



Ground Zero
PARENT GUIDE
2014-15

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Hey Ground Zero Parents!

My name's Joelle Hassler, and I'm the middle school teaching pastor at Eagle Brook Church. I'm heading into my second school year on staff, and I couldn't be more excited to teach your Ground Zero student about the love of Jesus Christ.

We've created this parent guide so you know the ins and outs of what we're doing throughout the year in GZ. We really want to prepare your student to become a lifelong follower of Jesus, so everything we do is designed with that goal in mind.

As always, if you ever have questions, or need resources or prayer for your middle school student, don't hesitate to reach out to the Pastor of Students at your campus or to me.

Peace,

Joelle Hassler

Middle School Teaching Pastor

STAY CONNECTED

OFFICE PHONE: 651.429.9227

WEBSITE: ebcgroundzero.com

INSTAGRAM: [@eaglebrookstudents](https://www.instagram.com/eaglebrookstudents)

FACEBOOK: [/ebcgroundzero](https://www.facebook.com/ebcgroundzero)

Ground Zero's Facebook page is where parents can find updated information about Ground Zero.

(Per Facebook's policy, we do not endorse students under 13 using this page.)

BLOG: blog.ebcgroundzero.com

GROUND ZERO MISSION & GOAL

OUR MISSION

To reach students for Christ.

OUR GOAL

To prepare students to be lifelong followers of Jesus.

HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

Through positive relationships and engaging environments.

GROUND ZERO WINS

We'll feel like we've really done a great job this year if we accomplish the following wins:

1. STUDENTS MAKE A DECISION TO FOLLOW JESUS
2. STUDENTS ARE KNOWN
3. STUDENTS SERVE

THE GROUND ZERO ETHOS:

ENVIRONMENTS

Large Group Worship
Retreats
Hang Time
Teaching Time
Serving Opportunities
Special Events

RELATIONSHIPS

Small Groups
Sharing/Prayer Times
Hang Time
Teaching
Serving Opportunities
Connecting with Adult
Leaders Outside of GZ

4. STUDENTS LOVE CHURCH AND INVITE FRIENDS

5. VOLUNTEERS LOVE SERVING

PROGRAM FLOW

GROUND ZERO

SMALL GROUPS

6:15-7 pm (check-in begins at 6:10 pm)

LARGE GROUP WORSHIP

7-7:45 pm (check-in begins at 6:45 pm)

HANG TIME

7:45-8 pm

PICK-UP TIME

8 pm



RELATIONSHIPS

SMALL GROUPS

Small groups are a gathering of 8-20 same-gender students with 1-2 adult leaders of the same gender. At Ground Zero, small groups meet 45 minutes before large group and attendance is optional.

Small groups are the primary way in which a student grows in his or her relationship with Jesus. Outside of a parent-child relationship, we believe there is no relationship more important than the one a student will develop with an adult small group leader.

Our leaders are adult volunteers who have been thoroughly trained and empowered to help students grow in their faith. In order for this to happen, a relationship of trust must develop. Our adult leaders take the time to get to know the student on his or her terms. Sometimes this means showing up at student games and activities or gathering at a leader's home.

Please take the time to get to know your student's small group leader as it will become one of the most important relationships in their life.

SMALL GROUP GATHERING



ENGAGE

VOLUNTEER LEADER MEETING | ROOM SET UP | GETTING STARTED

Small group leaders will create a space for relational connection by beginning with a fun and interesting discussion or activity.

INVOLVE

RECAP | TEACHING POINTS/DISCUSSION | APPLICATION

Small group leaders will begin by reading and discussing the recap of the previous week's message. This will be followed by a time of discussion, further cementing the previous week's message and application and give time for students to grow in their knowledge of the Bible. Students will be strongly encouraged to read from their own Bibles. With 5-10 minutes to go, they will land on the specific application from the previous week's message with a purposeful, clear, direct challenge to act.

CHALLENGE

SUMMARY | UPCOMING MESSAGE | PRAY | DISMISS

Small group leaders will summarize the discussion and main teaching points and clearly hammer home the application. In the final five minutes they will introduce the upcoming message topic and ask 1-2 generic questions to get students thinking about the topic. During the last few minutes, small group leaders will ask for prayer requests, challenge students to pray for each other, to pray out loud and close the prayer before dismissing students to large group.

OFF-SITE GATHERINGS

We train our small group leaders to develop relationships with students outside of Ground Zero. It is hardly enough time to grow in a relationship with a student during the time at Ground Zero once a week. Therefore, we ask our leaders to plan 2-3 gatherings outside of a Ground Zero night with their students each semester. When this happens, it will always be in a group and they will always inform you that this is happening. It is an incredible opportunity for relationships to grow deeper.

SMALL GROUP COMMUNAL LEARNING

Small groups are about more than just relationships. In fact, we want learning and discipleship to occur in small groups. Every week, leaders will take students through a series of questions to unpack the previous week's message and dive into the series at Ground Zero in a deeper way. However, we design these questions to have a spirit of communal learning. That means students will teach other students and students will often teach the adults. Included in this packet is an example of a small group leader's discussion guide.

SMALL GROUP PRAYING & SHARING

Aside from gathering and learning, small groups are designed for students to learn how to pray individually, pray together and pray for one another. Furthermore, small groups are a safe place for students to share the deeper parts of their lives. Relationships will grow stronger as students begin to share their lives.

SMALL GROUP CURRICULUM



SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

DATE: / /

WELCOME & ICE BREAKER

RECAP OF SERIES & LAST WEEK'S MESSAGE (READ OUT LOUD)

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS THE MESSAGE

LAST WEEK'S:

BOTTOM LINE:

CHALLENGE:

CEMENT THE BOTTOM LINE & CHALLENGE.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TONIGHT?

ASK THESE 2 QUESTIONS

SUMMARIZE, CLOSE & PRAY!

ENVIRONMENTS

LARGE GROUP WORSHIP

Students will be greeted right away as they enter the doors to our campus and will stop in at one of our convenient check-in stations for a name tag. VIP experiences are set up in the lobby for new students, recognizable and easy to access. A countdown is visible so students know when the large group program is about to begin.


During large group students will hear a familiar song from the radio as they walk in, and then be led in a high-energy time of worship by our excellent worship leaders. There will be a stage game where students can compete in a fun game for a cool prize. After the stage game, there will be a few announcements and a video that leads into our teaching time. Teaching times are 20 minutes or less and apply directly to the lives of middle school students. After the teaching time, students head out to hang time.

HANG TIME

We create hang time to be a space of 15-20 minutes where students simply get to hang out and be middle schoolers. Three environments incorporate all types of interests: high-energy-fun-zone, complete with video games and loud music; cafe, complete with pizza, soda and candy for purchase, and tables to gather and chat; and a coffee shop, complete with quiet conversations, low lights and couches. All of these environments are created for relationships to develop between peers and/or adults.

TEACHING

Everything we do at Ground Zero is created so students will begin a relationship with Jesus or learn how to grow in their relationship with Jesus. Therefore, the teaching portion of the night is central to conveying truths about Jesus.



Throughout the year, we dive into series covering a wide range of topics. All the messages are prepared weeks in advance, having been edited and critiqued by several different people, to make them as relevant and excellent as possible. Every message is founded on what the Bible says and translated into what it means to be a Christian as a middle school student.

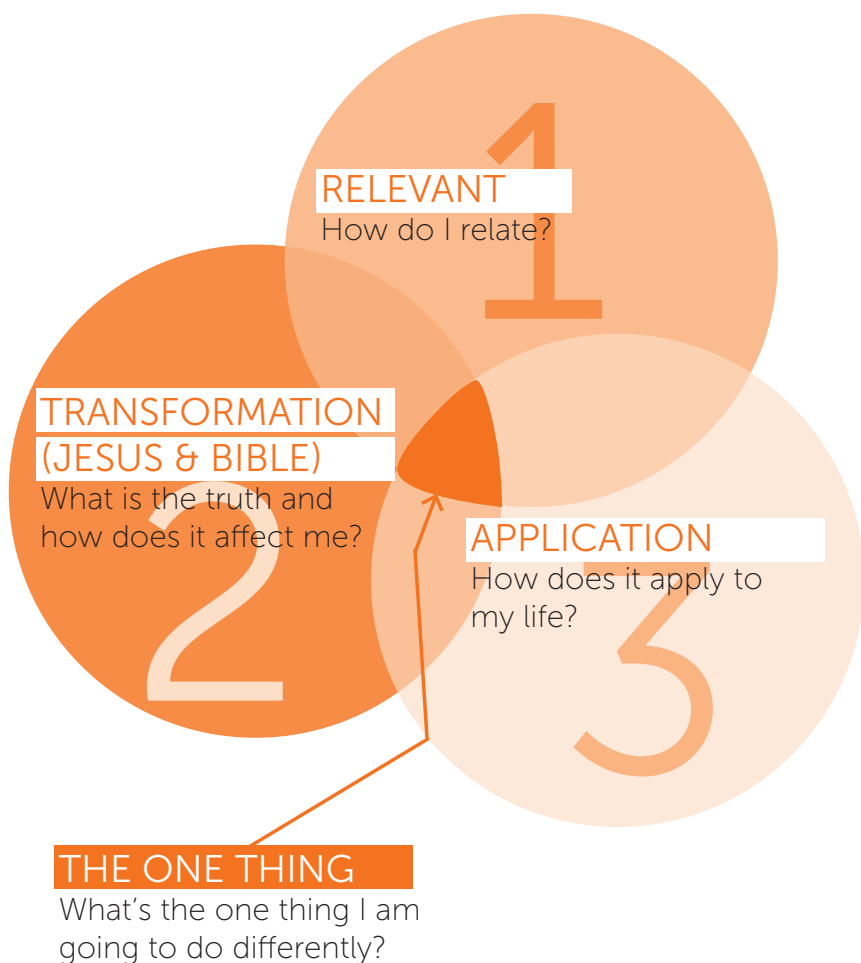
SERVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

Students who regularly attend small and large group can serve as VIP hosts, greeters or set up/take down volunteers at Ground Zero. They can also serve in kids' ministries areas during weekend services. This is a great way for students to learn how to serve and be involved in the local church.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Three to four times a year, we go all out for a special event. Whether it's a kickoff event, a Christmas Party or Spring-A-Palooza, we up the ante and create a much bigger, crazier environment at Ground Zero than usual. We do this for two reasons: First, we ask regular attenders to invite their friends to this fun special event so they learn how to reach their peers for Christ. Second, we believe middle school students just need to have fun! When these special events come up, make sure your student is attending and inviting his/her friends!

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY



For a detailed explanation of the theological beliefs and values of Eagle Brook Church, which we teach at Ground Zero, please go to eaglebrookchurch.com.



GROUND ZERO CALENDAR DATES

Ground Zero takes place weekly at all of our campuses on Wednesday nights. Below is a schedule of big events happening at Ground Zero, as well as nights that Ground Zero will not take place.

SEPT. 17

GZ starts (BLN, CRS, LINO, SLP & WBL)

OCT. 1

GZ starts at WDBY; small groups start (WDBY small groups Begin Oct. 8)

OCT. 15

No GZ (MEA)

OCT. 25

GZ Fall Retreat: All In

NOV. 26

No GZ (Thanksgiving)

DEC. 17

Christmas Party

DEC. 24 & 31

No GZ (Holidays)

JAN. 7

GZ is Back!

FEB. 18

Student Ministries Party

MARCH 11

No GZ (Volunteer Appreciation Night)

APRIL 1

No GZ (Easter)

APRIL 10-12

GZ Retreat (Lino/WBL)

APRIL 17-19

GZ Retreat (BLN/CRS/SLP/WDBY)

APRIL 29

8th Grade Celebration

MAY 13

Spring-A-Palooza



WHEN AND WHERE EACH CAMPUS MEETS

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

SMALL GROUPS: 6:15-7 PM

* Small group
check-in at 6:10 pm

LARGE GROUP: 7-7:45 PM

* Large group
check-in at 6:45 pm

HANG TIME: 7:45-8 PM

PICK-UP: 8 PM

BLAINE CAMPUS

3603 95th Avenue NE
Blaine, MN 55449

SPRING LAKE PARK CAMPUS

8498 Sunset Road
Spring Lake Park, MN 55432

COON RAPIDS CAMPUS

Coon Rapids High School
2340 Northdale Blvd NW
Coon Rapids, MN 55433

WHITE BEAR LAKE CAMPUS

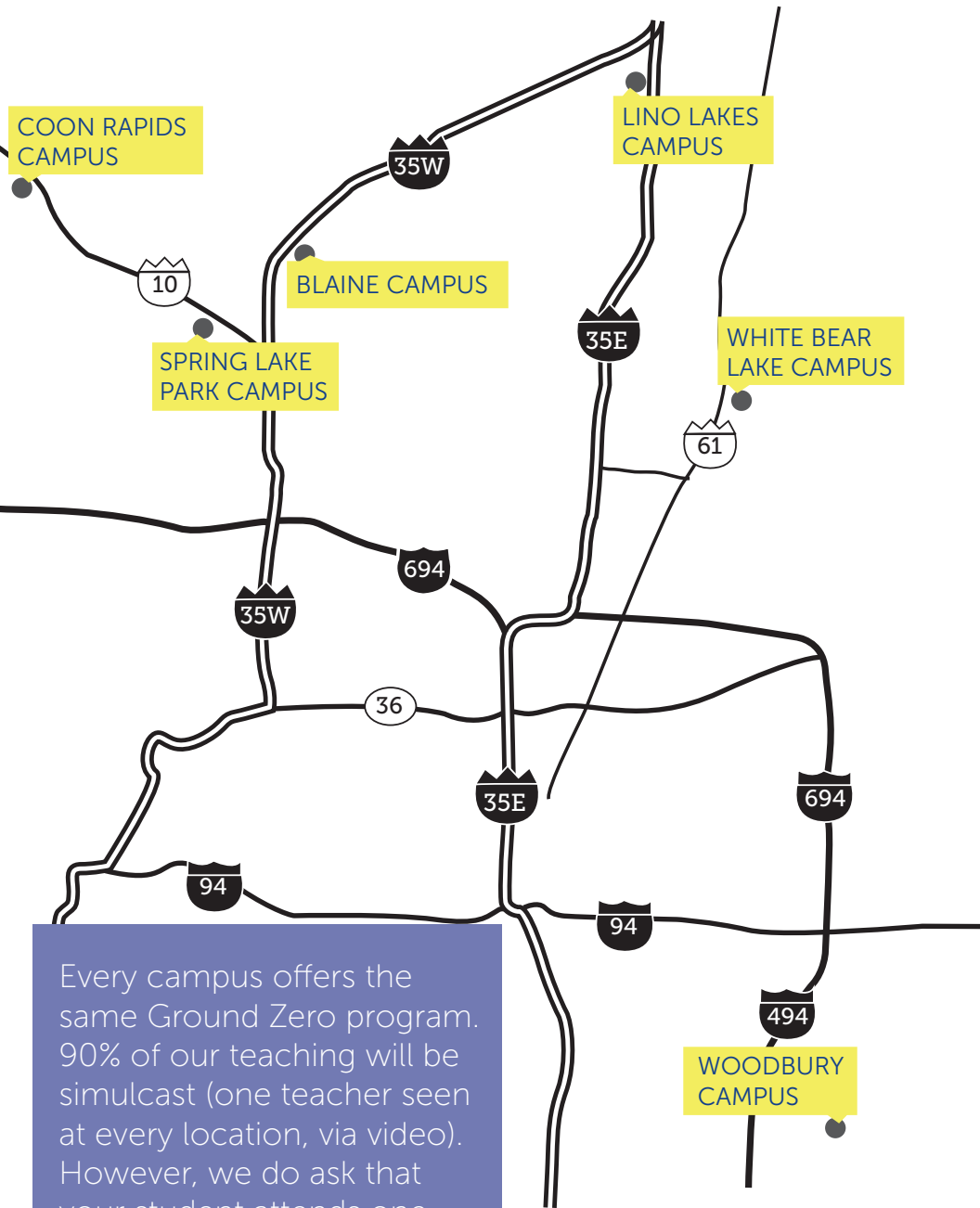
2401 East Buffalo Street
White Bear Lake, MN 55110

LINO LAKES CAMPUS

7775 20th Avenue N
Lino Lakes, MN 55038

WOODBURY CAMPUS

11125 Eastview Rd
Woodbury, MN 55129



Every campus offers the same Ground Zero program. 90% of our teaching will be simulcast (one teacher seen at every location, via video). However, we do ask that your student attends one campus consistently.

HOW TO REGISTER FOR GROUND ZERO

Registration is free and students can register at any time. Just show up at to Ground Zero and we'll mail you the paperwork. Or, you can go online and register at ebcgroundzero.com

HOW TO BRING A FRIEND

Students can bring a friend at any time. After attending once or twice, we ask the student to register. They will be sent a packet of information on how to do so.

HOW TO JOIN A SMALL GROUP

The best way for your student to join a small group is to simply show up at 6:15 pm and express their interest. We will ask them to fill out a card, and they will be directed by an adult leader on which group to join based on their grade and gender. We do everything we can to put students in groups with their friends. Once they've attended their small group for a few weeks, they will be given the choice of whether or not to commit to staying with the group for the rest of the year. If they do commit to stay with the group, we expect the student to attend as often as possible during the year.



WAYS TO SPIRITUALLY ENGAGE YOUR STUDENT

You are still the most influential person in your child's life—especially when it comes to their faith. Model healthy spiritual practices for your student. Pray regularly, take time to read Scripture each day, be generous with your resources and make church a priority. And of course, don't be afraid to ask questions and talk about what your student is experiencing in Ground Zero. Every Wednesday your student will come home with a Going Beyond card with a brief summary of what they learned and a few questions for you to ask them to get the conversation started.

THE BEST WAYS TO UTILIZE GROUND ZERO AND HELP YOUR STUDENT GO DEEPER IN HIS OR HER FAITH?

- * Ask about their small group leader
- * Ask about what they are learning in small group
- * Ask about what they are struggling with
- * Ask about the message
- * Suggest doing a devotional together
- * Challenge them to take notes during GZ
- * Pray together and pray for them
- * Make treats for your student to share
- * Get to know the pastor of Student Ministries at your campus



WAYS TO GET INVOLVED AS A PARENT

There is no better way to share the GZ connection than to volunteer. If you'd like to get involved, we are always looking for adults to step up and passionately lead this ministry. You can serve either two times a month or every week.

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

- * Small Group Leader
- * Check-In
- * Parking
- * Security
- * Tech
- * Cafe 5000
- * Set-up/Take down
- * Child Care
- * Greeter
- * Connector

Rest assured, if your child is worried about you being there, (stay out of my business, Dad!), many of these positions are ways to serve behind the scenes. Either way, we find that most kids get over it really fast and actually find it cool to see their parents serving at the ministry they attend.

To get involved, email serve@eaglebrookchurch.com or contact the pastor of Student Ministries at your campus.

UNDERSTANDING THE MIDDLE SCHOOL YEARS

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS: WHO ARE WE DEALING WITH?

ADOLESCENCE

On average, this begins at 11 years old. In other words, adolescence has generally begun by the time they enter middle school and Ground Zero.

PUBERTY: THE BEAUTIFULLY AWKWARD YEARS!

This is an awkward phase for middle school students. As parents, we need to seek to normalize their experience. For instance, if you hear a voice crack, don't laugh, mock, or point it out. Instead, act as if it hasn't happened. Don't forget to hug your student during these years. They need to know you don't think they are awkward or gross—and hugging will totally communicate that to them.

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

The brains of middle school students are way behind in development and are going through a crazy and speedy transition. The frontal lobe (aka the decision making center) is behind. Therefore, understand that it is generally more difficult to make decisions—let alone good ones. The temporal lobe (aka the emotional interpretation center) is also behind. Why do middle school girls cry so much? Why do middle school boys have moods that shift like the weather? They're figuring out how to interpret their chaotic emotions.

AN EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL AND RELATIONAL ROLLER COASTER

In other words, middle school is a roller coaster for a majority of young people. Your role is to stabilize and normalize their experiences.

THE THREE BIG ADOLESCENT TASKS

Like all human beings, middle school students are seeking to find their place and way in the world. However, this is a unique period of time where questions of identity, autonomy and affinity are being addressed.

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

For the first time since early childhood, their worlds are being reformulated. In the early stages of puberty, this assurance of identity changes rapidly. As parents and adults in their lives, we need to provide support as they figure out their identities. As Christians, we also need to point them to their identity as sons and daughters of Jesus Christ.

AUTONOMY: HOW AM I UNIQUE? WHAT CAN I CONTROL?

In the early stages of puberty, young people begin re-establishing their freedoms, uniqueness and gain a new grip on the world around them. Our job as parents is to help them identify their unique characteristics, grow them, and provide boundaries that point them to the right freedoms to pursue. They may perceive boundaries as restrictive, but the freedom we point to is

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ultimately the most liberating thing in this world.

AFFINITY: TO WHOM AND WHERE DO I BELONG?

Why do middle school students go from being a preppy athlete to a gothic punk to a straight-laced student? They are desperately trying to find out where they fit in. As parents, we need to reinforce the idea that their church is a great community to belong to. They belong to Christ, to the body of the Church and to their families.

CHRIST FOLLOWERS


Statistics ultimately point to the fact that a majority of Christians make a decision to follow Christ prior to age 13. You have the opportunity to make ALL the difference by creating a strong desire in them to be a part of the Ground Zero community.

PROBLEM: Youth feel disconnected and isolated.

SOLUTION: They are looking for a place to belong.

PROBLEM: Youth are feeling the pressure of a busy and stressful world.

SOLUTION: They are looking for a greater sense of balance and ways to handle challenges.



PROBLEM: Youth sense the shallowness and superficiality in encounters with others.

SOLUTION: They are looking for genuine relationships.

PROBLEM: Youth are feeling empty and drained from striving to meet their desires through school, material possessions and entertainment.

SOLUTION: They are looking for spiritual answers to their unfulfilled hunger.

PROBLEM: Youth are feeling overwhelmed by the pace of change in every aspect of the world.

SOLUTION: They are looking for stability and help through hard transitions.

PROBLEM: Youth are feeling discouraged or apathetic toward the decay and corruption of our society.

SOLUTION: They need help in maintaining a sense of Christian values at home, school and in their community.

PROBLEM: Youth can feel used, sensing they are valued for only what they can contribute.

SOLUTION: They need a caring Christian community that loves them unconditionally.





Ground Zero—Eagle Brook Church

ebcgroundzero.com

[facebook.com/ebcgroundzero](https://www.facebook.com/ebcgroundzero)

Twitter: [#ebcgz](https://twitter.com/ebcgz)

Instagram: [@eaglebrookstudents](https://www.instagram.com/eaglebrookstudents)