

THIRD BIRTHDAY

WHO IS GOD?

EASTVIEW FAMILY RESOURCES



www.eastview.church | 1500 N. Airport Rd. | Normal, IL 61761 | 309.451.5000

THIS YEAR AT A GLANCE...

Your three year old is smack dab in the middle of a stage that is full of wonder - where curiosity and delight create a unique time in life to discover the Wonder-Maker. This year, we want to leverage this phase to help them grow in their understanding of God. All throughout this year, we want to encourage you to constantly enter their world and connect the wonder they are experiencing to the God who created all that wonder.

HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE:

- **Letter from Jason Smith**, Next Gen Pastor at Eastview.
- **A Letter To Your Child** A guide to writing a letter to your child with memories and affirmations
- **"Who is God?" Overview** The concept of tapping the natural wonder of your 3 year old to meet God.
- **"God is..." Activities & Outings** Creative ideas to teach your child about what God is like.
- **Fish Bowl Verses** Create a "pick-a-verse" activity for a simple way to read the Bible together.
- **This Year's Parenting Plan Checklist** A summary of this year's focus with an easy checklist.
- **Marriage Plan** For married parents, follow this simple plan to keep your family healthy beginning with your marriage.
- **Digital Resources** The Parent Cue App and RightNowMedia are two digital resources we highly recommend.



Your three year old is growing quickly and so is his imagination and curiosity. It is our privilege to come alongside you as you raise your child in the ways of the Lord and leverage the natural wonder and excitement in the heart of your child. This year's focus is: WHO IS GOD?

At Eastview, we believe that God designed the home to be the primary place for discipleship in a child's life. In case you are new to these parenting plans, let me explain what this booklet is. We offer this Family Ministry Map as a guide to help you raise your child one step at a time — with one annual focus each year. This certainly isn't the only parenting plan you could follow, but over the 18 years of your child's life, you will have followed a fairly comprehensive plan to raise your child in the faith.

These booklets are not intended to cover all there is to know about each topic. Sometimes parents feel overwhelmed with the responsibility of raising their child to know the Lord, and aren't sure where to start. So we have created simple steps to get you started. We also include recommended resources to help you in your parenting journey. Visit our Family Resource Center and Eastview Bookstore where our staff and volunteers can help you with other topics and resources.

During the time that your child is in our early childhood programs here at church, we will be focusing on:

KNOWING GOD AND HIS LOVE

KNOWING JESUS AND HIS STORY

MEETING GOD'S FAMILY

Also, from 2 year olds up to 5th grade, we walk the kids through the Bible every 2 years, so they get to learn God's big story of love and rescue. We are committed to being a faithful partner to you and your family. If you have anything that we can pray for specifically, or if you have any questions, send me an email or call 309-451-5000.

Jason Smith,
Next Gen Pastor
jsmith@eastview.church



MY LETTER TO YOU FOR YOUR 3RD BIRTHDAY

Each year throughout the parenting plan, take time to write your child a letter. Below are some ideas of things to include that will speak life and love into your child, as well as give them an invaluable collection of insights into their upbringing and a storyline of memories to be cherished for the rest of their lives. You can write them all in a journal or write each letter as a separate piece of paper.

1. Things I've loved about you this year...
2. Important memories from this past year...
3. Some of my favorite time with you is when we...
4. My favorite book to read to you is...
5. Our favorite song to sing together is...
6. Your favorite toy this year is...
7. Things that make you smile and laugh...
8. Your favorite food this year...
9. I've been praying about this for you this year...
10. I've been praying about this for me as a parent this year...
11. What I want for you in life...
12. A scripture verse I have picked out for you this year...

**Include a photo of your family with the letter to give a year by year collection of memories all in one place.
Each year after giving your child the letter, get it back and keep them all somewhere safe.
You will give them all to your child in the 18th year for LAUNCH.**

THIRD BIRTHDAY: WHO IS GOD?

CAPTURING THEIR WONDER: Your three year old is smack dab in the middle of a stage that is full of wonder - where curiosity and delight create a unique time in life to discover the Wonder-Maker. This year, we want to leverage this phase to help them grow in their understanding of God. Throughout this year, we encourage you to enter their world and connect the wonder they are experiencing to the God of wonders.

Take time to get familiar with the Phases Summary (tri fold developmental handout included with this booklet - sorry, not available digitally) which gives you an overview of what you might expect in your child's development. These phase summaries come from the ReThink Group out of Northpoint Church in Georgia. Here is an excerpt from their book [It's Just a Phase:](#)

"Preschoolers who think like artists blend the stories they hear with the stories they live in a way that makes a loaf and two fish just as memorable as yesterday's pizza. They relate to an invisible God they can imagine. The One who designed the animals and created the flowers, the One who made them and knows everything about them,. Who keeps them safe, and who loves them."

START FROM THE BEGINNING: Whether you take them to the zoo, watch a thunderstorm out the family room window or watch a mother duck waddle through the park with her ducklings, opportunities exist all around us to point to God the Creator. This is the beginning of their understanding of God. As they understand that He made the world, they can better understand that He loves the world.

WHAT IS GOD LIKE? The ways in which you care for your child throughout the day can be a way to teach about how God provides for us, cares about us, helps us when we're hurt or afraid, and loves us even when we make bad choices. As you encounter experiences throughout the day, learn to capitalize on the moment to impress an important truth about God. For example, after comforting your crying little one, tell them that when you're sad, God helps you feel better. Or after disciplining your little stinker, hug him and explain how God loves you and forgives you when you make a bad choice. Parenting is a reflection of how God cares for and deals with us. Use these moments to help a child learn what God is actually like. Side benefit – many parents feel like they grow to know God better after becoming a parent and experiencing things like love, rebellion, forgiveness and provision.

LOVE THE BIBLE IN YOUR HOME: And of course, teach your child about who God is by reading about him in the Bible. Whether it's a story bible with illustrations or not, try to help the story come alive with different voices, sensations (like blowing in their face for wind or spraying them with a light mist for rain), and movement (like bouncing them on your knee during a storm, or tickling their tummy when the people were hungry).

IGNITE THEIR IMAGINATION: (Don't fight it.) "When it comes to the Bible, preschoolers might miss a few details, add some embellishments, or confuse the chronology. Just remember, they are overthinking it. They are imagining it. Sometimes it's just better to let them put a monkey in the manger scene and spend time talking about the wonder of Jesus being born rather than correcting their historical, geographical understanding of Bethlehem." It's Just a Phase*

ACTIVATE THEIR SENSES: "Artists learn through their senses, so if you really want to help them relate: sing songs, tell stories with hand motions, make crafts, show videos, use pictures, eat snacks. (Don't worry about creating new smells; there are already enough of those!)."

(It's Just a Phase*)

While your child will connect easier to stories, don't be afraid to read non-narrative verses from the Bible that describe God. Just remember that they are not ready for abstract thoughts (metaphors and similes). Also, remember to keep it simple - the shorter the better at this age - and it's OK to leave them wanting more. We will focus on Bible reading in the 7th Birthday parent packet.

*It's Just A Phase - So Don't Miss It, ReThink Group, 2015. This book is a child development book that is easy to read, digest, apply and share. Written for children and youth workers, but applicable to parents. Available at orangestore.org. Highly recommended if you work with children or teenagers.





WHO IS GOD: IDEAS FOR TEACHING...

While we can't describe what God looks like, we can certainly teach them what he is like. Remember that they are letting their imagination teach them as well, so they might be picturing God as a cross between a fairy tale giant and Santa Claus. Your child might have a lot of questions about God over the next couple of years. That's normal and very good. Don't panic if you don't know the answer. Show them how you find answers to your questions: look in the Bible, ask a pastor or teacher, look it up online, and pray.

Throughout this year, as you and your child learn what God is like, create a place in your home where you can write down the things you learn. You can get creative and make an artsy display, or you can simply cover their closet door with post it notes. The goal is to keep track of what they are learning, and keeping it visible and handy can make it easier to reinforce these lessons throughout the year.

WHAT IS GOD LIKE DISPLAY IDEA: As you read the Bible you will come across verses like Psalm 145:8 "The Lord is gracious, kind and tender. He is slow to get angry and full of love." Talk about how this describes God with your child and then add this to your display. When you are raking leaves in the fall, or driving to the orchard, talk about how the beautiful fall colors teach us that God is beautiful. When you get home add it to your display. Read your display together once in a while throughout the year.

Here are some suggestions:

- Tape banner paper on a wall to create a work of art together throughout the year. Fill it with words, phrases, verses and doodles that describe God. Keep it and get it out again when they are older.
- Use a whiteboard marker to write adjectives about God on the bathroom mirror or a bedroom window throughout the year.
- Get a multi-color Post-It pad. As your child learns this year, write things about God on them. Write as many as they can think of at first. Then, put those on their bedroom wall or closet door and add to it throughout the year. Take a picture of your child in front of it before their 4th Birthday.
- Create a fishbowl of small slips of paper with verses that describe God. Allow your child to draw one out each night at dinner or at bedtime. You don't need a new one for each day of the year. It's okay if the same verse gets chosen over and over. Repetition is OK!! We have a table of verses below that can get you started.
- Create a fun journal together with quotes from your child, verses, memories (zoo, baby birds in a nest), doodles, song lyrics, etc. describing God. Keep it for them for when they're older, or continue it throughout their childhood and send it with them when they leave home.

WHAT IS GOD LIKE OUTINGS

Throughout the year, make plans to spend special time with your 3-year-old to teach them about God.

PICTURES IN THE CLOUDS: The Bible says that the heavens are telling us something about God (Ps. 19:1). What do they show us? Some day when the sky is beautiful (nighttime skies work great too), grab a blanket, some snacks and head out to the yard or go to a park. Pray that God would bless your discussion. Lay back and watch the sky, find pictures in the clouds and talk about how the sky shows us that God is big and beautiful.

A CARING GOD: Bake a pie, pick some flowers (or buy a simple bouquet), or grab some rakes and head to an elderly widow's home. Have your child give them your gift or help rake the leaves. Prepare them to say hello and goodbye, although you will do most of the talking. Explain that widows can sometimes be lonely and that the Bible tells us that God cares very much for these women... and he wants us to care about them too (James 1:27). You can use this idea for orphans too by babysitting for a foster family so they can grab an evening out.

A DAY AT THE ZOO: The next time you go to the zoo, leverage this as an opportunity to have a faith conversation about how God made animals and how creative He is. Before you leave for the zoo or maybe while you're having lunch there, read the creation story in Genesis 1 from a children's story Bible. The Read With Me Bible or The Read To Me Bible by ZonderKids are great options.

STORY TIME: The families of the Old Testament would tell their children stories of God's faithfulness to Israel. Put that into practice in your family by telling your kids stories of how God has done amazing things for you or your family. You might even start to keep different momentos of those stories around the house, like how they would stack rocks or name trees in the Old Testament. Start this early in their life so that it's a normal part of your family culture.

God Created the World Genesis 1:1	God Created People Genesis 1:27	God Has Always Been Here and Always Will Psalm 90:2	God Knows Everything 1st John 3:20	God Is Everywhere Psalm 139:7-12	God Can Do Anything Jeremiah 32:17
God Is Near Jeremiah 23:23	God Sees Everything Psalm 139:1-4	God Is Our Heavenly Father 1st John 3:1	God is Jesus' Father Matthew 3:17	God is Mysterious Psalm 145:3	God Helps Us Psalm 54:4
God Loves Us 1st John 4:7-8	God is Good and Kind Psalm 145:8-9	God Forgives Us Psalm 86:5	God Cares About Us 1st Peter 5:7	God Takes Care of Us Matthew 6:26	God is Patient 2nd Peter 3:9



THIS YEAR'S PARENTING PLAN SUMMARY/CHECKLIST

WEEKS TO GRADUATION: 780 and counting
PHASE PARENTING PHRASE: EMBRACE your child's physical needs

*"We will not hide them from our children; we will tell the next generation
the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done."*

Psalm 78:4

- Read the contents of this booklet and the Phase Summary (green tri-fold) that comes with this booklet.
- Write a letter to my child.
- Read Bible stories with my child. We use the Read With Me Bible (Zondervan, 2000) in Eastview Kids.
- Take the opportunities to turn everyday activities into lessons about God.
- Read verses about God using the Fish Bowl Verses activity.
- Follow This Year's Marriage Plan below. *(We know not every parent is married. We don't mean to offend by including this segment.)*

THIS YEAR'S MARRIAGE PLAN

Each year we want to encourage you to make a plan to keep your marriage healthy. One of the most important gifts you'll give to your child is the love you give to your spouse. When mom and dad love each other and demonstrate the traits of a healthy (NOT PERFECT!) marriage, it not only sets a good example of a godly marriage, but gives them a greater sense of security and well-being. Andy Stanley in *The Principle of the Path* writes "We don't drift to good places." (Thomas Nelson, 2008). Good marriages require intentionality. Use the plan below to make an intentional effort in your marriage this year. Read [The Best Us](#) by Ted Lowe (©MarriedPeople 2016) for a full explanation of Have Serious Fun! Love God First; Respect and Love; Practice Your Promise.

Have Serious Fun! Date Night Scheduling: Grab your calendars and mark at least TWO date nights for each month and PROTECT those dates. Remember that you were boyfriend and girlfriend before you were dad and mom, and have fun together! No family administration discussions! For extra fun, watch for sponsored "Date Nights" by Eastview's Marriage Ministry. Each date night, you swing by the church to receive your plans for the evening.

Love God First - Faith Practices 101: Research finds that couples who pray together at least twice a week have a divorce rate of less than 1% (HomePointe). Commit to praying as a couple at least twice a week. Plan which worship service the two of you will attend together each week – don't "divide and conquer" in order to volunteer.

Love and Respect - Write an Annual Letter: Write a letter to your spouse for your anniversary this year, much like the one in this booklet that you will write to your child. Write a letter of memories from this past year, affirmations, prayers and promises to each other.

Practice Your Promise - Personal Growth: Set a "secret goal" to grow as a spouse, such as "listening better," "praising her in public," or "initiating romance." Write it down and seal it in an envelope, or save it on your phone. When you receive next year's booklet, open the envelope or file and assess your progress.

Invest in Your Marriage: Join an email blog like [lesandleslie.com](#), choose one book to read this year, or choose a small group study on marriage. The Eastview Family Resource Center, Eastview Marriage Ministry and RightNow Media have many helpful events and resources.




EASTVIEW RESOURCES

WE BELIEVE THAT EVERY PARENT
WANTS TO BE A GOOD PARENT.
WE CAN HELP YOU TAKE THE NEXT STEP.

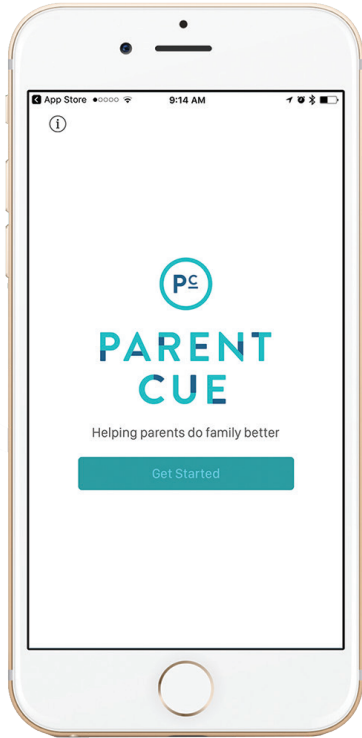
STEP-BY-STEP PLAN: As a part of our Eastview Church Family, we never want you to feel like you have to parent alone. We want to come alongside you in your parenting journey and provide resources and relationships that can help you along the way. While this is certainly not the ONLY Christian parenting plan out there, and probably not even the best one, it is a way to raise your children in the faith over the years, with one specific focus a year.

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER & EASTVIEW BOOKSTORE: However, you will have specific needs along the way that we do not cover in these booklets. You might have a child with special needs, or your child might be dealing with a specific issue, or you might need more creative ideas for family times together... whatever it is, we will do our best to offer helpful resources. Stop by our Family Resource Center on the lower level of the atrium. We can point you to great organizations like Focus on the Family (focusonthefamily.com) and others that give expert advice on all things family. We have topical cards that give you some quick advice on a variety of topics with recommended resources and next steps to take at Eastview. We highlight various books and resources to help with different aspects and seasons of parenting and marriage. Our Bookstore is also a wonderful resource for us at Eastview. Sure, you can buy books on Amazon, but at our bookstore, all of the books have been recommended by Eastview Staff and leaders and our helpful staff and volunteers are able to help you find the just right resource.



MEMBER CARE: At Eastview, we believe that the care of our members is very important. Because of this, we have different areas where we can assist our members needs, whether that be counseling referrals, help needs and family journeys.

- **CARE APPOINTMENTS:** We know that connecting to others for prayer and encouragement is a necessary part of our spiritual formation, especially in times of need. Care Appointments are scheduled times we have set aside to meet with you for pastoral care. We would like to hear your story, pray with you, and offer guidance on your next steps. To sign up for a care appointment visit eastview.church/membercare.
- **COUNSELING REFERRALS:** We want to help people connect to Christian Counselors when professional services are needed for healing and growth. For information on counselors in our area contact: Sara Thompson sthompson@eastview.church or 309.451.5057.
- **HELPS MINISTRY:** We depend on our small groups to help support one another and take care of one another's needs. For our church members that are not already in a small group, we can utilize our helps ministry team. This team can assist with meals, and limited transportation to our Sunday services during times of illness, hospitalization, new baby, or other life interruptions. For more information, please contact Nicki Green at ngreen@eastview.church or 309.451.5033.
- **CARE GROUP:** Eastview Care Groups range from support groups for parents with kids with autism to men's sexual integrity groups to divorce care to single moms groups and more. We keep a list of them at the Family Resource Center, or you can learn more about them at www.eastview.church/caregroups. For specific information, contact Jason Sniff at jsniff@eastview.church.
- **THE FAMILY ROOM:** Open on Sundays before, after and during services, our family room is a place to connect with caring staff and volunteers for prayer and encouragement.



DOWNLOAD THE PARENT CUE APP

As a parent, some of the most important things you do for your child don't happen in a single day. You make small deposits in their life week after week - over time. That's why the Parent Cue App gives weekly cues to help you make the most of the time you spend with your kid or teenager. This app is brought to us by The ReThink Group, producers of the Phase Summaries that come with these booklets, as well as the curriculum we use for our 4th & 5th Grade Ministry at ECC.



Easy encouragements to help your child start their day.



Ideas for meaningful talks on the way to soccer practice.



Conversation starters while grabbing drive thru tacos or sitting around the table.



Great reminders for ways to end the day on a great note.



Timely help for those moments that take you by surprise.

Do you have access to the **BIGGEST** Christian video library in the world?

Sign up for a **FREE** account
at EASTVIEW.CHURCH/RNM

BIBLE STUDY • ENTERTAINMENT • DISCIPLESHIP

rightnow MEDIA



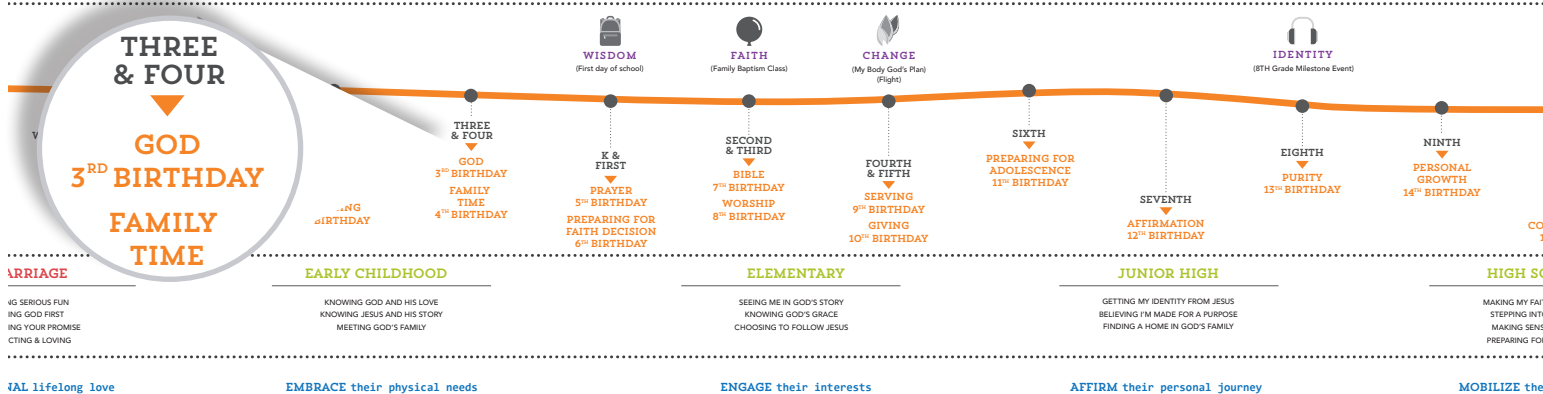
**OVER 14,000
VIDEOS!**

CHECK OUT THE KIDS' SECTION AND VIDEOS ON PARENTING AND MARRIAGE!

EASTVIEW FAMILY RESOURCES

FAMILY MINISTRY MAP

RAISING CHILDREN



AN INTENTIONAL PLAN FOR YOUR FAMILY. STEP BY STEP PARENTING FROM BIRTH THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL.

The Eastview Family Ministry Map is a bird's eye view of our strategy for helping families thrive. From the formation of families as young couples date, through the child rearing years, to the empty nest, we have a plan that families can follow to build strong marriages and pass on a legacy of faith to the next generation—one step at a time. For the full map, visit our Family Resource Center in the lower level atrium next to the bookstore.

SIGN UP FOR OUR PARENTING PLAN: TEXT "#PARENTPLAN" TO 309.808.6002

Each year on your child's birthday we will provide you with a new booklet to help you focus on one aspect of your child's life and spiritual formation. Each booklet contains helpful information on developmental milestones, simple ideas for passing on your faith in everyday rhythms, as well as practical ways to speak into their lives. Every parent wants to be a good parent. We can help you with the next step.