

TWELFTH BIRTHDAY

AFFIRMATION

EASTVIEW FAMILY RESOURCES



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THIS YEAR AT A GLANCE...

Your kid might be turning into someone much different than the one who has grown up in your home these past 12 years, but the last thing they need is for you to freak out about it. Your one-word mission this year as your kid's parent is AFFIRM! At every turn, make it your mission to affirm them. With so much change happening within and around them, you can provide them with a lot of stability by reminding them of how valuable and special they are.

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
- **"AFFIRMATION" Overview** The importance of affirming your preteen.
- **Affirmation Ideas** Practical ways to affirm your child in meaningful ways.
- **Identity Video** An animated video on your child's identity in Christ.
- **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, Tough Guys & Drama Queens, and RightNowMedia.



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: affirmation

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 Junior High programs here at church, we will be focusing on:

GETTING MY IDENTITY FROM JESUS

BELIEVING I'M MADE FOR A PURPOSE

FINDING A HOME IN GOD'S FAMILY

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 12TH 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 transitioned into adolescence...

**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.**

TWELFTH BIRTHDAY: AFFIRMATION

YOUR CHILD'S WORLD IS CHANGING: Your kid might be turning into someone much different than the one who has grown up in your home these past 12 years, but the last thing they need is for you to freak out about it.

Your one-word mission this year as your kid's parent is AFFIRM, AFFIRM, AFFIRM! At every turn, make it your mission to affirm them. With so much change happening within and around them, you can provide them with a lot of stability by reminding them of how valuable and special they are.

You probably won't need to worry about giving them a false sense of confidence, because you rarely have a child in this age group who doesn't struggle with the insecurities that go along with being in middle school. Though they might try to mask their emotions or insecurities through annoying behavior or conforming to their friends, they are very fragile right now. You being a constant voice of affirmation can stabilize their emotional and spiritual health. There will be enough "voices" in their world that will work to discourage and bring them down. Sometimes it only takes one trusted consistent voice of love to combat the lies they will hear about themselves from flaming arrows from the devil of self doubt and self deprecation.

HOW TO AFFIRM YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLER: To affirm means to "state as true," or "to uphold another judgment as true." There will be people and processes in life that will be trying to pull your son or daughter down with lies about who they are. So what is it that we are wanting to convince our kids is true?

THEY ARE LOVED: They frankly might feel a little unlovable at times during this season. They might think that God does not love them anymore because their hearts condemn them. They might not believe that you love them because they've gotten on your last nerve every night this week. They are convinced that their science teacher doesn't like them, the girl who sits at their table at lunch doesn't like them, the youth pastor or small group leader doesn't like them... their inability to make rational sense of their emotions might cause them to doubt that those they care about most, actually care about them. You need to affirm that they are loved... by God... by You... by their church... by their friends, etc. Even on those days when they really did manage to tick off everyone in their world, at the end of the day, Jesus gathers them in his arms and carries them close to his heart – Isaiah 40:11. And oh, the last they hear each night is their parents telling them they are loved.

THEY ARE NORMAL: The struggles they are facing, the questions they have, the emotions they are feeling, the failures they are experiencing... it's all part of their journey to adulthood. Don't trivialize their struggle as though it's not a big deal – that won't help anyone... **ESPECIALLY MOMS TO SONS** (they will feel disrespected which will cause them to react in unloving ways – for more on this, check out Love and Respect in the Family or Mothers and Sons: The Respect Effect by Emmerson Eggerichs). But affirm that they are experiencing normal growing pains as their bodies and minds mature. Assure them that they will get through it just fine.

They are important. God created him on purpose and for a purpose. She was handcrafted by God. Ephesians 2:10 is an important verse for kids. Keep it in front of them. The world needs them. God has a plan for them. Remind them of this often.

GOD IS IN CONTROL: Some kids will take on the care of the world at this time. Despair and guilt can be very strong emotions, but we can combat the anxiousness with truths from Scripture and testimonies of our own faith story.

LOVE YOURSELF: Jesus didn't say "love your neighbor but not yourself," but rather "love your neighbor as yourself." Constantly remind your child about the wonderful things about them. Be intentional about "catching them" doing good things. Write them down so you won't forget to tell them later, or text them right away while it's fresh on your mind. At dinner time, sit together and tell stories about them. If you haven't kept the practice of blessing your child (2nd B-day booklet), this would be a great year to start that back up. Read on in this booklet for more ideas on how to affirm your child this year.





PRACTICAL WAYS TO AFFIRM YOUR CHILD

SPEAK HIGHLY OF THEM AROUND OTHERS: In their presence, praise them in front of others. They may act like they are embarrassed and don't like it, but it's an effective way to let them know that you value them.

SHARE HOW THEY'RE BETTER THAN YOU: If your child is more caring, or patient, or serious about their faith than you were, let them know it. Make it character based more than accomplishment based. Don't make stuff up, but if it's authentic, tell him, "I wish I would have been half as nice to Uncle Joe as you are to your brother." Or, "You are much more hard working than I was at your age."

GIVE PLENTY OF PHYSICAL AFFECTION: And couple it with words. Give your son a big bear hug and tell him, "You are awesome! I'm so proud of you!" Wrap your daughter up in a hug, kiss her on the forehead and tell her, "You are amazing! I love you so much!"

TAKE TIME TO TRULY ADMIRE THEM: Especially if it's been a hard season with them, take time to think about how they truly are special. Make note of things you love about them and stockpile several affirmations to use when the moment arises.

WRITE THEM NOTES: Leave them a note on their bathroom mirror with a dry erase marker. Shoot them a random text in the middle of the day. Hide a note in their luggage when they go to camp. Put a note on a surprise treat and stick it in their lunch. Keep a journal of "Things I Love About You" and let them read it often.

CELEBRATE EFFORT AND CHOICES: It's great to tell your daughter she's beautiful or your son that he's really strong. But REALLY amp it up when they do something that reflects good character. Surprise them with a special gift out of nowhere, telling them you were so impressed with how hard they studied or practiced, regardless of the result. Celebrate their good choices too!

A MUST USE VIDEO: “My Identity in Christ” is a powerful animated notebook sketch video short about getting our identity from God. It is about a minute and a half and very engaging. In this video your child will explore the question, “Who am I, Lord?” and “Where do I get my identity?” You can access the video through both Youtube and Godtube.

Here are the links:

- <https://youtu.be/hsDQEb-qlyM>
- <http://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=WDYLYLNX>

You will see that once the video begins to explain our identity, there are several Scriptures. Take time as a family once a week to watch the video and choose one or two verses to look up and discuss. Consider putting those verses up in your home or in your child’s room. If they have a device, encourage them to save this video to it.

SPECIAL RESOURCE FOR GIRLS:

- [Rise Up Princess: 60 Days To Revealing Your Royal Identity](#) by former Miss USA Kristen Dalton Wolfe

This is a 60 day exercise in forming an identity based on the way God sees a young woman. From the struggles of her own journey, Kristen shares short daily readings that affirm the value of girls from the truths of Scripture.

Here is an excerpt from Day One:

“Thank You that I am no longer a slave to fitting in. I don’t have to strive to be the perfect Christian. I had it in reverse all along. Because I am Your child, the daughter You love, I already have the DNA to be like You. When I removed the layers of culture, the familial and spiritual damage, the girl I see in the mirror is a reflection of love, creativity, joy, wonder and peace.”

BOOKS TO HELP YOU LEARN TO AFFIRM YOUR CHILD:

- [No More Perfect Kids](#) by Jill Savage & Kathy Koch, Ph.D.
Jill and Kathy help you enjoy your kids by recalibrating your expectations as a parent and teaching you to be an expert on your own kids.
- [5 Love Languages of Children](#) by Gary Chapman
- [5 Love Languages of Teen](#) by Gary Chapman
Gary helps you understand how your child will best hear the affirmations you are giving them this year. The same principles that have helped countless couples, parents and children learn to communicate better.

RIGHT NOW MEDIA RESOURCES: Check out the invitation later in this booklet to a library of video resources. There are several resources that will help affirm truth to your child.





SCRIPTURAL AFFIRMATIONS

There is no more powerful resource for affirming your child than the very words of God. In Ephesians 6:16 Paul tells us to take up the shield of faith to extinguish the flaming arrows from the devil. Many scholars believe that these arrows are accusations of self doubt and self deprecation. Our kids can be especially vulnerable to these accusations and begin to believe the lies of our enemy. Use scriptures and affirmations to fill their hearts with the truth from God's word. Use the list below like the fishbowl verses from past years and write these affirmations on slips of paper. Have your child draw one out a day to read and look up in their Bible. As you come across verses this year, add them to the bowl.

HERE'S A SAMPLE LIST FROM DALE FLETCHER (FAITHANDHEALTHCONNECTION.ORG) TO GET YOU STARTED:

- God stands at my side and gives me the strength I need for today. 2 Timothy 4:17
- When I get alone with Jesus, I find rest. Mark 6:21
- Because I believe in Jesus, I no longer live in the darkness. John 13:46
- I was created by God for His glory. Isaiah 43:7
- I am a child of God. 1 John 3:1
- As I cleanse myself of the wood and clay in my life, I am better able to be used by God. 2 Timothy 2:20-21
- My hope is in the Lord. Psalm 40:7
- Scriptures in the Bible teach me to do what is right and equip me for every good thing God wants me to do. 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- God reveals his spiritual truths to me by his Spirit. 1 Corinthians 2:13
- Christ has set me free to experience true freedom. Galatians 5:1
- I'm learning to go boldly to God in prayer and in him I find grace and mercy in time of need. Hebrews 4:16
- God is my refuge, strength and help in times of trouble. Psalm 46:1
- God blesses me because I have a humble and contrite heart and I tremble at his Word. Isaiah 66:2
- As I acknowledge God in the morning, he makes my path straight during the day. Proverbs 3:6
- I am complete in Christ. Col. 2:10
- I teach God's great truths to people who are able to pass them on to others. 2 Timothy 2:2
- God is my stronghold in times of trouble. Psalm 9:9
- God's love for me is great! It reaches to the heavens. Psalm 58:10

- I am created in the image of God. Genesis 1:27
- Jesus came to the earth so that I might live an abundant life. John 10:10
- My glad heart gives me a happy face! Proverbs 15:13
- Jesus is the true Light that gives me light and Life. John 1:9 and John 10:10
- A Savior has been born for me. He is Jesus Christ. Luke 2:11
- I seek the praises and approval of God, not others. 2 Corinthians 10:18
- I choose to have the same attitude that Jesus had. Philippians 2:5
- Because I follow Jesus, I never walk in darkness but have the light of life. John 8:12
- I live for Christ because he died for me. 2 Corinthians 5:17
- Because my mind is controlled by God's Spirit, I enjoy life and peace. Romans 8:6
- I am walking humbly with my God. Micah 6:8
- I am blessed because I know and follow God's principles. Proverbs 29:18
- Because I stay closely connected to Jesus, I bear much fruit in my life. John 15:5
- God reveals his secret wisdom to me through his Spirit. 1 Corinthians 2:7 & 10
- Because I have the mind of Christ, I understand God's spiritual truths. 1 Corinthians 2:13,16
- God's divine power gives me everything I need for life. 2 Peter 1:3
- I honor God with how I care for my body because it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 6:19
- It's through Jesus Christ that I truly live. 1 Corinthians 8:6
- Because I am a child of God, He sent the Spirit of his Son to live in my heart. Galatians 4:6
- Because Jesus died for me, I have newness of life. Romans 6:4
- God works through me to strengthen, encourage and comfort others. 1 Corinthians 14:3
- I humbly ask God if he sees any offensive ways in me. Psalm 139:23-24
- Christ's energy works powerfully in me so that I might share God's truths with others. Colossians 1:28-29
- God's word will accomplish in me what He desires and the purpose for which He sent it. Isaiah 55:11
- God's anointing, His Spirit in me, teaches me about all things. 1 John 2:27
- The love that God has lavished on me is great! 1 John 3:1
- As I acknowledge and follow God, he makes my paths straight. Prov. 3:6
- I know that I am a child of God even when I see all the bad things going on in the world. 1st John 5:19





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 Jenson, 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!

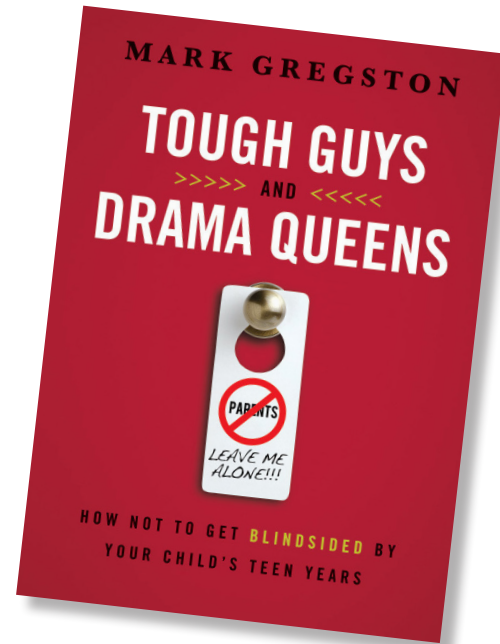
This two-week course will reveal:

- 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: 312 and counting
PHASE PARENTING PHRASE: Affirm Their Personal Journey

*"Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful,
so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them."*

Ephesians 4:29

- Read the contents of this booklet and the tri-fold Phase Summary that comes with this booklet.
- Write a letter to my child.
- Put the word AFFIRM somewhere where you will see it everyday to remind you of this year's goal.
- Put resources in your child's life to affirm the truth about them. For example, use the affirmation scriptures.
- Put into practice several of the ways to affirm your child listed in this booklet.
- 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.

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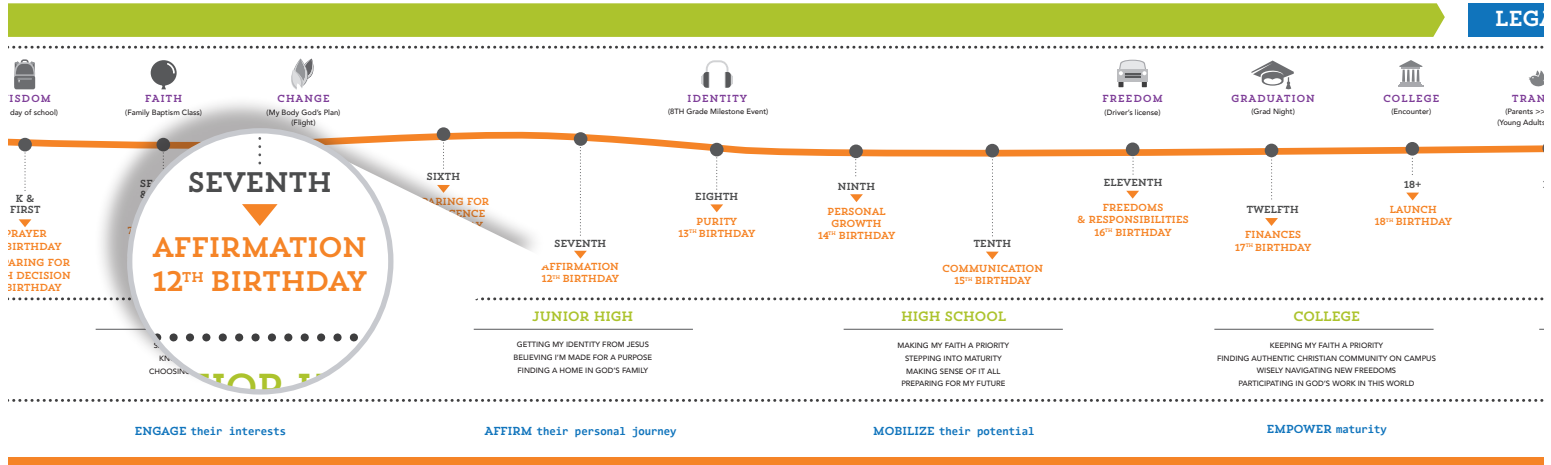


**OVER 14,000
VIDEOS!**

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.