

# LIFE TEEN

Leading Teens Closer to Christ  
[www.LifeTeen.com](http://www.LifeTeen.com)



[www.CovenantEyes.com](http://www.CovenantEyes.com)

**UNSPOKEN**  
BREAKING THE SILENCE ON PORN

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## ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

### ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This guide is not simply a resource; it is a powerful tool that has the potential to transform the lives of your teenagers and their families. *Unspoken* is a collaborative effort between Life Teen and Covenant Eyes, an organization that specializes in Internet accountability and filtering software. These two organizations have partnered to bring you this resource, which will empower parents to talk to their teenagers about the dangers of pornography, safe Internet use, and how to open the lines of communication so healing from addiction can occur.

Through intentional programming, encouragement, pastoral care, and the correct resources your parish community can support families in their effort to keep their children safe from the temptation and danger of pornography use. Statistically, the first exposure a person has to pornography occurs between ages 11 and 14. For some it is much younger. By helping parents recognize the warning signs of exposure, helping them understand how to protect their homes, and challenging both parents and teenagers to find help and healing if they are struggling with habit and addiction, we can fight back against the pornography epidemic.

### STRUCTURE AND METHOD

*Unspoken* contains six sessions: There are three “Life Nights” for teenagers and three “Parent Nights” for parents. It is highly recommended that Life Nights and Parent Nights occur simultaneously. The ending of each session provides an opportunity for parents and teenagers to pray together. This can be a powerful witness to the unity of the families in prayer and a great starting point for conversations back at home.

It is important to recruit a team of leaders for the Parent Nights that is different from your normal Core Team. These can be other parents that want to help out and

lead discussions, serve as a hospitality team, and provide food for each session. These leaders should be prepared with the material for each session before implementing it. Consider asking your parish priest to lead the teaching portions of each session or invite a couple to provide the teachings.

Each session contains at least one suggested video element. It is important to utilize these videos. They can be found on the *September 2016 Life Support USB* or online at LifeTeen.com.

### CORE PREPARATION VIDEOS

There are two videos that are included in the September 2016 Life Support USB that are critical to watch as a ministry team. They are:

“Unspoken Intro,” Life Teen Video, September 2016 Life Support USB

“Helping Teens With Porn Addiction,” Life Teen Video, September 2016 Life Support USB

Watch these videos at a Core Team meeting prior to the start of the series or send them to Core Members to view at home. They can also be part of your Core Team preparation retreat.

### CORE PREPARATION RETREAT

Prior to beginning *Unspoken*, host a one-day retreat with all of your Core Team and your Parent Night facilitators. Work through the content for the Parent Nights and spend time praying as a team about the material. It is important that all the adult leaders are familiar and comfortable with the content.

This is a great opportunity to encourage any Core Members that are struggling with pornography addiction to seek help and assistance. Provide Core Members with the resource handout from the Parent Night, “A Glorious

Hope,” which is found on the *September 2016 Life Support USB*. During the day retreat, invite your parish priest to be present to administer the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the Core Team.

### **INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL**

Each Life Night begins with a Goal, Key Concepts, and Scripture and Catechism references. These sections work together to provide an overview of the content and themes of the Life Nights and Parent Nights.

### **ABOUT THIS LIFE NIGHT**

*About This Life Night* briefly describes the Gather, Proclaim, Break, and Send. It provides a step-by-step framework for the Life Night.

### **ENVIRONMENT**

The *environment* section offers ideas on how to create a meeting space that supports the content and main themes of the Life Night. Not only can the environment be part of the evangelization and catechetical process, but also the effort and creativity put into it can make the teens feel valued and welcomed.

### **MEDIA SUGGESTIONS**

*Media Suggestions* provides music and video clip suggestions that creatively support the content and main themes of the Life Nights and Parent Nights. While planning, take a look at the media suggestions and consider weaving a video clip or song into the Life Night and Parent Nights. Media communicates with our hearts and minds in a unique, powerful way.

### **AS YOU GET STARTED**

*As You Get Started* offers adaptations to keep in mind as you read through and plan the Life Night.

### **PROCLAIM**

The Proclaim section of Parent Nights and Life Nights is designed to be adapted to fit your group. These teachings also include media suggestions, which are highly encouraged to break up the material and keep parents and teenagers engaged. Utilize these outlines to create a teaching that will fit your style and group.

### **SMALL GROUPS**

A key component of the Parent Nights are “Table Groups,” which are small groups that remain consistent through the workshops. This encourages accountability and community among the parents.

For Life Nights, divide teenagers into small groups during the first Life Night and keep these groups the same through the series. Be sure to separate groups by gender and, if possible, by grade level.

### **HANDOUTS**

All the handouts for Life Nights are on the *September 2016 Life Teen USB* and online at [www.lifeteen.com](http://www.lifeteen.com) under Life Support: September 2016. The handouts are formatted for you to easily print and copy on standard letter-size paper. Please be diligent in accessing and looking these over while planning the Life Nights and Parent Nights.

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## PERFECT DESIGN

A LIFE NIGHT ON HOW GOD CREATED OUR BODIES

### GOAL

The goal of this session is to help teenagers understand that the human body was created by God to be a reflection of God and a temple of the Holy Spirit.

### KEY CONCEPTS

- God created humanity in His image and likeness and we are created good.
- Our bodies reflect God and we must respect them as gifts and respect the bodies of others as sacred.
- We are a union of body and soul. What we do with our bodies has an impact on our souls.

#### SCRIPTURE:

Genesis 1:26-28  
 Romans 12:1-2  
 1 Corinthians 6:19  
 1 Corinthians 15:44

#### CATECHISM:

CCC 364-365  
 CCC 1004  
 CCC 1016  
 CCC 2354

## ABOUT THIS LIFE NIGHT

This Life Night introduces the three week series for teens about the dangers of pornography and how to prevent and overcome pornography habits and addiction. The session begins with an up front game that challenges participants to guess a mystery item using only their sense of touch. The teaching helps teenagers understand the sacred dimension of the human body. During the Break, the teenagers reflect on how they view their body and then process the teaching in their small group. To close the session, the teenagers renew their baptismal vows.

### ENVIRONMENT

The environment for this session is comfortable and inviting. Place snacks out for teens as they enter and encourage Core Members to be relational. Play Christian music in the background and prominently place a cross or crucifix somewhere in the room.

### MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

“Body Language Teaching,” Life Teen Video, September 2016 Life Support USB or LifeTeen.com

“Glorify,” Edge Video, Edge Video Support 17

### AS YOU GET STARTED...

*For a more prayerful Gather,* invite your music minister to lead praise and worship to start the session.

*Take the Break deeper* by challenging small groups to share their reflections from their journaling rather than using the suggested small group questions.

*Extend the Life Night into the week* by inviting teenagers to find a prayer partner to intercede for until the following week.



## LIFE NIGHT: **PERFECT DESIGN**

### **GATHER**

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#### **Welcome and Prayer (5 min)**

Gather the teens into the main meeting space. Welcome them to the Life Night and begin in prayer.

#### **What's in the Box? (10 min)**

Prior to the Life Night, find five “mystery items” and five larger cardboard boxes. Cut a hole in the side of each box and then staple a small piece of cloth over the opening so that it can be moved to the side, but also keeps people from looking into the box. Place a mystery item in each box and then tape the boxes up. Place the boxes on a long table and invite six teen volunteers to come forward to try to guess what is in each box.

Be creative with the objects you choose. A few ideas for objects are:

- A running shoe
- A slice of pizza
- A large book (but not a Bible)
- Putty or dough

The volunteers must only use their sense of touch to guess what is in each box. Instruct them to remember what they think is in each box but not to say anything until every volunteer has an opportunity to check out each box.

After all volunteers have felt the object in the boxes, ask them the following questions:

- What color was the object in the third box?
- How heavy was the object in the first box (exact weight)?
- What was the size of the object in the fifth box (exact length)?

- How old was the object in the fourth box?
- Where did we buy the object in the first box?

Add your own questions that follow this theme. The questions should be about truths that the teens aren't able to fully discern because they don't have full use of their senses and can't get a full picture of the objects. Use this realization to transition into the Proclaim.

### **PROCLAIM**

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#### **“Body Language Teaching” Video (10 min)**

Play the video, “Body Language Teaching” found on the September 2016 Life Support USB. You can supplement this teaching with notes from the “live teaching” option if your group needs to go deeper.

#### **Live Teaching: “Perfect Design” (15 min)**

An outline for the live teaching can be found on pages 13 to 15. Adapt this teaching as necessary for your group.

### **BREAK**

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#### **Personal Reflection (10 min)**

Divide teenagers into small groups of six to eight teenagers with one Core Member in each group. These groups should be same-gender and remain the same throughout the series. Please see the introductory materials on page 7 for more details.

Instruct the Core Member leading each group to pass out the reflection handout found on the *September 2016 Life Support USB* and allow the teens several minutes to journal.

#### **Small Group Discussion (15 min)**

Instruct the Core Members to facilitate a small group discussion using the reflection as a starting point. The following questions may be used to help guide the group:

- Is it easy or difficult for you to see the “image and likeness” of God in others? Why?

- What are ways that we can respect the bodies of other people? How can we show our bodies greater respect?
- God created us to be good and to be loved. How can you share the love of God with others? How can you be more mindful of the ways that God loves you every day?
- Are you a good reflection of God in the world? Why or why not? How can you reflect God more clearly in your family, friends, and at your school?

## SEND

### Renewal of Baptismal Promises (10 min)

Invite your parish priest or deacon to be present to lead the teenagers and parents in a renewal of baptismal vows. If you are hosting this session concurrently with the Life Night for teens, the two groups join together and close the session at the same time with the Renewal of Baptismal Promises.

Ask the priest or deacon to preface the vows with the following text or something similar:

*For many of us, our “beginning” in faith was at Baptism. Our parents made promises on our behalf to raise us in the faith and help nourish the gift we received at the Sacrament of Baptism. Every year at the Easter Vigil liturgy, we renew these promises. We may also renew them throughout the year. When we do this, we remember the great love that God has for us as sons and daughters. We remember that we have dignity and great worth. We remember that we are not alone and we recommit ourselves to living holiness through God’s grace.*

Ask the priest or deacon to lead the renewal of baptismal promises. If this prayer is combined with parents and teenagers, ask the priest or deacon to invite each group to renew their promises individually.

After the renewal of baptismal promises, have the entire group pray a Hail Mary together to close the Life Night.



## PERFECT DESIGN

### TEACHING

#### THE BIG PICTURE

It is difficult to fully understand the nature of something if we only know part of the picture. During the game, we used only one aspect of our senses to determine what objects were in each box. But our senses didn’t help us to understand more information about what was in each box. When we were asked questions about the object, that single sense didn’t help us at all. We needed more information.

Our world is founded on physical and spiritual realities. What we sometimes see or feel is only part of the bigger picture. This is true of the human body. What we see points us to a spiritual reality, but we need to understand what this spiritual reality is before we fully understand the physical reality of the human body. This physical reality includes our sexuality. The bible helps us to understand this spiritual reality clearly.

The first several chapters of the book of Genesis give us a picture of why God created the world and the purpose that he gave humanity. We sometimes get caught up in how “historical” this account is. We need to remember that everything in Sacred Scripture speaks truth, but the first chapters of Genesis speak to a truth that is beyond human history. Oftentimes, history answers the question “what” and science answers the question “how,” but the first several chapters of Genesis answer the “why.”

CCC 293-295

God creates humanity as the last piece of creation and God creates them male and female. God creates humanity

as a union of a body (physical) and a soul (spiritual). What a person does with his or her body has an impact on his or her soul; this means that the body is not something that is inconsequential or that we can do whatever we want with. Our bodies reveal important spiritual realities.

*Genesis 2:7, CCC 364-365*

Humanity is created in the image and likeness of God which means that the human body reveals important truths about who God is. Since God is love, God creates humans with the capacity to love each other. Through this love, they can create more life in the world. In fact, God commands that. God writes the capacity for love into the very design of humanity.

*1 John 4:16, Genesis 1:28*

Sometimes we don't look at our bodies that way. We may view them as flawed or annoying. We get frustrated with the way we look. We may even mistreat our bodies with alcohol, drugs, extreme dieting and eating disorders, or by even harming our bodies. We may also use our bodies and our sexuality to feel affirmed, "loved," desired, needed, or even to use other people or get something we want.

## **SPIRITUAL TEMPLES**

Project a picture of a beautiful Cathedral or put several pictures together on a slide show to punctuate the main points in this section.

Our body is not something that we can just disregard and throw away. What we do with our bodies impacts our souls. Saint Paul encouraged people to view their bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit.

*1 Corinthians 6:19*

Think about the feeling you get when you see a beautiful church. There is a deep sense of awe and reverence that overtakes us because we know that the beauty reflects something really good and holy within. The design points us to that reality.

Our bodies, as temples of the Holy Spirit, are designed the same way. God created us to reflect who God is and to hold the Holy Spirit. This is why honoring and respecting our bodies and the bodies of others is so important. We are more than just bodies - we are bodies and souls.

This was the plan from the very beginning. The original intention of our bodies was to reflect God and to express love. Understanding that this is still God's plan for our bodies, for sexuality, and for love is more important than ever in our world.

## **BROKEN IMAGES**

Unfortunately, our bodies are often not viewed as temples of the Holy Spirit. We view other people's bodies as objects rather than incredible cathedrals. Our world makes a profit off the way people look without any regard for what is inside. We see only one dimension of a person without seeing that they are so much more.

Over the next couple of weeks we are going to talk about one really destructive way that our world has reduced people to simply bodies. Pornography is a billion dollar industry that becomes more accessible and toxic every day. The impact of pornography on the human brain is staggering and nauseating, but not irreversible.

In order to change a culture that uses people and sees them as only bodies, we need to first embrace change ourselves. We need to be able to see ourselves as temples of the Holy Spirit and recognize the image and likeness of God within us, as we recognize it in others.

The next couple of weeks are going to be challenging, but also life changing. God created us with a purpose and with a destiny. We are going to embrace both of them and reject anything that may take us away from all God created us to be.







## THE VIRUS

A LIFE NIGHT ON THE DANGER OF PORNOGRAPHY

### GOAL

The goal of this session is to expose the dangers of pornography and challenge teenagers to recognize how harmful pornography consumption is spiritually and physically.

### KEY CONCEPTS

- God created the human body to be good and a reflection of His image and likeness, but through original sin we now have a distorted view of our bodies and of each other.
- Pornography is a harmful distortion of the sexual act and the body of another person.
- The consumption of pornography changes the way we think and the way that our brains operate and hurts our relationships, emotional health, and spiritual well-being.

#### SCRIPTURE:

Genesis 3:7  
 Matthew 5:27-28  
 1 Corinthians 6:13

#### CATECHISM:

580  
 592  
 602-604

## ABOUT THIS LIFE NIGHT

This Life Night begins with a game of tag that has a medical twist. Teenagers watch a short film during the Proclaim, have an opportunity to discuss it, and then listen to a live teaching given by a Core Member or the youth minister. During the Break, teenagers examine their conscience to prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the Send.

### ENVIRONMENT

The environment for this Life Night resembles the set of an “epidemic” or “disease-outbreak” movie. Get large plastic tarps and drape them over the entryways to the room. Set up large fans that teens need to stand in front of for “decontamination” prior to entry. Have all of the Core Members wear medical masks, goggles, and long coats and pass out medical masks to teenagers as they enter.

### MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

“Breathe,” Life Teen Video, Life Teen Video Support September 2014

“Examination of Conscience,” Life Teen Video, Life Teen Video Support 16

### AS YOU GET STARTED...

*Begin with prayer* by inviting your music minister to lead worship during the Gather.

*If you cannot find priests for the Sacrament of Reconciliation,* use the “Examination of Conscience” as a journal reflection and then lead a small group during the Break and Send. Be sure to remind the teenagers of the parish’s times for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

## LIFE NIGHT: THE VIRUS

### GATHER

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#### Welcome and Prayer (5 min)

As teens gather in the main meeting space, hand each one of them a medical mask to put on. Welcome any teenagers that are attending Life Night for the first time and lead an opening prayer. Then, explain the game “Virus Tag.”

#### Virus Tag (15 min)

This game is a modified version of “Doctor Tag.” One person begins as “infected” and one or two people act as “doctors.” The infected person can tag other teens, who will also become infected. When a teen is tagged, they must take their mask off, sit on the floor, and count out loud to 30. Once they have been sitting for 30 seconds, they need to leave their mask on the floor and are now fully “infected” and can tag other teens.

If, however, a teen is tagged by a doctor while they are sitting and counting to 30, they become healed, put their mask back on, and continue in the game as before. The identity of the doctors should be kept secret (you could indicate the identity of the doctor by handing these teens a notecard along with their mask as they walk in).

Continue playing the game until there are only one or two teens left. Award prizes to the teens that “survived” the entire game. After the game is finished, instruct teenagers to sit in their small groups.

### PROCLAIM

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#### “The Virus” Video and Discussion (15 min)

Play the video “The Virus,” found on the *September 2016 Life Support USB* or online at LifeTeen.com. After the video,

have Core Members facilitate a discussion with their small groups using the following questions:

- What images, dialogue, or situations stuck out to you from the video?
- Have you ever thought about pornography like a disease or virus? How is it similar? How is it different?
- If you could say something to or encourage the characters in the video, what would you say? Why?

#### Teaching: The Virus (20 min)

Transition into the teaching from the video and discussion. An outline for the teaching can be found on pages 22 to 25. Adapt this teaching as necessary for your group.

### BREAK

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#### Examination of Conscience (15 min)

Pass out copies of the “Examination of Conscience,” found on the *September 2016 Life Support USB*. Invite the teenagers to take time to pray through the handout and journal as they prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

### SEND

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#### Sacrament of Reconciliation (50 min)

Prior to the Life Night invite several priests to hear confessions. Challenge the teenagers to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. As teens wait, ask your music minister to lead worship. Teens may also journal or speak with a Core Member or counselor during this time.

#### Pastoral Care

If your Core Team is trained to talk with teenagers about a struggle with pornography, you may invite teenagers to speak with Core Members during this time. Be sure that all safe environment policies are followed, that Core Members meet with teens of the same gender, and that there are always two adults present for each conversation.



## THE VIRUS

### TEACHING

#### CREATED GOOD

Last week we discussed that our bodies were created good and they were made in the image and likeness of God. They reveal that God created us to give ourselves as a gift to another person and that we are made to give and receive love. When we see another person, we see something unique about God.

At least, that is the ideal situation. When sin entered the world that situation become distorted and broken. Sin distorted our perception of each other and caused us to see how we could use another person's body rather than respect it. In Genesis 3, Adam and Eve are tempted into sin. When we talk about sin, we are really talking about a sickness that prevents us from being who we are created to be – healthy sons and daughters of God.

The first sin is called “original sin.” Original sin has been transmitted to all of us and we see the effects of it on the world – suffering, death, and disordered relationships all abound because of this first sin.

After Adam and Eve sin, God tells them that they have introduced disorder into the world, and they will now struggle with lust, disordered desire, and face death. Because Adam and Eve chose against God, they would have to accept the new reality they lived in. And now the ripples from that choice continue to spread, impacting every person.

Pornography is one of those ripples. And, because of technology, it's everywhere, all the time. It is a clear example of how we've taken something good and sacred – another person – and turned that person into an object.

Let's be clear. God's image is still there. The original design for our bodies and what it means to be fully male and female are still there. But, pornography, like having a pair of dirty glasses on, causes our view of sex to be fuzzy and even completely obscured.

#### IDENTITY THEFT

Pornography is not a new issue. Technology makes it accessible like never before, but it has existed in some form for thousands of years. In Sacred Scripture, we read in 2 Samuel that King David caught sight of Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, as she was bathing. Due to what David saw, it gave birth to lust in his heart, and ultimately, pregnancy, shame, death, and deception.

Remember, we are not simply a body and a soul – we are body and a soul that are bound together. Saint Paul reminds us that we will receive a heavenly body, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands.” God Himself, in the form of Jesus Christ, incarnated in a body and resurrected with a body.

*2 Corinthians 5:1*

As a result, these components cannot be separated without causing great harm. Saint John Paul II said that one of the many problems with pornography is not that we see too much, but rather, that we see too little. It is an affront to our original design, because it rips the body away from the soul.

Pornography reduces a woman or man to a shell; an object meant for use and pleasure, a rupture of the body and soul composite. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells us “...anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

*Matthew 5:28*

Ultimately, pornography can never give us what we are looking for, which is a true encounter with another person.

*Play the video “Faulty Promises,” found on the September 2016 Life Support USB or on Life Teen.com*

## TERRIBLE LIES

Pornography is so alluring to so many people because it is a counterfeit representation of the Divine act of sex. It looks and feels like the real thing. But, that's exactly what sin wants us to believe.

Pornography cannot deliver on any of the promises it makes.

Pornography and our sexualized culture tell the lie that we are primarily sexual beings and therefore require sex, in its many forms, to survive. But, if we understand our origin, we see that we are primarily spiritual beings and, therefore, require God to survive.

Pornography promises sexual freedom and that anything and everything is permissible, as long as it feels good. The lie of sexual freedom is that by telling us to say "yes" to everything, we are not able to say "no" to anything, and we are actually less free and held captive by our passions and temptations.

True freedom is experienced through embracing an attitude of chastity that is defined by understanding that we are children of God, and only then will we experience the abundant life promised by Jesus Christ.

Pornography communicates a message that "sex is no big deal" even though many bodily expressions have great significance. A hug has meaning. A handshake has meaning. They all have significance.

Pornography whispers to its viewing victims, "you're not hurting anyone by watching." The truth is that the very act of viewing pornography gives tacit approval to whatever sinful act is being viewed. What kind of victimization is happening to the people involved? Is it tied in any way to sex trafficking or child pornography? These are real questions with real impacts.

The act of viewing pornography hijacks the brain's rewards center into believing that real sexual intimacy is being experienced,

thereby releasing a potent chemical cocktail that solidifies neuropathways that crave pixels instead of real people. Yes, people are being hurt, including the one who is watching.

## TAKE ACTION

We don't need to be trapped by pornography. Some of us may be struggling intensely with an addiction to pornography. For others, it may be a bad habit. For those of us that were exposed to pornography, it was probably at a young age. It wasn't your fault that you saw it and that you were curious about it. Regardless of your experience with it and how it started, we are going to use the next few weeks to restore order and begin a journey toward eliminating pornography and the negative effects from your life.

Ultimately, pornography keeps us in sin and distorts our view of other people. It rewires our brain to see people as objects. But there is healing and hope. Next week we are going to talk about practical steps to overcome addiction and habit. This week, we are going to focus on the spiritual root of the problem and ask for grace to overcome our habit and addictions.

To begin a journey of healing, we need to recognize that we need the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We must immerse ourselves in daily prayer. We should receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist frequently.

Then, we need to leverage that grace in our action. Take your phone out of your room. Don't use a computer or iPad alone or late at night. Identify areas of temptation and remove them. We need to take practical steps to avoid temptation.

Really, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is the cure to our infection - but we need to also take steps to avoid getting infected again. That is why we are going to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before we leave so that we can be empowered by grace to not simply avoid the sin of pornography, but anything that would threaten to infect our lives and take us away from Christ.





## ABOUT THIS LIFE NIGHT

This Life Night begins with a fun game that challenges teenagers to build a “fort” that can withstand an unknown attack. During the Proclaim, a video teaching is played and is followed by a live teaching that challenges teenagers to recognize areas of temptation or spiritual weakness, so they can fortify those areas and stand firm against sin. The Break provides an opportunity to reflect on some of these areas more deeply and then pray with an accountability partner. The Life Night closes with parents and teenagers coming together during the Send to pray in front of the Blessed Sacrament during Eucharistic Adoration.

## ENVIRONMENT

The environment for this Life Night should be set up for the “Fort Building” activity during the Gather. Clear an open space for groups to build their forts and throw dodge balls at each other in your meeting space.

## MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

“Armor of God,” Life Teen Video, Life Teen Video Support 10

“Unfinished,” Edge Support Video, Edge - Existence

## AS YOU GET STARTED...

*For a deeper Send,* invite the parents and teens to pray with each other before or after Eucharistic Adoration.

*Expand the Proclaim* by inviting a Core Member or teen to share a testimony about overcoming a habit or addiction (it does not have to be pornography).

*Challenge the teens during the Break* by asking them to share their “Identifying Triggers” reflection with their accountability partner.

## LIFE NIGHT: FORTIFY

### GATHER

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#### Welcome and Prayer (5 min)

Gather the teens into the meeting space and welcome them to the Life Night. Introduce any teens that are attending for the first time, begin in prayer, and then divide the teens into small groups.

#### Fort Building and Discussion (25 min)

Prior to the Life Night, gather several “building” materials for forts. Some suggested materials are:

- Chairs
- Cardboard boxes
- Tarps
- Blankets
- Butcher paper
- Pillows or other cushions
- Duct tape

Explain that each group will have approximately ten minutes to build a fort that they can all fit inside. The fort must be built to protect them from an attack from another team (but don’t tell them how they will be attacked).

After small groups complete their fort, give each group two dodge balls and instruct them to “attack” other forts by trying to get the dodge ball inside another fort without stepping more than two steps away from their own fort. They can throw, roll, or bounce the ball. Each time they break into another fort with the ball, they receive a point.

At the end of the game, tally the points and declare a winner. Then use the following questions to facilitate a discussion:

- What were the weakest points of your fort? What were the strongest?





## FORTIFY

### TEACHING

#### TOWARD VICTORY

Over the past two weeks we've recognized God's plan for our holiness and the great dignity that each person is born with, since they are born in the image and likeness of God. We learned how pornography harms relationships, communities, and our own view of other people. We know it is an epidemic and ultimately a habit that enslaves us. This week we turn toward how we can break free and protect ourselves against pornography so we can live holy, free lives.

The first step to overcoming a struggle with pornography (or preventing one) is to recognize where we are at in that struggle and being honest about it. These steps are not exclusive to a struggle with pornography; they can be applied to any habit or addiction that is enslaving us and preventing us from living free.

#### AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

Some of us may not have any struggle with pornography. We may not have ever even seen it. If that is you, then prevention is critical. At some point, you may be exposed to pornography. How will you respond? How will you get out of the situation? Even though you don't currently struggle, setting up internet filters and having boundaries for how you use technology is still a great idea. Think about other habits or behaviors in your life that cause you to sin; those same "doorways" can become doorways for a struggle with pornography. Recognize them and stay rooted in prayer.

### STAYING OUT OF THE DEEP END

If you find yourself viewing pornography a couple of times each month, think about the situations where you find yourself viewing it. Resolve to avoid those situations and circumstances. If your phone is a struggle, keep it in places where it won't become a temptation. Set up internet filters on your computer and phone so that if you find yourself struggling you can be prevented from viewing pornography. Set up the "Victory" app from Life Teen and find accountability partners to pray with you when you feel tempted. If you follow any accounts on social media that are suggestive and could be "triggers" for you, unfollow and block them.

#### BREAKING FREE

If you are struggling habitually and may even have an addiction to pornography, there are a few important steps to take. First, don't be ashamed of the struggle. Yes, sin is not good and takes us away from God. But the worst thing you can do is be silent about your struggle. Silence only feeds sin. The path to healing comes through honesty and through community.

Next, know that you need both a spiritual and psychological approach to tackling and beating pornography addiction. God is going to give you the grace, but we are tackling a biological reality of dependency. If you broke your leg, you wouldn't look at it and say, "Man, I really should pray about my leg and hope God heals it." God gives people gifts and talents that allow them to heal our physical pain and suffering. There are doctors that are trained to help set a broken leg so it heals.

The same is true for counselors. They are trained to help people overcome their struggles, whether it is with mental health, addictions, or depression and anxiety. If you find yourself habitually struggling with pornography or even feel like you need to look at it daily to feel "at ease" or to

get through you day, you need to see a counselor to help you work through your addiction and struggle. If you feel like you keep trying to quit looking at pornography but just can't, you may need to talk to someone about strategies for overcoming the habit and addiction.

Internet safety filters and accountability software are also very important. If a person is a struggling alcoholic, they know that they can't simply walk into a bar and then order a soda. For an alcoholic, a bar is a trigger. Unfortunately, our world is over-sexualized and "pornified." You can't always avoid a suggestive advertisement or a picture on your Instagram feed of someone that is half-clothed. We need to do our best with protecting ourselves on our devices.

This may mean talking to your parents honestly. That can be a really uncomfortable conversation, but an important one. If you have siblings that are younger than you, the conversation can also help them be more protected.

Finally, for all of us, we need to stay rooted in the sacraments of the Church. Being connected to Christ is critical in overcoming our struggle. Jesus gives us hope that there is always resurrection after suffering when we stay rooted in Him. We must also act, though, and recognize that sometimes the struggle takes time and diligence to overcome. We aren't going to just wake up tomorrow completely free of temptation. We need to continue to strive to "run the race" daily.

*1 Corinthians 9:24*

In order to do that, we are going to create an action plan to identify our triggers and fortify ourselves so that when we are tempted - whether it is through pornography or another sin - we can resist and live free.

## CORE TEAM OVERVIEW

**FORTIFY:** A Life Night on Breaking Free From Pornography

**GOAL:** The goal of this session is to assist teenagers in identifying areas of temptation in their lives so they can recognize it and stand firm against it.

**GATHER (30 MINS):**

Welcome and Introduction: \_\_\_\_\_

Fortify Yourself: \_\_\_\_\_

**PROCLAIM (20 MINS):**

"Fortify" Teaching: \_\_\_\_\_

**BREAK (25 MINS):**

Identifying Triggers Handout: \_\_\_\_\_

Accountability Partners: \_\_\_\_\_

**SEND (45 MINS):**

Eucharistic Adoration with Parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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## A BEAUTIFUL DESIGN

### A PARENT NIGHT ON THEOLOGY OF THE BODY

#### GOAL

The goal of this Parent Night is to introduce parents to the Theology of the Body and provide a framework for them to speak to their children about pornography, while also being challenged in their own attitudes and understanding about sex and sexuality.

#### KEY CONCEPTS

- God created our bodies and sexuality as good things. They have become distorted in the world we live in.
- We were created in the image and likeness of God. Our bodies are a reflection of God and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Understanding God’s purpose for sex helps us to understand why certain behaviors and forms of media, like pornography, are destructive.

#### SCRIPTURE:

Genesis 1:26-28  
 Romans 12:1-2  
 1 Corinthians 6:19  
 1 Corinthians 15:44

#### CATECHISM:

CCC 364-365  
 CCC 1004  
 CCC 1016  
 CCC 2354

## ABOUT THIS PARENT NIGHT

This Parent Night begins with a social time for parents to get to know each other. During the Gather, parents work through a handout that challenges them to reflect on how life was different when they were growing up. They discuss their answers and then watch a video during the Proclaim that introduces them to the Church’s teaching on sex and the body and gives them practical tips on how to talk to their children about this topic. Parents discuss the video in their table groups during the Break and join their son or daughter for a Renewal of Baptismal promises during the Send.

#### ENVIRONMENT

The environment for all the Parent Nights is comfortable and inviting. Place snacks out for parents as they enter the meeting space and encourage Core Members to be relational. Play Christian music in the background and prominently place a cross or crucifix in the room.

#### MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

“Hunger Teaching,” Life Teen Video, Life Teen Video Support: May 2013

#### AS YOU GET STARTED...

*For video content during the Gather,* create a video of teenagers responding to the same questions that the parents are answering on the “Back in the Day” handout and play the video after parents write down their answers.

*For larger groups,* instruct parents to complete the handout and discuss it with one other person close to them. During the discussion during the Break, divide into small groups and move outside of the main meeting space.

## PARENT NIGHT: A BEAUTIFUL DESIGN

### GATHER

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#### Social and Welcome (5 min)

Welcome all of the parents to the session and spend some social time together. Invite a few parents to bring refreshments and snacks, and ask Core Members and your parish priest to be engaging the parents in conversation. Make the room and environment as relational as possible.

After several minutes of social time, invite the parents to be seated at tables. Be sure that there is one facilitator at each table that is part of the parent ministry team. This person will help lead discussions. Each “table group” will be the group for discussion throughout the evening. Open with a prayer and invite the table groups to introduce themselves to each other.

#### Back in the Day (15 min)

Pass out a pen and the handout “Back in the Day” to all of the parents. This handout can be found on the September 2016 Life Support USB and on LifeTeen.com.

Allow the parents several minutes to fill in their answers. Invite the parents to share their responses with the group at their table and discuss the similarities and the differences.

### PROCLAIM

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#### “Tough and Necessary” Video Teaching (15 min)

Play the video teaching “Tough and Necessary” featuring Mark Hart for the parents. It can be found on the September 2016 Life Support USB or online at LifeTeen.com.

Since this is a more theologically dense topic to cover, it is recommended that this video is used as the primary teaching. It can be supplemented with a live teaching after the video.

#### Alternative Live Teaching: “Beautiful Design ” (15 min)

If your group will respond better to a live teaching, watch the video “Tough and Necessary” and use the teaching outline found on pages 41 to 45 to create a teaching for your parents.

### BREAK

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#### Table Group Discussion (30 min)

After the teaching, have the facilitator at each table group lead a discussion using the following questions:

- Do you think that, culturally, we value people more or less? How so?
- In what ways have you witnessed the over-sexualization of our culture in the past week? What impact does this have?
- Have you ever heard of “Theology of the Body?” If so, what did you hear and what was your perception?
- What challenges do we face parenting in this culture? How can we support each other?
- What is one specific step you can take this week to remind your children of their original design and goodness?

### SEND

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#### Renewal of Baptismal Promises (10 min)

*Programming Note: For the Send of this session, the parents and the teenagers join together. If you are meeting on separate days, the parents and the teenagers will renew their baptismal promises separately.*

Invite your parish priest or deacon to be present to lead the teenagers and parents in a renewal of baptismal vows. Ask him to preface the vows with the following text or something similar:

*For many of us, our “beginning” in faith was at Baptism. Our parents made promises on our behalf to raise us in the*

*faith and help nourish the gift we received at the Sacrament of Baptism. Every year at the Easter Vigil liturgy, we renew these promises. We may also renew them throughout the year. When we do this, we remember the great love that God has for us as sons and daughters. We remember that we have dignity and great worth. We remember that we are not alone and we recommit ourselves to living holiness through God's grace.*

Ask the priest or deacon to lead the renewal of baptismal promises. If this prayer is combined with parents and teenagers, ask the priest or deacon to invite each group to renew their promises individually.

After the renewal of baptismal promises, have the entire group pray a Hail Mary together to close the Life Night.

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## A BEAUTIFUL DESIGN

### TEACHING

#### SOMETHING HAS CHANGED

Begin by thanking the parents for attending and introducing yourself. Explain that the topic that is being covered is important and their openness to attend speaks volumes about the way they care for their families and children. Challenge them to attend every session.

Over the coming weeks, we are going to discuss the growing reality of pornography use and the way that it can impact our family and children. The Church teaches that pornography is always a grave matter and serious issue. Culturally, though, it seems more and more accepted and even seen as “healthy.”

CCC 2354

In order to understand why pornography (and sexual distortion of all kind) is wrong, we have to go back to the beginning to understand what it means to be fully human, made in the image of God. Only then does the stark contrast between God's original plan for our bodies and sexuality and where we are today become crystal clear.

The Church finds clarity about the meaning of our lives, the purpose of our bodies, and why we were created in the beginning of the Bible - the Book of Genesis.

Depending on your group, you may need to explain different senses of Sacred Scripture and how Catholics read and understand the first 11 chapters of the Book of Genesis.

The first two chapters of Genesis give us a lens through which we can see clearly how things “used to be” in regards to our sexuality. The creation narrative makes it abundantly clear that sex is God’s idea and that it is good. After all, the first instructions we read from God to humankind in the form of Adam and Eve are, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

*Genesis 1:28*

When placed in the garden, Adam and Eve made sense of everything around them through their bodies, through their senses. Everything we experience in life is through the body.

Christian apologist C. S. Lewis said:

“...if man had never fallen, sexual pleasure, instead of being less than it is now, would actually have been greater... Christianity is almost the only one of the great religions which thoroughly approves of the body—which believes that matter is good, that God Himself once took on a human body, that some kind of body is going to be given to us even in Heaven and is going to be an essential part of our happiness, our beauty, and our energy.”

*C.S. Lewis, “Mere Christianity”*

Through its very design, the human body tells us how love should be expressed and received between man and woman. There are four marks of good conjugal love. We understand that sex is good and unifying when it is free, total, faithful, and fruitful. Since God created us in His image and likeness, the ways that we experience love, our bodies, and sex all reflect something about God.

## **THEOLOGY OF THE BODY**

On November 28th, 1984, St. John Paul II began a 4-year series of Wednesday audiences that would later be titled, “Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the

Body.” These audiences addressed the topics of marriage and how it reflects the love of God in the Trinity, celibacy and how it foreshadows our destiny with God in heaven, and sexuality and how sex is not only a good thing, but an act deliberately willed by God in order to help unify man and woman as they bring forth new life.

The words that he spoke and wrote down have had a tremendous impact on how people understand our sexuality within the Church and have led to a renewed understanding and respect for human dignity and sex. And, under the crushing weight of pornography that is so prevalent, we desperately need to be reminded of the Divine perspective because things are not how they used to be. Something has changed.

## **A GODLY SELF-IDENTITY**

There are many spectacular truths revealed to us about humankind in Genesis 1-2. The first is Genesis 1:27, where we read: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

*Genesis 1:27*

These are among God’s first words ever spoken about human beings, and no statement in the Bible is more foundational to our dignity and our destiny. The only way to immunize our children from an over-sexualized culture that gives them a false standard of worth is by giving them a far more compelling vision of their true worth.

God did not create us in the image of any other creature but in the image of Himself, and after He saw us, He pronounced us as “very good”. We possessed original innocence, in the beginning “the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.”

*Genesis 1:31, Genesis 2:25*

The absence of shame is a clear indicator of this innocence. Adam never considered using Eve as an object for sexual gratification. In the same way, Eve would never have used Adam as an object for her sexual gratification. Adam and Eve were created as gifts to one another. Their bodies made this truth known.

## **FUZZY MATH**

The second creation narrative in Genesis 2 extends our understanding of what it means to be fully male and fully female. God creates Eve from Adam's rib and the two complement each other. When Adam looks at Eve, he sees not only a reflection of his humanity, but a complement to his masculinity. When Eve sees Adam, she sees a complement to her femininity.

*Genesis 2:23-25*

And, in some mysterious mathematical equation, "a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh." The two become one. The only possible explanation is a free, total, faithful, and fruitful union of complementary beings that bear the image of God Himself.

Those four words are critical in understanding God's plan for sexual union. A sexual act, properly ordered to God's plan, must be free - both parties offer themselves without reservation and without expectation. It is a gift. The act must be total - the partners hold nothing back from each other, they give all of themselves. The action must be faithful - both people are not having sex with anyone else nor are they intending to in the future. They are committed to this one partner. And finally, the action is fruitful - it has the potential to create new life and is open to this possibility.

And when these four things happen, the two people become "one flesh." This is more than something that happens only during intercourse. "One flesh" was God's

way of talking about the lifelong bond that is cemented, celebrated, and consummated in sex.

*Genesis 2:24*

Maybe our original design, our very bodies, point to the truth that being made "male and female" shows us how we were made for each other. Yes, there are distinct physical and emotional differences between men and women, but the overall message of our bodies is that in spite of our differences, we complete each other when offered as a gift.

Masculinity and femininity only exist in respect with each other. Men and women fit together and have the capacity to love and give themselves to each other. When they do this sexually, it has the potential to bring forth new life. After all, what is love if it can't be offered freely and openly?

Understanding God's purpose for our sexuality is how we can begin to understand the dangers of pornography and why it fits outside God's plan. God created sex as something to be good and something that is sacred - it is the very action has the potential to bring about human life. Protecting the sacred nature of that, as well as the dignity of the human body, is critical to us as parents as we strive to raise our children in a world that has forgotten it's very beginning and purpose.

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**BEAUTIFUL DESIGN:** A Parent Night on the Theology of the Body

**GOAL:** The goal of this Parent Night is to introduce parents to the Theology of the Body and provide a framework for them to speak to their children about pornography, while also being challenged in their own attitudes and understanding about sex and sexuality.

**GATHER (20 MINS):**

Social and Welcome: \_\_\_\_\_

Back in the Day: \_\_\_\_\_

**PROCLAIM (15 MINS):**

“Beautiful Design” Teaching: \_\_\_\_\_

**BREAK (30 MINS):**

Table Group Discussion: \_\_\_\_\_

- Do you think that, culturally, we value people more or less? How so?
- In what ways have you witnessed the over-sexualization of our culture in the past week? What impact does this have?
- Have you ever heard of “Theology of the Body?” If so, what did you hear and what was your perception?
- What challenges do we face parenting in this culture? How can we support each other?
- What is one specific step you can take this week to remind your children of their original design and goodness?

**SEND (10 MINS):**

Renewal of Baptismal Vows: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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**A DISTORTED ANSWER**  
A PARENT NIGHT ON THE DANGER  
OF PORNOGRAPHY

**GOAL**

The goals of this Parent Night is to present parents with the dangers of pornography and help them grasp the prevalence of the epidemic and the need to take action against it in their own lives and in the lives of their children.

**KEY CONCEPTS**

- God created the human body to be good and a reflection of His image and likeness, but through original sin we now have a distorted view of our bodies and of each other.
- Pornography is a harmful distortion of the sexual act and the body of another person.
- The consumption of pornography changes the way we think and the way that our brains operate and hurts our relationships, emotional health, and spiritual well-being.

**SCRIPTURE:**

Genesis 3:7  
Matthew 5:27-28  
1 Corinthians 6:13

**CATECHISM:**

CCC 1607  
CCC 2351  
CCC 2354  
CCC 2541

## ABOUT THIS PARENT NIGHT

This Parent Night begins with social time and transitions into the Proclaim with a short video that helps set up the teaching. The teaching lays out the dangers of pornography use and challenges parents to protect their children. During the Break, parents process the teaching in their table groups. The Send challenges parents to confront their own sin and provides them with an opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

## ENVIRONMENT

The environment for all the Parent Nights is comfortable and inviting. Place snacks out for parents as they enter the meeting space and encourage Core Members to be relational. Play Christian music in the background and prominently place a cross or crucifix in the room.

## MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

“Adult,” Life Teen Video, September 2016 Life Support USB or LifeTeen.com

## AS YOU GET STARTED...

*For more time for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, cut the table questions during the Break.*

*For a better pastoral response, provide a business card with the names of Catholic or Christian counselors and marriage counselors that specialize in pornography addiction and recovery.*

*If the Sacrament of Reconciliation is not an option, close by praying a decade of the rosary and asking for healing for all those struggling with pornography.*

## PARENT NIGHT: A DISTORTED ANSWER

### GATHER

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#### Social and Welcome (5 min)

Welcome all of the parents to the session and spend some social time together. Invite a few parents to bring refreshments and snacks, and ask Core Members and your parish priest to be engaging the parents in conversation. Make the room and environment as relational as possible.

After several minutes of socializing, invite parents to sit in their table groups. If possible, ask them to join the table group they were in last week.

### PROCLAIM

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#### “The Virus” Video (5 min)

Play the video “The Virus” found on the September 2016 Life Support USB or online at LifeTeen.com. Use this video to begin the teaching.

#### “A Distorted Answer” Teaching (25 min)

The teaching outline for this Parent Night can be found on pages 52 to 57. Adapt it as necessary for your group.

### BREAK

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#### Table Group Discussion (25 min)

After the teaching, instruct the parents to discuss the following questions with their table group. Have the facilitator at each table lead the discussion, making sure to keep a pastoral tone and watch for any potential “trigger” moments with parents that may require a greater pastoral response:

- How easy was it to access pornography when you were a teen?
- What sorts of challenges do kids face today because of technology? How is it different from your own childhood?

- Parents – can you name any distortion experiences? Moments from your childhood that might have warped your understanding of sexuality?
- “It is not an overstatement to say that in today’s world, porn has become the norm” (Parenting the Internet Generation e-book from Covenant Eyes). What is your first reaction when you read that statement? What fears well up as you think about raising your children in a world where “porn has become the norm”?
- While current research suggests there are many parents concerned about pornography, the same research also shows this concern doesn’t translate into action.” On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being “We never talk about appropriate use of technology” and 5 being “We consistently have family conversations about appropriate use of technology,” how would you rate your level of action on digital topics?
- What do you think is an appropriate age to begin conversations about pornography? Backing things up even further, what is an appropriate age to begin conversations about human sexuality? How are these conversations related?
- What steps might you have to take personally in order to prepare your own heart to lead your children into a lifestyle of purity and chastity?

## SEND

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### Closing Challenge (5 min)

Close the session or transition into the Sacrament of Reconciliation with the following text or something like it:

*As we talk to our children about pornography, we may need to confront this reality in our own lives as well. Some of us may have struggled with pornography in the past or may struggle with it now. Our marriages may have been hurt by pornography use or we may be hurting from past experiences with pornography or a relationship where our partner consumed porn. Our own current struggles or past*

*history can become a stumbling block, or even a roadblock, to talking to our children about this important issue.*

*As parents, we don’t need to be ashamed of our own struggles or let them be a hindrance to leading our families. We do need to find healing, though. We have a responsibility, not only to our children, but to ourselves, our spouses, and to God to live in freedom and not in sin.*

*Healing is possible, even if we have been viewing porn for a long time. It begins with prayer and grace. We have the sacraments of the Church – especially the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist – to help us. We can’t stop there, though. If we are struggling, we also need to consider counseling if our porn use is habitual or even an addiction. There is no shame in seeking this kind of help and support. Internet accountability programs like Covenant Eyes not only protect our families but also protect us personally.*

*To close this session, we have an opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and find healing – not simply for sexual sin, but for any sin – and to return to Christ to be better parents and more importantly, better disciples.*

### Sacrament of Reconciliation (30 min)

Prior to the Parent Night, invite several priests to hear confessions. Allow the parents the option to receive the sacrament as the session ends. If you are hosting Parent Nights at the same time as Life Nights, be sure to have enough priests available. After parents receive the sacrament, invite them into another room to continue to socialize and wait for the Life Night to finish. If you are not hosting Life Nights concurrently with Parent Nights, parents may leave once they receive the sacrament. If you are not able to have the Sacrament of Reconciliation available during the Parent Night, be sure to remind the parents of the times your parish offers the sacrament.



## A DISTORTED ANSWER

### TEACHING

#### WHAT HAPPENED?

As we discussed last week, sex is God's idea. Sex is not only a good thing, but also an act deliberately willed by God in order to help unify man and woman as they bring forth new life. Our bodies, as male and female, fit together in very complementary ways and were made to be a gift to each other.

CCC 371

In the beginning, our nakedness brought no shame because the body represented a gift to be offered and not an object to be used by the other.  
Genesis 2:25

The creation narratives don't simply elaborate on the goodness of creation; they also explain where sin entered human history. Sin blurred our understanding of this original design. As we might remember from our religion classes, Adam and Eve made a choice to doubt God's plan and their disobedience invited sin into human history.

We call this event "the Fall," and from Adam and Eve's disobedience came original sin. Original sin has been transmitted to all of us and we see the effects of it on the world - suffering, death, and disordered relationships all abound because of this first sin. It is like a disease that every person is infected with.

CCC 390

After Adam and Eve sin, God tells them that they have introduced disorder into the world, and they will now struggle with lust, disordered desire, and face death. Because Adam and Eve chose against God, they would have to accept the new reality they lived in. And now the ripples from that choice continue to spread, impacting every person.

CCC 401-404

Pornography is one of those ripples. And, because of technology, it's everywhere, all the time.

Let's be clear. God's image is still there. The original design for our bodies and what it means to be fully male and female are still there. But, pornography, like having a pair of dirty glasses on, causes our view of sex to be fuzzy. Similar to the old days of watching a TV show when the antenna wasn't quite in the right spot, where you can kind of make out what it's supposed to be, but it's blurred and distorted.

#### IDENTITY THEFT

Pornography is not a new issue. Yes, our technology makes it accessible like never before, but it has existed in some form for thousands of years. King David caught sight of Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, as she was bathing. Due to what David saw, it gave birth to lust in his heart, and ultimately led to pregnancy, shame, death, and deception.

2 Samuel 11:1-5

Because we are made in God's image as male and female, we are reminded that we are a body and soul composite. We are embodied creatures and Saint Paul reminds us that we will receive a heavenly body, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands."God Himself, in the form of Jesus Christ, incarnated in a body and resurrected with a body.

2 Corinthians 5:1, CCC 365-367

As a result, these components cannot be separated without causing great harm. Saint John Paul II said that one of the many problems with pornography is not that we see too much, but rather, that we see too little. It is an affront to our original design because it rips the body away from the soul.

CCC 2354

## THE NUMBERS

The statistics around pornography use are eye-popping. Recently, Josh McDowell Ministry and Covenant Eyes commissioned the Barna Group to do a major study on pornography, called The Porn Phenomenon, and they discovered some startling trends.

- Teens and young adults consider “not recycling” to be more immoral than viewing pornography!
- 22% of young adults ages 18 to 24 consider porn to be good for society, and 8% of that age group actually thinks it is “very good for society.”
- The 18 to 24-year old group is more likely than any other age group to actively seek out porn (57% at least monthly).

## TERRIBLE LIES

Pornography is so alluring to so many people because it is a counterfeit representation of the divine act of sex. It looks and feels like the real thing. But, that’s exactly what sin wants us to believe.

*Optional: Play the video, “Far From Good,” found on the September 2016 Life Support USB or online at LifeTeen.com.*

Pornography and our sexualized culture tell the lie that we are primarily sexual beings and therefore require sex, in its many forms, to survive. But, if we understand our origin, we see that we are primarily spiritual beings and, therefore, require God, in His triune form, to survive.

There is an ache in every human being to understand our identity, which includes an understanding of our sexuality. As a result, we worship whatever we think will satisfy that ache. If we believe the lie that we are primarily sexual, then we will worship sex. When this happens, this gift from God becomes a god itself.

Pornography promises sexual freedom and that anything and everything is permissible, as long as it feels good. The lie of sexual freedom is that by telling us to say “yes” to everything, we are not able to say “no” to anything, and we are actually less free and held captive by our passions and temptations.

True freedom is experienced through embracing an attitude of chastity that is defined by understanding that we are children of God, and only then will we experience the abundant life promised by Jesus Christ.

Pornography communicates a message that “sex is no big deal” even though many bodily expressions have great significance. A hug has meaning. A handshake has meaning. They all have significance.

The sexual act has immense significance because of the body/soul composite. In truth, “casual sex” is an oxymoron; there is no such thing. Because of our original design, the sexual act forms a powerful union between a man and woman. Remember the “fuzzy math” from week one? The two become one. It’s the joining of bodies and souls. And, the brain supports this physical and spiritual adhesion by releasing powerful hormones intended to emotionally attach you to your partner. Everything about sex is a very big deal.

Pornography whispers to its viewing victims, “you’re not hurting anyone by watching.” But the truth is that the very act of viewing pornography gives tacit approval to whatever sinful act is being viewed. What kind of victimization is happening to the people involved? Is it



tied in any way to sex trafficking or child pornography? These are real questions with real impacts.

The act of viewing pornography hijacks the brain's rewards center into believing that real sexual intimacy is being experienced, thereby releasing a potent chemical cocktail that solidifies neuropathways that crave pixels instead of real people. Yes, people are being hurt, including the one who is watching.

*Optional: Play the video, "Adult" found on the September 2016 Life Support USB or online at LifeTeen.com.*

### TAKE ACTION

In church circles, it's common to think, "I have a good kid. He or she hasn't or won't look at porn."

But, the statistics beg parents to pay close attention and be vigilant. It isn't natural for a kid to be repulsed by seeing naked images because many times they will be drawn to them out of a natural curiosity. Remember, sex is good, when enjoyed according to God's original design! If parents want their kids to have a healthy view of sex and sexuality and navigate our "pornified" world, then they must take action.

We can teach our children that through Christ and His grace we can return to God's original plan for our relationships, sexuality, and bodies. When we look at the world we know that something has gone wrong - the effects of original sin remain. But, we don't need to succumb to them.

Our kids are growing up in a schizophrenic world: on one hand, being told to value themselves above all else ("just do it" or "do whatever feels good"), but on the other hand, constantly seeing images that suggest they don't measure up to what is truly talented or beautiful.

This is why children need to be taught what it means to be created in *God's* image. This is why children need to see *models* of purity and chastity in their parents. By understanding what it means to be created in God's image, our children internalize these truths:

- that they have inherent dignity that cannot be taken from them.
- that they have a wonderful destiny that involves hard work and virtue.
- that they can depend on a Deliverer (Jesus Christ) who alone can make them whole.

If these truths are understood, then the trappings of a pornified world will seem like cheap trinkets compared to the endless riches of God's promises.

In the digital age, passive parenting is not an option. Parents who are observant (action), engaged (action), and informed (action) often have kids who learn to use technology well and in a God-honoring way. We will discuss specific strategies for how to protect our homes and children in our next session. But know that the very first thing you can do is to begin to pray that your child will see themselves and others as worthy as God created them. We can't underestimate the power of prayer as we raise our children. God hears and responds and ultimately will bring healing and hope.

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## A GLORIOUS HOPE

### A PARENT NIGHT ON PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY AGAINST PORNOGRAPHY

#### GOAL

The goal of this Parent Night is to offer practical tools to empower parents to protect their homes against pornography and know how to respond when their son or daughter is exposed to it.

#### KEY CONCEPTS

- We must learn areas of our lives where we may be more tempted to sin and what our “triggers” are so we can avoid them.
- Both grace and action are necessary in overcoming any habit or addiction.
- Parents have a responsibility to care for their son or daughter by monitoring Internet usage and putting up appropriate blocks and accountability filters.

#### SCRIPTURE:

Luke 4:1-13  
 Hebrews 2:18  
 Hebrews 4:15-16  
 James 1:12-15

#### CATECHISM:

CCC 540  
 CCC 1808  
 CCC 2340

## ABOUT THIS PARENT NIGHT

This is the final Parent Night in the “Unspoken” series and it begins with a discussion starter that asks parents to reflect on what they wanted to be “when they grew up.” The Proclaim challenges parents to take control of their Internet and be involved in their children’s use of technology. During the Break, parents process the series in small groups and then join the teenagers during the Send to pray before the Blessed Sacrament.

#### ENVIRONMENT

The environment for all the Parent Nights is comfortable and inviting. Place snacks out for parents as they enter the meeting space and encourage Core Members to be relational. Play Christian music in the background and prominently place a cross or crucifix in the room.

#### MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

“Far From Good,” Life Teen Video, September 2016 Life Support USB or LifeTeen.com

#### AS YOU GET STARTED...

*Follow up on the Parent Night* by e-mailing the parents the resource list with links to all the resources so they are easily accessible.

*For added support,* pass out copies of the “Victory” book by Life Teen at the end of the session.

## PARENT NIGHT: A GLORIOUS HOPE

### GATHER

#### Social and Welcome (5 min)

Welcome all of the parents to the session and spend some social time together. Invite a few parents to bring refreshments and snacks, and ask Core Members and your parish priest to be engaging the parents in conversation. Make the room and environment as relational as possible.

After several minutes of socializing, invite parents to sit in their table groups. If possible, ask them to join the table group they were in last week.

#### When I Grow Up Journal and Discussion (15 min)

Pass out the handout “When I Grow Up,” found on the September 2016 Life Support USB or online at LifeTeen.com. Allow the parents a few minutes to write down some of their answers. Keep the tone light during this activity – it is meant to be fun and even humorous.

After the parents have time to reflect, invite them to share their responses with the other parents at the table. Transition to the Proclaim with something similar to the following:

Hope is a good thing. This session is all about hope. Our hope is that you walk out of this session encouraged and hopeful that you can teach your teenagers how to use technology responsibly and knowing that protecting your family from pornography is possible.

### PROCLAIM

#### “A Glorious Hope” Teaching (25 min)

An outline for this teaching can be found on pages 65 to 69. Adapt the teaching content to fit your group.

### BREAK

#### Table Group Discussion (25 min)

Invite the parents to have a conversation that summarizes the series and encourages them as they move forward. Have the facilitator at each table use the following questions as a starting point:

- How do you manage screen time in your home? Does it feel like a runaway train at times? What kinds of rules have worked well for your family?
- When you were growing up, did your parents teach you about strangers? How does the conversation about strangers change with technology in the home and constantly in their hands?
- On a scale of one to ten (one being “I have no idea” and ten being “I would consider myself proficient”), how would you rate your knowledge of how parental controls work on each of these devices in your home?
  - Computer/laptops:
  - Tablets:
  - Smartphones:
  - Wireless router:
- While these safety features take time to set up properly, your child’s innocence is worth the time and cost. What specific steps can you take this week to enhance the level of Internet safety in your home?
- Wearing a bulletproof vest doesn’t eliminate the possibility of being killed with a bullet. In the same way, implementing parental controls can’t eliminate all the risk of your child seeing inappropriate content. At some point, it will happen — maybe not in your home, but maybe at school, on the bus, or at a friend’s house. Does your child know what to do if he/she ever sees porn?

### SEND

#### Eucharistic Adoration with Teenagers (50 min)

Gather all of the parents into the sanctuary space of your parish for a time of Eucharistic Adoration. If you are



my obedience to and love for God, or I will be an example in my repentance.”

The notion of “do as I say, and not as I do” just doesn’t apply here. It doesn’t work!

### **KEEP IT PRACTICAL**

Parents don’t need to be technology experts in order to create an home with a safer Internet. But, parents need to do something. There will be resistance, but resistance doesn’t make something impossible. In the digital age, where access to twisted, distorted, and broken messages are just a millisecond away our words to our children and our actions are still relevant.

One of the most effective tools parents have to help their kids use technology well is conversation. Shame thrives in dark, quiet places. Look your kids in the eye (often) and encourage them to live in the light. Everything brought into the light automatically has less control over us. The tendencies that kids have to hide, blame, and cover melt away when you create space for real, focused conversation.

Parents must be willing to engage in topics that are uncomfortable. What used to be “the talk” has now become “many talks” in the digital age. The Internet never shuts down, which requires parents to be persistent and consistent, keeping the conversation doorway wide open.

We can teach our kids that the body is not to be used for pleasure only or to be feared and be ashamed it - but that our bodies can be used to serve others and can be a gift to our spouses if we are called to marriage.. But, we need to find the courage to talk about these topics with our sons and daughters. If we don’t teach them, someone else will - and we can’t risk our children receiving faulty or broken information from unreliable sources, anymore.

Pass out the Parent Resource handout before speaking through the next section.

There are many free tools that can help you with this conversation. A great starting point is the free resource Parenting the Internet Generation: A Blueprint for Teaching Digital Discernment written by Covenant Eyes. In this e-book, you will find excellent age-specific conversation guides about technology that any parent can use as a starting point.

A second very practical, but effective, tool is to find the right software that can help you monitor Internet usage. But, remember that Internet accountability is not a spying exercise or a game where parents are trying to play “gotcha” with their kids’ Internet usage. In fact, this kind of game can inadvertently chase kids further into the “hide-and-cover zone” as they try to dodge being caught.

Instead, be honest. Install Covenant Eyes Accountability Software on every device in the home and be upfront about it. Say things like, “Did you know that there are over one billion websites on the world-wide web? With a number that big, it’s so easy to venture into places online that will tempt us, even when we aren’t expecting it. Rather than let these things happen in secret, where they can control and manipulate us, we want to keep things out in the light and help each other deal with temptation. That’s why we’re going to use Covenant Eyes to help our whole family use the Internet better.”

Recently, Covenant Eyes asked The Barna Group to survey a group of families that have been using Covenant Eyes Accountability and Filtering software for five years and compare their views with families who do not use Covenant Eyes. The results showed overwhelmingly that the Covenant Eyes families (including their children) have a radically different view of porn than their peers.

A final very practical step is for parents to be involved in all app decisions. Do your homework! Many apps have hidden doorways to Internet search engines or other risks that aren’t included in the app store description. Both



Android and Apple iOS devices have certain parental control functionality that can be utilized to monitor and approve app downloads. Please refer to the this resource list for a list of partners who have made it their goal to keep parents informed as to the latest technology and app trends.

## GET HELP

At some point, you might discover that your son or daughter is viewing pornography. Be as wise as a fox and as gentle as a dove when addressing this issue. Yes, punishment is still appropriate and probably necessary, but with issues of the heart (and viewing pornography is a heart issue), leading with love works best.

Here are a couple of practical steps to take if you discover your son or daughter is using technology inappropriately:

- Don't overreact. This means waiting for the right moment to have a discussion, after emotions have settled down a bit.
- Remind your son/daughter that you still love him/her (show grace).
- Give an opportunity to tell God, "I'm sorry" (Sacrament of Penance).
- Connect him/her to other caring adults, like a youth minister or priest (loving accountability).
- Equip him/her with Bible verses or prayers that will encourage and strengthen (remember, this is a spiritual battle).
- Then, punish as you see fit (consequences).

The order is significant. Lead with love. Follow with consequences. It almost always works better that way.

An excellent tool for middle schoolers and teenagers to use to overcome any kind of porn addiction is Life Teen's Victory app, which is available for Apple's iOS devices. It's discrete and has some amazing functionality, including

daily inspiration, a "one day at a time" approach to recovery, and an accountability button. Thanks to some amazing donors, it's free for download.

Sometimes, a parent might wonder, "how do I know if my child needs professional counseling?" Here are a few cues to look for:

- Your teen's behavior is excessive.
- Your teen can't seem to stop viewing pornography.
- Your teen's pornography preferences are hardcore, bizarre, and/or illegal.
- Your teen is engaging in sexual activities with strangers met online.
- Your teen says they want to see a counselor.

Again, this isn't an exhaustive list, but don't let pride as a parent get in the way of admitting your family might need professional help. Sexual addictions don't ever go away without a lot of hard work. But, the freedom is worth the effort!

Last week, we ended with these words, and they seem like a great place to end tonight. In the digital age, passive parenting is not an option! Parents who are observant (action), engaged (action), and informed (action) often have kids who learn to use technology well and in a God-honoring way.

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## CORE TEAM OVERVIEW

**A GLORIOUS HOPE:** A Parent Night on Protecting Your Family Against Pornography

**GOAL:** The goal of this Parent Night is to offer practical tools to empower parents to protect their homes against pornography and know how to respond when their son or daughter is exposed to it.

**GATHER (20 MINS):**

Social and Welcome: \_\_\_\_\_

When I Grow Up Journal and Discussion: \_\_\_\_\_

**PROCLAIM (25 MINS):**

“A Glorious Hope” Teaching: \_\_\_\_\_

**BREAK (25 MINS):**

Table Group Discussion: \_\_\_\_\_

- How do you manage screen time in your home? Does it feel like a runaway train at times? What kinds of rules have worked well for your family?
- When you were growing up, did your parents teach you about strangers? How does the conversation about strangers change with technology in the home and constantly in their hands?
- On a scale of one to ten (one being “I have no idea” and ten being “I would consider myself proficient”), how would you rate your knowledge of how parental controls work on each of these devices in your home?
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  - Tablets:
  - Smartphones:
  - Wireless router:
- While these safety features take time to set up properly, your child’s innocence is worth the time and cost. What specific steps can you take this week to enhance the level of Internet safety in your home?
- Wearing a bulletproof vest doesn’t eliminate the possibility of being killed with a bullet. In the same way, implementing parental controls can’t eliminate all the

risk of your child seeing inappropriate content. At some point, it will happen — maybe not in your home, but maybe at school, on the bus, or at a friend’s house. Does your child know what to do if he/she ever sees porn?

**SEND (50 MINS):**

Eucharistic Adoration with Teenagers : \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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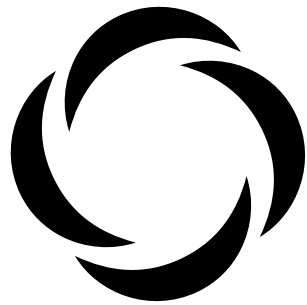
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