

REAL LIFE THEOLOGY CONVERSATIONS

Launch Party Event Overview

This Launch Party Event is designed to get families started on the *RLT Conversations* journey and connect them with a cohort of other families that will journey together for the next 52 weeks. In the document, you will find:

- **Page 1: Example Launch Party Event Schedule**
- **Page 2: Sample Keynote/Sermon with slide prompts (see Launch Party Event Slides to download slides)**
- **Page 8: Getting Started: First Conversation guide with slide prompts**

Example Launch Party Event Schedule *(Total event time: 1:15-1:30.)*

12:00 PM	Gather and pray for food and event.
12:05PM	Provide food for participants. This can be as simple as a dessert, bar-b-que, or pizza, or as elaborate as a sit-down meal depending on your preference.
12:20 PM	Show the video “RLT Conversations Promo.”
12:22 PM	Present a Keynote/Sermon with provided slides. (Optional Video Keynote/Sermon: Show the provided “Bobby Harrington – Keynote.”)
12:35 PM	Show the <i>RLT Conversations</i> “Introduction” video featuring Jason Houser.
12:41 PM	Lead families through Conversation #1: How Can We Know Truth About God? You may want to show the video “Section 1” featuring Jason Houser as prompted (see slide 20). Houser has put together an introduction video for each of the 11 sections of the book. There are 5 steps to each conversation. This conversation (Conversation #1) can be found on p. 15-18 in the <i>RLT Conversations</i> book. Slides have been provided to guide the participants. The leader will need to limit the time for each discussion to keep the event moving. The goal is simply to get families familiar with the process.
1:05 PM	Q&A. Allow time at the end for questions, and let the families know how they will be supported through the process through weekly social media posts and sectional encouragement videos from Jason Houser.
1:15 PM	Pray for the families and dismiss.

Sample Keynote/Sermon – With Slide Prompts

(Optional Video: Bobby Harrington Keynote)

Real Life Theology Conversations Launch Event

NOTE: For the Real Life Theology Conversations Launch Event, we recommend starting with a keynote by a trusted leader, preferably the church's senior pastor/leader/minister. The purpose is to open the audience's eyes (both parents and kids) to how important it is that families carve out time to have these important conversations in the coming weeks. There's nothing more important than for parents and kids to spend time talking about God and getting to know him! Here is a sample keynote you might want to use (or you might want to use sections of it). We recommend the keynote taking around 10-15 minutes, and, at just over 2,000 words, this sample keynote is likely on the high end of that. So, feel free to use sections from it, shorten it, etc. in whatever ways are most helpful.

The slides which go along with this keynote address are listed below where they should appear (Slide 1, Slide 2, etc.). The slide with the picture of the open Bible and the lamb, cross, stone tablets, etc. makes a good default screen when you're not going through a particular slide.

Also, before the Keynote show the RLT Conversations Promo video (the one with book information).

Show the following video:

- **RLT Promo Video with Book Information**

Slide 1 – Real Life Theology Conversations

Keynote Introduction

Thanks so much for taking the time to come to our *Real Life Theology Conversations* launch event! I really do believe this event could be the start of a real game changer for our families. I'd like to welcome you and start with a story.

ILLUSTRATION: Preacher and author Fred Craddock tells the following true story:

"Glen Adsit and his family spent years as missionaries in China. During the Communist regime change, they were under house arrest. One day a few Chinese soldiers came to their house, and said, 'You can return to America.'

The family was thrilled.

They were celebrating when the soldiers told them, 'You can take two hundred pounds with you.'

Well, they'd been there for years. Two hundred pounds. They got the scales and started the family arguments: two children, wife, husband. Must have this vase. Well, this is a new typewriter. What about my books? What about this? And they weighed everything and took it off and weighed this and took it off and weighed this and, finally, right on the dot, two hundred pounds.

The soldier asked, 'Ready to go?'

'Yes.'

'Did you weigh everything?'

'Yes.'

'You weighed the kids?'

'No, we didn't.'

'Weigh the kids.'

And in a moment, typewriter and vase and all became trash. Trash." (Fred Craddock, *Craddock Stories*. Mike Graves and Richard F. Ward, eds. [St. Louis: Chalice, 2001], 22-23.)

There will come a moment when every Dad and Mom will look at their stuff (money, cars, computer, career) and at their kids and know beyond a doubt that, in comparison to their kids, all that stuff is trash.

The parents who can feel good about how they raised their kids are the ones who come to that moment sooner rather than later.

Slide 2: Parents...

For you parents, all the stuff in your life you have or the stuff you're trying to get is nothing compared to how important your kids are. In the busyness of life, you must not leave them behind.

Whatever You Get Right...

As parents, there are a lot of things you're going to try to accomplish for your kids.

- You're going to want them to grow up in a loving environment and in financial security.
- You're going to want them to learn basic skills and do well in their education.
- You're going to want them to enjoy hobbies and make good friends.
- You're going to want them to grow up and be able to make a good living.

All these are important. Yet, is it possible to do well in all these parenting areas—and yet miss out on the most important area?

Actually, it is very possible.

- What if your kids grow up in comfort and security—but they never end up having a relationship with God?
- What if they never build their lives on God’s truth—but instead build their lives on lies that will mess their lives up?
- What if they never receive God’s forgiveness for their sins in Jesus and never commit to trust and follow Jesus?
- What if they enjoy their time on earth but totally miss out on heaven?

Slide 3: ... miss out on heaven

As parents, whatever you get right, you’ve got to get this right.

ILLUSTRATION: David in the Bible was a good shepherd. He was a good servant to King Saul. He was a good warrior. He was a good king, for the most part.

However, I don’t think we can say that David was a good dad.

As a dad, David did some things right, but he did some things royally wrong. Read through 2 Samuel, and you’ll discover that he didn’t show attention to his kids when he should have. He didn’t discipline his kids when he should have. At best, he was an okay dad (but even that’s probably an exaggeration).

In fact, most of the dads we read about in the Bible were not good dads. Just read about Noah’s drunkenness, Isaac’s favoritism, Jacob’s deception, Samuel’s inability to lead his kids. On and on we could go.

So we can’t hold David up as this great dad. But we can learn from his life. Especially from something that David the dad did right. And if you get this right, your kids have a good chance of turning out right.

Slide 4: David...

Here’s the decision that David got very right:

“When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon his son. ‘I am about to go the way of all the earth,’ he said. ‘So be strong, act like a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in obedience to him, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and regulations, as written in the Law of Moses. Do this so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go.’” (1 Kings 2:1-3, NIV)

Slide 5: Priceless

What was the parenting decision David got right? The decision David made was to pass something priceless along to his son. “Before I die,” says David, “I’m going to make sure my boy knows what he needs to know.”

How Do You Make Sure Your Kids Know?

How do you make sure your kids know what they need to know most? In other words, how do you make sure your kids know about God? How do you make sure your kids *know* God?

God designed families to where parents were meant to teach their kids what they most needed to know, and parents were to teach them throughout everyday life. One of the most important sections of Scripture in the Old Testament was a prayer called the “Shema.” Jewish parents were to teach their kids this prayer and teach them about God throughout the day. Here's how it worked (and this passage of Scripture begins with the Shema prayer):

Slide 6: Deut. 6:4-9

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.” (Deut. 6:4-9, NIV)

This was how the families in the Old Testament were to disciple their kids to follow God. And it's the same way for Christian families today. We teach our kids to know God, and we use everyday opportunities to do it. Just as Deuteronomy 6 describes, we...

- Talk about God when we're hanging out at home
- Talk about God when we're driving to the event
- Talk about God before bed
- Talk about God in the morning
- Communicate about God through what goes up on the house walls, etc.

Sounds nice, right? But it also sounds like a lot. It may sound really intimidating just to think about talking about God to your kids once in a while, let alone multiple times throughout the day! Is it really all that important to make sure your kids are connected with God?

Kids Are in Danger!

The truth is that kids really, really need parents to step up and teach them about God and his ways. This is because kids have forces within them and forces outside them which are drawing them away from God and his ways.

Slide 7: Forces

Proverbs 22:15a (NASB) says, “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.” What does this foolishness look like?

As amazing as kids are, from an early age, they also tend to be ...

- All about themselves. That's why you hear them say, “Mine!” so often.
- All about getting out of trouble. That's why you hear them say “Wasn't me!” so often.

- All about doing what they want to do. That's why you hear them say "No!" so often.

And, yes, kids will be kids. And we love them like crazy!

But left that way, if the kid never grows out of saying, "Mine" all the time, that kid will grow into a very selfish adult, a dishonest employee at work, and a husband or wife that doesn't care about the other person. If that kid never grows out of saying, "Wasn't me," that kid will grow into an adult who never takes responsibility and never owns up to their mistakes. If that kid never grows out of saying "No" to authority, and he never learns how to tell himself no, eventually you're looking at an adult who didn't learn to respect authority. And so he hasn't learned to respect the boss or the police officer. Worst of all, he never learned until it was too late how to respect God.

But kids don't just have forces inside them that will try to draw them away from God; they also have forces around them that will try to draw them away from God. There are some great movies out there, but a lot of movies they watch will tell them lies that can really lead them down destructive paths. There are some great books they'll read, but there are also a lot of books that will tell them lies that will hurt them. There are some great websites out there, but a lot of websites will tell them lies that will lead them astray. There are some wonderful friends your kids will meet, but some so-called "friends" will try to lead them away from God and away from God's ways. And let's not forget that we all have an enemy of our souls, Satan, who actively tries to draw us away from God and destroy us forever. Kids face some serious dangers from inside and from outside.

Slide 8: God's solution?

The Solution?

Since your kids face forces, both inside and outside them, that are trying to draw them away from God and his ways, we've got to do everything we can to help them know God and stay committed to following him.

And do you know God's Plan A for helping your kids say no to lies and say yes to God?

Slide 9: Parents

Yep, you guessed it. God's Plan A was to give kids parents. Here's how the apostle Paul describes it:

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother'— which is the first commandment with a promise— 'so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.' Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." (Eph. 6:1-4, NIV)

What is the solution to your kids' facing forces from inside and outside that are trying to draw them away from God and his ways?

God's solution is you. "Bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."

Yes, we parents are far from perfect. Sometimes we

- Are busy
- Are selfish
- Are poor examples
- Get angry for the wrong reasons
- Hold grudges

And yet there's a really important reason that God gave parents to kids and why parents are still a great gift:

We parents really, really love you kids. And we will love you forever. And as long as we live, we will fight for what's best for you. Even if everyone in the world turns their back on you, you can come to us. You'll never lose our love. You can drive us as crazy as you want; we'll still always be crazy about you.

Slide 10: RLT Conversations Main

So, as parents who love our kids like crazy, let's make sure we're doing what the Bible says over and over: teaching our kids to know God. And like Deuteronomy 6 and Ephesians 6 describe, it happens through everyday conversations between parents and their kids.

Getting Started: First Conversation Guide

Why This Event

Slide 11: Book

The point of this event is to introduce you to a book that is going to help your family to have meaningful conversations. It's a parent-child conversation guide called *Real Life Theology Conversations*. Does every family have their book? This incredibly important resource is going to help you have some of the most important conversations you can ever have about God and life.

Let's watch a video that walks us through this book and how it works.

Slide 12: Introduction Video

Show the following video:

- **Introduction – Featuring Jason Houser**

Slide 13: Parents & Kids

Parents & Kids: Are you ready to start having some life-shaping conversations?

Slide 14: 52 Conversations about...

Your family is going on a journey where you will have 52 Conversations about:

Truth, the Bible, Christian Convictions, the Gospel, Faith, New Birth, Holy Spirit, Disciple Making, Kingdom Life, Countercultural Living, and the End.

Slide 15: 11 Topics

The 52 questions are organized around 11 topics. Here's what the journey looks like for your family.

Slide 16: Question

Each conversation is built around a question. For example:

- How can we know truth about God?
- What is the Old Testament?
- What is the New Testament?
- How did we get our Bible?

Slide 17: 5 Steps

Each conversation has 5 main steps:

Step 1: How would you answer the question?

Step 2: Now, let's walk through this answer...

Step 3: Can you fill in the blanks from memory?

Step 4: Continuing the Conversation

Step 5: Scripture to Memorize

Slide 18: First Conversation

Now's your turn! Let's go through the first conversation together!

Each family will walk through the first conversation. Turn to page 15 in your *Real Life Theology Conversations* book, and let's get started!

Slide 19: Section #1 Video (Add specified video to slide show at this point)

Show the following video:

- **Section 1 Introduction – Featuring Jason Houser**

Slide 20: Step 1

Let's begin **Conversation 1: Step 1**, by turning to page 15 in your *RLT Conversations* book.

The question for this conversation is, "How can we know the truth about God?" So, how would you answer this question? Let each member of your family respond.

Leader's Note: Give each family 3 minutes to explore this question.

Slide 21: Step 2

Let's continue on to **Conversation 1: Step 2**, pages 15-17.

For Step 2, the answer is divided into 5 parts. Talk with your family about each part. This step will be the longest part of the conversation.

Let's walk through this answer. The first part of the answer is, "We can know truth about God." Let's talk about this...

Leader's Note: Instruct the families to continue through all 5 parts of Step 2. Let them know they will have 12 minutes to walk through Step 2.

Slide 22: Step 3

Great job! Now, let's move onto **Conversation 1: Step 3**, on page 17.

Can you fill in the blanks from memory?

We can know t_____ (truth) about God through c_____ (creation), S_____ (Scripture), J_____ (Jesus) the Savior, and the impact of the H_____ (Holy) S_____ (Spirit).

Leader's Note: Encourage families to go around to each person and see if they can fill in the blanks. Give the group 4 minutes to do this step. End by asking "How did you do?"

Slide 23: Step 4

Now, on to **Conversation 1: Step 4**, pages 17-18.

Continuing the Conversation – Knowing, Doing, Sharing

This material is intended to give you opportunities to apply what you are learning and put it into action. Here is a brief outline of this section:

- **Knowing:** Summaries and activities to help you and your child remember the key takeaways from the conversation.
- **Doing:** Activities either to reinforce the truths we have learned or to help take what you have learned and do something with it.
- **Sharing:** Ideas for how to share the key truths with each other and to give your family opportunities to share with and invite others into what you are learning.

Leader's Note: Allow families 7 minutes to discuss Knowing, Doing, and Sharing. Let them know that this might be a bit of an awkward conversation at first but that they will gradually get really good at this part!

Slide 24: Step 5

And for the last part, let's do **Conversation 1: Step 5**. Turn to page 18.

Scripture Memorization: "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse." —Romans 1:20

Leader's Note: Encourage families to try to say the memory verse together three times. This should take about 3 minutes. See how much of the verse you all can memorize.

Slide 25: Yes! You did it!

Leader's Note: Celebrate with your families the first successful conversation!

Slide 26: Three Options

Leader's Note: Have families turn back to page 11 in their RLT Conversations book and look at the section "COMMIT TO A PLAN." Encourage them to come up with a plan for a successful journey through the next 52 weeks.

Here are three options to encourage:

1. One day/night per week
2. Five days/nights per week focusing on a different part of the conversation each time you meet.
3. Create your own plan!

Slide 27: Q&A

Leaders Note: Allow families to ask questions and give feedback.

Slide 28: Main Slide

Leaders Note: End by praying for the families.

