

FOURTEENTH BIRTHDAY

PERSONAL GROWTH

EASTVIEW FAMILY RESOURCES



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THIS YEAR AT A GLANCE...

While much of the effort in these parenting packets have encouraged your family to participate in activities or conversations together, this year we want to encourage you to focus on teaching your child the joy of going to God in solitude, and in particular to spend time in the Bible, in prayer and journaling. As you turn the corner into this season, your one word parenting plan is MOBILIZE... it is time to help your child learn to feed himself/herself spiritually.

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
- **"PERSONAL GROWTH" Overview** Helping your child develop habits to grow on their own.
- **Personal Growth Resources** Recommended resources for getting your child started with devos
- **Growth Opportunities** How your child can use giving, serving, secrecy, community and sacrifice to grow.
- **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: **PERSONAL GROWTH.**

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 student ministry programs here at church, we will be focusing on:

MAKING MY FAITH A PRIORITY

STEPPING INTO MATURITY

MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

PREPARING FOR MY FUTURE

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 14TH 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 type of music is...
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. Something I hope you learned this year is...
12. A bible verse I have picked out for you is...

**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.**

FOURTEENTH BIRTHDAY: PERSONAL GROWTH

“Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.”

James 4:8

While much of the effort in these parenting packets have encouraged your family to participate in activities or conversations together, this year we want to encourage you to focus on giving your child the tools and challenge of taking the initiative with their own personal growth. Help them experience the joy of going to God in solitude, in particular to spend time in the bible, in prayer and journaling. As you turn the corner into this season, your one word parenting plan (phase challenge) is MOBILIZE... it is time to help your child learn to feed himself or herself spiritually.

While we want to warn against creating a legalism as you teach your child to have daily devotions, we believe that this is a very important spiritual discipline in the life of a believer. The great leaders of the Bible modeled times of personal prayer, study and meditation (Moses, David, Daniel, etc.). Jesus, who is God himself, modeled the importance of withdrawing from the noise and demands of life to spend time in prayer with God.

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place where he prayed.”

Mark 1:35

Just because you are focusing on them developing the holy habit of personal prayer and scripture intake, it doesn't mean you have to give up family times of prayer and Bible reading... but it might. You might need to shorten what you have done as a family, or you might have to turn it into once a week, or as a part of dinner. If you have to create some margin in order to help your son or daughter fall in love with their own times of prayer and meditation on God's word, consider it a step towards leading them towards becoming a well-adjusted godly young adult. But maintaining family faith discussions and prayers are still an important role of a parent.

RESOURCE THEM: There are a number of good devotional books available for teens. We carry several of them in our Eastview bookstore that are recommended by our High School staff. Buy them a Bible if they don't already have one. Make sure that it is a translation that is contemporary and easy to understand. We recommend the New Living Translation (NLT) for teens. Consider buying them a prayer journal. They don't have to be expensive – a spiral notebook is fine. Journaling is a good way for kids to stay focused as they pray. It also helps them to internalize the scriptures they are reading and studying if they write down reflections on those verses.

BE AN EXAMPLE: If you already have a quiet time of your own, this doesn't mean you have to do them in front of your kids, although that would be good too. But make sure that they know you practice this as well. If you have not made this a part of your faith experience, use this year as a fresh start to spending time alone with God. Your words will likely fall flat if they know you are not spending time in prayer and the Word yourself.

TALK ABOUT THEIR FAITH WITH THEM: (But try not to have all the answers.) Create a safe and comfortable place in your relationship to talk about faith – what they are learning, how they are growing, how you are growing, what questions they have, what they feel like God is telling them, etc. Check in with them about their daily devotionals – how are they going? What do you like? Do you need anything from me to help you? Don't panic if they are slow in getting this habit formed. Be patient and understanding, owning your own struggles if you have any in this area. They will benefit from the safety and honesty you offer. Don't nag them, but continue to encourage them to keep trying to get into it.

CREATE SPECIAL TIMES: Investing in retreat times with your child can help them find the joy in disconnecting from the world a little, in order to connect with God in a special way; whether it's a camping trip to the mountains with a spiritual emphasis, spending a weekend at a retreat center, adding comfortable lawn furniture to your yard or deck to create special times for prayer, or driving to a favorite spot by the pond. Not only will it provide time for you both to hear from God, it will create lasting memories centered around your shared faith journey.



HOW TO HAVE A “QUIET TIME”

As you work with your teen to develop a personal habit of spending time with God through prayer, scripture and meditation, here are a few methods that can give you some structure to that time. Sometimes called “devotions” or “Quiet Times,” this is time that you break away from the world to concentrate on God and communicate back and forth with him by praying, listening, studying, meditating and reflecting. While it may be tempting to say “I’m going to spend 10 minutes a day in quiet time,” don’t worry about that for now. If you spend 10 minutes one day, 20 minutes the next and 8 minutes the next, that is not the point. Quieting yourself for a time to focus on the presence of God can be organic and fluid, based more on the experience and less on the clock.

While different people are wired for different styles of quiet time, below is a simple way to structure a quiet time based on one method. Other types of “devos” are more based on studying, or praying or journaling. All are good, so try them and see what you like the most.

QUIET, PRAY, READ, LISTEN: Sometimes called lectio divina* (Divine Reading), this method is effective for all personality types, but especially for contemplative (thoughtful) people.

QUIET

Get in a quiet place and quiet your mind and thoughts before the Lord.

PRAY

Pray that the Holy Spirit would draw your attention to something in the passage of the Bible you are about to read (start with the passages included).

READ

Read a passage of scripture with a “listening” kind of reading –slowly moving over the words.

LISTEN

Listen for what God might be drawing your attention to and read, linger and meditate on what comes to your attention. In the Christian faith, meditation is not the emptying of oneself, but rather the filling of oneself. You fill yourself with thoughts of God. The word in the Old Testament actually refers to a cow chewing her cud. You mull things over thoughtfully.

At this point, offer requests and praise to God as the Spirit brings them to your thoughts.

**You can search online for a detailed explanation of lectio divina.*

DAILY SCRIPTURE PASSAGES FOR TEENS

Just like the Fishbowl Verses from the younger Parent Packets, we have provided some verses to get your teen in the Word of God every day. These can get you started, but there are apps and programs that your child can download that will give them a verse a day – check out YouVersion for example. There are also books such as 199 Favorite Bible Verses for Teens where verses are categorized into topics. You can also search online for a daily scripture reading plan to help your child find one they are interested in trying.

1st CORINTHIANS 10:12-13	JEREMIAH 29:11	PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9	PSALM 24:1-6	JOHN 15:1-7
PSALM 119:1-16	PSALM 139:14-16	ISAIAH 40:12-14, 22-26	ISAIAH 40:28-31	DANIEL 3
1ST TIMOTHY 4:1-16	HEBREWS 12:1-14	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
ROMANS 7:7-25	MATTHEW 28:1-10	LUKE 10:25-37	LUKE 10:38-42	LUKE 16:19-31
1ST JOHN 1:5-2:2	GALATIANS 6:1-10	ROMANS 12	1ST CORINTHIANS 13:1-13	JAMES 1:19-27
EPHESIANS 4:25-5:2	PHILIPPIANS 3:12-14	PSALM 23	MATTHEW 11:28-30	PSALM 103:1-13



CREATING GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

There are a lot of different spiritual disciplines along with prayer, bible study, silence and meditation which naturally occur as a part of quiet times. Think about ways to encourage your child to grow in other areas of their lives. Here are some suggestions below.

SERVING: Kids who serve in church are statistically MUCH more likely to remain in the church after leaving home.

In the church: Encourage your son or daughter to be engaged in some kind of church service. There are a lot of opportunities for 14 year olds to serve. They can work in the nursery; teach a small group; serve in the food pantry; serve in the high school ministry music, set up or tech teams. Consistently serving on a team that is counting on you is a great way for students to learn responsibility. Finding their own substitutes when they are gone teaches them that what they do matters, and they are missed when they are not there.

Missions: Cross cultural missions trips are another opportunity for your child to be stretched and grow. Being a part of one of these teams opens the doors for new relationships and experiences. Growth not only happens on the field, but also in preparation: team bonding, meeting new people, contributing to planning, fundraising, and learning about a different culture. There are all types of trips, and the cool thing is, you could go as a family!

In the community: There are also a lot of great opportunities to serve in the community such as Big Brothers Big Sisters or ringing bells at Christmastime.

GIVING:

Consistently Tithing: In the 10th Birthday Booklet, we spend the year talking about giving. We reemphasize it again during the 17th Birthday Booklet on Finances, but this year, you could encourage them to give regularly in the church offering. They might not have consistent income, so it might not be as consistent as your giving. However, you can instill in them the importance of giving to participate in the work of the local church.

Responsive Giving: Along with giving in a disciplined way to the ministry of the local church, there are other opportunities to give that you can help your son or daughter think through. There are times where there are special offerings taken at church for missions work or charity initiatives. There are also ways to participate in work through NGO's and relief efforts like World Vision or the Red Cross. Talk to them about how you decide what to give to with so many needs. Teach them how to make good choices when selecting ministries and organizations to be a part of. Talk to them about how to handle situations like beggars on the street or when friends ask for money.

SACRIFICE: To combat the tendency we all have to focus more on our own needs than those around us, have some conversations as a family about things you could change or give up to bless the world. Teaching your fourteen year old the joy of selfless living will help them establish a thought pattern that they can carry with them when they leave home and start making more money and having more expenses.

But it's not just all about money. It might be fasting and praying for a drought in Kenya to end. It might be simplifying your schedule to allow room to care for an elderly neighbor or relative. It might be giving up a birthday in order for that money to be used to provide clean water in another country.

What we want to do as parents is to make sure we pass on a sense of responsibility for the greater good to the next generation. As with anything, more things are caught than taught. If this is a weakness of yours, you might need to address some of this in your own life and invite your child along for the journey.

AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY: If your teenager isn't in a small group, get them signed up for one this year. Help them discover the importance of having a group of friends that will walk with you in your faith journey. If your child is shy or reluctant to get involved based on a previously negative experience, reach out to our high school staff who can help your child find a good fit. Christians were not meant for isolation - even the most introverted among us. We need to put ourselves

out there to be encouraged and to encourage. We need trusted friends to confess struggles with and know that we are safe and supported. We need someone walking alongside us who won't let us settle. This is an important part of the Christian life that our kids need to take with them into adulthood - especially college.

SECRECY: In our age of social media, it can be easy to slip into self-promotion. Challenge your teen to do some things this year to learn the joy of secret service. Maybe that means they will serve in a ministry that only a few people will know about. Or maybe they do something for someone and don't post anything about it. For example, if a group of friends ring bells for the Salvation Army, have them keep it off social media. Now, it's not wrong to post about it - and it might even spur other friends on to join the cause. But sometimes it's good to do things that only God will know about. Another example might be if they teach a small group of kids, they might go above and beyond and write them cards throughout the year, but never bring it up at church. Learning to give and serve just for the joy of pleasing God and not promoting yourself is a valuable lesson to learn while they are still at home with you. Maybe you can model this with some family outings this year. For example, you could secretly go to a family in need and drop off supplies on the porch and run. Or quietly give up your weekly meal out in order to give that money to missions.





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 towards 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!

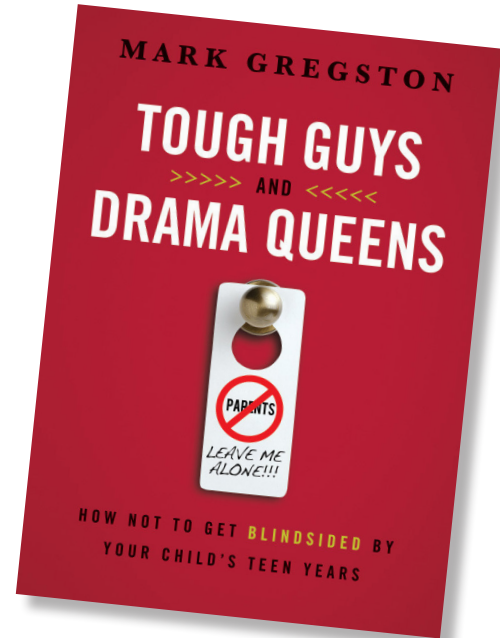
This two-week course will reveal:

- 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: 208 and counting
PHASE PARENTING PHRASE: Mobilize Their Potential

“Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.”

James 4:8

- Read the contents of this booklet and the tri-fold Phase Summary that comes with this booklet.
- Write a letter to my child.
- Challenge your child to establish a daily quiet time and provide them resources.
- Take your child on a spiritual “retreat” or some kind of special outing for the purpose of personal growth.
- Set an example and have a daily quiet time of your own.
- Follow This Year’s Marriage Plan below. *(We know not every parent is married. We don’t mean to offend by including this segment.)*

THIS YEAR'S MARRIAGE PLAN

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

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

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

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

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

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




EASTVIEW RESOURCES

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

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

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



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

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

DOWNLOAD THE PARENT CUE APP

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



Easy encouragements to help your child start their day.



Ideas for meaningful talks on the way to soccer practice.



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



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



Timely help for those moments that take you by surprise.

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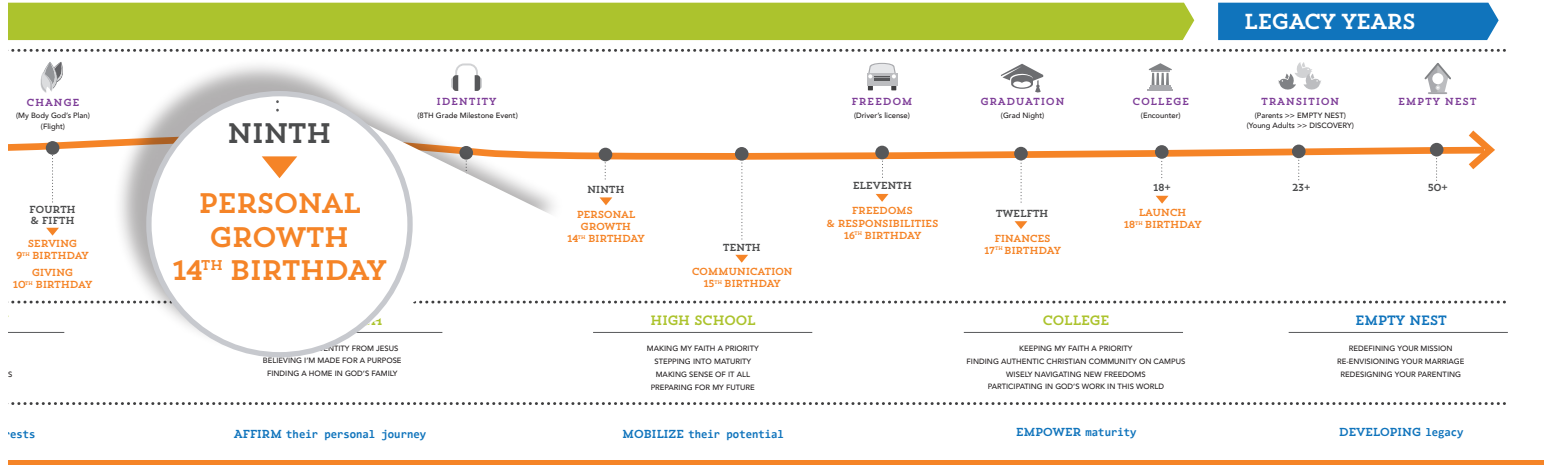
rightnow MEDIA

CHECK OUT THE VIDEOS FOR KIDS, YOUTH, 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.