

LIFE TEEN

Leading Teens Closer to Christ

www.LifeTeen.com



GUARANTEE OF STORMS

A LIFE NIGHT ON HURRICANE HARVEY, IRMA, AND NATURAL DISASTERS

GOAL

The goal of *Guarantee of Storms* is to help teens both directly and indirectly affected by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma process natural disasters in light of God’s plan and respond in faith.

KEY CONCEPTS

- Asking, “Why?” after a natural disaster or tragedy is a good and important question; let it lead to hope in Christ and not despair.
- The created world operates according to it’s design: physics, thermodynamics, natural selection. When mankind fell, creation also fell. Creation now operates according to its own principles, which sometimes lack the goodness it was originally created with.
- God does not will and is not apathetic toward suffering, but He allows the world to continue on it’s fallen course. He also sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem the fallen world.

KEY TERMS:

Evil
 Human /Moral Evil
 Natural Evil

SCRIPTURE:

Genesis 2:16-17
 Deuteronomy 31:6
 Matthew 14:28-32
 1 John 4:8
 John 3:17
 Romans 8:28

CATECHISM:

385
 390
 396-400

ABOUT THIS LIFE NIGHT

This Life Night has sections dedicated to teens both directly and indirectly impacted by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. *For teens directly impacted*, the Gather is a prayer reflection led by the priest or youth minister, followed by a Proclaim that discusses the origins of suffering and how God works for good in all things. The Break is a small group discussion and the Send is a time of prayer, offering personal petitions to the Lord.

For teens not directly impacted, the Gather offers a scenario filled with inconveniences that cause teens to feel confused and frustrated. The Proclaim discusses the origins of suffering and how God works for good in all things. The Break is a small group discussion and the Send gives teens the opportunity to commit to responding to disasters with faith.

ENVIRONMENT

Instead of having an environment and snacks, print off signs that say, “The money that would have been spent on environment and snacks has been donated to those affected by Hurricane Harvey or Irma.”

MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

New York Times: “After Harvey, A Return Home in High Water” ([youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...))

New York Times: “Deep in Houston Floodwaters, Families Decide to Stay or Go” ([youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...))

Life Teen: “A Good God in a Suffering World” (Edge: August 2015)

Ascension Presents: “Why Does God Let Bad Things Happen?” ([youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...))

Rend Collective: “Rend Collective - “Whatever Comes” (Official Lyric Video)” ([youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...))

For Teens Directly Impacted by Hurricane Harvey or Irma

- What is your experience of Hurricane Harvey or Irma so far? How did you and your family prepare for and react to the storm?
- What have you lost? What have you seen destroyed?
- What emotions have you been feeling and what are your honest reactions to everything?
- How have you seen love appear?
- How might God already be working for good?
- How might God be calling you to love?

For Teens Not Directly Impacted by Hurricane Harvey or Irma

- What is your experience of Hurricane Harvey or Irma? Is it just another hashtag? Do you have friends or family in Texas or Florida?
- Have you ever experienced a natural disaster? Tornado, earthquake, flood, fire, etc...? What was it like? How did God work for good?
- Have you ever experienced material loss or devastation? What was it like? How did God work for good?
- Are there any other “storms” in your life that, in hindsight, you see God was working for good?
- How do you feel called to love those affected by Hurricane Harvey or Irma?

SEND _____

Faith in Action (20 min)

For those directly impacted by the natural disaster, in small groups or as a large group, get in a circle and pray for the needs of the community. Pray for the needs of friends, family, and neighbors. Pray for the rescuers. Pray for the community to come together and support each other. Pray that God works for good. Be specific in your prayers. Use names of particular people and communities. Encourage teens to pray honestly from the heart, not worrying about whether or not it is eloquent.

After the petitions, invite the teens to close their eyes and slowly and prayerfully read Psalm 27 to the teens.

For those not directly impacted by the natural disaster, in small groups, pass out the *Faith in Action* handout and instruct the teens to discuss ways they can commit to aiding a specific relief effort in a material way. For example, the small group will have a bake sale after each Mass on Sunday to raise money for the Adore Ministries Relief Fund or each member of the small group will donate \$20 to the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Relief Fund. After the discussion, instruct the teens to decide on a specific commitment.

Next, the Core Member encourages the teens to not only help materially, but also spiritually, by having them read over the spiritual support portion of the handout and make a personal commitment to a specific prayer. Have the teens share their personal commitment with the small group. Instruct them to check in with each other throughout the week to stay faithful to their spiritual commitment.

Notes: _____



GUARANTEE OF STORMS

KEY TERMS

Evil: The absence of good

Human Evil / Moral Evil: Human action or inaction

Natural Evil: Occurs from the consequences of nature; earthquakes, tornados, floods, hurricanes, etc...

TEACHING

For those directly impacted by the natural disaster, simply transition from the prayer reflection to the Proclaim.

For those not directly impacted by the natural disaster, transition from the Gather by explaining that the inconveniences of those affected by the natural disaster are far greater than a messy room. Entire houses have been destroyed. Possessions, both sentimental and essential, have been lost. People are sleeping in sleeping bags on gym floors, some don't know where their next meal is coming from, and getting from one place to the next is no longer easy; entire worlds have been turned upside down.

WHY?

Whether we are directly impacted by the natural disaster or not, we may find ourselves asking big questions: Why did God do this? Why do bad things happen to good people? How could a good and loving God let this happen? Where is God in all this?

CCC 385

To answer these questions, we have to go back to the beginning when humanity first experienced suffering.

BACK TO THE BEGINNING

God created Adam and Eve, the human race, out of love. He was not lonely. He was not bored. He simply loved and out of His love, we came into being.

Project and read 1 John 4:8b.

He created us in His image and likeness. Therefore, we have the ability to be like Him and give and receive love. We also have the ability to exercise free will, the ability to make decisions for ourselves, to choose to do something one way or another. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve chose not to do it God's way and did the one thing God asked them not to do - eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

CCC 390

Project and read Genesis 2:16-17.

Thus, evil entered into the world, which is now considered fallen. God did not create evil. He created everything good. Evil is simply the absence of good. In this fallen world, there is human evil and natural evil. Human or moral evil stems from human action. Natural evil occurs from consequences of nature — earthquakes, tornados, floods, hurricanes, and the like.

CCC 396-400

Since humans have free will, we are not puppets in the hand of God and we make our own decisions. The created world, oceans, skies, plants, and animals, do not have free will, but are also not puppets controlled by God. The created world operates according to it's design: animals behave according to instinct and natural selection, the weather and the seas ebb and flow in keeping with the laws of thermodynamics, and the sun and stars obey the laws of physics.

When mankind fell, creation also fell; goodness left and evil entered. The Genesis account explicitly says, "Cursed is the ground because of you." Saint Paul in the book of Romans confirms, "We know that all of creation is groaning

in labor pains...” Creation now operates according to it’s principles, which sometimes lacks goodness.

Genesis 3:17, Romans 8:22

Consider playing “A Good God in a Suffering World.”

God never intends suffering; in fact, He weeps over it. God is not apathetic to suffering, and He is not the cause of it. Yet, for reasons somewhat difficult to understand, He allows the world to continue on its natural, fallen course.

John 11:35

God also sent His Son to redeem the world.

Project and read John 3:17.

GOD WORKS FOR GOOD

Project and read Romans 8:28.

God has a way of working for good in the worst of situations.

Share a story from a time when God worked for good during a difficult time in your life.

This does not negate the suffering, but it also does not allow us to be abandoned to hopelessness. God does not abandon us.

Project and read Deuteronomy 31:6.

Share stories and photos of civilians with boats, rowing down the streets that have turned into rivers to rescue complete strangers. Share stories and photos of emergency officials putting their lives on the line to do their job. Share stories and photos of people transporting children and the elderly, crossing the water to get others to safety.

Love has appeared in little ways and in big ways. “God is love” is no longer just a Bible verse; it is a reality to which

we must cling. God shows Himself through His people, and it is this love that will move us forward, no matter what suffering comes our way. God is present in every monetary donation and every rescue, every act of love that points us towards hope. There is tragedy, yes, but there is also human love that participates in Divine Love.

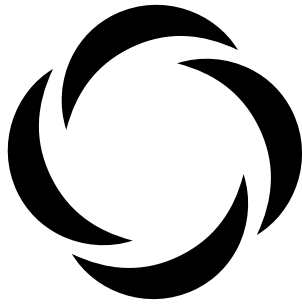
1 John 4:21

How is love appearing in your life? How is God working for good in your life? How is love inspiring your to act?

FAITH IN ACTION

For many people, Hurricanes Harvey and Irma can seem far-off. It’s a hashtag, a photo, another voice in the background of a busy world. Our challenge to you is to ask how you are being called to love. Let this disaster come close; the suffering is real, and we can’t let it become just another news story. Here are some suggestions:

- 1. Pray For:** Take time to intercede for the people of Texas and Florida, for the success of relief efforts, and especially for the most vulnerable.
- 2. Pray About:** Let your prayer stir you to action. Pray about what you would want others to do for you in this situation, and examine what you have to offer.
- 3. Research:** Not all donations are created equal. Research what is truly helpful during a period of disaster. Monetary donations, given to reputable organizations, are most immediately effective. Some organizations you can offer direct support to are listed here on the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops website.
- 4. Act:** Not just today, but everyday. Live out the words of Jesus to love those around you. We, as Christians, must orient our lives around advocating for and assisting the most vulnerable. Love is a lifestyle, not a single action; begin that lifestyle today by doing what you can.



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