



Continuum: Parent Cue

[FOR STUDENT PASTOR AND SMALL GROUP LEADERS]

The week before you begin the Continuum series, connect with the parents of your students by email. Included below is content for an email (or blog post). Use the information below in the “Be a Student of What They are Learning” section to inform them about the new series and what students will be discussing, or post this content on a blog and direct parents to the site. You may also want to include updates or reminders about important upcoming events, registration deadlines, retreats or church projects. Attach pictures or links to your website so that parents can see what is happening in your ministry. Use the “Be a Student of Your Student” content to challenge and encourage parents.

In whatever method you use to communicate this content to parents, make sure you include the Parent Cue logo. This logo appears in all the Orange curriculums, and helps parents look for the “cues” to prompt spiritual discussions with their children. The logo is available in your downloaded files in the Parent CUE folder. Also, when you post, send or distribute the article, make sure you include the copyright information.

We would love to hear the success stories of your parents. If you have a parent who shares something with you that you feel may be an encouragement for all, ask if they feel comfortable sharing their story. Then send us their stories at onebigstory@rethinkgroup.org. Make sure you include a way we can contact them directly in case we have any questions.

Copy and paste the following description into an email or blog post for parents to help convey the main goal of this series.

1. Be a Student of What They are Learning

The Bible is a big story. It's the story of the beginning. It's the story of God's people. It's the story of a great rescue. And, ultimately, it's the story of you and me—and the love God has for His people. Each part of God's story is richly connected to the next and has something to say to every one of us. So, let's take a journey through the story and discover a God who has something to say to us, here and now, through a story that started “In the beginning.”

2. Be a Student of Your Student

Have you ever noticed how a good movie or book can draw you in? How it can offer you something unique? Something big? Something more? A good story has the ability to make you feel connected to something bigger than yourself. Whether it's a true story of someone else's struggle or a comedy cataloging the silly antics of a make-believe character, a good story allows us to both escape reality and capture it at the same time.

This is true for adults and for our students. It's why so many teenagers flock to see the latest *Twilight* or *Hunger Games* movie. As one *Relevant Magazine* article puts it, “To get right down to it, stories like *Star Wars* illustrate the deep longings of humankind ...”

(<http://www.relevantmagazine.com/culture/film/features/3148-the-force-of-truth-star-wars>).

You might even say that in these stories we find a piece of ourselves—we find something to identify with that makes us feel like we can know ourselves a little bit better.

An excerpt from a recent *Psychology Today* article pinpoints exactly what this looks like for teenagers (to read the full article, go to <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/movies-and-the-mind/201212/praising-the-lord-the-rings-in-anticipation-the-hobbit>):

Psychologists such as Dan McAdams (The Stories We Live By) argue that identity is inherently narrative. Fundamental questions such as “Who am I?” are answered through the stories we [speak] out about ourselves. Stories about our struggles, our triumphs, our loves, and our hates combine into the sum total of our sense of self. For most people, these identity stories really emerge in adolescence. Certainly younger children tell stories, but their stories tend to be

*[speak] out about ourselves. Stories about our struggles, our triumphs, our loves, and our hates combine into the sum total of our sense of self. **For most people, these identity stories really emerge in adolescence.** Certainly younger children tell stories, but their stories tend to be loose and episodic. **In adolescence, people start trying to tell stories that put all the pieces of what they do and think together into a more or less coherent whole.***

*One of the things I was doing in early adolescence was reading Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. It immersed me in a strange world that only vaguely mirrored my own, yet the archetypal motifs of the quest, wisdom, heroism, and evil were instantly familiar. **Tolkien transformed these motifs into a series of tales that idealized friendship, loyalty, endurance, sacrifice and compassion, and these themes were woven into my identity.***

Books, movies, music, television shows—the things of culture—matter to students, because they identify a piece of themselves in the stories being told. They feel connected to something bigger while simultaneously discovering something more about themselves. And we, as parents, have the potential to tap into that—not only to learn about our students, but teach them a bit about ourselves as well. When we learn about the stories that matter to them and share our own stories, we grow in understanding and this gives us amazing relational leverage.

3. Action Point

For this Action Point, there are two opportunities for you to connect with your student around this idea of story and identity. You can choose whichever one feels the most comfortable for you, or find time to do both.

Option A: Find out from your student what their favorite movie is and then sit down and watch it together. After the movie, take some time to talk about some of the themes that were present (good versus evil, brokenness and redemption, good choices versus bad choices, etc.) and then ask your student why they like that particular movie. What connects with them the most? What do they feel when they watch it? You can make this conversation casual and comfortable. Don't force it, or it might start to feel like another homework assignment. The goal is to simply have a dialogue with your student to discover more about who they are and give them a chance to share their favorite story with you.

Option B: Just as learning about oneself through stories is an important process of adolescence, so is learning about the story of our parents. Take some time to share your own story with your son or daughter. When did you first discover how much God loved you? When did you make a decision to follow Jesus? Who or what played a role in that decision? Share about your faith journey so that your student can begin to understand your story as an important part of their own.

Get connected to a wider community of parents at www.orangeparents.org.