



## Our Mission

In a relay race the most important part is the transition – when the baton moves from one runner’s hand to the next. Cru wants **every** Christian graduate to continue on with Jesus by making a smooth transition from their present Christian community to their next Christian community after high school.

With Cru’s understanding of college life from over 60 years of campus ministry and Cru’s understanding of building godly family legacies from 40 years of family ministry (Family Life), Cru wants to come alongside parents to help them establish their kids in the gospel before they leave home for college. Our COUNTDOWN seminar was designed to help parents strengthen their kid’s faith in the gospel before they leave home.

## Current Realities

1. Most church leaders agree that when our Church kids leave high school they face real challenges in their faith:

"Among incoming freshmen, 44% said they frequently attend religious services, but by the end of their junior year, that was down to 25%."

- *UCLA Higher Education Research Institute (HERI)*

"70% of young adults ages 23-30 stopped attending church regularly for at least a year between ages 18-22. Of those, 25 percent said, 'I moved to college and stopped attending church'. The college environment can have a dangerous effect on a Christian student’s faith."

- *Lifeway Research*

- 61% of students with Christian background stopped attending church after going regularly
- 41% have struggled with significant doubt
- 35% have rejected their parents faith

- *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church...And Re-Thinking Faith,*  
*David Kinnaman*

"40-50% of kids who graduate from a church or youth group will fail to stick with their faith in college. Only 20% of college students who leave the faith planned to do so during high school. The remaining 80% intended to stick with their faith but didn't."

- *Sticky Faith: Every Day Ideas To Build Lasting Faith In Your Kids,*  
*Chap Clark And Kara Powell*

2. Research continues to show that parents play the most influential role in their child's Christian faith.

"Perhaps our most significant and summative finding regarding the influence of parents is this: how you express and live your faith will have, all things being equal, a greater impact on your child's life than any other factor."

- *Sticky Faith: Every Day Ideas To Build Lasting Faith In Your Kids,*  
*Chap Clark and Kara Powell*



"Most teenagers and their parents may not realize it, but a lot of research in sociology of religion suggests that the most important social influence in shaping young people's religious lives is the religious life modeled and taught to them by their parents."

- Soul Searching: The Religious And Spiritual Lives Of American Teenagers,  
Christian Smith And Melinda Lundquist Denton

3. Many parents feel ineffective when it comes to discussing their faith with their teenager. When parents no longer feel they have influence in their kid's lives they either stop trying, or start controlling.

4. Many teens feel a growing "disconnect" with their parents. When talking with parents about important issues gets tough, teens look elsewhere for understanding and guidance. When that happens a major connection to the gospel is broken. Those who "get them" will gain their allegiance and influence how they see God and the Bible.

## Seminar Details

Our Countdown seminar is typically done from 7-9 in an evening. The two-hour session is a combination of lecture, video, discussion, role-play and Q&A, and covers:

- Three qualities students need to own their faith as young adults.
- Three skills parents need to help their kids own their faith.
- Seven critical questions students need to think about during their teenage years.
- How to evaluate the spiritual environment of your child's future college campus.

Past seminars:

Cedar Mill Bible Church, Beaverton, OR  
Rolling Hills Community Church, Tualatin, OR  
Santa Barbara Community Church, Santa Barbara, CA  
Park Street Church, Boston, MA  
Trinity Baptist Church, Nashua, NH  
Grace Chapel, Lexington, MA  
Faith Community Church, Hopkinton, MA

Booking information: contact Ben Burns, [ben.burns@cru.org](mailto:ben.burns@cru.org),

## Presenter

Ben Burns is a marriage and family educator. He serves as Director of Cru's gradGUIDES ([gradguides.org](http://gradguides.org)), which helps high school students and their parents discuss faith before leaving high school through our College Life 101 and Countdown seminars. Ben also addresses couples nationally about God's blueprints for marriage and family at *Weekend to Remember* getaways, sponsored by Cru's Family Life ministry. Ben has a BA in Communication and an MA in Exegetical Theology from Western Seminary in Portland, where he is currently an adjunct professor on "Developing Strong Families". He and his wife Janet have been married for 19 years, have three children and live near Portland, Oregon.

