
EPIC UNIVERSE

An Edge Social Night

LEADER OVERVIEW

The universe is vast, mysterious, and larger than we know or could ever imagine. Yet, in the midst of the largeness of the universe, God has created our world and He created us. Humankind was created by God and for God and will only ever know true happiness when we are in relationship with God (CCC 27-30). Deep in the heart of every person there is a longing and a yearning for happiness, for greatness, for something beyond oneself.

"It is Jesus that you seek when you dream of happiness; He is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you; He is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is He who provoked you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise; it is He who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it is He who reads in your heart your most genuine choices, the choices that others try to stifle. It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be ground down by mediocrity, the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal."

- St. John Paul II

God is not distant from humanity, nor is He in hiding; rather, He comes to meet humanity and to reveal Himself to it. God reveals Himself in the order of the created world, in the very being of man, and, if that were not enough, God comes to earth and reveals Himself personally to humankind through all of salvation history. Even then His desire for us to know Him and to be in a relationship with Him does not stop. He sends His only Son who is fully God and fully man and paves our path to salvation (CCC 32-35, 54-67).

All of the knowledge of God, all of the revelations throughout history have been safeguarded and handed down to us with great care. We come to know all of these things about God in our own personal experiences but also more fully through reading Sacred Scripture and knowing more about what has been handed down to us through the Catholic Church in Sacred Tradition. (CCC 77-133)

God is mysterious and far greater than we can describe. Everything we try to say about God falls short because we cannot comprehend the infinite. Yet God is not far off. He is not distant. He did not put the world into motion and then step back. Rather, He leaned in and does everything in His power, while still respecting our free will, to reveal Himself to us and to enter into a loving relationship with us.

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EDGE NIGHT OVERVIEW

GOAL

The goal of this Edge Night is to build community through fun activities that also bring the youth to wonder and awe of God and the universe that He has created. It also builds a foundation for the proof of God's existence and His desire for humanity to know Him.

SUMMARY

The Gather contains various games and activities that draw the youth's attention to creation and the vastness of the universe. The Proclaim is a brief teaching about the magnificence of the universe. The Break and Send are combined and the youth participate in a prayer experience adapted from the 38th chapter of the book of Job.

MAIN IDEAS

- God created the whole universe and we can see proof of His existence in the intricate details of the created world and humanity.
- God reveals Himself to humankind in creation, salvation history, Scripture, Tradition, and most clearly in Jesus Christ.
- Humanity is created by God and for God and will only find true happiness in Him.

ENVIRONMENT

Cut out stars and planets and hang them around the room. Create a large sun and moon and put them at opposite ends of the room. Put up pictures or cut-outs of various animals around the room, twist large pieces of butcher paper to hang as vines, and borrow plants from around the parish to put at the entrance to decorate your meeting space.



MEDIA

To Scale: "To Scale: The Solar System" (youtube.com)



SCRIPTURE

Job 38:4-7; Matthew 10:29-31



CATECHISM

27-30, 32-43, 54-67, 74-133

Notes: _____

EDGE SPG: Existence

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EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

GATHER

Edge Night Introduction (5 min)

Welcome the youth and begin in prayer. Introduce anyone who is new, recognize any birthdays, and ask about any big events happening this week. Introduce the Core Team Members and give a brief overview of the topic using the following as a guide:

Does God exist? And if He does exist, how do we know that He exists? That is one of the greatest questions of humanity. This series will start the amazing journey of getting to know who God is and discovering proof for His existence all around us. God is mysterious and far beyond our understanding but because of His great love for us, He choose to reveal Himself to humanity. God does this throughout all of human history, in the Scriptures, in the Tradition of our Church and most fully in Jesus Christ. God is real. God is real. God does exist. We were created by God and for God and in Him we will find the true happiness we all desire. (CCC 54-133)

Get To Know You (10 min)

Break youth into small groups to spend time getting to know one another using the following questions:

- What is your name?
- What school do you go to?
- Would you rather be a tiger, a blue jay, or a shark? Why?
- Would you rather be surrounded by bees, scorpions, or snakes? Why?
- Would you rather live on the beach, in the desert, or in the forest? Why?
- Would you rather be stuck in a blizzard, a thunderstorm, or a sandstorm? Why?
- Would you rather be an astronaut, a zoo-keeper, or a scuba diver? Why?



SUGGESTIONS

Divide small groups by grade and gender and keep them in the same group for the whole year.



STEP IT UP

Name each small group after an aspect of outer space such as a planet, constellation, star, or galaxy.

Animal Noises (10 min)

This game is played in small groups.

1. Stand in a circle and have the youth say their names. Choose one person to go into the center of the circle and close his or her eyes.
2. The rest of the group runs clockwise around the person in the center.
3. The person in the center shouts “stop” and everyone freezes. Then, with eyes still closed, he or she points in any direction and says an animal (e.g.: horse, dog, cat, cow...). The youth who is closest to where the centered youth is pointing must make the noise of the animal.
4. The person in the center guesses who it is based solely off of the animal noise.
5. If the person in the center guesses correctly, then the youth who made the noise then goes to the middle. If the guess is incorrect, the person in the center stays and the game continues.



STEP IT UP

Put together multiple small groups to make the game more challenging.

Dessert Creations (15 min)

Have youth stay in small groups and rotate between three dessert creation stations, giving them two to three minutes at each station. At station one youth decorate cupcakes, at station two each small group creates something out of rice crispy treats, and at station three youth decorate cookies. Allow youth to eat their treats as they go from station to station.



STEP IT UP

Make creation based themes for each station - decorate cupcakes to look like plants, create animals out of rice crispy treats, and decorate cookies to look like outer space.

Solar System Scramble (10 min)

This game is played in groups of eight.

1. Every youth in the group picks a planet (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, or Neptune). Make sure that youth who are in the same group are not picking the same planet.
2. Then, everyone forms two circles- a large circle with a smaller circle inside of it. Be sure that the youth are not standing next to anyone in their group.
3. Start music. While the music plays, the outer circle walks clockwise and the inner circle walks counterclockwise.
4. When the music stops, the groups must reform and get into a line in the correct order of the planets starting with Mercury at the front of the line.

5. The group that is the last to get in order, or gets in the wrong order, is out. Use Core Members to help facilitate the game, to see who the last group is, and to check the order.
6. The game is played until there is one winning group.



SUGGESTIONS

Give each youth a nametag to write which planet he or she is or a colored bandana that identifies the planets to speed up the time of checking the right order.

Fun Facts About the Universe (5 min)

Gather the youth together in a large group and have a Core Member or the youth minister present the following facts about the universe:

- The slowest spinning object in the universe is the planet Venus. A person could walk faster than it rotates.
- The density of every neutron star is equivalent to what you would have if you crushed a cruise ship to the size of the ball in a ball-point pen.
- The large dark blotches on the moon are all names for weather events or emotions e.g.: Ocean of Storms or Sea of Emotions.
- The largest storm in the known universe is Jupiter's Great Red Spot. It is a hurricane that is three times the width of Earth and floats five miles above Jupiter's surface.
- In addition to white, stars are colored red, orange, blue, violet, yellow, brown, and even black. The only color hue missing is green.
- The fastest spinning objects in the universe are pulsars or tiny stars. The fastest of these turn 716 times per second.
- Neptune has the strongest winds in the solar system. They move at 1,300 miles per hour, which is four times faster than Earth's fiercest tornado.
- The Earth's axis is tipped at a perfect 23.5 degrees. Anything more or less and we wouldn't be able to survive.



SUGGESTIONS

Instead of using the facts above play the YouTube video "To Scale: The Solar System".



STEP IT UP

Create a slideshow of pictures to go along with each fun fact and have a Core Member read each fact in an epic deep voice.

Proclaim

"Epic Universe" Teaching (5 min)

This teaching can be found on page 20.

Prayer of Job (15 min)

Youth remain in the large group while a Core Member or the youth minister leads the following prayer reflection. Instruct the youth to bow their heads and close their eyes.

Begin by reading Job 38:4-7:

“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements – surely you know! Or who stretched the lines upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”

Then, say something similar to the following:

Consider God’s magnificence, His power, His might, the epic universe that He has created. He formed the entire universe out of nothing, He knows the exact number of the stars in every galaxy. He knows the deepest depth of the ocean. He created everything.

We are so small and our time here on Earth is so short in comparison to the age of the universe.

And yet, in the Gospel of Matthew, our Lord tells us how very important each one of us is to Him.

A Core Member reads the following passage from the book of Matthew 10:29-31:

“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father’s will. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.”

End by saying the following:

Lord, you are mindful of us. Even in the greatness of who you are and all you have created, you still want to know us and for us to know you. You know us and are concerned with every detail of our lives- all of our joys, our hopes, our fears, our worries, our dreams. While sometimes it may seem like we are little or insignificant or may feel like we are nothing, the truth is to you we are everything. We praise you and we thank you, Lord our God. You are mightier, more powerful, and bigger than we could ever imagine, and yet you know us and love us. Thank you!



SUGGESTIONS

End the Edge Night with a few upbeat praise and worship songs.

Notes: _____

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TEACHING GUIDE

GETTING STARTED

To cover the basic information follow along and craft the talk based off of the bullet points. If your youth are ready to take it deeper, start incorporating a few of the Going Deeper call out boxes (like the one below) by picking the ones your youth would relate to the most.



GOING DEEPER

Check inside these boxes for tips and ideas on how to take your youth a little deeper with the Proclaim.

GOD OF THE UNIVERSE

- Tell a story about a time that you were struck with wonder and awe by the vastness of the universe or a favorite fact or show you enjoy about the universe.
- The universe is massive. There are solar systems, stars, and galaxies far beyond our wildest imagination. The universe is bigger than we could ever comprehend – and so is our God. (CCC 39-43)
- Yet, in the midst of such complex systems and the vast expanses of stars, God has created our world and He has created us.
- God created man with great care and great love. Man was created by God and for God and will only know true happiness in God. (CCC 27-30)
- We can come to know that God exists in many different ways – through seeing order and design in the created world, through our own human reason, through our instinctual understanding of right and wrong, and through a desire for happiness and something greater than ourselves. (CCC 32-35)
- God reveals Himself to man through all of salvation history and most specifically through Jesus Christ. We can know all of this because of Sacred Scripture (what we know from the Bible) and Sacred Tradition (what has been handed down to us through the Catholic Church). (CCC 54-133)
- This semester we are going to be diving into getting to know who God is and more about the world He has created.
- Challenge the youth to star gaze this week and contemplate the vastness of the universe.

Notes: _____

