



# LAST WORDS

*(LIFT MY HANDS)*

FOR PARENTS, TEACHERS AND CHURCH LEADERS

HELP YOUNG PEOPLE EXPLORE THE THEMES IN THE SONG/VIDEO

[BETHESMBOL.COM](http://BETHESMBOL.COM)

# **Last Words(Lift My Hands)**

*A resource for Parents, Teachers, and Church Leaders*

Prayer:

Mary, Mother most pure, and Joseph, chaste guardian of the Virgin, to you I entrust the purity of our young people. I beg you to plead with God for me that we may never, for the remainder of our lives, soil our souls by any sin of impurity. I earnestly wish that we will all be pure in thought, word and deed in imitation of your own holy purity. Obtain for us a deep sense of modesty, which will be reflected in our external conduct. Protect our eyes, the windows of our souls, from anything that might dim the luster of a heart that must mirror only Christ-like purity. And when the “Bread of Angels” becomes food in Holy Communion, seal our hearts forever against the suggestions of sinful pleasures. Finally, may our families, schools, parishes and homes be among the number of those of whom Jesus spoke, “Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God.”

Hail Mary, full of grace the Lord is with you  
Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb Jesus  
Holy Mary, mother of God  
Pray for us sinners,  
“So that we may be saints.”

Hail Joseph, spouse of Mary  
Of whom as born Jesus called Christ  
Blessed are you the just one who believed  
And blessed the Messiah whom you guarded as a son  
Most holy Joseph, mystical father of God  
Pray for us sinners,  
“So that we may be saints.”

Amen

*“Last Words(Lift My Hands)” music video by The Symbol, filmed and edited by Chari Films. Produced by all is love media.*

**Explanation of the song:**

This song written by Brandon Morel(The Symbol) serves both as a testimonial and a prayer; a story of redemption and transformation by surrender to the Father’s will. Inspired by the last words of Jesus found in scripture; “Father into your hands I commend my spirit.” - Luke 23:46

The transparency and honesty of the song, although not explicit, does present some challenging themes. These particularly relate to those struggling with sins/temptations against God’s plan for human sexuality. It alludes to and points out that the world’s plan for our sexuality is pleasure-centered, uses contraception, and does not glorify God or uplift mankind. The lyrics direct us to knowing that all of this can only be overcome by grace and surrender to God. Because of these themes, we felt it would be helpful to create resources that could assist other adult leaders in instructing young people about these topics in collaboration with this music video.

**Explanation of the video:**

The symbolism in this video contains two performance shots of the artist, one in a jail cell dressed as a “criminal” to show the reality of sin; and two is the image of a silhouette of the artist against the sunrise to show how by surrender to “the rising sun”(another symbol for Jesus) such inclination to sin can be overcome.

This video also contains a story of a young person who is bullied in school, and instead of holding on to his anger he forgives his enemy(Matthew 5:44), surrendering his pain to God. As the story progresses you see that the bully is actually experiencing his own traumatic experiences at home with abuse from his father.

In the end, through the teacher’s invite, all wind up at a prayer group and find peace in surrender to God’s will. In many ways the bully represents not only bullying, but also how the cycles of sin as they continue to pass from person to person, and generation to generation. The role of a saint is one who forgives like Jesus did.(Luke 23:34).

The very last visual of the video is one of the artist looking into the camera through the bars of the jail cell. The purpose of this is to show that as long as we are in the world, in a sense, we will always have to deal with the imprisonment that sin has all around us until the end time. This speaks to Jesus’ words in his prayer to the father in John 17:15-18 stating *“I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world.”*

The hope is that this video will inspire viewers to reflect upon their own “bullies” and “cycles of sin”, feeling inspired in prayer/daily action to surrender these all to the will of God in their lives. That they will persevere despite any sins floating around in their family, society, and world, enduring to the end in “running the good race” as the apostle Paul puts it in 2 Timothy 4:7.

**About the artist:**

Brandon Morel, also known as The Symbol, is an international performing/recording artist, entrepreneur and public figure working to engage the culture directing it towards love. His background as a teaching artist for over 10 years with Peace Education through theater, visual arts and music has given him a very dynamic approach towards teaching and serving.

Brandon is a Catechist/organizer of youth sessions at Santa Maria Parish, Idente Youth professor, member of the World Youth Parliament in the US, founder of the AMDG movement, has been a designer for Exodus 40 clothing line, lead organizer of The Encounter NYC, president of all is love inc, and is currently in his novitiate as a consecrated Lay person of the Institute Id. of Christ the Redeemer (Idente Missionaries) which is a religious community of Pontifical Rite in the Catholic Faith. He has Directed films involving faith and culture in collaboration with ESM ministries and The Catholic Youth Minister (dot) com. Brandon has also traveled all throughout the New York/Tri-state area, across the country, and abroad for speaking, performing and educating in values.

In addition, Brandon Morel (The Symbol) is the Director of Youth Ministry at the Sacred Heart Of Jesus Catholic Church in Bayside Queens, New York City working under the Diocese of Brooklyn, and the Assistant Program Director of the Mount Carmel Teen Project in the Bronx which was founded as a teen gang prevention program in remembrance of Lesandro "*Junior*" Guzman(a 15 year old who was murdered by a corner store in June 2018 due to gang violence).

**About Chari Films:**

Chari Films, founded in 2018 by Justo Jesus Diaz, is a media production company focused on capturing the beauty of the Catholic Church and God's glory here on Earth as it is in Heaven.

Our mission is to create short films, testimonial documentaries, and other forms of visual media to evangelize and proclaim to the world that Jesus Christ is alive and still transforms the hearts of many today. The media platform allows us to reach the masses on an exponential level, therefore, we pray that God can use our films as a bridge to touch those in most need of His mercy and to shower those in most need of His graces all across the world.

**About All is Love media:**

All is Love produces, and releases content which directs others towards the fullness of love (agape).

Everything we produce reflects a common experience of human life and its struggle, while also uplifting the person into a consciousness that will propel them to strive upward always and in turn, forward.

We believe that the mainstream media, and pop-culture produces messages which damage the mind, heart, and spirit of the human person. "All is Love" wishes to be the alternative to these messages with universal content that opens persons up to the fullness of truth.

Our **mission** is to engage all aspects of modern culture to transform the way all individuals comprehend themselves and others.

We **value** the human life in the greatest esteem of love, and feel it is our responsibility to bring to reality art that promotes universal ideals that transcend divisions and enhance the quality of human life for all.

We **believe** the model for this love is Jesus Christ, and this love operates through his church in this world.

We **serve** the church, ministries, non-profits, and any organization or groups of people that believe in this mission of love, as long as they coincide with Catholic moral teaching.

In short all is love because God is Love, and as we produce content we wish for it to be a reflection of the revealed truth in the love of Christ.

**Last Words(Lift My Hands)Lyrics:**

*Pre-chorus:*

So I lift my hands to the sky and I surrender my soul  
Said I left my hands to the sky and I say Lord take control

*Chorus:*

Into your hands I commend my spirit(4x)

*Verse 1:*

Each and every day each and every day  
Every moment every hour every second Pray

There's no way no way I'd make it through the day  
If it wasn't for your humble embrace  
I be stressing all that's left of me is ego and pride  
All the things that I always try to keep inside  
Growing pains in my brain in my heart I cry  
Molested in middle school wanted suicide  
Mad at dad mad at mom mad at world  
As a team in NYC sought false love in my girl  
At 15 the first condom broke  
At 17 she was pregnant and my wallet's broke  
Still to this day I'm impatient as ever  
I approach each sacrament like Lord I'm yours forever  
There's absolutely no way to overcome alone  
The instigating passions in my agonizing soul

*(Pre-chorus)*

*(Chorus)*

*Verse 2:*

If these were our Lord's last words  
These are my last words let them be my first  
In my life yeah I've done some dirt  
And not listened to the spirit when he sent alerts  
Yeah I know that I don't deserve anything but death but Christ bore my curse  
He was there through all of the hurt  
And every time I couldn't control my sexual urge  
Worried about what my financial status is  
And how I lost 2 kids through miscarriages  
Called to be great - but I keep living average  
Want to live Holy Lord but I'm so bad at this  
'Til this day I'm impatient as ever  
I approach each sacrament like Lord I'm yours forever  
There's absolutely no way to overcome alone  
The instigating passions in my agonizing soul

*(Pre-chorus)*

*(Chorus)*

### **Statistics on young people and distorted sexuality:**

1. 92% of teens report going online daily from their smartphones- including 24% who say they go online “almost constantly,” *according to Pew Research Center.*
2. Today’s youth spend an average of 9 hours a day consuming media — watching TV, listening to music, surfing the Web, social networking, and playing video games(*Common Sense Media*)
3. According to recent data, 90% of young men age 18 have been exposed to pornography-much of which is hard-core (meaning it often involves violence and overtly explicit imagery). Of the 90%, **the average age** these young men were sexualized by pornography was between **8-11 years old.**
4. Similarly, 60% of young women by the age of 18 have been exposed to porn as well. Almost 80% of this exposure, which isn’t always voluntary, is happening in the perceived safety of their homes.
5. 71% of teens keep their online habits from their parents and 90% of the 8 to 16 year olds who have viewed online porn did so while doing homework.
6. 60% of families who give their children smartphones, do so between the ages of 10 and 11. (20% give their children phones between the ages of 8 and 9.) This is in fact the same age that the average child in our nation is exposed both voluntarily and involuntarily to explicit material.

*If you are wondering what potential impact this can have upon a child, think of this... Though exposure to explicit material affects each individual differently, the overall damage it can cause is sobering to say the least. The truth is that ongoing exposure can lead to sexual addiction, unplanned pregnancies, and/or puts children at a higher risk of being victims of sexual violence. It molds and shapes their values and attitudes towards themselves, as well as how they view others around them. This can often lead to a distorted perception of reality, a devaluation towards human life in general, as well as trivializing violent behavior.*

Simply put, it damages a child’s development, and unless it is dealt with properly and carefully, these children will take these destructive patterns, perceptions and behaviors into their future. (*Covenant Eyes, [internetsafety101.org/pornographystatistics](http://internetsafety101.org/pornographystatistics), [growing wireless.com](http://growingwireless.com) )*

### **Statistics on Teen Pregnancy in America(From <https://www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy/about/index.htm>):**

1. In 2017, a total of 194,377 babies were born to women aged 15–19 years, for a birth rate of 18.8 per 1,000 women in this age group. This is another record low for U.S. teens and



a drop of 7% from 2016.<sup>1</sup> Birth rates fell 10% for women aged 15–17 years and 6% for women aged 18–19 years.

2. U.S. teen pregnancy rate is substantially higher than in other western industrialized nations, and racial/ethnic and geographic disparities in teen birth rates persist.
3. In 2017, the birth rates of Hispanic teens (28.9) and non-Hispanic black teens (27.5) were more than two times higher than the rate for non-Hispanic white teens (13.2). The birth rate of American Indian/Alaska Native teens (32.9) was highest among all race/ethnicities.<sup>1</sup> Geographic differences in teen birth rates persist, both within and across states. Among some states with low overall teen birth rates, some counties have high teen birth rates.

### **God's plan for human sexuality:**

Taking all of the above into consideration, and viewing this from a faith-filled perspective we can see that the purpose of our sexuality is to understand how to give our bodies as Jesus did. If we are to imitate Christ, loving like God, then we must learn to speak the same language that he spoke with His body in the incarnation. This love of God was spoken all throughout his life in a way that was *Free; Total; Faithful; and Fruitful*.

Dr. Albert Mehrabian, author of “Silent Messages”, conducted several studies on nonverbal communication. He found that **7%** of any message is conveyed through words, **38%** through certain vocal elements, and **55%** through nonverbal elements (facial expressions, gestures, posture, etc). This means that a lot of our life and our interactions, even without realizing it, is lived through our bodies. Man is composed of both body and soul. The soul is the form of the body and thus gives it life. The body is the expression of the soul. St. Thomas Aquinas says that grace perfects nature, meaning that God's action does not negate nor go against our physical realities but instead elevates it. A life lived with God in a state of grace means then even our physical bodies, our daily lives, and how we communicate are all one, not separate entities of life, but all complimentary.

For us, this means that human sexuality, as the language of the body, can only be completely true within the context of marriage between one man and one woman. In scripture, from the very beginning at Genesis 1:27, we see that, “*God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and God said to them: Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that crawl on the earth.*” God's first command to mankind is to have sex, but in a way that honors and glorifies him; and one that is open to life.

The apostle Paul puts it this way, “It is good for a man not to marry. But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. . . . I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.” (1 Corinthians 7:1B–3, 7–9) Understanding this, the human person should be directed towards understanding their sacramental vocation, whether it is to marriage, single, or religious life.

### **Tips on how to teach human sexuality as adult leaders:**

1. Instill Daily Prayer
  - a. Anything can be used, but a consecration to the Holy family is a great start.
  - b. Morning prayer and evening prayer(A simple start is in the morning make the sign of the cross say from your heart, “Father I am here to do your will.” Then, in ending the day making the sign of the cross once again and repeating with love Jesus’ last words which were “Father into your hands I commend my spirit...” and further adding - I commend my day, I commend my efforts; I commend all I am entrusted to care for; I commend my family, my community, and this world. Amen.”)
  - c. Prayer before and after meals
  - d. St. Michael Prayer
2. Use Child safety apps, websites, and other parental controls(*one resource is listed below*) on all smart devices to limit the exposure to such materials.
3. Live a consistent sacramental life(*reconciliation/confession regularly, and a minimum of once a week Eucharist on Sunday or Saturday evening*)
  - a. Find a regular confessor or find a spiritual director for you as an adult
4. Talk to children not only about sexuality, but about the value of their own bodies along with the value of all human persons. (*Try to be the first to speak to them about these things, before the media and society shape their view of these things. And even if your child has already been exposed, by dialoguing with them you can help to redirect their minds.*)
  - a. One thing to look at is to examine, and discuss the themes of self sacrifice and roles of man/woman in Ephesians 5
5. Work to get parents, educators, and other adults(*grandparents, other family members, coaches, etc.*) on the same page with this set of values.
6. Try to instill limits on the amount of time on technology(*especially unsupervised*)
7. Pay attention to the songs being listened to, and shows watched.

8. Speak about vocation with young people consistently. Help them to understand God has a Sacramental calling and non sacramental calling with their work/profession in the world. Starting from young, helping them to think about if they are called to religious life or marriage is important in them understanding God's plan for their sexuality for them particularly and individually in light of our faith.
9. Healthy eating and exercise taught to young people as well as practiced with the family(*in understanding our bodies connected with our soul, we can understand that taking care of one also helps the other*)
10. Watch the music "Last Words" music video, examine the lyrics and themes, discussing with young people their significance in their lives. Ask questions about their own experiences and their peers such as if they know anyone struggling with such things, and even if not ask continuing to ask in their opinion what can be done to help.
11. Make the goal of Sanctity("Holy as the heavenly father is Holy" - Matthew 5:48) something commonly spoken about in your home, with your students, in your parish, etc.
12. (For parents specifically) Make it a point to bless your children. God grants a special opportunity to parents to guide his children and for children parents have the ability to access many more graces than anyone else. Before bed, before they leave your home, and before you leave their presence as a whole simply make a sign of the cross on their forehead and offer them to our Lord.
13. (Also for parents) Make technology usage only accessible in common areas of the home(kitchen, living room, etc. try to limit usage in bedroom or bathroom or other private areas)

**Materials for application:**

1. Worship Version of Last words used for prayer, reflection, and also can be used in liturgical settings(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5Mc9jO8-OM>)
2. Websites for older teens/young adults/adults struggling with sexual addictions(<https://fightthenewdrug.org/> ; <https://www.covenanteyes.com>)
3. App for parents to monitor/ control child's phone (<https://www.qustodio.com>)
4. For teenage pregnancy help ( <https://www.sistersoflife.org/> )
5. Website for the family ( <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/> )
6. See the following pages for worksheets on holiness, etc.(*to be used with youth*)
7. (For teachers/Youth Ministers) See following pages for sample lesson plans/youth nights
8. For parents, just to review on their own marriages and grow together look at the book "The 21 Undeniable Secrets of Marriage by Dr. Allen Hunt" (It's proven that kids with parents in healthy marriages have more of a chance battling these things. Of course if this isn't the case it is not like your child does not have hope, but this is a resource to help.)

## CREATE YOUR SAINT PRAYER CARD

Many times when we think of holiness, it is hard to envision ourselves, our neighborhoods, our lives, etc. as ones that can be holy. With this worksheet, take time to reflect on what you would look like if you were a Saint.

*(Draw the image of you on your saint card here)*

**Saint Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Feast Day:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(This could be your birthday, or some other significant day of your life)*

**Patron Saint of:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Really think of something people know you for, or you would like to be asked to intercede for)*

**Prayer:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(What would be the prayer on the back of your card that people would seek your intercession for)*

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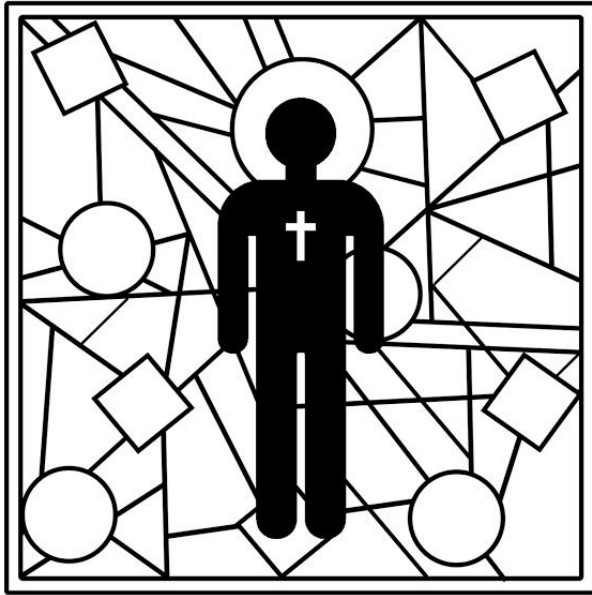
## STAINED GLASS

The beauty of stained glass is only seen when the light shines through it. This is like our lives in how holiness is really when we allow the beauty of the light of God to shine through us.

When we think of ourselves as saints, we also should recognize that holiness in others.

Fernando Rielo says "Dream the other person holy, then go and make it happen."

On this page, label one side for yourself, and add color, then on the other side think about someone of the opposite gender (this could be your brother/sister, family member, someone from school, etc.) and what actions you could take that would help this person be more holy in their lives.



(NAME)



(NAME)

**Below, write how you can help this other person be more holy:**

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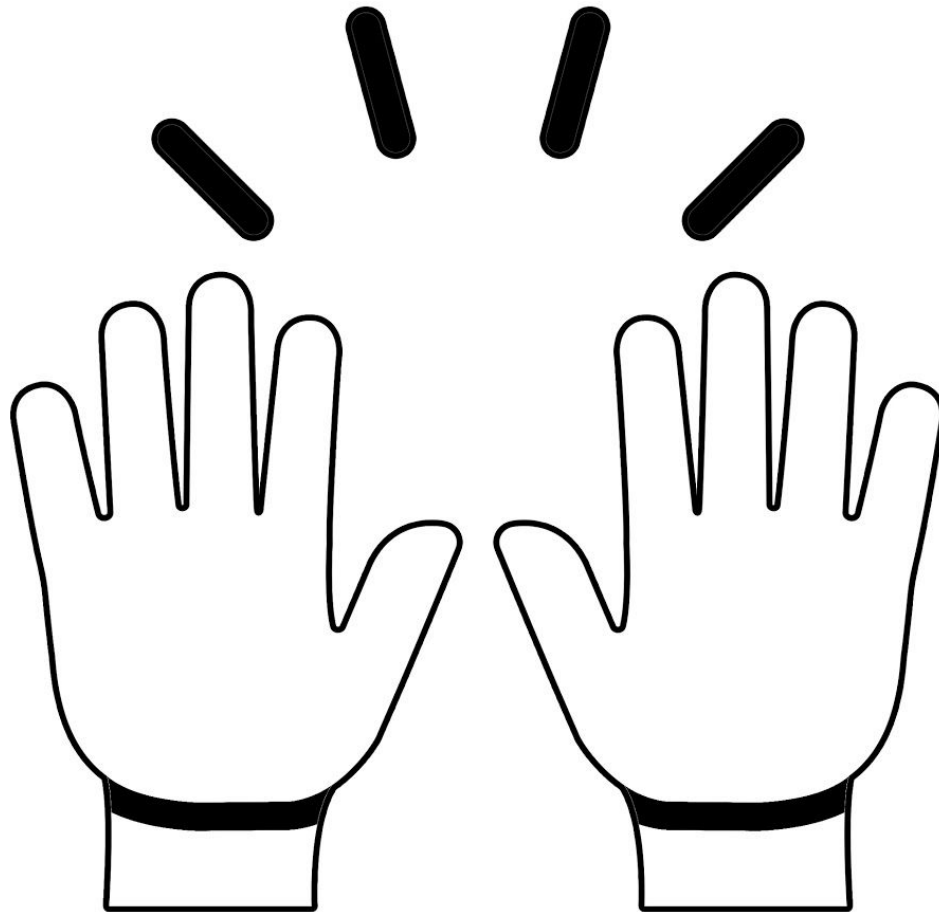
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## LIFT MY HANDS

Sometimes we make mistakes, and allow sin to come into our lives. The beauty of the sacrament of reconciliation/confession is that we are able to let go of all of these sins and through the priest surrender them all to God. Sometimes it is the things that happen to us that make us act in ways that are sinful.

Below, color the hands, and also write some things down that you can let go of and surrender to God.



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**SAMPLE: LESSON PLAN(FOR RELIGION CLASSROOM) USING SONG/VIDEO:**

**Lesson Plan:** Ashes, Lent, and Triduum

**Class length:** Approx. 45 minutes

Objective: To understand the purpose for the liturgical season of Lent, and to inspire young people to take hold of the core truths of the Gospel lessons.

Opening prayer: Spontaneous prayer invoking the Holy Spirit into the room, and to ask for inspiration to better understand/apply the teachings from the actions of Jesus as missionary disciples. Concluding with the ‘Our Father’.

**Opening activity:** Giving high fives to different people around the room and starting dialogues about one’s passions, and experiences with others being compassionate towards them.

Purpose of activity:

1. To release tension, and redirect the energy of the room by getting them on their feet, moving around, and having directed dialogues
2. To spark within the minds of students their own exploration of the meaning of ‘passion’ and ‘compassion’

**Activity 2:** Playing of ‘Ashes’ rap song by Brandon Morel(The Symbol)

Purpose of activity:

1. To engage students with elements of Catholic faith through usage of the arts(*“I would teach children music, physics, and philosophy; but most importantly music, for the patterns in music and all the arts are the keys to learning” - Plato; Also implies usage of the ‘transcendentals’ - Truth, Goodness, Beauty; also see St. Pope John Paul II’s 1999 Letter to Artists; lastly, also Vatican II particularly in Gaudium Et Spes talks about the need to evangelize using the culture of the people[Time magazine in the year 2000 names Hip Hop as greatest youth culture of the world; and in 2017 U.S. music consumption was up 12.7% with Hip Hop surpassing Rock as the highest selling genre of music - it accounted for 24.5% of all music consumption]*)
2. To introduce a new form of music not typically associated with the faith in order to challenge their perspectives on Christianity/Catholicism.
3. That through the lyrics and the expression of the song, students would start to reflect upon the meanings of Ash Wednesday(*see lyrics below*)



## 'Ashes' by The Symbol(Brandon Morel)

*Chorus:*

I know where I came from (2x)

I know where I'm going (2x)

*Verse 1:*

Ashes to ashes, And dust to dust oh  
Molded me from clay and you breathed in me Lord  
I'm fasting I'm fasting I must I must oh  
40 days in the desert to renew my soul  
Yeah - turning point I switched on them  
I left Sodom - was so broken so rotted  
Yeah - now I blast off rocket  
No big beard like James but my heart hardened  
Woah - repentance and change, lessons from pain  
Yes I felt shame, no one to blame but me Lord

*Bridge:*

Cover me with Ashes (6x)

*(Chorus)*

*Verse 2:*

The stains of original sin  
Washed away in baptism still reminded of them  
'Cuz every day I'm inclined to reject you again  
No longer you call us servants Jesus you call me friend  
Where I came from where I came from  
Got to spit it hot - no keynesian  
Right on the drop of that bass drum  
Flame on - flame on  
Burning up - same song  
iPhone notes or crayons - I gotta make this statement uh  
I covering all of my sinning with lyrics I brag and I boast  
For you are true Lord the bread of life I make you blackest of toast  
So butter I'm jamming on track to track from coast to coast  
Funny thing about the fire - that's where ashes come from uh  
My ego burned up your grace  
My pride yes my pride led me to make mistakes  
I deserve no handouts Lord I've disobeyed

Please cover me with ashes, this Lent May I change

*(Verse 1)*

*(Bridge)*

*(Chorus)*

Amen

### **Activity 3: Large group discussion/debrief**

1. Discussed lyrics/themes that stuck out to them in a large group. Then presented the meaning of Ash Wednesday briefly by connecting to Biblical themes(made from dirt - Genesis 2:7; repentance of Ninevites in Jonah 3:6)
2. Spoke of meaning of Lent by looking at Olde English meaning of Lent which is “springtime” and connected it to the concept of “spring cleaning”, or “spring training”. Spoke on how it is a time of purification for ourselves leading up to the Holy Triduum.
3. Went back to meaning of passion/compassion
  - A) Asked Of examples spoken about from first activity
  - B) asked by their own definition of what ‘passion’ meant
  - C) Looked at Latin root word “pati” which means suffering and enduring
  - D) connected this meaning to what happens during the Triduum, particularly on Good Friday on the cross. How Jesus suffered out of love for us and died on the cross(Philippians 2:8)
4. Asked young people then to reflect on how they can truly step into this Lent connecting to Jesus’ passion(suffering) by acting out of “compassion”(suffering with).
5. Summed this all up by saying we cannot do these things on our own power but by surrendering like Jesus to the will of the Father in his last words which should be our first words(“Father into your hands I commend my spirit” - Luke 23:46)

**Closing activity:** “Last Words” music video by The Symbol, directed by Chari Films

**Purpose:** To leave one last artistic representation of all we spoke about.

**Closing Prayer:** Spontaneous prayer leading to a moment of silence where students could reflect on what they truly should give up/surrender to God this Lent out of ‘compassion’ for his ‘passion’. Followed by refrain from Last Words sung as a prayer; Hail Mary; Hail Joseph(written by Fernando Rielo, founder of the Idente Missionaries); St. Michael prayers.

**SAMPLE: YOUTH NIGHT USING SONG/VIDEO:**

**Lesson Plan:** Surrender, Forgiveness and Teamwork

**Class length:** Approx. 1 hour, 30 minutes

*Catechism of the Catholic Church: Sections 811-856*

**Materials needed:**

- Candles
- Index Cards or Post it notes
- Pen/pencils
- Some kind of container such as a basket
- Screen with Projector or TV(to play videos)
- Sound system
- “Helium Stick(s)”
- Blindfolds

As they enter: Play music to make atmosphere inviting(depending on the group, there are good Christian Hip-Hop, Christian Contemporary, Christian Rock, or Christian Pop playlists that can be used; perhaps even a blend of all of the above, etc)

**Room Set-Up:**

- One main large group area with seating set around as a circle
- Large Stand up cross in middle of this space or off to the side to be easily moved into the center later
- Screen & Projector or TV Screen
- Lighting(For a more intense approach perhaps red light, and for a more calm atmosphere use blues and greens.)

**Activity 1: Opening Prayer(2-3 minutes):**

- Invoke the Holy Spirit into the space asking for grace to enter, and for it to be a comfortable environment for the youth people. Pray for needs you know specifically of your community. End with ‘Our Father’ and ‘Hail Mary’

**Activity 2: Helium Stick(Icebreaker, about 15-20 minutes)**

This deceptively simple game is easy to facilitate and gives your group a common experience through which to discuss issues of teamwork and leadership.

*(The "stick" used can be a broomstick, or light weight wood trimming you could get from Home-Depot or some other hardware store. Whatever it is should be something around the size*

*of your typical broomstick, and should be very lightweight/ almost unnoticeable when being held.)*

#### How it's Played:

Form two lines facing each other. Lay the "stick" on the group's index fingers.

Goal: Lower to ground.

Reality: It seems to magically rise up.

#### Facilitation:

- Line up in two rows which face each other. (With large groups feel free to break into smaller teams for this exercise - you can even make it into a competition)
- Introduce the Helium Stick.
- Ask participants to point their index fingers and hold their arms out.
- Lay the Helium Stick down on their fingers. Get the group to adjust their finger heights until the Helium Stick is horizontal and everyone's index fingers are touching the stick. Explain that the challenge is to lower the Helium Stick to the ground.
- The catch: Each person's fingers must be in contact with the Helium Stick at all times. Pinching or grabbing the pole is not allowed - it must rest on top of fingers.
- Reiterate to the group that if anyone's finger is caught not touching the Helium Stick, the task will be restarted. Let the task begin...
- Warning: Particularly in the early stages, the Helium Stick has a habit of mysteriously 'floating' up rather than coming down, causing much laughter. A bit of clever humoring can help - e.g., act surprised and ask what are they doing raising the Helium Stick instead of lowering it! For added drama, jump up and pull it down!

#### How Does it Work?

The stick does not contain helium. The secret is that the collective upwards pressure created by everyone's fingers tends to be greater than the weight of the stick. As a result, the more a group tries, the more the stick tends to 'float' upwards

#### End with a debrief on the game:

- What was the initial reaction of the group?
- What skills did it take to be successful as a group?
- Explain how this collaboration is how we are as a church supposed to work together and how this should be a safe space for people in their successes as well as their failures. (Use *1 Corinthians 12* to speak about Unity in the body)

#### **Activity 3: Video(6 minutes)**

- "Identity Short Film" ( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikGVWEvUzNM> )

- Purpose:
  - Get them to think about their true identity(Especially their identity in Christ)
  - Introduce the place of the individual in the community(*Again reference 1 Cor. 12*)

#### **Activity 4: Small Group discussions (20 minutes)**

*(Make sure small group leaders reiterate that this circle is a safe space and no one will be judged, as well as what is said in that space will be kept confidential.)*

##### Questions:

- Describe yourself in 3 words; why?
- Which people have had the most influence on your life, why?
- What are your best memories, and how have they helped you become who you are today?
- What are some things that have happened, or parts of yourself you feel afraid to share with other people(parents, teachers, and/or friends)?

#### **Activity 5: Trust Falls (10-15 Minutes)**

- In their small groups: One member of the team is selected and stands on a raised platform, next they fall backwards relying on the support of their team to catch them. This quick team building activity is all about support and trust and great when in the forming stage of team development.

#### **Activity 6: Last Words Video(5 Minutes)**

Purpose: To leave one last artistic representation of all we spoke about and introduce the idea of surrender for the purpose of building community.

#### **Activity 7: Worship/Prayer session with guided meditation**

- Music Playing(Use Last Words Worship Version instrumentally)
- Backpack meditation(10 minutes):
  - This meditation is good for high school and college students. Close your eyes and relax. Breath deeply. Imagine each part of your body relaxing. Feel the calm travel up from your toes to your legs. Relax your back and your shoulders...your neck and your head. Imagine yourself sitting here (the place where you are at). You get up and walk to the door. You open the door and you are in your favorite place. Where are you? Picture the sights and sounds of this place as you walk around. As you reach the center, you can see Jesus standing there with his arms outstretched. What do you say to him? What questions do you have for him? What does he answer? As you are talking, Jesus hands you a backpack. It is filled with symbols, words, phrases, and memories of all the experiences which have influenced your faith journey throughout your life. You look inside. What do you

find? Think back to your childhood - what you first learned about God. Who or what have influenced you most since then? What obstacles have you faced in your faith journey? Who has helped you through these rough times? What questions have you wondered about? You see at the top of the backpack those issues which you and Jesus have just discussed. You also notice that there is still room left for future growth and learning. Jesus explains that you will always wear your backpack. However, once you leave this place, it will become invisible. When you are finished talking to Jesus, say goodbye. Walk back the way you came until you come to the door of (the place where you are now). You walk inside and sit back down where you are now and open your eyes.

- As music continues to play allow kids to use index cards, etc to write out things they want to let go of and place in basket/container at the foot of the cross.(Use Last words and possibly one other worship song)[10-15 minutes]

**Closing Prayer:**

*(You can have the music continue to play here or allow it to go to silence)*

One last time re-inforce how this is a safe space, and pray that God continues to grow the youth in your church community, and gives grace to their families. End with St. Michael Prayer.... “St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.”

## **SAMPLE 2: YOUTH NIGHT USING SONG/VIDEO:**

**Lesson Plan:** “Netflix and Chill”

**Class length:** Approx. 1 hour, 30 minutes

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:** Sections 2331-2371

### **Materials needed:**

- Tape
- Screen with Projector or TV(to play videos)
- Sound system

**As they enter:** Play music to make atmosphere inviting(depending on the group, there are good Christian Hip-Hop, Christian Contemporary, Christian Rock, or Christian Pop playlists that can be used; perhaps even a blend of all of the above, etc)

### **Room Set-Up:**

- One main large group area with seating set around as a circle
- Screen & Projector or TV Screen
- Lighting(*Perhaps blues and reds mixed to create the purplish/pinkish look as you will be speaking about relationships, romance, etc. from God’s perspective*)

### **Activity 1: Opening Prayer(2-3 minutes)**

- Invoke the Holy Spirit into the space asking for grace to enter, and for it to be a comfortable environment for the youth people. Pray for needs you know specifically of your community, and especially mention relationships, marriages, and families. End with ‘Hail Mary’ and ‘Hail Joseph’

### **Activity 2: Ice-breaker(7-10 Minutes)**

- Use tape and wrap around each child’s hand with the sticky side facing outwards.
- Have them give a ‘Hi-five’ to someone of the opposite gender in the room(using the hand with the tape). Each time they will stay there and dialogue about a question given
  - Example questions:
    - What thing is your ‘pet-peeve’ or gets on your nerves the most? Why?
    - What thing brings you the most joy? Why?
    - Who is the person you are closest to in your family? Why?
    - Name one weird thing about yourself most people don’t know.
    - If you were stuck on an island and could only have one person with you, who would it be? Why?

- If there was a fire in your house and you could only save 3 things from your bedroom what would they be? Why?
- Do this a few times and then circle them back up into the main meeting area.
  - Debrief: Talk about how they shared something about themselves with each person they met, and how every time they let go of the ‘hi five’ going to a new person the tape became “less sticky” Use this as a way to talk about how on a deeper level intimacy is supposed to be with that one person in marriage but the world/the media, etc has distorted that.

### **Activity 3: Music Video(4 minutes)**

“Best Part” by Daniel Caesar & H.E.R. ( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKgl5-lkT8U> )

- Purpose: Using this visual of the beach by the shore during those two times of the day, creatively speak about the importance of the difference between man/woman, and how God’s true plan for sexuality is beautiful as it is true intimacy between a husband and wife, and not something evil/dirty, etc.

### **Activity 5: Talk (5 minutes)**

- Debrief concepts presented in the video
- Using Genesis 1:27-28, speak about how God’s first command was for sexuality between man and woman in marriage, and how this beautiful design has been messed up because of the fall.

### **Activity 6: Small Groups(separated by guys and girls) - 15-20 minutes**

- Questions:
  - Describe your perfect wedding. What would it look like? Who would be there? Who would be your best man? Maid of honor? Etc.
  - What do you think are the different roles between a guy and a girl?
  - What do guys/girls want out of a relationship?
  - In your own words, what is our culture’s message about sex?
  - What do you think God has to say about sex?

### **Activity 7: Talk pt. 2 (15- 20 minutes)**

- Pick up on themes from “Song of Songs” in old testament to re-inforce again how sex is a normal part not only of life but of love and our spirituality
- Explain Hebrew words for sex/intimacy “Shekobeth” and “Erva” and how this is to get to know one another in the fullest way and should be reserved for marriage because of it
- Explain how the marital bed is like the altar used in mass(“This is my body given for you.”... Free, Total, Faithful, Fruitful. It mimics the way Jesus lived)
- History of St. Valentine(*how he died for marriage; for true love; martyrdom, etc*)



- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8
- Talk about how even if we have ‘messed up’ there is always an opportunity to surrender to God’s will and start all over

**Activity 8: Last Words Music Video leading into prayer with worship (10-15 minutes)**

Purpose: To leave one last artistic representation of all we spoke about and introduce the idea of surrender, and how although sexuality has been distorted in our culture, Jesus came to make “all things new” (*Isaiah 43:18-19; Revelation 21:5; Ephesians 2:15; Ephesians 4:24*)

- Coming out of the video play worship version of the song, and invite young people into prayer/worship experience at this moment

**Closing Prayer:**

Pray for hearts of purity, and redemption for our world when it comes to these things. Hail Mary. Hail Joseph. St. Michael Prayers.

### **SAMPLE 3: YOUTH NIGHT USING SONG/VIDEO:**

**Lesson Plan:** Animate(A pro-life topic)

**Class length:** Approx. 1 hour, 30 minutes

*Catechism of the Catholic Church: Sections 2258-2301*

#### **Materials needed:**

- Screen with Projector or TV(to play videos)
- Sound system
- “Helium Stick(s)”
- Blindfolds
- Index Cards
- Pens/Pencils

As they enter: Play music to make atmosphere inviting(depending on the group, there are good Christian Hip-Hop, Christian Contemporary, Christian Rock, or Christian Pop playlists that can be used; perhaps even a blend of all of the above, etc)

#### **Room Set-Up:**

- One main large group area with seating set around as a circle
- Screen & Projector or TV Screen
- Lighting(Use blue as a connection to the consecration to Mary)

#### **Activity 1: Opening Prayer(2-3 minutes)**

- Consecrate the night to mother Mary, talk about the meaning of life and that we realize the beauty of the life we have been given by God. End with Hail Mary.

#### **Activity 2: Video(3 minutes):**

Pro Life Spoken word video ( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPiUKvtF2T0> )

- Purpose: Use this as an intro to the topic, and speak about the sanctity of life.

#### **Activity 3: Sword Fight: Icebreaker(5-10 minutes)**

- Have everyone break into partners.
- They hold one hands as if shaking hands but poke out one finger towards the other person.
- The goal is to poke the other person without letting go. If they get poked they are out.
- Have a tournament until the last person standing.

- Purpose: Get them up, moving and “animated”. Talk about the 5th commandment; and also Matthew 22:39-40. How we a lot of times we battle against our brothers and sisters instead of loving them.

**Activity 4: Video (5 Minutes)**

- Bible Project Video: Word Study: Nephesh  
( [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g\\_igCcWAMAM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_igCcWAMAM) )

**Activity 5: Talk(10 minutes)**

- Debrief the video
- Definition of “Animation” in its Latin root word “Anima” which means soul
- Genesis 2:7 - God’s life/breathe
- Talk about animation as the importance of life
- Draw out the importance of how we should respect all human life. How sex is meant to be for life. Problem with Abortion, Euthanasia, etc.
- End With how to create a Flipbook video  
( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Un-BdBSOGKY&t=287s> )

**Activity 6: Activity: Create-A-FlipBook(15 Minutes)**

- Give them time to create a flip-book that represents “Life” to them. (*example: a tree growing, a baby, an egg hatching, etc.*)

**Activity 7: Last Words Music video (10 Minutes)**

Purpose: To leave one last artistic representation of all we spoke about and connect how God died giving his life for us in Jesus so that we can have full life in him.

- After the video talk about bullying, also debrief themes in the lyrics of the verses about human sexuality, etc.

**Activity 8: Closing Prayer:Divine Mercy Chaplet (18 Minutes)**

- Offer to God for the respect for life.
- (*Use this video or have someone play/sing live:*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYtxixBnVGg> )

This was also offered as a free resource because we believe in the mission of sanctifying our world, not as something as a business for profitable gain, but truly the working of Christ in our lives. Feel free to download, print, and distribute as you see fit in your community.

We pray that these resources help and will be put to use. We also know that in order for them to be most effective the adults using them will have to adapt for their particular communities/environments so feel free to move around as needed. There is so much more that we know could have been added, and so much more that can be done but we pray this along with the song/video will begin the process. If you would like to invite one of us personally to your youth group, school or community feel free to email us at: [allislovemedia@gmail.com](mailto:allislovemedia@gmail.com) ; also visit: [www.BeTheSymbol.com](http://www.BeTheSymbol.com) and [www.allislove.us](http://www.allislove.us) for more resources.