

PARENT CUE:

UPSIDE DOWN

[February 24-March 3]

We're kicking off a new series this Sunday, called UPSIDE DOWN

Our goal is to come alongside you, in what you're already doing, to help grow your student in their walk with Christ. This Parent Cue is specifically for **you**--to hear what your student hears on Sunday mornings/evenings, and for you to be as well-equipped as possible to continue the conversations at home. It's divided up into three sections: 1) Be a student of what they're learning, 2) Be a student of your student, 3) Action Point.

1. Be a Student of What They are Learning

In the Upside Down series, we are going to look at something Jesus talked a lot about--the Kingdom of God. Many of the people who heard His message firsthand thought that He was talking about a kingdom where Jesus would be in political power, and that their lives would be easier than their present circumstances under Roman rule. But Jesus was talking about something bigger than that--a kingdom where His desire for broken things to be restored is met. Jesus was talking about ushering in an upside-down world.

SESSION ONE: COLLISION (February 17)

Bottom Line: There are two kingdoms that are trying to co-exist, but there is only room for one.

Scripture References: Mark 1:15; Mark 4:11; Luke 9:2; Matthew 6:33; Matthew 6:9-10

SESSION TWO: INVERTED REALITY (February 24)

Bottom Line: Living in God's Kingdom means living in an upside-down world.

Scripture References: Matthew 5:1-10

SESSION THREE: AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD (March 3)

Bottom Line: The Kingdom of God is not only something we experience and hope for someday, it is something we participate in now.

Scripture References: Revelation 21:3-5; Matthew 11:12

2. Be a Student of Your Student (By Carey Nieuwhof)

I'm not sure what time of day you are reading this, but whatever time it is, you and I have already been writing our story lines for the day. Your story line is that narrative that you and I bring to every day we live.

For me, my story line today, as I write this, is to complain about the snow.

In my view, the snow here is about three weeks too early. It's November in Canada and it snowed a bunch last night, and it snowed a lot the night before. I had to fire up the snowblower. The snow from yesterday was still inside the chute and intake system (I think that's what it's called) and it was frozen.

So I had to dig all that frozen icy snow out of my snowblower. Then after five minutes of snow-blowing, the blower ran out of gas. The cars were frozen over too, so I had to chisel them free. My guess is that reading the paragraph about that didn't energize you. In fact, it probably drained you. That's the point. Complaining belongs in the circular fire--shredded and even burned.

Complaining is something I want to banish from my personality. So I'm writing this post to remind myself that it's just not helpful in any way. It's not. Stop. Cease. Desist.

The trees were gorgeous this morning with the ice and snow. Despite the inconvenience, the front yard looks really beautiful too. And I think that, for me, that's a much better story line for my day. Instead of complaining, there's a better way for my day to be defined.

What about you? What's your story line today? Choose what it will be. As apart of this Upside Down world Jesus invites us into, we get to choose the way we engage in the world around us.

3. Action Point

This month, your student will be taking a hard look at the way they live their life in comparison with how Jesus calls us to live. They may even have their worlds a little rocked if this is the first time they've ever considered that--maybe, just maybe--God has called them to a much different way of life.

But it's not just in the big things. It's in the small ways, too. In the ways we honor those around us, love people, humble ourselves, apologize, and seek to serve rather than to be served. Sometime over the next few weeks, go through Matthew 5:1-10 together with your student, and talk through the tough and upside-down things Jesus said. Here are some questions to get your started in your discussion:

- How is God's Kingdom opposite of how the world operates? What does that even mean?
- Do you think it would be easier to serve God if we had more money, or less? Why?
- Why do you think Jesus said "Blessed are those who are poor and realize their need for him?"
- What does it look like for a 16-year-old to be the example of "blessed are those who are humble, for they will inherit the earth?" What does humility look like in your high school?
- What are some characteristics of your kingdom? How do you try to control it? (For example: selfishness, control, pride, etc.)
- What are some things that are "broken" around us?
- How can you be apart of God's restoration with those things? Is there someone God's calling you to love in a radical way?

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