

ELEVENTH BIRTHDAY

PREPARING FOR ADOLESCENCE

EASTVIEW FAMILY RESOURCES



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THIS YEAR AT A GLANCE...

CHANGE. This is the one word description of the season of life your child is about to enter or has already begun. Many experts agree that your child will experience the greatest amount of change in early adolescence, second only to the first year of their life. The best way to prepare your child for the changes and challenges of adolescence is to walk through this time with a great deal of understanding and intentionality. Included are some practical helps.

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
- **“Preparing for Adolescence” Overview** Practical ways to navigate this phase.
- **Family Time Ideas on Giving** Family devotions that focus on giving.
- **Budgeting Worksheets for Kids** Tools to show your child how to manage money wisely.
- **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.



According 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 ADOLESCENCE.

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 Parenting Plan 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 elementary children's 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



MY LETTER TO YOU FOR YOUR 11TH 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 could collect them 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. Your favorite books to read are...
5. Your favorite hobbies are...
6. Things that make you laugh...
7. Your favorite things to do with your friends...
8. I am impressed when you...
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. Ways you have learned to give this past 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 back all of the letters to your child in the 18th year for LAUNCH.**



ELEVENTH BIRTHDAY: PREPARING FOR ADOLESCENCE

CHANGE: This is the one word description of the season of life your child is about to enter or has already begun. Many experts agree that your child will experience the greatest amount of change in early adolescence, second only to the first year of their life. The best way to prepare your child for the changes and challenges of adolescence is to walk through this time with a great deal of understanding and intentionality.

We will provide some ideas on how to have some important discussions this year, but we highly recommend that you spend some time getting familiar with the Phase Summary included in this packet. Now, obviously no two kids are the same. It is important for you to know your child in such a way as to gauge when your child is ready to start processing some of the information you will share with them this year.

However awkward you might feel, it is the best thing for your child that the parents he or she loves and trusts explain the changes that are ahead, rather than leaving that to other sources who don't have the best interest of your child in mind, like the fellas on his baseball team.

Help your child prepare for coming changes in a proactive and positive way, constantly affirming them and reassuring them along the way. Maybe you've heard of Chuck Norris or the Most Interesting Man on Earth giving his father the "talk." Well, for the rest of us, the responsibility falls to us parents to help frame up puberty and adolescence for our children in a godly way.

When Should We Discuss Sensitive Topics: Often parents are concerned that they will overwhelm their preteen or encourage premature curiosity if they jump the gun in preparing them for adolescence. A greater concern, however, is the likelihood that someone else will beat you to it. Children are typically ready before their parents are, usually around eleven years old. Of course, not all children are the same. Ask God for wisdom about the timing of your conversations.

What Should I Talk to Her/Him About: You should plan to address the many areas of change your son or daughter will encounter during the transition to adulthood, especially bodily changes, decision-making and the changing relationship to you.

BODY: It's important to talk about the physical changes ahead as much more than only a plea for sexual abstinence. Your son or daughter needs a vision for how these internal and external changes will prepare the body for the joys of marriage and the miracle of creating new life. We encourage you to participate in the Your Body God's Plan sex education program from a distinctly Christian Perspective, which is a two-class experience with Moms & Daughters/Dads & Sons in the spring of each year. This is a Christian class on puberty – the proverbial “talk” led by a pastor and a doctor/nurse. It teaches a comprehensive overview of puberty with structured times for discussion. It is offered with a 5th grader in mind. Visit yourbodygodsplan.com for more information.

DECISION MAKING: Increasingly, your child will need to make and assume responsibility for his or her own decisions. As you maintain your overall family values in areas like media choices, individual responsibilities (chores, homework, etc.), drugs and alcohol, etc., you also need to direct your son or daughter in

how to make wise decisions in areas of health and integrity. The first nine chapters of Proverbs can help guide an early teen on choosing wisdom over folly. We also provide each family The Parent Handbook from operationparent.org, which is a booklet with Christian biblical advice for parents on over 40 topics that preteens and teens deal with. This is a gift to ECC 5th grade families given at our FLIGHT event in the Spring.

RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU: Consider explaining to your preteen that over the next decade your role will progressively change from a teacher to that of a coach. You will begin to guide him or her in the transition toward independence. It is also a great time to intentionally foster relationships with other godly adults who can influence your child's life, like a small group leader in our student ministry.





PREPARING FOR ADOLESCENCE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

Multiple studies have shown that, by a large margin, statistically across the country among evangelical teens, the most spiritually influential person in their lives are mom and dad – much more so than the pastor or church programs.

So even if over the next several years, you feel as though your influence is waning, take heart and continue to lead your child in their faith development. Lean into these years where your child is transitioning from a child into an adult. Continue to hold out the word of God in your home, pray with and for your kids often, model grace in your home, and pray daily for the Holy Spirit to bear his fruit in your parenting: love...joy...peace...patience...kindness...goodness...gentleness...and self-control. You are NOT irrelevant to your child. They still need you. If they try to dismiss you because of *your* mistakes, stay strong. Own your mistakes, assert your authority, express your love daily and be the parent!

ONE-ON-ONE TIME: Plan some “dates” throughout this year with your child. Even better if each parent takes the child out for one on one time. Go to dinner, take her shopping, go fishing or grab some coffee – choose an activity and environment where you can have a good talk. Talk to them about life and faith, praying beforehand that God will bless your conversation.

FAMILY DEVOTIONS: Continue to gather daily for family prayer and bible reading. This might work well when the youngest one in the family goes to bed, or at a meal you all are usually present for. Maybe you could continue to use the fishbowl verses and passages from the 7 year old parenting booklet, or make some new ones. (We included the verses in this booklet) You might even consider using a short devotional book like Jesus Calling by Sarah Young or Josh McDowell’s One Year Book of Family Devotions.

CHURCH INVOLVEMENT: Pray that God would provide a “second voice” for your child throughout this next season - someone who reinforces your faith and values. The youth programs at Eastview aim to connect your child with not only age specific programs, but also a small group leader that works WITH YOU to influence your child for Jesus. Encourage your child to get involved in volunteering. Statistically, kids who serve at church have a much higher rate of staying in the church. Help them find something they really enjoy whether it’s working with kids, serving in the cafe, or helping load food from the food drives.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES: Mood swings, periods, lust, identity issues, peer pressure, sexual purity. The types of conversations we are encouraging you to have this year can be difficult ones to have. Don't feel like you have to do this alone. Below are some resources that you can use to help navigate some uncomfortable discussions. Just don't flake out on your kid – they need you to help them. You can be sure they will be just as weird-ed out as you, but this is an important time for you as a parent to engage in your child's life. There are many good Christian resources you can use. Don't get overwhelmed by choices. Pray for God to guide you to the just right resource for your child. To talk to someone in person, stop by the Family Resource Center or the Eastview Bookstore.

ONLINE RESOURCES:

- Mark Gregston – topics on teens and preteens www.heartlightministries.org
- AXIS – resources for parents on engaging the culture www.axis.org
- Ready for Adolescence Family Night Tool Chest www.heritatgebuilders.com
- RightNOW Media – resources for parents and youth - Check out the invitation in the back of this booklet.
- Great Articles and Blogs on all things PARENTING AND MARRIAGE: family.org; homeward.org; familylife.com; theparentcue.org

BOOKS:

- [Preparing for Adolescence](#) by Dr. James Dobson
- [Five Conversations You Must Have](#) by Vicki Courtney
- [Emergency Response Handbook for Parents](#) by Group
- [So You're About to be a Teenager](#) by Dennis & Barbara Rainey
- [Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens](#) by Paul David Tripp
- [Tough Guys and Drama Queens](#) – by Mark Gregston

CLASSES/STUDIES:

- Tough Guys and Drama Queens – small group study
- Your Body God's Plan – YourBodyGodsPlan.com
- Passport to Purity Weekend Getaway Kit - interactive experience with your preteen to discuss puberty and adolescence.
- Visit FamilyLife.com.





FISHBOWL VERSES:

An easy way to build Bible reading into your family's daily rhythm is to fill a bowl full of slips of paper with verses on them. Each night at bedtime or after dinner, have one of the kids draw a slip of paper. Look it up together and have someone read the Scripture that is chosen. Our list below is a good start. Put single verses on different colored paper than the longer passages, and choose which one fits the moment well.

SHORT ONES:

ISAIAH 48:17	PROVERBS 22:9	MATTHEW 5:16	EPHESIANS 4:29	JOSHUA 1:9
PSALM 86:15	EPHESIANS 4:2	PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7	ISAIAH 40:11	COLOSSIANS 3:12-14
GALATIANS 6:10	GALATIANS 5:22-23	1ST JOHN 4:7	PSALM 5:1-3	1ST PETER 5:7
JAMES 3:17	HEBREWS 11:1,6	ROMANS 12:13	2ND TIMOTHY 3:16	ROMANS 12:9-10
HEBREWS 10:25	1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-8	JOHN 13:34-35	EPHESIANS 2:10	JOSHUA 1:8
1ST JOHN 3:1	PROVERBS 14:29	PHILIPPIANS 4:4-5	MARK 12:28-31	EPHESIANS 6:1-4

LONGER ONES:

PSALM 100	PSALM 103:1-13	PSALM 23	PSALM 24:1-6	PSALM 105:1-4
PSALM 119:1-16	PSALM 139:14-16	ISAIAH 40:12-14; 22-26	ISAIAH 40:28-31	DANIEL 3 OR 3:16-30
MALACHI 3:6-10	MATTHEW 4:1-11	MATTHEW 5:38-48	MATTHEW 5:13-16	MATTHEW 6:1-4
MATTHEW 6:5-15	MATTHEW 6:19-24	MATTHEW 6:25-34	MATTHEW 7:1-5	MATTHEW 7:7-14
MATTHEW 25:31-46	EPHESIANS 4:25-5:2	LUKE 10:25-37	LUKE 10:38-42	LUKE 16:19-31
1ST JOHN 1:5-2:2	ROMANS 6:1-4	ROMANS 12:9-21	1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-13	JAMES 1:19-27



DON'T GO IT ALONE!

NO PARENT SHOULD FEEL LIKE THEY HAVE TO PARENT ALONE.

From small groups to parenting resources to youth ministry leaders, we don't want you to think you're in this by yourself. There are a lot of ways to find help as you raise your adolescent.

In the back of this booklet, you will find an invitation to RightNowMedia. We cannot encourage you enough to check out the resources available for FREE through a partnership between Eastview and RNM. There are all kinds of videos for your child that cover all types of topics - body image, deeper faith, friendships, dreams about their future, sports, parents and MORE! If your child isn't a big reader, these videos will deliver the same great content in an engaging way. Watch them together, taking one video a week and then discuss it. Or give them incentives for watching the videos. John Maxwell, a famous speaker, preacher, author and leadership guru talks about how his dad paid him to read books when he was growing up and how much that impacted his life. Maybe there's something you can do to motivate them to watch some of these video series.

There are also a lot of videos on parenting. Many popular books are covered in a handful of videos in these series. These are great to go through as a couple or just a group of friends. Small groups can walk through these video series and cheer each other on as you remain engaged parents who are leaning into raising your young man or woman to become a godly well-adjusted young adult.

If you are not in a small group, consider joining one this week. If you're in a small group, consider inviting someone to come speak to your group who has already been where you are and has raised their kids. Our church has many of these wonderful couples who have a tremendous amount of wisdom and practical advice.

Eastview's youth staff do not want to replace you in your role, but rather help you through some of their expertise and programming. Invite them to a cup of coffee and pick their brains. Ask them for help when you get stuck. Volunteer in the youth ministry and stay engaged.



SAFEGUARDING YOUR HOME

PROTECTING YOUR CHILD FROM ONLINE THREATS

Did you realize that your child is in the average age window that children are first exposed to pornographic content on the internet? If you haven't already, you need to make sure that every device in your family is protected. Having unprotected devices in your home would be as if our parents had left explicit magazines lying around the house, expecting us to make good choices.

3 STEPS TO PROTECTING YOUR CHILD ONLINE

- 1. Talk to your child about using their devices.** Discuss how they should never give out personal information or chat with strangers. Have an age-appropriate conversation about pornography. Stress how important it is to let you know if they come across inappropriate content. Make sure they know you are a safe person to talk to about what they've seen. For help in talking with kids about pornography, check out Good Pictures/Bad Pictures and Good Pictures/Bad Pictures Jr. by Kristen Jensen, M.A. and Gail Poyner, PhD. There are also great resources at family.org and covenanteyes.com.
- 2. Set boundaries for internet usage.** Require that all internet usage be done in a central area of the house where parents and other family members will be. Do not allow surfing while you are not home, including homework which typically requires a lot of need for google images.

Do not allow devices in a child's room - they should not need privacy to be on the internet.
- 3. Protect your devices with a content blocker and report generator.** There are several companies that provide these services/software. Focus on the Family partners with Net Nanny and Forcefield. Covenant Eyes is used by many families at Eastview. These programs will not only block content, but will also send accountability reports on everyone's usage in the family. You should also go into the settings of each device and determine the restrictions for that device, which is then protected by a 4 digit PIN.

Commit yourself to being intentional about being a gatekeeper for your child's heart and mind - no apologies. It will be impossible to protect them entirely, but these simple steps are a good start toward giving them a good shot at never knowing the dark world of a porn addiction.

Get answers to your toughest parenting questions in this new free course. Mark Gregston's "Tough Guys and Drama Queens" course is now available absolutely free!!

How you choose to navigate your child's teen years is one of the most important factors in how they learn and grow into adults, and your relationship with them now will set the course for years to come.

Whether you're in the middle of your teen's adolescent years and struggling with how to connect with them, or preparing for the years ahead, you're in the right place.

For almost 40 years, Heartlight Ministries has been passionate about guiding kids and parents through the turbulent teenage years. Tough Guys and Drama Queens has been a huge part of that mission, and we're thrilled to be able to offer it now, to you, as a free online course!

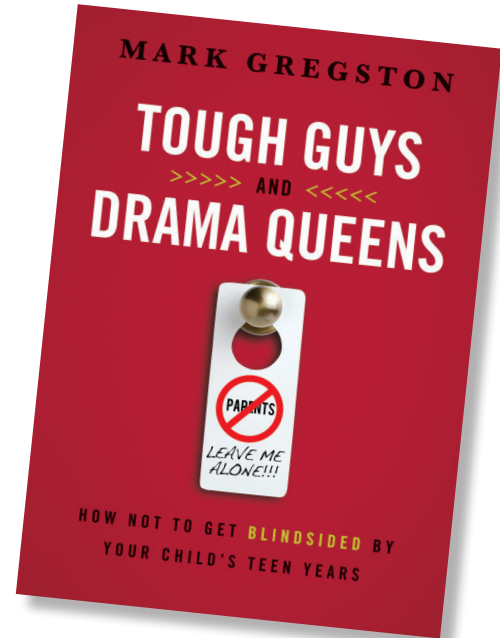
This two-week course will reveal:

- why traditional parenting techniques aren't as effective as they used to be
- the pressures teens face in today's culture
- how to build a stronger relationship with your teen throughout these years.

Enjoy Tough Guys and Drama Queens, and remember: God is the one truly in control of your teen's life. Your job is to help them through it.

For more information go to:

facebook.com/parentingteens/posts/10154830885106892



THIS YEAR'S PARENTING PLAN SUMMARY/CHECKLIST

WEEKS TO GRADUATION: 364 and counting
PHASE PARENTING PHRASE: Affirm Their Personal Journey

"Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people."

Luke 2:52

- Read the contents of this booklet and the tri-fold Phase Summary that comes with this booklet.
- Write a letter to my child.
- Attend My Body God's Plan with our child in the spring of their 5th grade year (other grades can attend).
- Plan some intentional times to have conversation about body, choices and our relationship.
- Attend the 5th Graders Milestone event, FLIGHT.
- Pray and read the Bible with my child daily.
- 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/memberscare.
- **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

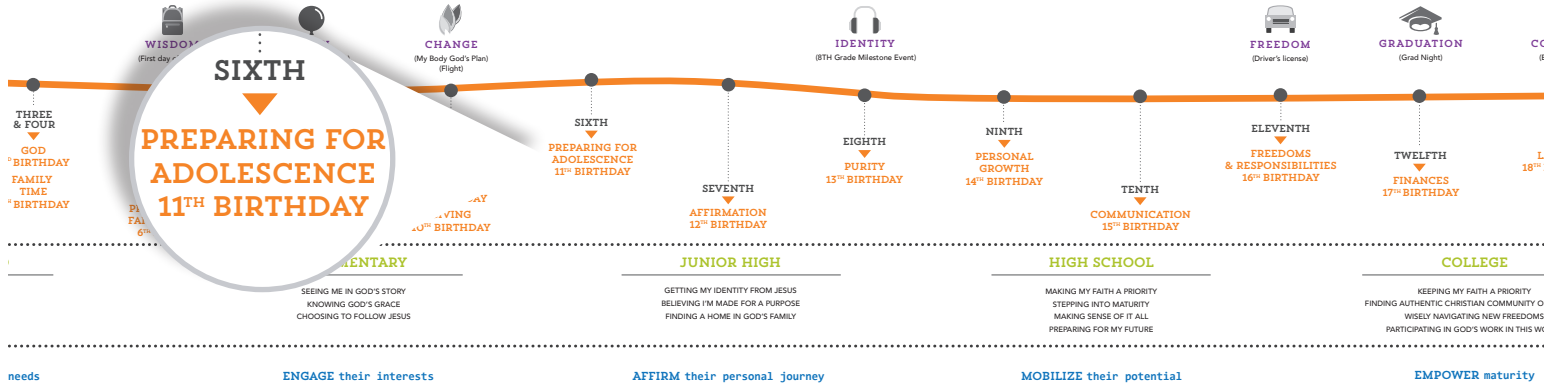


**OVER 14,000
VIDEOS!**

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

EASTVIEW FAMILY RESOURCES

FAMILY MINISTRY MAP



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.