



YEAR 8, MONTH 1

Email

Hello Courageous Mamas,

It's time to kick off YEAR 8 of Courageous Girls. I divided the lessons up this year and as always, you are welcome to switch with another mom if you prefer. I will leave that up to you. I have attached the annual schedule below. Here are the details for our first gathering this year:

(Add meeting dates, times and locations here for your group.)

Shepherding teen girls is one of the hardest and yet, most rewarding privileges we have. Our group has put in sweat equity over the years, building trust with our daughters and with one another. We've talked about hard things, and have stayed rooted in what God thinks about us. Our girls are watching each of us as we engage in the group. They may make lots of mistakes these next few years (that's a normal part of a teen's journey); the key is that we continue to walk and talk with them every step of the way.

Let's lean into the trust we have built. Let's prove to them and to each other that we are here for one another and are not going to add harm or judgment. Including us moms! I trust you will reach out for help if you run into a bump in the road and not stay silent or try to navigate these years alone. Isolation is the enemy's camp, always trying to tell us we are the only one _____ (fill in the blank). I know each of you personally and I know that we moms love one another, respect one another, and our girls need us to continue to lead well. Let's all lean into Truth.

Thank you for saying YES to this invitation again. I trust you will all make this next year a priority, not because of obligation, but because of grace and hope for your daughter. However, we are all in the busiest season of our lives. Let's do our best to communicate well and innovate to make as many of these dates as possible. Know that I KNOW you all are trying.

Here are a few things to revisit for the year:

- 1) We are modeling to our daughters how to stay committed to a group of believers. Commitment is one of the characteristics lacking in this generation and our girls need our help.
- 2) Our time with our girls is ticking away and our relationships with them will prove to be vital. It could determine whether she makes it through her teen years well. Despite her push back, complaining, lack of enthusiasm, etc., know that she does (albeit secretly) want this time with you. *You know the moment when you wish your husband would pursue you but instead you act cranky and push him away? Relationships with teen girls are like that.*
- 3) Consider adding a special tradition this year with her sometime during the month to continue



talking about the lessons. Maybe you get hot chocolate and pie at a fave spot or do a walk together in the evenings. You decide, but try to be consistent.

4) This year, we will have an ice breaker to help the girls relax and laugh together before each meeting. See the year's curriculum for ideas.

Consistency is truly a key ingredient in girls who have faith throughout their lives. Many lose it along their journey to adulthood. These times together are less about the lessons and more about the time we are devoting to our daughters, showing her she's a priority and that she means more than her productivity and performance (sports, dance, academics, good behavior, etc.). It's only one time a month, but to your relationship, this one meeting could prove vital.

This year we are hitting on some of the basics again, but at a level the girls need as developing (and sometimes insecure) teens. We are discussing how to stay connected to God, His Truth, caring for our big emotions like shame, anxiety and depression, finding our significance, and recognizing temptations (like partying, gossip, body image issues, perfectionism). We will also have more conversations about LGBTQ+ issues and more.

We are only doing recommended reading this year. You can decide to read on your own or invite your daughter to read with you. The lessons will not have direct links to books, but these are books that will resource you this year if you would like additional material and resources.

If you haven't read *Courageous: Being Daughters Rooted in Grace*, by Terra Mattson, this is a great time to read it with your teen daughter and go through the questions in the back of the book with her.

Here are a few other books that will help your journey this year:

Why Emotions Matter, by Jon & Tristen Collins

Pharaoh's Daughter, by Mesu Andrews

People to Be Loved: Why Homosexuality Is Not Just an Issue OR Embodied, by Preston Sprinkle

Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain, by Dr. Daniel Siegel

Get ready, because it's going to be a great year! In the meantime, here's a list of what to bring to the first meeting:

(Add to this list based on the Materials listed on the Lesson Outline for the meeting.)

- Bible (one for you and your daughter to share or each your own)
- CG Notebook or Journal
- CG Memory Verse Notecard Ring
- An open heart, ready to participate

Here we go!

Love,



YEAR 8, MONTH 1

Lesson

Part I. Prepare

Title: Rhythms For Our Soul: Going To The Truth Teller

Key Verses:

"If you hold my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." John 8:31b-32

"You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies." John 8:44

Key Take-Away: Learning to recognize lies and replace them with truth requires practice and on-going grace for ourselves. **How we nourish our hearts and minds is similar to how we nourish our bodies.** Think about the food we eat. If all you eat is fast food, what would happen? Would it kill you? No. But, we might feel stomach sick, weak, sluggish, and eventually develop other side effects. The truth is, we are not able to sustain ourselves on fast food. The father of lies tempts us with fast ways to meet our cravings and temptations in life. God's ways provide nourishment that helps us do everything better. Spending time with God in His WORD is like eating healthy meals that sustain us. You can't eat just one meal and be good for the rest of your life. You have to keep eating healthy so you can dance, play sports, study, etc. God's Word is like a balanced meal and provides you with everything you need until it's time for the next meal. Getting into a regular habit and learning how to sustain our mind, body, heart, and soul is one of the key ways we are able to live by the TRUTH - and the truth is what sets us free from the temptations and insecurities that the father of lies tries to lure us with.

Materials needed for this meeting:

- Bible and CG Notecard ring
- Questions printed (2 sets) from point 9 below
- CG Canvas Notebooks (1 per person, option 1 below)
- Acrylic paints, paint brushes, markers, magazines, poster boards, mod podge glue, etc.

Mom Prep: Two weeks before the meeting, talk with your daughter about planning it, modeling how important it is to look ahead and be prepared. Pray together and ask God to guide you. Casually ask your daughter how she would like to contribute to the lesson. Do not force her

involvement, but offer reading of scripture, asking questions, or prepping and guiding an activity. She is a teen now and this is helping her develop confidence in her own leadership skills. Let her do it her way.

Daughter Prep: Take time to read through the lesson and decide which piece you will be ready to own and lead for the group. God wants to use you to encourage your CG group this month. Practice recognizing what comes easier to you as you utilize your God given abilities and passions.
Part II. Lead

Part II. Lead

First 15:

Gathering time. Welcome everyone. Grab a snack if your group is providing that; water and a small snack are best to keep it simple! Gather your group together in a circle (or as close to a circle as you can make). Make sure there is room for everyone and that everyone can sit comfortably. It is not necessary for you to be seated at a table, but you may choose that option.

Consider starting with an ice breaker: Four-On-A-Couch.

(See other ice breaker ideas from the Year 8 list. Teens open up after some time to relax and laugh together.)

Let's Go 70:

This is the heart of your gathering time. Use the following outline to help guide you in this process, but don't feel bound by it. Take some time with the material before you lead so that you can adapt things to best meet your group's needs. **The action steps are in bold.**

1. **Open in prayer.**
2. **Share with the group:**

Did you know that the US government has a department dedicated to identifying counterfeit money? (pass around a \$20 bill as you share) To ensure the department can identify fake money instead of real money, they dedicate their time to study all the facets of the real thing. In other words, instead of focusing on the details of counterfeit money, experts rely on their intimate recognition of the REAL thing so that they can easily spot a fake.

Optional: If you have a group who loves to learn, feel free to share this quick video: <https://www.stlouisfed.org/open-vault/2018/october/four-ways-spot-counterfeit-currency>

3. **READ the key verse out loud:**
 - Jesus was confronted by the religious folks - the ones who thought they knew everything, but were entangled by judgment, rules, and hypocrisy. They challenged Jesus and this was His response: Read John 8:42-47
4. **Ask and discuss as a group:** (or use "turn and talk" if your group is having a hard time



warming up to the discussion)

- Who is the father of lies?
- When Jesus uses the word “language”, what does He mean? (Not Hebrew, Greek, English, etc. He means the language of Truth.)
- How do you think the analogy of discerning counterfeit money helps us form a good plan for discerning lies versus truth?
- Why do you think reading our Bibles and intimately studying Truth helps us in our day to day lives?
- What is the impact of social media on discerning lies and truth?
- As teen girls, what lies do you hear or see around you? (a few examples to get the dialogue going...)
 - I have to be skinny.
 - I have to have lots of friends or likes on social media to be valuable.
 - It’s my body and I’ll dress and do what I want with it.
 - I should always follow my heart (whatever I desire, choose, believe).
 - I have to be perfect, smart, athletic, etc. to be valuable to God.

5. **Pair/Share: There are so many lies and we are so vulnerable to them.** It’s one of the enemy’s tactics to “kill, steal, and destroy” our confidence in God and in safe people. Turn and talk about the lies that are most tempting to you right now. Try to be honest - moms, feel free to share with your daughter as well.

6. Have the girls **update their Bible verses** by adding this month’s new verses:

→ **John 8:31b-32**

→ **John 8:44**

7. **Read: Genesis 3:1-7 - A narrative about how the serpent (father of lies) tempted Eve:** *The serpent was clever, more clever than any wild animal God had made. He spoke to the Woman: “Do I understand that God told you not to eat from any tree in the garden?” 2-3 The Woman said to the serpent, “Not at all. We can eat from the trees in the garden. It’s only about the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, ‘Don’t eat from it; don’t even touch it or you’ll die.’” 4-5 The serpent told the Woman, “You won’t die. God knows that the moment you eat from that tree, you’ll see what’s really going on. You’ll be just like God, knowing everything, ranging all the way from good to evil. 6 When the Woman saw that the tree looked like good eating and realized what she would get out of it—she’d know everything!—she took and ate the fruit and then gave some to her husband, and he ate. 7 Immediately the two of them did “see what’s really going on”—they saw themselves naked! They sewed fig leaves together as makeshift clothes for themselves. (the Message version)*

8. **Divide into two smaller groups and ask:** What did you notice about the enemy’s tactics in tempting Eve? What convinced Eve to give into his lies?

Possible responses:

- He questioned God’s Truth.
- He planted seeds of doubt.
- The enemy tells Eve that God doesn’t mean what He says.



- What she saw looked good and she could get what she wanted.
- She didn't trust God to provide what she wanted.
- She now was exposed to things God never wanted her to "know."

9. **Stay in two smaller groups and assign a teen discussion leader.** Brainstorm ideas for how to create healthy habits for getting into God's Word. (Hand questions to each leader.) *This is not a time to judge or brag. This is a time to learn from one another.

Discuss the following:

- Do you like reading the Bible? Why or why not?
- Do you enjoy journaling about what you read? Why or why not?
- Do you prefer reading/journaling in the morning or night?
- Did you know associating God's Word with something you enjoy will help? In the OT, they used to pair honey with studying God's Word to help children see it as "sweet." What "habit" can help you want to read your Bible? Ideas: Sitting by a window, drinking hot tea while reading, using special markers to highlight, having your favorite music playing, having a Bible that has study notes, etc.
- Do you use a devotional, a Bible study, an app, or just open your Bible and read?
- What would motivate you to read your Bible every day and study Truth so you can recognize the lies around you?
- Honestly answering, what is the hardest thing about daily reading your Bible?
- Start with a goal, writing down 1 action step to start this month. Maybe it's simply reading 1 verse a day. Maybe it's spending 10 minutes listening to worship music. Start small and see God grow your desire for more good nourishment.

★ **Make the Point:** Think about the food we eat. If all we eat is fast food, what would happen? Would it kill us? No. But, we might feel stomach sick, weak, sluggish, and eventually develop other side effects. The truth is, we are not able to sustain ourselves on fast food. The father of lies tempts us with fast ways to meet our cravings and temptations in life. God's ways provide nourishment that helps us do everything better. Spending time with God in His WORD is like eating healthy meals that sustain us. You can't eat just one meal and be good for the rest of your life. You have to keep eating healthy so you can dance, play sports, study, etc. God's Word is like a balanced meal and provides you with everything you need until it's time for the next meal. Getting into a regular habit and learning how to sustain our mind, body, heart, and soul is one of the key ways we are able to live by the TRUTH - and the truth is what sets us free from the temptations and insecurities that the father of lies tries to lure us with.

10. **Pair/Share:** Discuss a plan for regularly reading the Bible. Discover what works best for you (consider your wiring and style of learning). What motivated you from today's lesson?

11. **Optional Activities:**

- **Prayer Journals:** Provide canvas journals from a local art supply store or have each mom bring two - one for her and one for her daughter. Write scripture, prayers, and naming truths and lies. Or, encourage moms and daughters to get a devoted journal



for each person's time with God this year.

- Dream Board: Spend some time getting creative as a group. Cut large poster boards in half. Give each girl a board and encourage her to fill it with drawings, magazine pictures, personal photos, scripture, words that motivate her, etc. that inspire her to truly be devoted to God – a sort of DREAM/VISION BOARD for her spiritual life. The boards can encourage her to stay focused on God's plan and purpose for her.



Getting to the HEART of the issue: We can only recognize a lie if we are intimately familiar with the TRUTH. Time with God is not meant to be a religious law "to do"- like the Pharisees. It's an invitation to know God's Voice - His Truth that sets us free. Spending time in God's Word, around God's people, and learning from mentors is a key part of helping us be in the world and not fall prey to the father of lies. This is a battle in which we are learning to live victoriously for the rest of our lives. God's ways are full of love and grace, and leaves lasting satisfaction. Anything that shames, burdens, or keeps us on a treadmill of "doing" (to look good, be good, and experience good), only leaves us with a bitter aftertaste in the end. **God's Word and ways never leave us empty.**

Final 5:

Gather everyone back together to wrap up the meeting. **Circle up and pray** over this sweet tribe that has come together. Make sure to dismiss on time; it is extremely important to honor everyone's time, especially those that desire structure and schedules.

Suggested Homework for the Month: If you and your daughter want more, try listening to a podcast together on a drive to and from an activity. Learn about God's truth in new and fresh ways with these Bible Project Podcast ideas:

- One of the most common questions about the Bible: Where the heck did serpent come from? <https://bibleproject.com/podcast/theme-snake-throne-room-son-man-e3/>
- Tale of Two Trees: <https://bibleproject.com/podcast/tale-two-trees/>
- Genesis videos that give an overview of the first books of the Bible. <https://bibleproject.com/learn/genesis-1-11/>

This generation is highly interactive and likes all things digital. These are ways we can engage our daughters. However, don't force it. We want her hunger for God's Word to develop out of the desire of her heart and not out of an obligation to religious duties.

Part III: Reflect and Connect

Email out the 'Suggested Homework for the Month' (printed above; do this even if you printed it out already for your group). Find ways to hold the other moms and girls lovingly accountable this month. Perhaps check in with everyone in a week to find out if they are following through with their habits or forming new ones? Make sure to take some time this month to connect deeply with your daughter so that you can follow up with her after the lesson, one-on-one.

