



The
RISING

Parent Guide

Theme I - Truth
2022-23



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About Student Ministry

We believe God designed humanity to passionately know Jesus and make him known. This is the one way of life that leads to everlasting fulfillment, satisfaction and meaning. We want our students to begin experiencing this now! God is available to them and desires relationship with our

students. Everything we do in Student Ministry flows from this desire.

We also believe the most important things in life are the Glory of God, Radical Grace and Extravagant Worship. Our aim is for students to build their lives around these three values no matter the circumstances they face.

Why The Rising?

The world is changing. In 2007, Pew Research Center found 78% of Americans identified as Christian and 16% identified as "No Religion." Fast forward to 2021, only 63% identify as Christian with an alarming 29% now identifying as "No Religion."

Where did we loose all those Christians?

Lifeway Research found that 66% of students lose their faith in college with only 35% coming back to faith later in life. That's a 31% net loss of students abandoning the faith each year. If current trends continue the church will lose one million youth every year for the next three decades. In other words, we are currently witnessing the single largest generational loss of souls in history...

Unless we do something about it.





Our Hope

We want to raise up generations of students who passionately know Jesus and make Jesus known. We desire students to experience the Glory of God, receive his Radical Grace and respond in Extravagant Worship. Jesus described how this would happen,

"A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

Notice how the man who scatters has no control over the growth of the seed. Instead, Jesus is saying, the Holy Spirit will bring life-long faith, trust and passion for God. God is responsible for bringing and sustaining faith in our students. All we're asked to do is scatter the seeds of truth.



Our Response

We can't always tell if the seeds of God's truth are growing in student's hearts, but we can help cultivate a good harvest. Like a good farmer, we will till the soil, add nutrients, and create an environment for the Spirit to thrive.

Today's students are being exposed to errors about faith, the Bible, life and the church faster than ever before. They exist in a society which values subjective personal experience and the "authentic self" over objective truth. We need to equip our students with Biblical truth to combat the moral, ethical and spiritually bankrupt worldviews of this present age. We need them to see that there are no other perspectives, religions or answers that adequately account for the universe we inhabit. The Biblical worldview is the only answer, because Jesus alone has the words of eternal life.



Parents

Everything begins with you; you are the primary developer of your student's faith. God designed families this way and every statistically significant data point confirms that you are the most influential voice in their life.

We want to help you see and seize this God-given privilege. We desire to equip you with tools, resources and opportunities to spiritually engage with your student. The Rising is meant to be an addition to faith formation already happening at home, not their sole source of spiritual formation.

Helping our students navigate these confusing times is difficult. If you're struggling or feel you've been missing the mark, you're not alone. Together, with the power of the Holy Spirit, we can create an environment where relationship with Jesus thrives.





About this Guide

King of Kings is part of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS). Our faith tradition has a long

Calendar & Topics

September

Central Question

21 - Welcome to The Rising
28 - Purpose

What is The Rising and why am I in it?
Why do I exist and what am I supposed to do with my life?

October

5 - Values
12 - Group Bonding #1
19 - Legacy Night #1
26 - Truth

What are the most important things as a Christian?
How can I feel more comfortable with my Small Group?
How do I encourage my student to passionately know Jesus?
Is there a such thing as truth?

November

2 - Worldviews
9 - Standards
16 - The Marketplace
 - Thanksgiving Break
30 - Truth Tests

Why do other people see things differently than me?
How do people answer the big questions of life?
What are the different worldviews?
How do I find out which worldview is true?

December

7 - Composition
11 - Arrival
 - Christmas Break
 - Christmas Break

Why are some parts of the Bible different than others?
Where did the Bible come from?

January

 - Christmas Break
11 - Accuracy
18 - Group Bonding
25 - Legacy Night #2

Is the Bible really what God said?
How can I get to know my Small Group even better?
How can I add value to my student's faith?

February

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 - Navigating | <i>Why are there many Bible translations and which should I use?</i> |
| 8 - Context | <i>Why does the Bible have so many contradictions?</i> |
| 15 - Resurrection Proof
- Ash Wednesday | <i>Did Jesus actually rise from the dead?</i> |

March

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1 - Archeology | <i>Is there any evidence the Bible stories actually happened?</i> |
| 8 - Fine Tuning | <i>Hasn't science disproven the Bible?</i> |
| 15 - Legacy Night #3 | <i>How do I make an environment where passion for Jesus thrives?</i> |
| 22 - Suffering | <i>Why do bad things happen to good people?</i> |
| 29 - Hell | <i>If God is supposed to be loving, why does he send people to hell?</i> |

April

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| - Holy Week | |
| 12 - LGBTQIA+ | <i>Why does the church hate my LGBTQIA+ friends?</i> |
| 19 - Finale | <i>What should I do now that The Rising is over?</i> |
| 26 - (Bad Weather Day) | |
| 29 - CLOSING CEREMONY @ 11AM | |



About the Catechism

King of Kings is part of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS). Our faith tradition has a long history of teaching Luther's Small Catechism to middle school students. We believe the Catechism can be a helpful resource for instructing students in the faith. However, the Catechism was originally designed in 1529 as a resource for parents to use with their children.

Therefore, we will let parents decide if Catechism instruction is right for their student at home. Although some content may overlap, we will not be formally using the Catechism in The Rising.

If you would like a copy of Luther's Small Catechism we will gladly provide one.



Prologue

Gatherings 1-5

There are two big goals at the beginning of The Rising. First, we want students to understand what is most important to Student Ministry, and by extension Christianity. Second, we want them to form bonds within their Small Group.

We'll be jumping right in and letting students know what their purpose on earth is: to passionately know Jesus and make Jesus known. The sooner they begin living for him the better! We also want them to adopt these central Christian values as their own: Glory of God, Radical Grace and Extravagant Worship.

Welcome to The Rising

Central Question

What is The Rising and why am I in it?

Main Point

The Rising is a two year journey preparing students for life with Jesus.

Scripture

Isaiah 26:8

Description

The Rising has officially begun! On this first night, we'll focus on expectations, procedures, and organizing Small Groups. We'll also take some time to discuss who we are as an LCMS church. We believe it's important to acknowledge the past while continually reforming and improving our ministry efforts.

As a Parent...

Do you remember what it was like to start your Confirmation program? Or, can you think back to the emotions you felt when a new school year began? What kind of fears did you have? What were you excited about? What things gave you the strength to put yourself out there and form new friendships?

So much has changed since you were in 7-8th grade, and especially the culture. But nothing will change the basic human emotions felt at the beginning of something new. How can you encourage your student as they begin this new faith journey? How can you challenge them?

Primer Questions

1. How are you feeling about the start of The Rising?
2. What are you most excited about and what are you unsure about?
3. How are you wanting to grow in your relationship with Jesus over the next two years? What are you wanting to grow in or learn more about?

Additional Resources

- [The Culture Translator](#) (weekly email) from Axis.com.
 - This is an excellent resource to stay informed about relevant trends and phenomena in teen culture. They provide great insights for conversations and bring things back to faith.

Purpose

Central Question

Why do I exist and what am I supposed to do with my life?

Main Point

We exist to passionately know Jesus and make Jesus known.

Scripture

Isaiah 26:8, Colossians 1:16-18, John 5:37-40

Description

The central question of the human experience is: why am I here? Our students are at an age where they've begun to ponder this question, and will spend the rest of their lives seeking an answer. We believe God has revealed the answer and desires us to live out our purpose.

Colossians 1:16-18 tells us we were made by Jesus, for Jesus, so he would get the supremacy. In other words, our purpose is to know Jesus and make Jesus known. However, this isn't just knowing about Jesus, but passionately knowing Jesus.

As a Parent...

What role does purpose play in your marriage, family, work and social life? Do you feel you've lived your life with a sense of greater purpose? What would it look like for you to explore passionately knowing Jesus and making him known? What challenges and joys do you foresee as a result of this quest?

We instill many important values into our children like telling the truth, being honest or even being kind. But how are you actively building up in them a sense of greater purpose? There is nothing more fulfilling or meaningful in life as passionately knowing the God who loves us, how do you instill this truth in them at this age?

Primer Questions

1. What is your favorite toy, or device, that you own? Why did you choose that? Why do you think that thing was made in the first place?
2. Why would it be important to know the reason why something was designed/invented? Can you think of why it would be a problem if you didn't know?
3. Why do you think God created you? What does the Bible say our reason for existing is? Why would it be important for you to know the answer?

Additional Resources

- [Passion + Purpose](#) message series by [Passion City Church](#).

Values

Central Question

What are the most important things as a Christian?

Main Point

The Glory of God, Radical Grace, and Extravagant Worship are what Christians value most.

Scripture

Matthew 5:16, Romans 3:24, 2 Samuel 6:1-15

Description

The Bible speaks of many things that are important to God, and his people. However, if we were to distill these down into only three things, what would they be?

Above all else, God is for his own glory; He alone is Ruler over all and worthy of our praise. Second, a major difference between our God (Yahweh) and all other "gods" is his radical grace. Instead of giving us what we deserve or making us earn our salvation, he radically offers it as a free gift. Finally, in response to his grace, and in light of his glory, we offer our lives in extravagant worship.

As a Parent...

Do you have a set of values that you live by? What values are you trying to instill in your student? How are you actively communicating and modeling these values for them? Are they written down anywhere?

We live in the era of self-help and good advice, so there is no shortage of opinions on what is most important. Regardless of what values you're attempting to pass on, it's critical they are clear, concise and easily repeatable (not to mention true/good). How could you re-orient your life around the Glory of God, Radical Grace, and Extravagant Worship? How can your student's life be built around these three things?

Primer Questions

1. What is the best advice you've ever been give? Who gave it to you? Why was it so valuable?
2. What would you say are the three most important things to live by/for?
3. What would you say are the three most important things to God? What does he believe is most valuable and important to live for?

Additional Resources

- N/A

Group Bonding #I

Central Question

How can I feel more comfortable with my Small Group?

Main Point

God gives us community to be enjoyed.

Scripture

Hebrews 10:24

Description

Now that we've had a few weeks to settle into our groups, this gathering is dedicated to strengthening these bonds. Since this is the first Group Bonding night of the year there will be a heavy emphasis on ice-breakers and group identity. We want our students to feel more comfortable with one another and hopefully form friendships that last a life time.

As a Parent...

Can you remember what it was like to be accepted into a group of students? Who were your best friends in you middle school years? What made those relationships so special? Did you have any community with fellow followers of Jesus?

You know the importance of being surrounded by good community. So much of our identity in middle school, and the rest of life, can be shaped by the people around us. I have no doubt you desire great Jesus-filled friendships for your student, but what is your role in the process? How can you encourage and prioritize the friendships your student has with other believers?

Primer Questions

1. What has been your favorite thing about your Small Group so far? What's the most memorable thing that's happened with them?
2. Are there any students in your group you could see being close friends?
3. Do you think God enjoys when you make friends? What does the goodness of friendships tell us about who God is? Do you ever think of Jesus as your friend?

Additional Resources

- N/A

Legacy Night #I

Central Question

How do I encourage my student to passionately know Jesus?

Main Point

We cannot control the faith of our students, but we can Till the Soil, Add Nutrients, and Create an Environment.

Scripture

Mark 4:26-29

Description

This is our first Legacy Night of the year and is a gathering for both parents and students. If our goal is for students to passionately know Jesus and make him known, how do we accomplish it?

In this parable (Mark 4:26-29), Jesus points out that man has no say in the growth of a seed; it occurs on its own. Likewise, we have no control over the growth of faith in students. However, there are ways to garden that lead to greater chances of harvest. On this night we'll discuss how to "till the soil" of your student's heart by inoculating against errors and preventative maintenance.

As a Parent...

You probably don't remember getting your measles vaccine as a kid. But in order to prevent infection later in life, the measles vaccine actually contains the virus itself! I'm also willing to bet your parents didn't tell you the world was an easy place. Instead, they told you the truth of how difficult life can be to prepare you for what was to come.

Likewise, we need to inoculate our students against the errors causing so many to fall away from the faith. Do you talk about the challenging/difficult topics that undermine people's faith? Do you ask and process the hard questions with them? Consider also how you can prevent future doubts by being honest about how difficult and challenging life with Jesus can be.

Primer Questions

1. What are the most difficult things for you to believe about God? What doubts do you have?
2. Have you ever heard about someone losing their faith? What was it that happened? How did that story make you feel?
3. When you think about living your life following Jesus, what do you picture? Is it easy? Does God owe you a good life? Money? Blessing?

Additional Resources

- [Keeping the Faith](#) message at the Bayside Church Bible Conference.
 - This message will actually shape our conversations at each subsequent Legacy Night.



Part III: Objections

Gatherings 18-25

Christianity is constantly taking fire, but most objections are neither new, nor necessitate abandoning the faith. But Christians contribute to the problem when we shield students from difficult questions of faith, only to return later in their life like a wrecking ball. We want to talk about these objections and teach students to reason through them with logic and evidence.

Resurrection Proof

Central Question

Did Jesus actually rise from the dead?

Main Point

The best explanation for Jesus' empty tomb is the resurrection.

Scripture

1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 1 Thessalonians 4:14

Description

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:14, "And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith." If the resurrection of Jesus didn't happen, everything we are doing is a complete waste of time. This singular event is the lynch pin of our faith. So, did he rise? Can we even know for certain? We will examine the evidence and test popular theories.

As a Parent...

What are you most confident in in life? How are you able to have confidence in that? How confident are you that Jesus rose from the dead? What would you need to have confidence in the resurrection?

The resurrection of Jesus is the single most important piece of Christianity. In what ways are you building your student's confidence in this cataclysmic event?

Primer Questions

1. What does it mean to be confident? What are some things you're confident in?
2. Have you ever lost confidence in something, or someone? Did you ever regain it?
3. If Jesus' resurrection is the most important event in history, how confident are you that it happened? What would it take for you to be more confident in it?

Additional Resources

- [Cold Case Christianity](#) by Jim Warner Wallace.

Archeology

Central Question

Is there any evidence the Bible stories actually happened?

Main Point

There's physical evidence the Bible is true.

Scripture

Romans 1:20

Description

The Bible makes many claims about history and events of the past. Therefore, we should expect to see archeological evidence to prove its claims. Have any such discoveries been made? Is there physical proof to verify the Bible?

As a Parent...

You've kept mementos from your student's life for years. Paintings from kindergarten, trophies from tee-ball, ballet slippers from their first recital; physical reminders of events now past. Likewise, there have been many discoveries linking physical objects to the events of scripture.

Are you aware of the archeological evidence for the Bible? Could you reference any if a friend/colleague asked for physical proof? In what ways could you encourage and anchor your student's faith in these physical realities?

Primer Questions

1. What is the best discovery you've ever made?
2. What do you think the greatest discovery in history has been?
3. If someone told you discoveries have been made that authenticate the Bible, how would you respond?
4. Do you know of any Bible discoveries that have been made?

Additional Resources

- [Q&A: The Bible and Archaeology](#) video by Sean McDowell

Fine Tuning

Central Question

Hasn't science disproven the Bible?

Main Point

There is a clear design to the universe.

Scripture

Nehemiah 9:6

Description

Evolutionary theory continues to dominate the scientific community as the explanation of all that is. However, modern science is coming to grips with the incredibly fine tuning of our universe as evidence of an intelligent designer. If this level of programming exists in nature then there must be a source behind it. Intelligent Design is rapidly becoming the most reasonable explanation for creation: and we know who the Designer is!

As a Parent...

Does it bring you joy, stress or something in between to design things for your student? Whether it's planning birthday parties, schedules, or personalized gifts, designing things for our students is one expression of our love. Although science has long eroded the faith of many Christians, it's now increasingly acknowledging a supernatural "creator" as best explanation for our universe due to its intricate calibration.

How are you creating opportunity/space for your student to passionately follow Jesus?
How could conversations about an Intelligent Designer influence their faith?

Primer Questions

1. How do you think the universe came to be? What kind of answers have you heard in school/from friends/online?
2. Have you ever heard something that made you doubt God as creator?
3. Do you think evolution and what the Bible says about creation can both be true?

Additional Resources

- [Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed](#) movie by Ben Stein.
- [Return of the God Hypothesis](#) book by Stephen Meyer.
- [Stephen Meyer](#) Youtube channel.

Suffering

Central Question

Why do bad things happen to good people?

Main Point

We exist to passionately know Jesus and make Jesus known.

Scripture

1 Peter 5:10

Description

The book of Job is quite possibly the oldest book of the Bible. Interestingly, the central issue in Job is: suffering. For millennia humanity has wrestled with the reality of suffering and its implications. How can God allow so much suffering in the world? Doesn't the existence of suffering prove that God isn't loving or even real? Is the presence of suffering enough for our students to abandon the faith?

As a Parent...

What kind of suffering have you experience in life? What suffering is present right now? Has your suffering, or the suffering of others, ever caused you to doubt/question God? Have you ever shared these experiences with your student?

What they need isn't an impenetrable super-parent, instead they need to see that you bleed just like them. Wrestling through life's suffering together could deepen your intimacy and give them hope/strength to lean on Jesus in these times.

Primer Questions

1. What's the most painful injury you've ever experienced?
2. Have you ever noticed someone else suffering before? What did it feel like?
3. When was a time you went through suffering? Did it make you question anything about God?
4. Since there's suffering in the world, do you think that means God isn't real or doesn't care?

Additional Resources

- N/A

Hell

Central Question

If God is supposed to be loving, why does he send people to hell?

Main Point

Because God is love, hell must exist.

Scripture

Matthew 25:46

Description

A massive stumbling block in the Christian faith is its teaching on Hell. Many find Hell repulsive and abandon the truth contained in the Bible because of it. We will talk about Hell and see it as a necessity, example of God's love and non-contradiction to his nature.

As a Parent...

Shockingly, nobody in scripture discusses Hell more than Jesus. He actually talks about Hell more than he talks about Heaven. Why? Because it's a terrifying reality God came to save us from.

How have you struggled with the idea of Hell? What do you believe about it and what does scripture say? What kinds of conversations are you having with your student about it? How are they processing Hell and what hope do they have from it?

Primer Questions

1. What do you picture when you hear "Hell"? What does the Bible say about it?
2. Does it make you uncomfortable to think about Hell? Does it make you doubt God is real or good?
3. Why would God create, or allow, a place like Hell to exist? What is its purpose?
4. Do you think God wants people to go to Hell? What makes you think that?

Additional Resources

- [The Problem of God](#) by Mark Clark
 - The chapter on Hell is excellent.

LGBTQIA+

Central Question

Why does the church hate my LGBTQIA+ friends?

Main Point

God loves all people and desires them to turn from sin and trust him.

Scripture

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Description

There are few issues more prominent than this in our day. How do we handle this delicate topic in an increasingly affirming world? What is a student to do when adherence to Biblical teachings on marriage automatically label you a homophobic bigot? What is God's heart for LGBTQ+ people, how should we respond, and most importantly: what does the Bible actually say about it and our response?

As a Parent...

You know it. You're inundated with it. Your student is constantly bombarded by it and their generation hardly sees any issue with it. What have your conversations about this topic been like so far? Have you even engaged with your student on this topic?

How can your family reach the lost, hurting and broken within the LGBTQ+ community?
How can your student be a beacon of hope and uncompromising on scripture?

Primer Questions

1. Do you have any LGBTQ+ friends? Do you see anyone at school who is LGBTQ+? Do you identify as LGBTQ+?
2. What do you think about the LGBTQ+ community? How did you come up with those thoughts?
3. What does the Bible say about LGBTQ+? How does it say we are to treat people who are LGBTQ+?

Additional Resources

- [Not a Mistake](#) by Jim Domen.

