

# BIRTH - FIRST BIRTHDAY

BABY DEDICATION

## 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...

**A**s you begin a journey with your new little one, this year's parenting plan focuses on DEDICATING YOUR CHILD TO GOD. Inside you'll find information on how to participate in the Child Dedication service at Eastview, as well as practical ways to dedicate your child every day during the normal rhythms of life: morning time, bath time, meal time, snuggle time and bed time.

### HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE:

- **Letter from Jason Smith**, Next Gen Pastor at Eastview.
- **A Letter To Your Child** Write a letter of memories from this year and speak into your child's spiritual formation.
- **Child Dedication Overview** The background of child dedication and how to get started.
- **Daily Rhythm Prayers** Ideas for prayers at morning time, bath time, snuggle time, meal time and bedtime.
- **Family Culture Activity** Decide what type of family culture you want to create in your home.
- **This Year's Parenting Plan Checklist** A summary of this year's focus with an easy checklist to follow.
- **Marriage Plan** For married parents, follow this simple plan to keep your family healthy beginning with your marriage.
- **The Parent Cue App** A digital resource option from the makers of the Phase Guides included with this booklet.
- **Right Now Media Resources** Video Library with children's videos and parenting resources.



**A**t 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 scope of topics that will help you 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 on your parenting journey.

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

We are committed to being a faithful partner to you and your family. Our staff would love to pray for you and your child 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 1ST 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 both 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 could collect them in a journal or write each letter as a separate 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. My favorite song to sing to you is...
6. Your favorite toy this year is...
7. Things that make you smile and laugh...
8. Someone said this about you 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.**



## BIRTH - 1ST BIRTHDAY: BABY DEDICATION

**W**e're so excited for you and your family as you have been blessed to welcome a baby to your family! As a church, we are excited to partner with you as you begin this incredible journey with your child.

**WHAT IS A CHILD DEDICATION?** Child Dedication is a special service in which you make a formal commitment to raise your child in a Christ-centered home. We see some examples in the Bible such as 1 Samuel 1:24 – 2:10 when Hannah dedicated Samuel at the temple and Luke 2 where Mary and Joseph dedicated Jesus.

During this Dedication service you will be asked to make a Parent Covenant (a promise) that you will raise your child to know, love and follow Jesus Christ. God designed the home as the primary place for faith to be nurtured. One way that we seek to partner with you is by providing resources throughout your child's spiritual journey. We call this the Annual Parenting Plan. Child Dedication is the first step.

While the event is the public aspect to this step, we have included in this booklet ways to practice this covenant beyond the service.

### **WHY CHILD DEDICATION INSTEAD OF INFANT BAPTISM?**

Child Dedication is about your commitment to model, teach and raise your child in the Christian faith. We believe the Bible teaches that baptism is a personal choice that your child must decide on his or her own that reflects a personal commitment to follow Jesus (Acts 2:38). The age for baptism varies for each person, but we will emphasize this later in the parenting plan.

### **EASTVIEW FAMILY RESOURCES:**

Child Dedication is also a time for the church to commit to walk alongside you as you point your child toward Christ. In this packet, you will find a Family Ministry Map which outlines our strategy for partnering with you to help your child flourish in their faith. Each year of your child's life, we will provide you with a focus and simple steps to make an intentional impression on your child's faith journey from birth to age eighteen. We also commit to providing excellent children's and youth programs to foster authentic Christian community and faith development. We have resources on our Family Resource Walls at the Normal and Bloomington Campus and the Normal Campus Family Room that we recommend for further help throughout the seasons of your family.

### **PARENT DEDICATION STEPS:**

1. Sign up to participate in a Child Dedication class and service. Contact Val Burcham at vburcham@eastview.church for dates and times.
2. Attend the Spiritual Parenting Class before the service.
3. Begin the Parenting Plan program by texting #parentplan to 309-808-6002.
4. Invite friends and family to attend an upcoming Child Dedication Service, which we offer annually in the Spring.

**WRITE A LETTER TO YOUR CHILD:** Each year in the parenting packet you will find a letter for you to write to your child. We encourage you to keep these birthday letters in a box and save them for your child. Attach a photo of your family to each letter and they will serve as a keepsake of special memories as well as a picture of the role you have played in their spiritual lives over the years. You might even choose to have each parent write their own notes on the letters.

**MAKE A PLAN FOR THIS YEAR:** Your next packet will be ready for your child's 2nd Birthday, so between now and then, follow this simple plan or create one of your own:

- Participate in the Child Dedication.
- Take time to read the developmental information in this booklet.
- Pray for your child each day – dedicating your child to God.
- Begin to decide what type of family culture you will have in your home and complete the Family Culture Activity.
- Be the healthiest parent you can be for your child by tending to your own health, spiritual life and marriage.





# DAILY DEDICATION PRAYERS

*“Pour your heart like water before the face of the Lord.  
Lift your hands towards Him for the life of your young children.”*

**Lamentations 2:19**

**T**hroughout this year, lay a deep foundation of prayer for your child’s life by simply praying small prayers of dedication throughout the normal rhythms of your life. Use the verses below as starters to pray simple prayers throughout the day for your child, inserting your child’s name in the verse. For example: “He gathers “Lilly” in his arms and carries “her” close to his heart...” OR use the verse to help you pray prayers like “God, please draw Lilly to you and keep her close to you her whole life.” For more ideas check out The Power of a Praying Parent by Stormie Omartian (Harvest House Publishers 2014) or Baby’s First Book of Prayers by Melody Carlson (Zonderkids 2002) which has little prayers about everything from breakfast to bugs to bedtime. Even as you read the Bible in your own quiet time, you will begin to see verses you can pray over your child.

**MORNING PRAYER - 1st Samuel 1:26**

*“I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him.  
So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD.”*

**BATH TIME PRAYER - Psalm 51:10**

*“Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me.”*

**SNUGGLE TIME PRAYER - Isaiah 40:11**

*“God tends his flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart...”*

**MEAL TIME PRAYER - Luke 2:40**

*“There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God’s favor was on him.”*

**BEDTIME PRAYER - Zephaniah 3:17**

*“The Lord your God is with you. He is mighty to save. He takes great delight in you.  
He will quiet your fears with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.”*

# FAMILY CULTURE ACTIVITY

*“...clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.  
Put up with each other. Forgive each other. Love each other. Have peace.  
Be thankful. Teach and challenge each other.”*

**Colossians 2:12-16**

**A**s you pray for your child, think about the environment you want your child to be raised in. Maybe you want it to be much like the home you grew up in, or maybe you don't want it looking anything like that! Take some time this year to determine what your family culture is going to be. Family culture pieces are a popular item in home décor right now. They are often titled something like: “In our family, we do...” followed by a list of attributes and activities like forgiveness, hugs, laughter, football, patience, dinners together, etc.

Prayerfully determine a family culture that you would like to establish in your home, and dedicate your home and family to God. Andy Stanley reminds us that “we don't drift to good places,” so steer your family culture toward an intentional reality.

There are many family culture pieces that are already made and can be purchased online or at a home décor store. They range from small plaques to large vinyl wall decals. You might consider creating your own, adding some faith elements that might not appear on other ones. There are even sites where you can customize/personalize Christian wall art like **littlelifedesigns.com**. Whether you decide to make your own or buy one, make sure that your family culture is visible as a reminder of the expectations of how your family will live.

When choosing your family distinctives, don't try to fit the entire Christian life into your family culture piece. Don't feel the pressure of leaving something out, because if it's too long, it won't be memorable for your kids as they grow up. Some things might be obvious and some might be more obscure based on your story, passion or calling.

You could use your bible to identify the attributes of a Christian and select some qualities that will define your family. You can do an online search for ideas, such as an article on Christian traits at **discipleshiptools.org** which gives a large list of qualities along with scriptures.

***Make it yours. Make it visible. Make it happen.***





# THIS YEAR'S PARENTING PLAN SUMMARY/CHECKLIST

**WEEKS TO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION: 936-884 and counting**  
**PHASE PARENTING PHRASE: EMBRACE your child's physical needs**

*“Now I am giving him to the Lord, and he will belong to the Lord his whole life.  
And they worshiped the Lord there.”*

**1st Samuel 1:28**

- Read the contents of this booklet and the Phase Summary (tri-fold) that comes with this booklet (not available digitally - must be picked up in person)
- Write a letter to my child.
- Participate in the Child Dedication Program.
- Consistently dedicate the life of my child to the Lord with prayers throughout the rhythm of my day.
- Register my baby for the Eastview Kids nursery.
- Follow This Year's Marriage Plan below. *(We know not every parent is married. We don't mean to offend by including this segment)*
- Take care of myself physically, emotionally and spiritually.

# 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.

**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 – try to avoid "dividing and conquering" 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 packet 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. When you receive next year's packet, open the envelope 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 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. These plans are available in three ways:

1. Visit [eastviewresources.com/familyresources](http://eastviewresources.com/familyresources) to select and download these booklets digitally.
2. Stop by the Family Resource Wall at the Normal or Bloomington Campuses and pick up a physical copy anytime.
3. Text #parentplan to 309.808.6002 to register your family to receive the booklets each year on your children's birthdays. If you are a regular attender, the registration will be quick as we will match your family records with your phone number - no data entry required.

**FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER:** You will obviously 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 on the Normal Campus. We have a rotating inventory of resources 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.



**MEMBER CARE:** There might be certain seasons where you have specific needs and just need a little extra help. We understand and have been there too. Because of this, we have different areas where we can assist our members needs:

- **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 [www.eastview.church/membercare](http://www.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.
- **PARENTING APPOINTMENTS:** Sometimes professional clinical counselling is not an option or necessary and you just want to get some pastoral counseling based on biblical principles, email Jason Smith at [jsmith@eastview.church](mailto:jsmith@eastview.church) to make an appointment with him or a specific age group pastor. (emphasis that this is biblical pastoral counselling NOT clinical professional counselling)
- **CARE GROUP:** Eastview Care Groups range from support groups for parents with kids with special needs, to parents of children who identify as LGBTQ+, to men's sexual integrity groups, to divorce care to single moms groups and more. For a list of current available care groups, visit [eastview.church/ministries/care](http://eastview.church/ministries/care). 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. Available at the Normal and Bloomington Campuses.



## 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.



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](http://EASTVIEW.CHURCH/RNM)

**BIBLE STUDY • ENTERTAINMENT • DISCIPLESHIP**

**rightnow** MEDIA



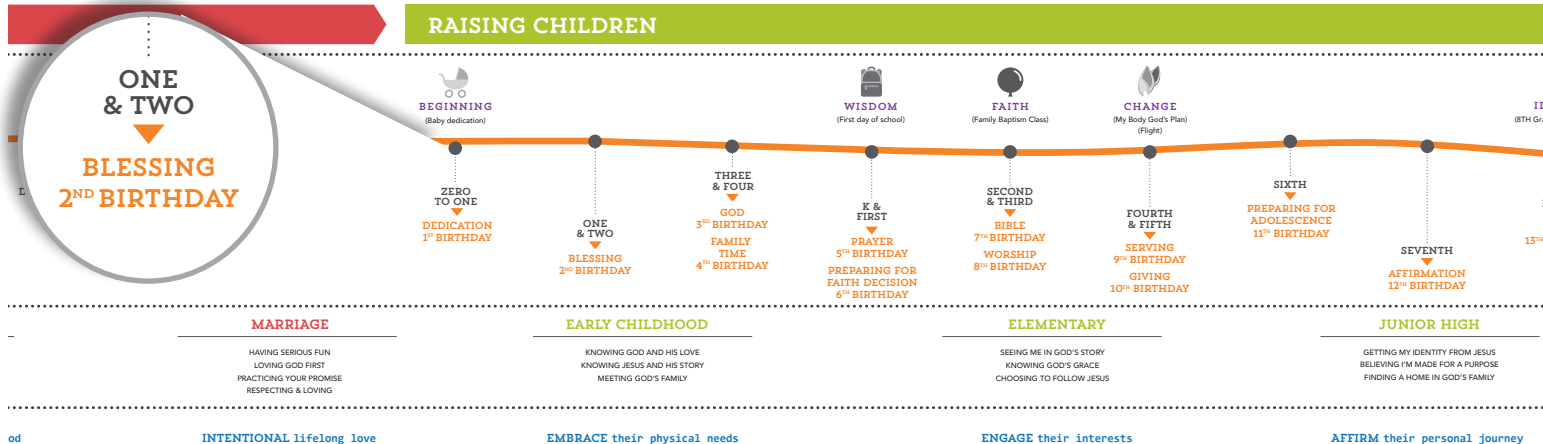
**OVER 14,000  
VIDEOS!**

**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.