THROUGH THE STORM
AN 8TH GRADE RETREAT

EDGE

Middle School Ministry

LIFE TEEN
ABOUT THIS RETREAT SERIES
How do we weather the storms in our lives? When the waves come, and the winds pick up, will we be able to withstand what comes our way?

*Through the Storm* is designed specifically for 8th-grade youth to help them understand the importance of having a firm foundation in Christ. They will learn that through a relationship with Jesus, in reading the Scriptures, and in acting upon the will of God they will build an immovable foundation for their lives. In doing so, when they face the storms that inevitably come in high school they will not be washed away but rather stand firm in their faith and the truth.

USING THIS RETREAT
This Retreat breaks open the Scripture verse from Matthew 7:24-27 that speaks of building a house upon rock rather than sand. It is written specifically for 8th-grade youth but can be used for any age with adaptations. This retreat shows the youth the importance of having a firm foundation in Christ as well as gives them the practical tools of learning to hear the word of God and act upon His will. That way when the storms come in their lives, they will be able to stand firm in truth and love, the firm foundation that is a life with Christ.

We suggest that you utilize this Retreat as a day retreat. Ideally, this retreat would be done as the 8th -graders are transitioning out of middle school into high school and from Edge to Life Teen. We suggest doing this retreat on a Sunday and ending the retreat with an evening teen centered Mass followed by the 8th -graders attending their
first Life Night. If your Life Teen program meets during the week, then have this retreat the weekend before the 8th-graders attend their first Life Night.

**PREPPING THE CORE TEAM**
Give all the materials to the Core Team well in advance and discuss any questions, concerns, or ideas for adaptations. If a Core Member is running a talk or small groups for the youth, make sure that he or she is prepared well in advance.

Go over any specific needs for the retreat setting or any special tasks that will need to be done by the Core Team according to your retreat location.

**INTRODUCTORY MATERIALS**
The *Goal*, *Summary*, *Main Ideas*, *Scripture*, and *Catechism* give a snapshot of what will be happening during the sessions and what the main focus will be. Review these points before each session and use them as a guide in preparing content.

**ENVIRONMENT**
The environment serves the purpose of preparing the youth before the content is discussed; it is meant to help the youth refresh their mindset as they enter the room. This will set the tone and help the youth prepare their hearts for the topic before the session begins.

Because this is a retreat, take extra time to make the environment special and allow each of the sessions environment to build upon the previous environment. This way the youth will have visuals that constantly remind them of what they have discussed and give them visual cues to guide them throughout the retreat.

**MEDIA SUGGESTIONS**
*Media Suggestions* provides music and video clips that creatively support the content and main themes of the retreat sessions. While planning, take a look at the media suggestions and consider weaving a video clip or song into the retreat session. Media communicates with our hearts and minds in a unique and powerful way – especially the hearts and minds of youth.

*Note that there are suggestions for videos from Life Support. Due to the vast majority of our parishes subscribing to both Edge and Life Teen, we intend to help those parishes to see the wide variety of ways they can utilize their video content from both. These videos are only used for suggested content and not the main content of the Edge Night to ensure that those who only subscribe to Edge are not missing any vital content.

**FLOCKNOTE**
For those parishes that also subscribe to Flocknote, *Parent Letters* are loaded into the interface. Simply log in to schedule these communications to be sent. You can find more information about subscribing to Flocknote at flocknote.com.

**SUGGESTIONS AND STEP IT UP**
The *Suggestions* are helpful tips and pointers for running different activities. *Step It Up* involves different ways to amp up the activities for those parishes with more resources, bigger budgets, and more time to invest in big ideas.

**PROCLAIM**
The attention span of modern middle school youth is not very long. To cater to the audience, the teachings should be no more than ten minutes. The *Proclaim* is written in a bullet point fashion to encourage the speaker and youth minister to shape and mold the content to be specific for the middle school youth they are serving.

There are various suggestions in italics for stories or images to be projected. This is to help make the teaching more interactive while holding the attention of the middle school youth.
**SMALL GROUPS**

Due to the great range of development during the middle school years, it is recommended that youth are broken into small groups that are both grade and gender specific. For the youth to really get to know one another and feel comfortable opening up and sharing their faith, it is also recommended that they stay in these same small groups with the same Core Member(s) for the entirety of the retreat. Also consider having an identifying item to give each youth, such as a bracelet or bandanas, to build an extra sense of community among them at the retreat.

**HANDOUTS**

All the handouts for the retreat sessions are on the March 2017 Edge USB and online at www.lifeteen.com under Edge Support: March 2017. 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 retreat.

**PARENT LETTERS**

The Parent Letter contains a brief overview of the retreat sessions along with discussion questions for the family to use as a follow up from the retreat.

The Parent Letter can either be emailed in advance or after the retreat. It can also be helpful to give the parents the content that will be covered in the retreat during the registration and signup process so that they know more about the retreat ahead of time. The Parent Letter can be found in both English and Spanish on the March 2017 Edge USB and online at www.lifeteen.com under Edge Support: March 2017.

### SAMPLE DAY RETREAT SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>Check in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:15 am</td>
<td>Session One: The Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:20 am</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 am</td>
<td>Session Two: The Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:40 am</td>
<td>Free Time and Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 pm</td>
<td>Session Three: The Will</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:05 pm</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:15 pm</td>
<td>Session Four: The Storm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:55 pm</td>
<td>Break and Snack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 pm</td>
<td>Sacrament of Reconciliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>Mass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Life Night</td>
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Notes:

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SESSION OVERVIEW

GOAL

The goal of this session is for the 8th-grade youth to realize the importance of having a firm foundation in Christ.

SUMMARY

During the Gather, the 8th-grade youth will be given an introduction to the retreat as well as challenged to see who can build the longest standing human pyramid. The teaching introduces to the youth the importance of building a strong foundation in Christ. The Break gives them an opportunity to reflect on the teaching, and the session ends with a prayerful Send during which the youth journal about the different foundations in their lives.

MAIN IDEAS

- There are transitions coming in your lives as you move onto high school that many of you may be excited for, may be uncertain of, or you might just be scared about. But you must never forget that through it all you are not alone.
- Jesus Christ is the strongest, most sure, never moving foundation upon which we should build our lives.
- This retreat is focused on giving you tools to build the foundation of your life in Christ so that when the storms come, you will not crumble but you will be able to stand tall and strong in Christ.

ENVIRONMENT

The theme of the whole retreat is to create a strong foundation in Christ. Create an environment that looks like a construction site with different signs, barriers, scaffolding, and caution tape around the main meeting space. Hang up hard hats and reflective vests at the front of the room and have tool belts and work boots below them. Put up large building blueprints at the front of the room for various sizes of buildings. This environment remains the same through the entirety of the retreat.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 7:24-27

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SESSION OUTLINE

GATHER

Gathering Music (10 min)
Gather in the youth with upbeat music and fun lighting. Core Team Members should be scattered around the room welcoming youth, dancing to the music, and helping the youth to feel at ease.

Retreat Introduction (10 min)
Welcome the youth, give any rules for the retreat, and introduce the Core Team. Begin in prayer and use the following as an example to introduce the theme of the retreat:

A lot of planning and work goes into the construction of buildings. There are countless steps of planning and gathering materials before the construction even begins. But there is one thing that all buildings have in common, a firm foundation. If a building does not have a firm foundation, it will not last. It will not stand strong, and eventually, the building will crumble. The same thing is true for our lives. As we begin to build our lives and journey towards discovering who we are and God’s will and plan for our lives, it is important for us to have a firm foundation.

Human Pyramid Challenge (10 min)
This game is played in gender specific groups of ten. Core Members should not be a part of the pyramid. They can help the youth climb to the tops of the pyramids and should be available to help them safely get down.

1. Instruct the youth that they will be building human pyramids.
2. Each group is given a few minutes to discuss how they will build their pyramid.

3. On “GO” the groups will build their pyramids by having four youth get on their hands and knees on the ground. Then the next group of three youth gets on their hands and knees on the backs of the four who are on the ground. Then a group of two makes the next level in the same fashion, and finally, the last youth climbs to the top of the pyramid.
4. The longest standing pyramid wins a prize.

STEP IT UP
Have a Core Member take photos of each pyramid and give a prize to the group with the best poses while in their pyramids.

PROCLAIM

“The Foundation” Teaching (5 min)
This teaching can be found on page 18.

BREAK

Small Group Discussions (10 min)
Break the youth into small groups and use the following questions for discussion:

• Would you rather be in hiding from a tornado or a tsunami? Why?
• Why is it important for buildings to have strong foundations?
• Why does it not make sense to build on sand or another weak surface?
• If Jesus is the ultimate rock foundation, what do you think would be some examples of sand foundations?
• What does it look like for you to have a foundation built on Christ? How would that be lived out day to day?

SEND

My Foundations (20 min)
Bring the youth back to the large group. Create a prayerful environment with a focal point on a picture of Jesus or a cross, dim the lights, and play prayerful music in the background. Give each youth a sheet of paper and a pen and ask them to spread out around the room. Project the following journaling questions for them to reflect upon:

• What foundations do I currently have in my life that form who I am?
• If I could, would I change any of these foundations? Why?
• How will my foundation form the type of person I will be in high school?

After the youth have had an opportunity to reflect on these questions, bring them back together and pray an Our Father for the intention of openness during the rest of the retreat and learning how to build a strong foundation in Christ.

STEP IT UP
Buy journals for all the youth to use throughout the retreat.

Notes:
“THE FOUNDATION” TEACHING GUIDE

UPON THE ROCK

• *Project the retreat environment image found on the March 2017 Edge USB.*

• There are transitions coming in your lives as you move onto high school that many of you may be excited for, may be uncertain of, or you might just be scared about.

• Through all of this, we cannot forget that we are not alone. We have the support of our families and community, and Christ is with us in every single situation of our lives.

• It may be hard to believe or hard to notice Him, but that is why it is important to start building a solid foundation for your life in Christ. This foundation will strengthen you in times of trouble and help you to know what to do and how to turn to God for help.

• *Read Matthew 7:24-27.*

• *Ask the youth to respond: What is the difference between rock and sand? Why would you want to build a house upon a rock instead of sand?*

• Rock is firm, it is solid, it is not easily moved. It is strong, it is secure, it is a safe place to build upon.

• Sand is fleeting, ever moving with the tides, it is easily moved and washed away. It is soft, it is not secure, and it is not smart to build houses on sand.

• *Share a funny story about trying to build or set something up improperly either on a bad foundation, with the wrong supplies, or not following the directions.*
SESSION OVERVIEW

GOAL

The goal of this session is for the 8th-grade youth to learn how to read and pray with Scripture as the first step to building their foundation in Christ.

SUMMARY

This session begins with a Gather that will get the youth thinking about how often they listen but do not hear. The Proclaim dives into the importance of hearing God’s words and that Scripture is a crucial component of building a firm foundation. The Break gives the youth an opportunity to discuss the teaching as well as to memorize Scripture verses to help them during times of need. The session ends with an introduction and opportunity for the youth to learn and pray with Scripture.

MAIN IDEAS

- It is common that we can listen to things, but we don’t really hear them.
- The Bible is God’s words to us. It is one of the main ways that He communicates Himself to us. Through the words of Scripture, we learn about who God is and what His plans are for us; it is one of the surest ways that we can build a relationship with Him.

MEDIA

Life Teen Video Support September 2012: “Scripture Aptitude Test” (lifeteen.com)

Edge Video Support: March 2010 “Books of the Bible”

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 7:24-26, Hebrews 4:12

CATECHISM

101-104

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SESSION OUTLINE

GATHER

Gathering Music (5 min)
Gather in the youth with some upbeat music.

Lyrics Challenge (15 min)
This game is played in a large group.

1. Pick out lyrics from twenty different appropriate popular songs.
2. Place a buzzer at the front of the room.
3. A Core Member reads out a stanza randomly from one of the songs and asks the youth the following questions:
   a. Who is the artist?
   b. What is the name of the song?
4. Youth who know the answer run to the front of the room.
5. The first one to hit the buzzer gets to guess. If he or she guesses correctly, he or she gets a prize. If he or she guesses incorrectly, the second fastest person gets to guess. If he or she guesses incorrectly, the round is over.
6. Repeat steps 3-5 for all the songs.

PROCLAIM

“The Words” Teaching (10 min)
This teaching can be found on pages 28-29.

BREAK

Small Group Discussion (10 min)
Break the youth into small groups and use the following questions for discussion:

- Would you rather be a character in (insert one of your youth’s favorite movies) or in (insert one of your youth’s favorite movies)? Why?
- What is your favorite story from Scripture? Why?
- Why is it important to our faith to have something like Scripture?
- Why is it important for us to read it?
- What questions do you have about Scripture or how to read it?

Keep Me In Mind (10 min)
Keep the youth in their small groups. From the front of the room explain to them the importance of having certain Scripture verses memorized in times of need.

Project the following list of Scripture verses and have the youth each pick one that sticks out to them the most and have them write it down and begin to memorize it. Add to this list if needed.

- “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)
- “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.” (Psalm 51:10)
- “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)
• “But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)
• “You will seek me and find me; when you seek me with all your heart.” (Jeremiah 29:13)
• “Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” (Philippians 4:6)
• “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10)
• “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32)
• “For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)
• “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.” (Philippians 4:4)
• “We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

SEND

Lectio Divina (20 min)
Youth come back to the large group. Pass out Bibles to each of the youth and give them a piece of paper and a pen. Give them a brief introduction to lectio divina using the following as an example:

It is wonderful to sit down and read the stories of the Bible, to listen to them during Mass, and to even memorize different verses, but the Word of God is “living and effective” (Hebrews 4:12). This means that it is not just a bunch of stories that have nothing to do with your life, but rather that at all times, God is working to reveal something specifically to you at this moment in your life through Scripture. Scripture is how we hear the voice of God and build our relationship with Him. One way to hear God’s words for your life is to learn to pray with Scripture. One way to pray with Scripture is called lectio divina.

At this time lead the youth through lectio divina. Either pick one verse for all the youth to pray with or choose the Gospel for the upcoming Sunday.

Help the youth to find the right section to follow along in their Bibles or project the verse and use the following outline to lead them through lectio divina:

Instruct the youth first just to listen to the words that are being said.
Read the scripture passage out loud and slowly.

Instruct the youth to listen now for a word or a phrase that stands out to them.
Read the scripture passage out loud and slowly.

Finally, instruct the youth to confirm the word or phrase that stood out to them.
Read the scripture passage out loud and slowly.

Now have the youth write down their answers to the following questions based off of the word or phrase that stood out to them.

1. What word or phrase stood out to me?
2. What does it mean to me?
3. What is God trying to say to me?
4. What concrete action can I do today to live this out?

Allow time for any youth who want to share with the group what stood out to him or her from the passage and why. End the session together in prayer and thanksgiving for the great gift of the Word of God.
**SUGGESTIONS**
Rather than having the youth share with the whole group take some time to let the youth turn to a partner and take turns sharing.

Notes:
“THE WORDS” TEACHING GUIDE

HEAR THESE WORDS

• Ask the youth to respond: How many of you were surprised in the Gather game that you did not recognize the songs?

• It is common that we can listen to things, but we don’t really hear them. Like in the case of our game, we may have heard those songs a million times, but when we slow down to just the words, we don’t recognize them.

• This can happen with Scripture too. We hear it all the time at Mass, but often we are not actually listening to the words or what is being said. You can test this by trying to retell what the readings were to someone after Mass.

• The Bible is God’s words to us. It is one of the main ways that He communicates Himself to us. Through the words of Scripture we learn about who God is and what His plans are for us; it is one of the surest ways that we can begin to build a relationship with Him.

• In the Old Testament, we hear incredible stories of how God communicated to His people and revealed Himself in a variety of ways, all in attempts to bring His people back to Him. The Old Testament is filled with accounts of heroic battles as well as beautiful poetry speaking of the love and mercy of God.

• Open up a Bible to the Old Testament and point out some of the specific books.

• In the New Testament, we have the Gospels, which tell us of the life of Jesus Christ revealing to us where He came from, what He taught, and what He did for us to save us from our sins.

• Open your Bible now to the Gospels and point out the four Gospels.

• The Gospels are followed by letters to various places where early Christians lived instructing them on how to be followers of Christ as well as telling stories of the early Church.

• Open your Bible to a few of the books of the New Testament.

• The Word of God is more than just a bunch of stories about things that happened: “the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

• Sacred Scripture is one of the main sources of our faith, and it informs us of who God is and what it looks like to be a follower of Him.

• Read the Matthew 7:24-27 again and emphasize “he who hears my words.”

• Part of building a strong foundation in Christ is learning how to listen to Him through Scripture and to hear the words that He speaks to us.

• He desires for us to be strong and wants to help us build good lives full of happiness and true joy. But that comes first with getting to know Him and having a relationship with Him so that He can be the foundation of our story.

• We build this relationship with Christ by not only reading Scripture but also in praying with it and memorizing it. When we do this, we will find that in times of need, the words of God will come to mind to comfort and strengthen us.

• Share a story about a time in your life where you faced a great trial and how the words of God from Scripture came to mind and helped you through it. Share what verses specifically came to mind in those moments.
SESSION OVERVIEW

GOAL

The goal of this session is for the youth to see the importance of acting upon the words of God and following His will for their lives.

SUMMARY

This session begins with a fun Gather game where the youth play a game trying to guess who the leader is. The Proclaim discusses the importance of following the will of God which brings about true freedom and happiness. During the Break, the youth watch a video and discuss the video and the teaching. The Send gives the youth an opportunity for silent prayer and reflection with an examination of conscience.

MAIN IDEAS

• It is not enough to just hear the words of God; we must also act upon them.
• God has created us with a free will. We have the option to choose to do good or to do evil - the choice is always ours. The “way of Christ ‘leads to life’; a contrary way ‘leads to destruction’” (CCC 1698).
• As we continue to seek God through building a relationship with Him, through reading Scripture, through the sacraments, through prayer, and through living moral lives. His will and plan will slowly unfold as we live our lives with Him. (CCC 1731)

MEDIA

Edge Video Support March 2017: “Captives” (lifeteen.com)

Edge Video Support November 2016: “Heartbeat Dreams” (lifeteen.com)

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 7:24; John 8:34, 10:10

CATECHISM

27, 1468-1470, 1698, 1731, 1733

Notes:
SESSION OUTLINE

GATHER

Gathering Music (5 min)
Gather in the youth with some upbeat music.

Find the Leader (20 min)
This game is played in a large group.

1. The youth create one large circle facing towards each other.
2. Choose one youth to leave the room.
3. Choose one youth to be the leader.
4. The leader must make small hand motions and gestures, and everyone else in the group imitates him or her.
5. The leader must change these hand motions every ten to twenty seconds - but it is important that he or she does so discreetly and that the other youth do not make it obvious who the leader is.
6. The leader begins with his or her first hand motion and the rest of the youth join in.
7. Bring back in the youth who left the room.
8. He or she stands in the middle of the circle.
9. The leader begins to change hand motions every ten to twenty seconds and the youth in the middle of the circle must try to identify the leader.
10. He or she has three attempts to find the leader.
11. If the leader is identified, he or she then becomes the youth who goes outside of the room to be the next guesser.
12. Play this game for as many rounds as time allows.

PROCLAIM

“The Will” Teaching (10 min)
This teaching can be found on pages 38 to 39.

BREAK

Video: Puppets (5 min)
Play the video “Captives” from the Media Suggestions.

Small Group Discussion (10 min)
Use the following small group questions for discussion:

• Would you rather always have someone make decisions for you or have to always make decisions for someone else? Why?
• What stood out to you the most from this video?
• What does it mean to say that someone becomes a slave of sin?
• How do all the choices we make in a day form our lives?
• What does it mean to be truly free? How is this different from the popular definition of freedom?
• What are some things you are already doing in your life to follow the will of God?

SEND

Silent Prayer (15 min)
Bring the youth back into the large group. At this time lead the youth to the church or chapel for a time of silent prayer and reflection.

Pass out an examination of conscience to all of the youth as well as a pen. An 8th-grade specific examination can be
found on the March 2017 Edge USB or online at lifeteen.com under Edge Support: March 2017. Encourage the youth to reflect on the questions in the examination. Have them write down different things in their life that are leading them on the path to life in Christ and things that may be leading them down the path of destruction.

Also, have Bibles available and encourage the youth to read through scripture practicing *lectio divina* and listening to what God wants to speak to them.

**SUGGESTIONS**
If possible have a priest available to hear confessions.

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THE WILL

Read Matthew 7:24-27 again and emphasize “and does them.”

It is not enough to just hear the words of God; we must also act upon them.

God has created us with a free will. We have the option to choose to do good or to do evil - the choice is always ours. The “way of Christ ‘leads to life’; a contrary way ‘leads to destruction’” (CCC 1698).

It can be tempting to fight against God’s will, or we might try to make decisions even though we know they are wrong just because we want something. But when we live our lives chasing things that lead down the road of destruction, we will never be happy.

When we choose to do things contrary to God’s law, we do not find more freedom, but rather we find the slavery of sin for “every one who commits sin is a slave to sin” (John 8:34).

This is because the desire for God is written on our hearts and only He will satisfy our deepest longings for happiness. Man “is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself” (CCC 27).

Play the video “Heartbeat Dreams” from the Media Suggestions.

Because we were created by God and for God - we will find ourselves freer when we follow Him and His will for our lives. (John 10:10)

While many people may think that true freedom comes in choosing to do whatever we want whenever we want, the truth is that “the more one does what is good, the frerer one becomes” (CCC 1733).

One way that we can learn the good things to do that will help us to experience freedom is by following the commandments of God.

The rules that God gives us to help us form our lives are not to punish us, but rather to help us to find this true freedom that comes from living our lives in accord with how we were created.

None of us are perfect; we will all fail at some point in time and fall into the temptation to sin. When this happens, we are given the great opportunity to go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

In this sacrament, we are forgiven of our sins and brought into right relationship with God again and set back on the path of His will and true freedom. (CCC 1468-1470)

The will of God will not just magically appear to us one day, but rather it is a matter of continually orienting our lives towards God and the good.

It is a matter of forming our conscience, frequently going to the sacraments, and knowing how to make good choices that lead us on the path of life towards Christ.

As we continue to seek God through building a relationship with Him, through reading Scripture, through the sacraments, through prayer, and through living moral lives. His will and plan will slowly unfold as we live our lives with Him. (CCC 1731)

Share a story about how you found God’s will for your life whether that was through finding your vocation or your call to work in middle school youth ministry.
Notes:
SESSION OVERVIEW

GOAL

The goal of this session is for the 8th-grade youth to realize that in times of suffering they can turn to Christ and that this will come more naturally if they already have a firm foundation built in Christ.

SUMMARY

This session begins with a Gather bringing the youth in with fun music and then giving them an opportunity to build a storm in a jar. The Proclaim explains the reality of suffering and how Jesus transforms suffering. The Break gives the youth an opportunity to discuss the talk as well as introduces them to the popular devotion to Mary Star of the Sea. The Send is an opportunity for the youth to pray a scriptural rosary as well as to celebrate and wrap up the retreat.

MAIN IDEAS

- Jesus is warning us of the storms that inevitably will come in our lives and shows us the importance of having a firm foundation to survive when they do come.
- We do not have a choice in whether or not we will experience suffering or feel the effect of evil - but we do have a choice in whether or not we will let Christ into those moments to transform them. “St. Thomas Aquinas wrote, ‘There is nothing to prevent

human nature’s being raised up to something greater, even after sin; God permits evil in order to draw forth some greater good’” (CCC 412).
- With Jesus, you never suffer alone. He loves us and is with us in our suffering. He even allows us to unite our suffering to His and offer it up for specific intentions or for those that we love. This is called redemptive suffering.

MEDIA

Edge Video Support August 2016: “Unfinished” (lifeteen.com)
Edge Video Support August 2016: “A Good God in A Suffering World” (lifeteen.com)

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 7:24-26, 1 Corinthians 9:24, 15:54-56

CATECHISM

385, 412

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SESSION OUTLINE

GATHER

Gathering Music (5 min)
Gather in the youth with some upbeat music.

Storm In A Jar (10 min)
Before the retreat, collect the needed supplies for this activity: five to ten glass cups or jars, shaving cream, black light or blacklight flashlight, glow in the dark or neon paint, water, pipettes, and souffle cups.

To create the glowing rain, add the neon paint to the souffle cups and add water. Put the lid on the cups and shake to mix in the paint - do this with as many colors as you choose and have multiple cups of each color available as multiple storms will be made at the same time.

At the front of the room set up a table and place a plastic table cloth over it. Set out enough jars so that there is one per small group. In each jar or glass fill it up of the way with water and then create a cloud on top of the water using shaving cream. Place one pipette by each jar and put out the various cups of neon colored water. Put a blacklight on the table or have a few blacklight flashlights pointed at the jars.

SUGGESTIONS
Get enough blacklight flashlights for each small group and have each small group create a storm in a jar in their group allowing each youth in the group to participate in adding rain to the storm cloud. More information about this experiment can be found at: growingajeweledrose.com/2016/04/storm-in-jar-experiment.

PROCLAIM

“The Storm” Teaching (10 min)
This teaching can be found on pages 50 to 52.

BREAK

Small Group Discussions (15 min)
Break the youth into their small groups and use the following questions for discussion:

• Is there anyone in your life who has experienced great suffering but has done so with the help of Christ and with great faith? What did that look like?
• Why do you think it is so important to suffer with Christ? How does He make suffering different?
• What types of storms do you think you might face in high school?
• How can you prepare now in building a strong foundation to face those storms?

Mary Star of the Sea (10 min)
Bring the youth back to the large group and lead them to the church or chapel. Use the following to introduce the youth to a popular devotion to Mary as the Star of the Sea:

In ancient times people used the stars for navigation. Sailors, in particular, would rely solely upon the stars as there was never a stable landmark to navigate from and in the midst of storms they would cling to the stars to help them find their way back to their route. Mary, the Mother of God, has also been given the title Star of the Sea because she is the one who constantly guides us to her Son, Jesus Christ. She helps us to navigate through life and in the midst of the storms of our lives she shows us the right way and is our bright light of hope leading us through the darkest of times. She is our hope, guide, and light not only because of...
her great example of living a life of Christ, but she is also a channel of God’s grace through her love and constant intercession for us. Just like a star reflects the light of the sun so too her light does not come from herself, but rather her light is a mere reflection of the light of her Son Jesus Christ.

In the twelfth century St. Bernard of Clairvaux wrote, “If the winds of temptation arise; If you are driven upon the rocks of tribulation look to the star, call on Mary; If you are tossed upon the waves of pride, of ambition, of envy, of rivalry, look to the star, call on Mary. Should anger, or avarice, or fleshly desire violently assail the frail vessel of your soul, look at the star, call upon Mary.”

So too should we call upon Mary as the Star of the Sea in the midst of our storms to be our hope and our guiding light to help us find the way through darkness and suffering to her Beloved Son.

**SEND**

**Scriptural Rosary Decade (30 min)**
Instruct the youth that Mary is our constant intercessor in times of need and will always help us when we turn to her with our prayers and that one of the greatest prayer devotions of the Church is the rosary. Then lead the youth through the “Scriptural Rosary” handout found on the March 2017 Edge USB or online at lifeteen.com under Edge Support: March 2017. This handout focuses on the Fifth Sorrowful Mystery of Jesus’ Crucifixion with scripture verses before each Hail Mary.

Close the rosary decade by praying together the following prayer for the intercession of Our Lady Star of the Sea. After you have finished the prayer allow for a short time of silence in front of the Blessed Sacrament before it is reposed or before you leave the chapel as a group.

**SUGGESTIONS**
If you are not ending the retreat with Mass have snacks and drinks available for the youth or consider inviting in families for a large potluck dinner.
STEP IT UP

Give each youth a retreat themed t-shirt and a blessed medal of Our Lady Star of the Sea.

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SCRIPTYURAL ROSARY

Handout

Read the following Scripture verses before each Hail Mary as you pray the Fifth decade of the Sorrowful Mysteries.

1. “And when they came to the place which is called ‘The Skull,’ there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on the right and one on the left.” (Luke 23:33)

2. “And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.’” (Luke 23:34)

3. One of the criminals crucified with him said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” (Luke 23:42)

4. “And he said to him, ‘Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.’” (Luke 23:42)

5. Standing by the cross were Jesus’ mother and the disciple whom He loved. (John 19:25-26)

6. Jesus said to His mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” Then to the disciple He said, “Behold, your mother!” (John 19:26, 27)

7. “And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.” (John 19:27)

8. “And there was darkness over the whole land. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks split” (Luke 23:44; Matthew 27:51).


10. “And having said this he breathed his last.” (Luke 23:46)

SCRIPUTURAL ROSARY

Utilize this handout to lead the youth in praying the Fifth Sorrowful Mystery. The printable version can be found on the March 2017 Edge USB.
“THE STORM” TEACHING GUIDE

THE STORM

• Project intense images of different types of storms and read Matthew 7:24-26.
• In this parable, Jesus is warning us of the storms that inevitably will come in our lives and showing us the importance of having a firm foundation to survive when they do come.
• Ask the youth to respond: what are different types of storms you see your friends or peers caught in?
• Storms will come in our lives - whether it is the loss of a loved one, facing extreme peer pressure, or struggling with anxiety.
• Because we live in a fallen world where sin and evil exist, there is no avoiding suffering. (CCC 385)
• But we can know with certainty that God can make good out of every situation even if we do not understand it. (CCC 412)
• We do not have a choice in whether or not we will experience suffering or feel the effect of evil - but we do have a choice in whether or not we will let Christ into those moments to transform them. “St. Thomas Aquinas wrote, ‘There is nothing to prevent human nature’s being raised up to something greater, even after sin; God permits evil in order to draw forth some greater good’” (CCC 412).
• If your youth struggle with why God allows suffering, consider playing the video “A Good God in A Suffering World” from the Media Suggestions.
• Jesus Christ overcame all suffering and evil by His death on the cross, and He has the power to make good even out of suffering.
• Read 1 Corinthians 15:54-56 and project an image of the Resurrection.
• With Jesus, you never suffer alone. He loves us and is with us in our suffering. He even allows us to unite our suffering to His and offer it up for specific intentions or for those that we love. This is called redemptive suffering.
• Share a story about a time in your life that you experienced great suffering or sorrow but how it was different because you were united with Christ in the midst of it.
• So how do we become this type of person? The one who experiences suffering and is not only strong through it, but sees the good that comes out of it and allows his or her life to be transformed by Christ in the midst of it?
• This is not something that will magically happen - but is a result of a life built on a firm foundation in Christ. This is a result of building a relationship with Christ by listening to His words and allowing His will to form our lives.
• Jesus was human; He knew what it was like to lose loved ones or to be ridiculed. He knew incredible suffering, and He can help us through anything. He understands because He was one of us.
• This is a continuous journey, and our relationship will continue to grow as we grow in our faith, but it is important that we never give up and never stop trying. (1 Corinthians 9:24)
• Play the video “Unfinished” from the Media Suggestions.
• Work to build your foundation and relationship with Christ in prayer, Scripture, and the sacraments. Then when that storm comes when you are at a party and offered drugs, or get the phone call that you lost a loved one, or feel exiled from a certain group of peers...
you will not be washed away but rather stand tall and strong in Christ because you know who you are and that you are loved and not alone.

- That does not mean that these situations will not be difficult or sad, or you won’t make mistakes, but you know that you have Christ on your side to stand with you through it all. He is your strong foundation that will keep you from getting washed away.

- The greatest prayer and hope is that as you go forth into high school that you will truly be like the “wise man who built his house upon the rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock” (Matthew 7:24-25).

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