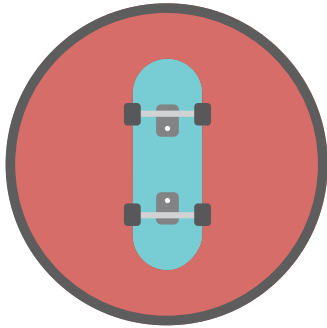
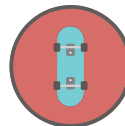


PARENTING PLAN

YEAR 12: AFFIRMATION



HI FRIEND!



We've heard it through the grapevine that there's a birthday in your family this month! As your child enters into Year 12, we want to focus on **Affirmation**.

At First Capital, we believe that a child's home is the number 1 faith-building, disciple-making environment that there is. We want to partner with you as you raise your fearfully and wonderfully made child. We've created a discipleship program that goes from year 1 all the way to year 18 when you're launching your child out into the world. We offer this plan that focuses on one thing every year when it comes to following Jesus.

This plan isn't supposed to be a course in everything you need to know when it comes to parenting and raising a child to love and follow Jesus. But we hope that every year, this plan will help you and your family take one step closer to Jesus.

This plan is just one part of many resources that we want to provide for you. Many of those resources can be found on our Parent Resources Wall in the lobby.

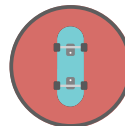
During this first phase of your child's life we label as the **Affirm** Phase, we focus on **making your faith your own**.

If you have any questions or just need an adult to talk to anytime this year, we are available to you! You can reach out to anybody on the Family Ministry Team.

Evalina Pinnick - evalina@churchanywhere.us
Marianne Rader - marianne@firstcapitalchristian.org
Spencer Roberts - spencer@firstcapitalchristian.org
Patrick Crawford - patrick@churchanywhere.us

We are praying for you and your family,
The Family Ministry Team

WRITE A LETTER TO YOUR FUTURE 18-YEAR-OLD

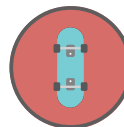


Each year throughout the parenting plan, take time to write your child a letter. Below are some ideas of things to include that will speak life and love into your child, as well as give them an invaluable collection of insights into their upbringing and a storyline of memories to be cherished for the rest of their lives

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...

You can write them all in a journal or write each letter as a separate piece of paper. Include a photo of your family with the letter to give a year by year collection of memories all in one place. Each year after giving your child the letter, get it back and keep them all somewhere safe. You will give them all to your child in the 18th year for LAUNCH.

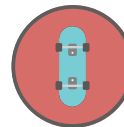
AFFIRMING YOUR CHILD



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?

AFFIRMING YOUR CHILD

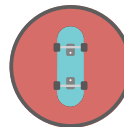


THEY ARE LOVED: They frankly might feel a little unlovable at times during this season. They might think that God does not love them anymore because their hearts condemn them. They might not believe that you love them because they've gotten on your last nerve every night this week. They are convinced 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 Emerson 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.

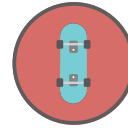
AFFIRMING YOUR CHILD



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 (Year 2 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.

PRACTICE AFFIRMING 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.

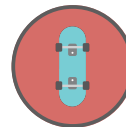
SHARE HOW THEY'RE BETTER THAN YOU: If your child is more caring, or patient, or serious about their faith than you were, let them know it. Make it character based more than accomplishment based. Don't make stuff up, but if it's authentic, tell him, "I wish I would have been half as nice to Uncle Joe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

PRACTICE AFFIRMING YOUR CHILD



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!

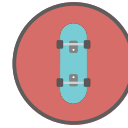
A MUST USE VIDEO: "My Identity in Christ" is a powerful animated notebook sketch video short about getting our identity from God. It is about a minute and a half and very engaging. In this video your child will explore the question, "Who am I, Lord?" and "Where do I get my identity?" You can access the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

Here are the links:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFpOHecByKw>
- <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.

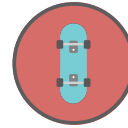
SCRIPTURAL AFFIRMATIONS



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.

- 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

PROTECTING YOUR KID: TECHNOLOGY HELP



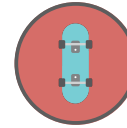
3 Steps to Protecting Your Child Online

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. 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.

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.

- 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!

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.

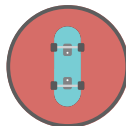
Love and Respect - Write an Annual Letter:

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

Practice Your Promise - Personal Growth:

- Set a "secret goal" to grow as a spouse, such as "listening better," "praising her in public," or "initiating romance." Write it down and seal it in an envelope. When you receive next year's packet, open the envelope and assess your progress.

DOWNLOAD THE PARENT CUE APP



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google play

**Parent Cue
creates the plan,
so you can make
the memories.**

