

**WE WILL**



**RISE<sup>®</sup>**

**A 30 - DAY CHALLENGE FOR MEN**

**PLANNING GUIDE**

**WWW.MENRISEUP.ORG**

## Welcome to this unprecedented movement of men in the Church!

RISE is simply a tool in your hand to awaken and strengthen men to live out their true identity as sons of God. New times require new methods. The typical barriers of entry most men face to be part of a men's group or traditional study have been eliminated. RISE goes right to the man in the busyness of life, and gives him practical tools to live out his Faith every day. The time for men to RISE up and claim our true identity is here. This guide will help you get the most out of this movement at your parish.

**\*Note:** If you've already run a RISE challenge, this is an opportunity to ask those men to become the "evangelizers" for the Fall start-date for a broader audience of men at the parish. Their personal invitations and testimonies are critical to conveying the power of RISE. The content below contains new tips and a promotional calendar for a successful implementation.

RISE® is a Cardinal Studios LLC production, created in partnership with Real Life Catholic, and in association with Ecce! Films.

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For more leader resources, visit [MenRiseUp.org](http://MenRiseUp.org)



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## Introduction: Why RISE?

The RISE 30 day challenge is for men who want to know and live more fully their unique masculine identity and vocation, in an age where both are ideologically and culturally emasculated.

Despite the confusion and collapse of our present society's understanding surrounding maleness, from the time men are born, we progress in our *identity* and are invited into a unique vocation precisely through our masculinity. (CCC, 1700)

We are first **sons**, then **brothers**. These first two identities are purely received at our birth, and cannot be earned or achieved. We are given them as a gift; invited into *sonship* in a family, and drawn into *brotherhood* with the entire human family as a man. We begin to collaborate with grace to enter more fully into these uniquely masculine roles. (CCC, 460)

The second two identities are chosen. We are potentially **spouses**, called to “leave father and mother” (Genesis 2:24, TOB 15:4) to cling to a wife in the sense of a literal marriage to a woman or through a spiritual spousal bond with God and the Church through priesthood or religious life. This chosen intimate communion with another creates and bestows on men the fullest realization of their masculinity; the name of **fathers**. (St. John Paul II, TOB 22:6, 78:5)

The RISE Challenge seeks to open up the doors to these masculine identities, and to explore their meaning and mission. For each day of the week, men are given a brief inspirational video, a quote to ponder, and a daily challenge suited to their present stage in life; single, married with children at home, married with no children at home, or divorced/separated/widowed. The recommendation is that each of these pieces be viewed and reflected upon in the morning. The estimated time frame for this daily RISE structure is roughly 5-8 minutes in total each day, with the challenges being applied throughout the day. The “anchor” lessons at the beginning of each week are a little longer, as they feature powerful short films and inspirational content.

This Leader's Guide is meant to give an overview and assist in the implementation of the Challenge at your parish.



## Keys to a Successful RISE Challenge

1. **The First Step is to Pray.** We know that nothing we do is ever fruitful without prayer, and a complete dependence on God's grace and providence. Pray for the men at your parish, that their hearts are open to the truth of their dignity as men, and that they're willing to step up to the challenge. Also pray for your priests, and all those who will be helping you coordinate the challenge.
2. **The next step to successfully bringing RISE to your parish would be to set up a meeting with your pastor for permission,** and, if there is a men's group already present and you're not the leader, the leader of that group should attend as well. Ask them in the initial call if they could set aside 30 minutes to meet. You'll also want a screen or laptop there to present the trailer video found at [www.MenRiseUp.org/p/parishgroups](http://www.MenRiseUp.org/p/parishgroups).

RISE isn't like other faith-formation programs. The vision for RISE is that it can be used as a wake-up call for men at the parish who normally would not attend faith formation groups. It's also a powerful tool to strengthen men who are currently forming themselves in the Faith. If hundreds (or thousands) of men at the parish rise up to take the challenge to become better men, and begin holding each other accountable, it could literally transform the parish community.

Share during your meeting the incredible need there for a challenge like RISE for your parish and the Church and culture at large. Also, be sure to make clear the simplicity of the RISE Challenge and the ease with which it can be implemented.

3. **Find 3-5 men to help you coordinate the challenge.** Things to consider are marketing the challenge to the men, finding the meeting space and day/time, speaking at the end of masses to promote it, manning a table in the narthex to answer questions.

If you know someone who's particularly good at speaking, have him be the one to encourage men at the end of masses. Also, whomever is best at facilitating discussion, consider having him lead the group meetings. Many times we take on too much as leaders, and often people are willing to help if they are passionate about the vision and the shared mission.

4. **Choose a Start-Date. New RISE Challenges begin every month.** We will have other start-dates available if you need to begin another day. On the first day of the challenge, everyone will receive an email with a link to the video and content for that day. Men can also visit [www.MenRiseUp.org/login](http://www.MenRiseUp.org/login) if for some reason they didn't see the email.

5. **“Brothers.”** Encourage all the men that sign up to “challenge” another man to journey with them through the 30-days. This is one of the most powerful elements of RISE. The “Brotherhood Guide” they access upon checkout includes tips for finding a brother, and instructions on daily check-ins, praying for each other, and supporting each other through the challenge. This is where true brotherhood has been formed, as men commit to having each other’s backs and bond around a common mission.
6. **What’s your goal?** It’s critical to have a goal for attendance that everyone can work toward. Here are suggested goals based on parish size. These are very attainable utilizing the 1=4 method:

- **1 = 4.** Each man who signs up can equal four total registrations by simple invites to two men within his immediate circle (e.g., his Father and brother, friend or co-worker)

**Here’s how it works:** Bob comes to the back table after mass and you take down his name and email. You instruct him to find a “brother” to journey with, and also to invite one more man from outside the parish (friend, co-worker, family member, etc.) That man from outside the parish will be encouraged to find a brother once he registers. Now you have four men from the same circle journeying together. After the challenge, that’s 3 additional men besides Bob whose faith has been awakened/strengthened and are ready for more.

- 1500 families or less: **Goal: 50 men. With 1=4 Method, you will have 200 men.**
- 1500-3000 families: **Goal: 100 men. With 1=4 Method, you will have 400 men.**
- 3000-5000 families: **Goal: 200 men. With 1=4 Method, you will have 800 men.**
- 5000+ families: **Goal: 250 men. With 1=4 Method, you will have 1000 men.**

7. **Market the Challenge.** Below are steps to follow to get the most excitement generated, and the most men signed-up for the challenge. It’s important that RISE isn’t presented as another “study” option or group program. It’s a movement of men that is accessible by all men of the parish. Whether they attend the group meetings is optional. If it’s presented in this manner, you’ll see a tremendous response.

- Personal Invitation.** The most effective means of getting men to commit to the challenge is by personal invitation. Encourage the leadership at your parish to invite all the men they know. Work with existing men’s groups. RISE casts a wide net, and can be used as a tool to draw men into an event, even if they’ve never attended any faith formation study.
- Utilize the marketing materials** found at [www.MenRiseUp.org/p/parishgroups](http://www.MenRiseUp.org/p/parishgroups) to promote the challenge. This includes flyers, posters, bulletin announcements, images for social media/web, and a powerful video. **A sample promotional schedule is on the next spread of this guide.**

- c. **Set-up a Table in Narthex or other highly visible area with 1-2 men.** Here you can have a large poster displayed, a computer screen with the trailer looping, and flyers. You'll be able to answer questions and take registrations using this [form](#).

Having a table is critical for two reasons:

- So that you can encourage men during your announcements and/or after your testimony to come for information after Mass, and you can share the power and vision of RISE and encourage them to sign-up right there. You can also share information about the optional group meeting times.
  - So that you can capture their name and email for follow-up about the meetings. Take down their information at the table using this spreadsheet. Our Privacy Policy doesn't allow us to share individuals names.
  - **\*If the Parish is Paying for the men:** You'll need to take down each man's name and email on this spreadsheet and send it to us by Sunday at 5pm the day before the start-date. We can always add more men in later on, but this will ensure the bulk of the men are in the system before the start-date.
- d. **Discuss with your pastor a homily series** leading up to the challenge about the importance of men fulfilling their God-given role. You may also ask for permission to play the teaser video at the end of weekend masses. You'll need to download the video from [www.MenRiseUp.org/p/parishgroups](http://www.MenRiseUp.org/p/parishgroups). Be sure to secure a projector, screen and laptop if your parish does not have a multimedia system already in place. Play the video and then introduce the vision of the challenge, and follow it up by directing men to a table in the vestibule or meeting center to answer questions.
8. **Share your meeting schedule with the men.** The group meetings are not reliant on gathering to watch a video. Therefore you can meet on the day of the week and time that works best. The men should have already been watching the videos and doing the challenges throughout the week. The meetings are designed to help the men go deeper into the content, share their successes (or failures), and hear from other men about their own journeys. The hope is that true Christian brotherhood will form around the common mission of becoming the men God is calling them to be.
- **We suggest 6 total meetings:**
    - **Meeting #1:** This is more of a logistical meeting that takes place. Introduce the men to each other, explain what they should expect through the challenge, share the meeting schedule. It's also an information night where men who haven't yet signed up can come to get information. Each man should be reminded to invite a "brother" and at least one other man from outside of the parish (work, sports, etc.) to take the challenge. Be sure to capture the names of everyone attending.

- **Meeting #s 2-5:** These are the meetings that follow the structure found within this guide. Here you will pray together, get into the themes of the challenge, and have small group discussions.
- **Meeting #6:** This is the wrap-up meeting. Here you will break into small groups and discuss the challenges that were most impactful, what the men chose for the “battle plan” focus from Day 30, and explain to men the “next steps” for ongoing journeying with the RISE resources for individuals and parish groups.

9. **What’s Next? The RISE® Life Series** is a powerful new approach to Men’s Ministry. The goal is to bring men into community and help you form them into disciples. This ongoing series combines the best features of the RISE Challenge, with powerful new content each week for individuals, and groups. It also includes ongoing leadership training and support unlike anything available. It’s a new way to strengthen or begin a dynamic men’s ministry at your parish.

10. **Consider running another RISE challenge for those men who didn’t make it for the first one.** RISE will be available throughout the year with different start dates. Start another 30-day challenge and have those who already went through it give a testimonial at the end of masses about the fruit they saw in their own lives. If even 25% of the men in your parish take the challenge, it could transform a community. **This will also get more men coming into your men’s group on a consistent basis.**

### **A Note About Group Meetings and Small Group Facilitators:**

The number of men attending your weekly meetings may be quite large. As you’ll see below, we suggest breaking the men up into small groups for the discussion time of the meetings. The ideal small-group size is around 5-8 men. Ideally, each small group has a facilitator that keeps the men on track with the questions, and helps moderate the discussion. Preferably, these men are volunteers who have experience with faith formation studies. Their job is not to provide answers, but to simply keep the discussion flowing, allowing each man in the group to have a voice in the discussion.

Small group facilitators are not absolutely necessary, but if you’re able to have them in place, it can help avoid the common issues that arise, such as one man dominating the conversation, or the discussion getting off-track onto other topics.

Please contact John Edwards, our Leader Support Specialist, with any questions at [john@cardinalstudios.org](mailto:john@cardinalstudios.org)

# Promotional Calendar

## 2 months before start date:

- Core team begins working toward registration goal
  - Men's group/core team begin personal invitations
  - Utilize business cards, Talking Points, Personal Emails using template
  - Parish Social Media, and core-team social media graphics posted
  - Plan meeting arrangements for group, including room, day/time.

## 1 month before start date:

- Table staffed each weekend in Narthex with flyers, 20 x 30 poster on easel
- Use spreadsheet found at [www.MenRiseUp.org/p/parishgroups](http://www.MenRiseUp.org/p/parishgroups) to keep track of men.
- 1=4. As you take registrations, challenge each man to invite one “brother” not doing it yet, and then one additional man from outside the parish.
- Sidewalk Signs on parish grounds
- Vinyl sign posted
- Meeting arrangements posted in bulletin and announced at mass.
  - Be sure to invite the men to the group, but make it clear they do not have to attend a meeting. This is a low barrier to entry, and much different than typical faith-formation programs. Once they take the challenge they'll be much more likely to come into community.

## 2-3 weeks before start date

- 3-part homily series using homily guide found at [www.MenRiseUp.org/p/parishgroups](http://www.MenRiseUp.org/p/parishgroups)
- Continue to promote with marketing resources. (posters, signs, bulletin, etc.)
- Table staffed with 2 men after each mass.
- Witness speaker at the end of mass, letting people know about impact of RISE on his life, and how to sign up...directing them to table in the back if there.

## Weekend before start date

### Final Push

- Continue to promote with marketing resources. (posters, signs, bulletin, etc.)
- Table staffed with 2 men after each mass.
- Pastor speaks at end of Mass encouraging men that the time is now to RISE, and to get more information at the table in the back.
- Encourage all men to invite others into the challenge.

## Group Weekly Plans:

The following pages contain some outlines for a weekly structure. You as the leader may want to arrange the meetings as you see fit, adding your own insights or follow-up advice/instruction. Overall, we hope that you, too, will take the RISE challenge along with the men you are leading, and you'll be able to share your own journey and ultimately be able to relate with the content and challenges as well.

## Week 1: We Are Sons

1. Lead the men gathered in an opening prayer of your own design but similar in content to this:

*Father, we are gathered here in Your Name and under Your Mercy. We long to be remade, rekindled, and reforged in the image of Your Son, who was Your Beloved in Whom You were well pleased. We give You permission Lord to take the clay of our hearts and reshape it. To take the desires of our hearts and redirect them, out of selfishness and into others. Make us, Father, the whole and holy sons you have always dreamed we could be. Open us up today to receive Your Love! **Amen.***

2. Mention the themes in this first week of reflections and challenges:  
Identity, awareness, gift, gratitude, wonder, acceptance.
3. Discuss as a large group Matt's story from Day 2 of this week. Ask anyone to share what struck them about his video.
4. Break into small groups.

### **Discussion questions** (in small groups of 5 or less):

- a. In your experience, growing up as a son, what did the expression "be a man" mean? What connotations came with it; what images came to mind?
  - b. What are some stereotypes (societal, changeable realities) of masculinity you've come across? (Example: Men don't change diapers). What are your honest thoughts about them?
  - c. Every stereotype has a grain of some truth. What archetypal truth (cosmic, unchanging reality) might be present in masculine stereotypes? (Example: Men are generally physically stronger than women).
  - d. Share a father/son story from your childhood. If you come from a fatherless home, share a memory of a man whom you looked up to or learned from.
5. Instruct the men gathered to begin each day for the coming week with the daily video and quiet reflection time with the daily quote and challenge. Stress the need to follow through on the daily challenges as they put these words and ideas into action.
  6. Remind the men to be touching base briefly each night with their "brother" utilizing the structure in the "Brotherhood Guide."
  7. Close with an Our Father and a final encouragement of fraternal prayer and support until next week.

**Notes:**

## Week 2: We are Brothers

1. Lead the men gathered in an opening prayer of your own design but similar in content to this:

*Father, we are gathered here in Your Name and under Your Mercy. We long to be remade, rekindled, and reforged in the image of Your Son, who was Your Beloved in Whom You were well pleased. He said "I no longer call you slaves but friends." We are brothers in Christ and brothers of Christ. Psalm 133 says "How good and how pleasant it is, when brothers dwell together as one!" Lord, we pray this week for a rediscovery of the call to brotherhood, to support and to sustain one another in Christ Who is our Brother, and to know deeply that You are Our True Father. Amen.*

2. Mention the themes in this second week of reflections and challenges:

Friendship, support, camaraderie, accountability.

3. Discuss Drew's story in the Anchor Lesson Video for this week.

4. Break into small groups.

**Discussion questions** (in small groups of 5 or less):

- a. What images or experiences does the word "brother" bring to mind for you?
  - b. Was there a sense of brotherhood for you growing up, amongst classmates or in your neighborhood?
  - c. How do you feel about the phrases thrown around in the culture like "bromance" or "man-crush" or the label "gay" put on men who enjoy hanging out together?
  - d. Share a story about an experience of "brotherhood" from your childhood, or adulthood.
5. Instruct the men gathered to begin each day for the coming week with the daily video and quiet reflection time with the daily quote and challenge. Stress the need to follow through on the daily challenges as they put these words and ideas into action.
  6. Remind the men to be touching base briefly each night with their "brother" utilizing the structure in the "Brotherhood Guide."
  7. Close with an Our Father and a final encouragement of fraternal prayer and support until next week.

**Notes:**

## Week 3: We are Spouses

1. Lead the men gathered in an opening prayer of your own design but similar in content to this:

*Father, we are gathered here in Your Name and under Your Mercy. We long to be remade, rekindled, and reforged in the image of Your Son, who was Your Beloved in Whom You were well pleased. It was Christ who called Himself the Bridegroom, Who left His Father and Mother to seek His lost Bride, the Church. And He laid down His life for her, to save her and restore her to grace. May we rediscover this week the powerful love of the Bridegroom, the Husband of Hearts Who has stopped at nothing to show His love for us, even to the last drop of His precious blood. Father, give us the passion of Your Son. Grant us the grace to become a total gift for others. Amen.*

2. Mention the themes in this third week of reflections and challenges:  
Spousal love, intimacy, total self-giving, vulnerability, listening, sacrifice.
3. Discuss Mark's story in the Anchor Lesson Video for this week. Ask the men what struck them about his story.
4. Break into small groups.  
**Discussion questions** (in small groups of 5 or less):
  - a. What was your image of God when you were very young? As a teen? A young adult? Did the image of a Bridegroom ever come to you? How does it make you feel?
  - b. A classic accusation hurled at men is that we fear "commitment." Why do you think this has such sticking power? What challenges does it entail?
  - c. For you, what would the ideal spousal love look like in a marriage?
  - d. Share a story about an experience of authentic "intimacy" from your life and what it taught you about yourself, God, others (without getting too... intimate).
5. Instruct the men gathered to begin each day for the coming week with the daily video and quiet reflection time with the daily quote and challenge. Stress the need to follow through on the daily challenges as they put these words and ideas into action.
6. Remind the men to be touching base briefly each night with their "brother" utilizing the structure in the "Brotherhood Guide."
7. Close with an Our Father and a final encouragement of fraternal prayer and support until next week.

**Notes:**

## Week 4: We are Fathers

1. Lead the men gathered in an opening prayer of your own design but similar in content to this:

*Father, we are gathered here in Your Name and under Your Mercy. You called King David for anointing because he was a man after Your own heart, and You commanded him to be captain over Your people. We pray in this final week that we be anointed too as fathers, as captains, as leaders over the families you've entrusted us with, either in our homes or in the larger circles of our lives and work. We are called to be stewards and keepers of the garden of life around us. Father, give us tender and attentive hearts like that of Your Son, Whose Heart wreathed in flames and thorns was ablaze with passion for every soul, was their Good Shepherd and a light in the darkness. Grant us the grace to become fathers in faith for others. Amen.*

2. Mention the themes in this fourth and final week of reflections and challenges:  
Guardians, stewards of the household, strength, support, presence, joy.

3. Discuss Bill's story in the Anchor Lesson Video for this week.

4. Break into small groups.

### **Discussion questions (in small groups of 5 or less):**

- a. Name two things you've learned from your father's example or a father figure in your life?
  - b. Whether he said it or not, what one thing would you have wished your father said to you over and over again as a child.
  - c. For you, what would the ideal father look like in a family?
  - d. What is one of the main lessons you'll take away from this RISE Challenge?
5. Instruct the men gathered to begin each day for the coming week with the daily video and quiet reflection time with the daily quote and challenge. Stress the need to follow through on the daily challenges as they put these words and ideas into action.
  6. Remind the men to be touching base briefly each night with their "brother" utilizing the structure in the "Brotherhood Guide."
  7. Close with an Our Father and an encouragement of continued prayer and support. Share contact info, and invite the men to continue meeting as a group, with next week's wrap-up session. They will have the opportunity to continue the journey weekly as a member of the RISE Series. As a Leader, you will have the tools provided to continue ongoing brotherhood and formation, touching on topics that are most important for men.
    - Each man registers individually at [MenRiseUp.org](http://MenRiseUp.org), and as a Leader you do as well.



## What's Next?

The next step for your men is the RISE® Life Series. This is a powerful journey for men, bringing together some of the best experts and voices in men's ministry and evangelization. This is a systematic and cohesive way for men to take their life from point A to point Z, while journeying alongside men in their local community and across the world. The goal is to help you as the leader and your team set men on the path of authentic discipleship.

This is a new approach to men's ministry that combines the power of an individual journey like the 30-Day Challenge, with intentional formation, powerful community building tools, comprehensive leader's materials, and training.

For more information, visit [MenRiseUp.org](https://MenRiseUp.org) and click on membership!