and make necessary changes.
- Create a list of needed supplies and materials. Assign a person to be responsible for collecting and/or purchasing the items needed.
- Discuss with the youth minister who will be giving the Proclaim/witness for the Edge Night. Be sure that this person is given the script and/or teaching. Inform them of any practices, time limits, and/or deadlines.

WEEK OF THE EDGE NIGHT:

- Person giving Proclaim checks in with youth minister.
- Check that all supplies have been obtained/purchased.
- Create/collect items for environment. Have volunteers ready to help if needed.
- Email Core Team an overview of the Edge Night.

DAY OF THE EDGE NIGHT:

- Set up the environment. Make sure the room is clean and presentable.
- If needed, set up audio/visual equipment. Test the video clips to make sure both picture and sound work.
- Pray! Pray for the youth attending the Edge Night. Pray for God's will to be done through the night. Pray over those involved.

EDGE NIGHT EVALUATION

INSTRUCTIONS:

Use the following questions to discuss and evaluate your Edge Night.

1. On a scale of 1-10, how well did this Edge Night accomplish the goal we set? Explain.

2. What was the strongest aspect of this Edge Night?

3. What kind of follow-up do we need to do after this Edge Night?

4. What can we improve for future Edge Nights? How can we accomplish this?

1. On a scale of 1-10, how well did this Edge Night accomplish the goal we set? Explain.

2. What was the strongest aspect of this Edge Night?

3. What kind of follow-up do we need to do after this Edge Night?

4. What can we improve for future Edge Nights? How can we accomplish this?

1. On a scale of 1-10, how well did this Edge Night accomplish the goal we set? Explain.

2. What was the strongest aspect of this Edge Night?

3. What kind of follow-up do we need to do after this Edge Night?

4. What can we improve for future Edge Nights? How can we accomplish this?

1. On a scale of 1-10, how well did this Edge Night accomplish the goal we set? Explain.

2. What was the strongest aspect of this Edge Night?

3. What kind of follow-up do we need to do after this Edge Night?

4. What can we improve for future Edge Nights? How can we accomplish this?

