



Strong Family

Week 4 Leader Guide

*** A note before you begin:

Many times when we talk about the extremely important topic of parenting at Rush Creek we run the risk of alienating adults who either don't have children or are no longer directly parenting their adult children. In fact, for some this subject can be a painful reminder about a lost child or inability to conceive. If your group demographics include adults who may feel "left out of the conversation" please be sensitive to include everyone in the conversation.

As a way to pull everyone in, you may say something like this, "Above all, Jesus valued one thing above everything else on the subject of family: **ADOPTION**. You see it recorded in Matthew 12 when someone tells Jesus that His mother and brothers want to speak with Him. He then corrects that person by saying, '...whoever does the will of My Father in heaven, that person is My brother and sister and mother.' You can also observe this value during the crucifixion. John writes in John 19:25-27 that Jesus looked down from the cross at His mother and John standing together below Him and told them they now belonged to each other as family. In both instances it is clear that Jesus regards CHOICE over BLOOD. A mom or dad is not a parent until they choose to rise up and engage in that role. Likewise, you do not have to give birth to a child to influence the next generation. Here in this group we have chosen to be a family of faith. Let's begin our time together tonight talking about who we consider to be 'family' and what we believe our responsibility is to the next generation."

THE WIN

The hope this week is that every adult is encouraged to lead their families toward a life of faith, and empowered to impact the next generation through the overflow of Christ's work in their own lives.

2-3
minutes

SERMON RECAP: WHAT DID THE TEXT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

In Joshua chapter 24 we find a victorious nation of Israel. They have finally settled into the land God promised Moses long ago, and are marking the successful conquest with a covenant renewal ceremony. Joshua begins the occasion by reviewing God's faithfulness throughout Israel's history. Then, based on the proven goodness of God, Joshua challenges the people to four things:

1. Fear the Lord
2. Worship Him in sincerity
3. Get rid of the gods of your fathers
4. Choose today the one you will worship

We, as parents, have a choice today as well. We can choose to place Christ in the center of our homes, or serve other idols like money, success, and comfort. Although there is no guarantee that our best efforts to pass along our faith will return spiritual giants, it is certainly more likely if we have a game plan for spiritual development and stick to it. Leading our children to fear the Lord, worship Him in sincerity, put away all idols, and daily choose to honor Him won't happen by accident. We must be engaged in the work God wants to do in our family every day.

3-5
minutes

WARM UP

SAY THIS:

The words “mom” and “dad” are mostly defined by the homes we grow up in. They can have positive or negative connotations... For most of us it’s probably a complicated mixture of both.

ASK THIS:

- What did you learn about parenting from the home you grew up in?
- What are some things from your upbringing you’ve tried or would like to try to emulate in your home?
- Is there a negative trait from your parents that you’ve identified in yourself?

SAY THIS:

Although our definitions are shaped by our experience, we are definitely not limited by them. In our sermon this week we saw Joshua challenge the people to choose a path for their families: either perpetuate the mistakes of their forefathers or follow the Lord wholeheartedly. Whether you grew up in a family that passionately pursued Christ, or in a family completely unengaged with spiritual activity, God wants to be the One to define your role as leader of the home.

15-20
minutes

THE TEXT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?

DO THIS ACTIVITY: IS IT NECESSARY?

1. **Read the following list of spiritual activities to your group. After each item ask the group to vote whether or not that activity is ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY for family spiritual leadership. Make a note each time the group decides an activity is necessary.**
 - Memorize scripture
 - Read the Bible together
 - Pray together
 - Read your Bibles individually
 - Worship together
 - Go on a family mission trip
 - Do community service projects
 - Attend church services consistently
 - Pray individually
 - Read devotionals specifically written for families
 - Teach your children how to share their faith
 - Listen to faith-based music in the car
2. **After all the voting is over, read back all the activities the group decided must happen for spiritual leadership to occur and ask the following questions:**
 - Who got overwhelmed thinking about all the things the group decided must be a part of your spiritual leadership game plan?
 - What are some things that keep you from accomplishing all of these spiritual activities in your home?
 - If you did everything on your “necessary” list, how much time would you need weekly/monthly/yearly?
 - Would you have to quit something you are doing now?

HAVE SOMEONE READ

Deut. 6: 4-9

Leader note: This passage, called the Shema, is extremely important in Jewish culture. Followers of Judaism have quoted this passage twice daily for thousands of years. It's the first scripture Jewish children learn in their study of the Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament).

SAY THIS:

God's definition of spiritual leadership can be summed up in two commands from the Schema (the passage just read): love God and teach His commands to your children. As you fall more and more in love with God and His Word, that love should bubble up, overflow, and manifest into faith talks with your children. These faith talks can happen at home, in the car, before bed, or really anytime and everywhere. This is great news! Although in our minds we often try to make spiritual leadership complicated and burdensome, God paints a picture in His Word of a real-life, as you go, seize the moment model of leadership. You really can do this! The key is to be growing in relation to God and aware of His activity in your family.

ASK THIS:

- If you could tell the next generation just three things about God, what would they be?
- What are the dangers of trying to lead the next generation without cultivating your own relationship with God first?
- What does a faith talk look like in your house?
- Look back at your "necessary" list from above. After hearing that real spiritual leadership involves simply loving God, His Word, and teaching His commands to your children, would you edit your list?
- How can you create a game plan that fulfills your calling to your kids, but remains achievable in the context of real life?

HAVE SOMEONE READ:

Mark 5:21-24

SAY THIS:

Jairus, a respected layman who was responsible for managing the synagogue, was an important leader in the region of Galilee. When his daughter's condition was critical, he ran to Jesus and became undignified in his pleas for help. His daughter's life was more than enough motivation to crawl at the feet of Jesus and beg for a miracle. At the end of this chapter Jesus honors Jairus' request and goes to his home to resurrect his daughter from the dead.

ASK THIS:

- What are you desperate to see God do in your family?
- What are some spiritual battles our kids face in the modern era?
- What does it look like to exhibit desperate dependency on God's power for the sake of your kids?
- How would the next generation at Rush Creek be impacted if we ran and pleaded at the feet of Jesus on their behalf?

HAVE SOMEONE READ:

Psalms 127: 3-5

SAY THIS:

An arrow in a warrior's hand can fly farther and do more for the kingdom than a warrior could ever do on his own.

ASK THIS:

- An arrow, to be effective, must be pointed toward the correct target. What are some things we must do in our homes to keep God and His Word the top priority?

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- An arrow, to be effective, must be shaped perfectly without blemish. What are some habits you can include starting today to mold your child into who God wants him/her to be?
 - An arrow, to be effective, must be released into the battle. What are some things you can plan immediately to help your family experience God in the real world?

CONCLUDE:

- Allow your group to pray together for the next generation. You may ask all group members to find a picture on their phone of a child in their circle of influence. Remind them that this lesson isn't merely an exercise to think through, rather it has real life implications and the pictures on their phones represent the flesh and blood stakes of getting this right.

3-5
minutes



DIGGING DEEPER

SAY THIS:

The family ministry of Rush Creek has created a resource to easily have faith talks using scripture in your home. It's a simple system called "Highlighter Talks" that involves 3 steps:

1. Have your child turn in the Bible to a verse and mark it with a highlighter.
2. Ask your child what he/she thinks the verse means?
3. Tell your child what the verse means to you.

And that's it! If it sounds simple, that's because it is. Faith talks don't have to be long or complicated, they just have to be grounded on the Word of God. We've provided 50 verses to get you started and more detailed instructions in a simple file we can email you directly.

To receive the free Highlighter Talks resource email your request to curth@rushcreek.org.