

Pro-Life Youth Night

Faith Without Works is Dead: 40 Easy Ways to Build a Culture of Life

GOAL

The goal of this Youth Night is for teens to grow in their understanding of what it looks like to proclaim/build a culture of life. Through the example and courage of others witnessing to the pro-life culture, we can have the confidence to build a culture of life through our faith and actions.

ABOUT THIS YOUTH NIGHT

This Youth Night is designed to be used with the teen track video presentation by Brian Westbrook that was created for the 2020 Respect Life Convention.

GATHER

Welcome and Introductions (5 min.): Gather the teens into the main meeting space, welcome them to the night, and do any necessary introductions.

Opening Prayer: Begin with a spontaneous prayer or consider using the prayer below.

Note: This could alternatively be used for the closing prayer if you are limited on time.

Prayer for life by Saint John Paul II

O Mary, bright dawn of the new world, Mother of the living,
to you do we entrust the cause of life.

Look down, O Mother, upon the vast numbers of babies to be born,
of the poor whose lives are made difficult,
of men and women who are victims of brutal violence,
of the elderly and the sick killed by indifference or out of misguided mercy.

Grant that all who believe in your Son may proclaim the Gospel of life
with honesty and love to the people of our time.

Obtain for them the grace to accept that Gospel as a gift ever new,
the joy of celebrating it with gratitude throughout their lives
and the courage to bear witness to it resolutely, in order to build,
together with all people of good will, the civilization of truth and love,
to the praise and glory of God, the Creator and lover of life.

~~ Pope John Paul II's Encyclical Letter "The Gospel of Life"

Given in Rome, on March 25, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, in the year 1995.

Who Am I?: (10 min.)

4-6 teens are selected to play this game and come up to the front one at a time. The youth leader will tape the name of a celebrity/famous person on the back of the teen so they cannot see it. They will turn around to show the rest of the group their "celebrity name". The contestant will then ask questions that can only be answered with a "Yes" or "No" by the rest of the group to gain clues about their identity (ex: Am I male/female? Am I an entertainer? Am I an athlete? Am I a historical figure? Am I alive now? Etc.). The contestant that guesses their identity in the least amount of questions wins a prize of your choosing. Have several celebrity names ready (they should be ones that all the teens are familiar with), and you can choose more contestants to participate dependent on time.

After ending the game, to transition into the Proclaim section, explain that one way to know about someone is by/through their actions. Would someone describe us as pro-life because of our actions?

PROCLAIM (approx. 20 min.) *Video presentation featuring Brian Westbrook*

Summary of Video: Are you fed up with abortion in our country? Are you looking for ways to be involved, but feel like you could do so much more? Then join Brian Westbrook as he discusses 40 easy ways to build a culture of life. Brian's full-time work in the pro-life movement for over a decade has given him great insight on many simple, but effective ways that normal regular people of all ages can make a real difference and save more lives.

Bio: *Brian Westbrook's life changed after witnessing the near-death experience and miraculous recovery of his firstborn son in 2008. Brian went on to become the Founder and Executive Director of the Coalition for Life St. Louis conducting sidewalk counseling, community engagement, and pregnancy center services. Brian is also an innovative leader, sought after speaker, and strategic advisor to pro-life leaders around the country.*

Brian's pro-life work has resulted in over 2,700 turnarounds at local abortion facilities and a dramatic reduction of abortions in St. Louis by 99.4%. Brian's work has been featured in The New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, and CNN along with numerous articles and interviews in local publications and radio shows.

Brian is married to his beautiful wife Marisa and currently lives in St. Louis, MO with their 6 children.

BREAK

Small Group Discussion (20 min.): Divide into small groups. The Small Group Leader should open in prayer and lead the small group discussion related to the video presentation. It's ok if you don't get to every question, but make sure that you do leave time for everyone to reflect on the Last Question/Send before going back to the large group.

Keep in mind during your discussion that while abortion is the preeminent issue discussed, being pro-life and putting our faith into pro-life actions happen in many ways. Brian mentions many examples specific to abortion, but also includes others that are broader. Our hope is that young people see that being pro-life is more than just being anti-abortion.

Questions:

- What struck you while watching/listening to the video? Is there any one person or their actions that you would like to be sure and remember or learn more about?
- Read James 2:14-17 (Relationship between Faith and Works)
 - How do the people Brian mentions in the video put their Faith into Action (Works)?
 - How do you/have you put your faith into action or How can you?
- Who is someone in your life that you think lives out their faith by their works/actions?
- What obstacles keep you from being more outspoken/active when it comes to living out your faith? *(this could be related to talking about being Pro-Life, abortion, or any topic of faith... for example, Brian mentions in the video that we might think we are too young, it's embarrassing or awkward, talking about that is uncomfortable, etc.)*
 - How can we overcome these obstacles?
 - How can you be pro-life through your actions within your Family? Your School? Your Church/Youth Group? Your Community?

Last Question in Small Group/Send (Be sure everyone has time to think about/reflect on this): Each person should think of at least one small thing they can do in the next week to share the Gospel/ Build the Culture of Life. They could share this with the rest of their group or write it down on a notecard to take with them as a reminder. Ideally, small group leaders can follow up with students the following week to see what their experience was like.

SEND (20-30 min.)

Large Group Discussion (10 min.): Youth Leader should facilitate a discussion based on ideas suggested by the small groups/teens about Pro-Life activities that the group could take part in. Decide as a group what to do and schedule a date/time if possible. If not possible to schedule right away, the youth leader should be sure to follow up and let everyone know when it is scheduled and invite all to participate.

Pro-Life Rosary (20 min.): Lead the teens in a Pro-Life Rosary (prayer intentions can be found here: <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/rosaries/pro-life-rosary-prayer-intentions>)