

EIGHTEENTH BIRTHDAY LAUNCH

EASTVIEW FAMILY RESOURCES



www.eastview.church | 1500 N. Airport Rd. | Normal, IL 61761 | 309.451.5000



THIS YEAR AT A GLANCE...

Whether your son or daughter is going off to college, joining the military or entering the workforce, how can you be intentional about successfully launching them into a God-honoring life? They might be leaving home soon, but you will continue to parent them... it just won't be the same... it shouldn't be the same. This year is about preparation and transition.

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.
- **"LAUNCH" Overview** Helpful advice for preparing your child to leave home.
- **"Before You Leave" Checklist** A list of things to make sure to go over this year.
- **Launch Ideas** Ideas for having a meaningful send-off.
- **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.
- **What's Next?** Transitioning from the parenting plan to other resources.



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: LAUNCH

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 high school 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 18TH 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. Your favorite things to do with your friends...
7. Something I saw in you at a young age...
8. Ways I saw you grow the most over the years...
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'll be praying for you as you leave...
12. A Bible verse I have picked out for you as you leave...

Take all of the photos and all of the letters you have written throughout the past years and put them in a special box.

Present your child with all of the letters and pictures before they leave home.

Maybe you can incorporate some time in your LAUNCH meal to take out the old letters and read them.

**If you have just started the parenting plan, you can still write this letter,
but cover more of the memories from over the years in just this one letter.**

Include photos from throughout their childhood.



EIGHTEENTH BIRTHDAY: LAUNCH

Perhaps you've heard the phrase "failure to launch" describing young men and women who don't make the transition into responsible adulthood. Unfortunately, many parents inadvertently keep their children from growing up due to overprotection and lack of intentionality. Whether your son or daughter is going off to college, joining the military or entering the workforce, how can you be intentional about successfully launching them into a God-honoring life?

BE A GOOD COACH: As the parent of an older teen on the verge of adulthood, you are a very important coach. You can motivate, encourage, challenge and advise, but you can't force feed. You can help them articulate what they believe, challenge their thinking, remind them of the "basics" already learned during earlier years, but the time has come for your child to truly own his or her own beliefs and choices. Provide a listening ear as they wrestle with and possibly question the values they learned as a child. Try to maintain a strong relationship that includes frequent, open dialogue. They might be leaving home soon, but you will continue to parent them... it just won't be the same... it shouldn't be the same.

GIVE PERSPECTIVE CONCERNING BIG QUESTIONS: During the transition into adulthood your son or daughter will face big questions including: Where should I go to college? What kind of work should I do? Where should I live? What should I do with my life? Who should I marry? Direct your child back to overarching Biblical principles. The last words of King David to his son Solomon (in 1 Chronicles 28:9) provide a model for parents advising emerging adults: "And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind." In the midst of the practical advice parents may offer on setting goals, choosing a job, finding a spouse and so forth, we must also elevate the importance of making decisions in light of the scriptures.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR REMAINING TIME: While leaving home is a healthy and good process, it can be emotional for parent and child alike. Ease the pain by using the remaining time your son or daughter has at home to create lasting memories. Spend quality time together connecting and talking about the exciting adventure of adulthood, affirming that you believe they are ready and can handle it.

GIVE A VISION FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY: Parents often go to extremes to help a child prepare for college or the workforce but don't know exactly what they can do when it comes to preparing them for the more important work of marriage and family. While a small minority will be called to life-long celibate service, most young people are called to marriage and family (Genesis 2:18-24).

We sometimes overlook how much marriage and family serve as the organizing structure of life and the prime arena for our spiritual development. You have a vital part to play in helping your child leave your nest and cling to their future spouse.

PREPARE THEM TO LEAVE HOME: Set your child up for the best opportunity to succeed and make an easy transition. Plan a special time together to discuss the Before You Leave page later in this booklet. Use the conversation to identify areas that might require some coaching before they leave.

Make a list of practical skills like laundry, cooking, balancing a checking account, jumping a dead battery, etc. and make time to teach them how to survive when you're not there. Keep things light and fun, but make sure you've prepared them to be the grown up now.



HEAL WOUNDS: Set aside some time to spend with your child, and ask them if there is any way that you have wounded them over the years. Maybe they've never talked to you about it but it affects them. Ready yourself with humility and prayer for their answer. Then own your mistakes, ask their forgiveness and work towards healing those wounds while they are still at home.

RAISING GOD'S KID: Ultimately, over the past 18 years, you have not been raising *your* child, you've been raising *God's*. God gave him or her to you to bring up to know Him. As your child leaves home, continue to lift your child up to God. "Pour out your heart like water in the presence of the Lord. Lift up your hands to him for the lives of your children." (Lam. 2:19) Your fervent prayers as a parent will continue to impact the life of your child into adulthood.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

This is a guide to help your young adult gain the skills and confidence to be on their own before leaving for college or moving into their own place.

Plan a special time with your son or daughter and keep it fun and light hearted. You don't want them to be overwhelmed or you to be crying the whole time about your baby growing up. Discuss the following items and find out how you still need to help them prepare before they leave:

CAR

- Can you change a tire?
- Can you check air pressure in your tires, and fluid levels?
- Help them find a reputable mechanic and wrecker service in the town they are moving to. Have them save them in their phones.
- Do you understand how and when to change the oil?
- Do you have appropriate gear for the weather where you are going?

LAUNDRY

- Do you know how to wash and dry a load of laundry?
- Do you understand how to handle colors and whites?
- Can you treat stains?
- Do you know what products to purchase?
- Can you iron your clothes?

Consider taking your son/daughter to a laundry mat before they leave.

MONEY

- Do you have a budget? Help them establish a budget that will keep them within their means. Warn strongly about credit card use.
- Do you have a job? Help them discover what is available in the area.
- Do you have access to your bank? Do you need to open an account in the town you are moving to?

FOOD

- Can you cook a handful of nutritious meals that don't come from a box or a can?
- Can you shop for groceries, pick out ripe produce, shop for sales, etc?
- Do you understand the meal program we are paying for at school?
- Do you know how to start and cook on a grill?
- Consider letting your child choose a menu for a few meals, and help them shop for, prepare and serve the meal.

HEALTH

- Where will you go if you become sick? Prompt Care? Doctor? ER?
- When should you go to the doctor?
- If your child is moving to a new town to stay, help them find a primary care doctor and a dentist.
- If they are still under your insurance, make sure they understand how that works (insurance cards, copays at the door, prescription copays, etc.)
- Can you get any refills on prescriptions that you might need?

COLLEGE CAMPUS/TOWN

- Are you comfortable with the town they are moving to?
- Can you get around to places you need?
- Are you familiar with the Public Transportation system there?
- Do you understand where you are on the campus?
- Do you know what to do in an emergency?

CAMPUS MINISTRY/CHURCH

- What church are you going to attend?
- Are you going to get plugged into a campus ministry?
- You can ask the Eastview Staff if they have any recommendations for the college/town you are moving to.
- Do you have transportation to church?



A “SENDING OUT” TIME

As it gets closer to the time that your child leaves home, plan a time to spend with your son or daughter where you can “send them out.” Rather than simply viewing it as though they are leaving, think about how you have prepared them to make their mark on the world and are sending them out to whatever God has next for them in life.

This could be a part of their graduation season, or just something small right before they leave. You could have a nice dinner with just your immediate family - everyone takes a break from all the preparations for school or moving and enjoys an evening with each other. Or it could be a cookout where relatives and friends have a chance to say goodbye. If you opt for the bigger crowd, with everything you are doing to launch your child, take it easy on yourself and make it pot-luck to cut down on the work. You could even have it at a park so you don't have to clean the house for company.

GIVE THEM YOUR LETTERS: If you've been in the Parenting Plan for very long, you would have a collection of letters you have written to your son or daughter. Put them in a folder, box or envelope and give the letters to them at their sending out dinner, taking time to read them as a family and look at the pictures. If you have not been in the program, or you would like

to write a closing letter, use the letter guide but reflect on more than just this past year alone. Include reflections from over their childhood.

PRAY THEM OFF: Even if your child is attending a local college and living at home, this signifies an important time in his or her life. Have a special time of prayer as a family. If you've had a group of people come for dinner, ask a few of them who know your child well to voice a prayer and gather everyone around your child. Commit your child to the Lord, praying one of the prayers like:

“I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.”

-Ephesians 1:16-19

COMMUNICATING NEW EXPECTATIONS

Now that your child is moving on to a new season, it is important to discuss what expectations you have for them. Below are some topics to get you started, but you will need to add your own. The concept is to have these discussions now, before the situation arises and you have different expectations than your child.

BUDGET ITEMS: You need to determine what, if any, costs your child will now be responsible for (phone, car expenses, tuition, etc.). Make sure you have clearly communicated with each other about how college is going to get paid for. Discuss who will pay for travel to and from school - especially if your child would need to purchase a plane ticket to come home for special events, breaks or holidays.

EXPECTATIONS AT HOME ON BREAKS: You need to communicate your expectations for your child when they are home for the weekend or for breaks. What do they need to ask your permission for? What time do you want them home? How will they split their time between being with family and meeting up with friends from high school? Will they need to help with chores, keep their room clean or attend certain events or programs? Do you expect them to come home for holidays as opposed to going home with a friend?

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS: Talk through your expectations for their studies. Include any conditions on your financial assistance from the start. In other words, if they fail a class, who pays for it? Talk about changing majors, studying abroad and intensive weeks of classes - anything that might increase or decrease the cost/time it takes to graduate.

COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS: If you expect your son or daughter to text or call on a regular basis, make sure you make that clear from the beginning. If you want to know certain things in advance, make that clear as well. Talk about if they need to ask permission for things like going home to a friend's house for the weekend or traveling with a group of friends to see a ballgame, etc. Making clear expectations from the start will help keep frustrations low when different situations arise.



THIS YEAR'S PARENTING PLAN SUMMARY/CHECKLIST

GRADUATION YEAR!
PHASE PARENTING PHRASE: **MOBILIZE** their potential

*“Direct your children onto the right path,
and when they are older, they will not leave it.”*

Proverbs 22:6

- Read the contents of this booklet and the tri-fold Phase Summary that comes with this booklet.
- Write a letter to my child and present all of the letters from over the years to them.
- Go over the Before You Leave checklist and cover what is missing.
- Take the opportunity to heal any wounds before they move on.
- Have a conversation about expectations when they leave.
- 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 packet, open the envelope or file and assess your progress.

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



I'VE COME TO THE END OF THE PARENTING PLAN, NOW WHAT?

KEEP USING THE RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FROM THESE BOOKLETS: As a part of our Eastview Church Family, we never wanted you to feel like you had to parent alone. We wanted to come alongside you in your parenting journey and provide resources and relationships that can help you along the way. While this plan gave you a step by step way to raise your child in the Lord, now that plan has concluded and you are entering into a new phase in your parenting life. You will still be raising your child, but in a much different way. Stay connected to the resources we have recommended throughout these booklets like family.org; heartlightministries.org; RightNowMedia and lesandleslie.com to name a few. These have great resources for all seasons in life.

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER & EASTVIEW BOOKSTORE: 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.

SIGN UP YOUR OTHER CHILDREN/GRANDCHILDREN FOR THE PARENTING PLAN: You might be raising more children, so take the time to text #ParentPlan to 309-808-6002. You can sign your grandchildren up too. Or you might be moving into the empty nest time in your life - or what we call the LEGACY YEARS. Stop by and pick up the orange card on the EMPTY NEST and consider what you can do to lean into this new season.

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 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 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.

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.