

# SIXTH BIRTHDAY

## PREPARING FOR A FAITH DECISION

### EASTVIEW FAMILY RESOURCES



[www.eastview.church](http://www.eastview.church) | 1500 N. Airport Rd. | Normal, IL 61761 | 309.451.5000



## THIS YEAR AT A GLANCE...

**W**hile we don't expect many 6 year olds to be ready to make a faith decision of their own, this year we want to prepare you to have the conversations that will help your child take the next step in his or her faith journey. This booklet will give you a plan and some resources to help guide your child to the most important decision he or she will make in life.

### 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
- **"Faith Decision" Overview** An overview of how to be ready to lead your child to a faith decision.
- **Gospel Conversation Ideas** Gospel conversation-starters and guides.
- **The Egg Gospel** A very memorable science experiment to share the gospel with your child.
- **This Year's Parenting Plan Checklist** A summary of this year's focus with an easy checklist.
- **Marriage Plan** 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.



**A**ccording to our records, you are celebrating a birthday in your family this month! As you celebrate your child's birth, we want to provide this booklet to help you as you guide your child on a spiritual journey to know, love and follow Jesus. This year's focus is: PREPARING FOR A FAITH DECISION.

At Eastview, we believe that God designed the home to be the primary place for discipleship in a child's life. It is our privilege to come alongside you as you raise your child in the ways of the Lord. 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:

SEEING ME IN GOD'S STORY

KNOWING GOD'S GRACE

CHOOSING TO FOLLOW JESUS

We are committed to being a faithful partner to you and your family. Our staff is praying for your child by name this month. 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](mailto:jsmith@eastview.church)

# MY LETTER TO YOU FOR YOUR 6TH BIRTHDAY

**E**ach 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. Our favorite book to read together is...
5. Our favorite song to sing together is...
6. Your favorite toy this year is...
7. Your favorite things to do with your friends...
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.**

## PREPARING FOR A FAITH DECISION

**B** **E PREPARED FOR THE CONVERSATIONS:** While we don't expect that many six year olds are ready to make their own faith decision, we want to give you this guide early so that when the time comes that they ask about following Jesus or about baptism, you will be prepared. Most kids at Eastview make a decision to follow Jesus and be baptized between 3rd grade and Junior High, though every child is different and has had a different journey.

One of the greatest privileges you have as a parent is to help your child come to faith in Christ. Like many parents, you may not quite know how or when to approach one of the most exciting moments of parenthood. Some worry that they won't explain salvation properly. They might be tempted to just "leave it to the professionals" by relying on people at church or ministry events. That's understandable, but God has given YOU the most important and influential role when it comes to leading your child to Christ. This guide is designed to help you feel more comfortable about the process when that time comes.

**FAITH DECISION - LANGUAGE MATTERS:** You may wonder what we mean by a faith decision. Rather than using phrases like "Becoming a Christian" or "asking Jesus into your heart,"

we believe that you are raising your child in the Christian faith. They already have a relationship with Jesus as they have learned to love Him and follow Him since they've been little. Now we are talking about them making their own decision to follow Jesus, not just because they've been raised in church. The Bible teaches us that if we are going to follow Jesus we need to believe in our hearts, confess Him as Lord, repent from our sins, be baptized, and follow Jesus in obedience.

**LAY A FOUNDATION:** We have started this parenting plan with the intentionality of teaching your children about who God is and developing a relationship with him through prayer and the scriptures. Your son or daughter grows in his or her understanding of God by developing a foundation; hearing stories from the Bible, learning scriptures, singing about Jesus, etc. Your child also learns by experiencing life in your home; watching your example, feeling your love, experiencing GRACE (getting what you don't deserve) and MERCY (not getting what you do deserve) at home and learning right from wrong. And now we want to make sure they understand that God made us and loves us. But because of our sin, we need a Savior to rescue us from our sin and give us a relationship with God again. So Jesus came from Heaven to die for us and raise again.

**ASK QUESTIONS:** To gauge where your child is in his or her understanding, ask questions. Use the discussion guides in this booklet that lay out the gospel and make sure that they understand each segment. Give them plenty of opportunities to ask questions. Don't panic if they ask hard questions or if they have areas of doubt. This is actually very natural, and it's best for them to sort this out while they are still at home in a safe place with safe people. Never shame them for their questions.

**DISCERN READINESS:** Do your best to discern when your child is mature enough to put the pieces together. Avoid the temptation to push for a decision before he or she is ready to truly grasp the gospel. Young children are usually bonded to their parents in such a way that they want to please and do not have a full sense of a separate self. A child needs to understand that this is a personal decision and not just something to do to please you. This decision requires both understanding and obedience.

**HELP THEM TAKE THE NEXT STEP:** When you feel like your child understands what sin is and what it means to accept God's gift of salvation and submit to Him as Lord, then you can guide your child to respond to God's grace by reading these scriptures about believing, confessing, repenting and being baptized:

**Believe in Jesus and Confess Him as Lord:** Romans 10:9-10 "Say with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord.' Believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead. Then you will be saved. With your heart you believe and are made right with God. With your mouth you say what you believe. And so you are saved."

**Repent & Be Baptized:** Acts 2:38 "Peter replied, "All of you must turn away from your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then your sins will be forgiven. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." You can lead your child in a prayer of confession and commitment and make plans for their baptism by contacting Jason Smith at [jsmith@eastview.church](mailto:jsmith@eastview.church).





## THE GOSPEL AT HOME

**T**hroughout your child's life, it is your primary responsibility to raise your child to know the good news about Jesus. There are a variety of ways to explain the gospel, but we've given you a few examples and some things to think about as you raise your child in the grace of God.

**EMPHASIZE GRACE IN YOUR HOME:** It has long been said that our children's first impression of God comes from their first impression of their parents, especially dads. Be very careful, then, to emphasize grace in your home. Grace is the unmerited, unearned gift of God. It is something we receive that we didn't earn. We can help children grasp that better if we make our homes a place of grace where they haven't had to earn your love.

**THE GOSPEL IN A NUTSHELL:** Here is a simple summary of the gospel. The word gospel simply means "good news." The good news, however, starts with bad news...

**THE BAD NEWS** We have all sinned – Romans 3:23. Discuss what sin is and have them give some examples. Sin breaks our relationship with God – Romans 6:23a. Talk about how our relationship with God died when we sinned.

**THE GOOD NEWS** God doesn't want to be separated from us – 2nd Peter 3:9. Discuss how God is being patient so more and more people will turn to Him again. Jesus died and took the punishment for our sin – Hebrews 9:28. Discuss how a good

and just God had to have someone pay for the sins we've done, but that he didn't want that to be us. Jesus took the punishment for our sins so that God could forgive us AND our sin was paid for. We can have a new relationship with God - Romans 6:23b. Talk about how we can have eternal life with God starting now because of Jesus.

**PAYCHECKS VS. GIFTS:** Give your kids a chore to do and tell them if they do it, you will give them some money (based on your situation) Choose an amount to fit the chore. After they've completed the chore, give them their "pay." Then read Romans 6:23 and talk about what we earn in that verse (spiritual death or a broken relationship with God). Then give them a gift (more money, candy bar, etc.). Talk about how they didn't earn that, but you just gave it to them for fun. Then discuss how we EARN death because of our sin, but God gives us the GIFT of eternal life.

# OBJECT LESSON

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE EGG

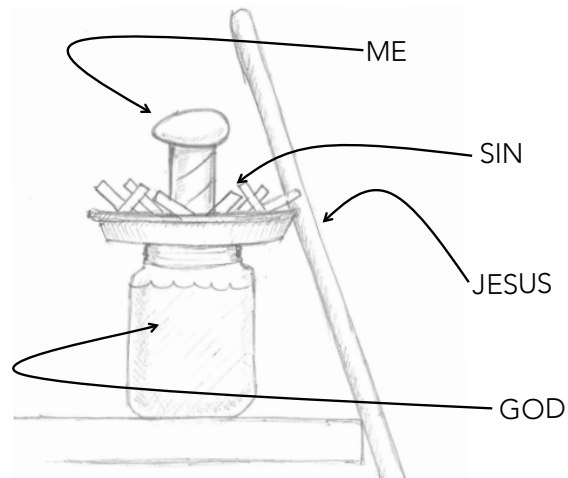
*This object lesson is a memorable way to talk about the gospel with your child.*

**You will need:** one raw egg, a toilet paper tube, a corn broom, an aluminum pie plate, slips of paper, and a wide-mouth jar of water

Arrange your objects by placing the wide mouth jar on a table with an aluminum pie plate centered on top. Place the toilet paper tube vertically in the center of the pie tin. Place the egg on top of the toilet paper tube horizontally. Then explain that the egg represents us and the jar is God. Ask your child to tell you what sin is, and then together write examples of sin on the slips of paper (Read Romans 3:23). Place the slips of paper into the pie tin, and talk about how our sin separates us from God (Romans 6:23).

Then place your foot on the bristles of the broom and pull the handle back so that it acts like it is spring-loaded. Talk about how God does not want to be separated from us (2nd Peter 3:9) so He sent His Son Jesus (the broom) to take away our sins (Hebrews 9:28). At this point, release the broom handle towards the pie tin. You will want to arrange it so the handle hits the side of the table and can only reach the pie tin and not the jar or the egg (see picture). The pie plate and papers will go flying, but the egg will drop right into the water.

End the lesson by explaining that Jesus takes away our sin, so that we can be close to God (Romans 6:23b). You might take time to practice this by yourself first or just have extra eggs. If you have questions email Jason at [jsmith@eastview.church](mailto:jsmith@eastview.church).





# THIS YEAR'S PARENTING PLAN SUMMARY/CHECKLIST

**WEEKS TO GRADUATION: 624 and counting**  
**PHASE PARENTING PHRASE: ENGAGE their interests**

*Leading your child to God is the most important thing you will do as a parent.  
This happens through countless conversations and interactions over the years,  
but this year you will have intentional conversations about  
the good news of Jesus and the new life he gives us.*

- Read the contents of this booklet and the Phase Summary (tri-fold) that comes with this booklet.
- Write a letter to my child.
- Plan some intentional times with my child to teach the gospel and have faith conversations.
- Continue to read the Bible and pray with my child each day.
- Continue having Family Times together (4 year old Booklet) and use the gospel egg for one of those sessions.
- 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

**E**ach 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 packet, 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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.eastview.church/caregroups). For specific information, contact Jason Sniff at [jsniff@eastview.church](mailto: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.

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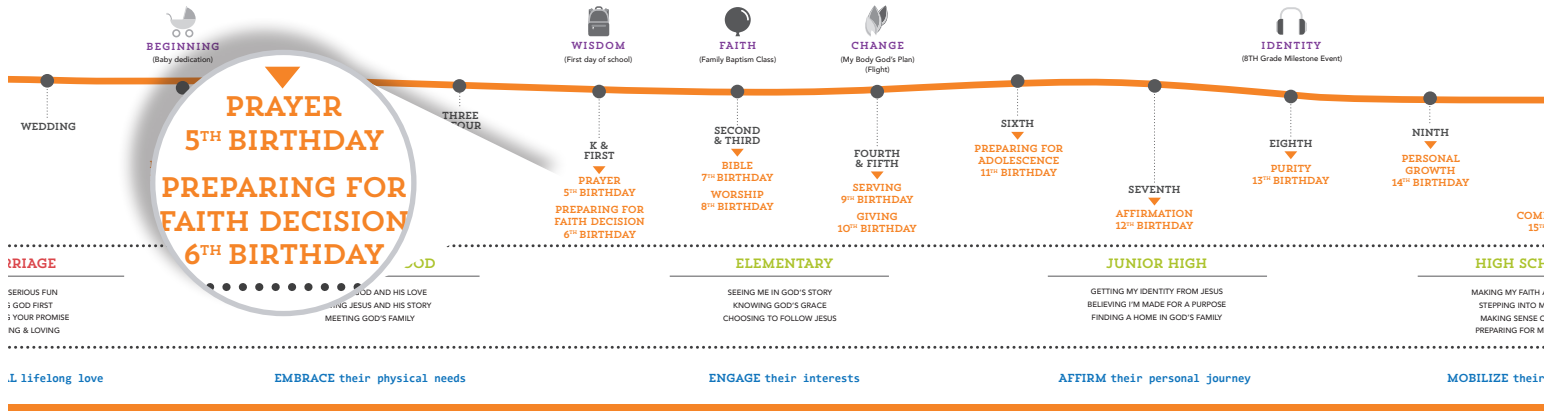
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# EASTVIEW FAMILY RESOURCES

## 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.