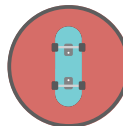


PARENTING PLAN

YEAR 2: BLESSING



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 2, we want to focus on *blessing your child* .

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 Embrace Phase* , we focus on

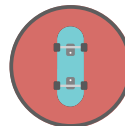
- God Made Me
- God Loves Me
- Jesus Wants to be my friend forever

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

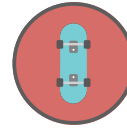


Each year throughout the parenting plan, take time to write your child a letter. Below are some ideas of things to include that will both speak life and love into your child as well as give them an invaluable collection of insights into their upbringing and a storyline of memories to be cherished for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

- important memories from the past year**
- fun stories from the last year**
- favorite toy**
- things that made you laugh the most**
- what I want for your life**
- a scripture verse that I picked out for you this year**

Include a photo of your family with the letter to give a year-by-year collection of memories all in one place. Each year after giving your child the letter, get it back and keep them all somewhere safe. You will give them all to your child in the 18th year for LAUNCH.

BLESSING YOUR CHILD

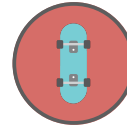


WHAT IS THE BLESSING? This is a powerful tool with which we communicate acceptance and genuine commitment. The word comes from the ancient practice of weighing coins on a scale to determine value. Blessing someone adds value to his or her life. In scripture the word bless or blessing is used almost 700 times. The Bible shows us that our God is a God of blessing. We receive that blessing from our Heavenly Father and have the wonderful opportunity to pass it on.

Our hope is that this year's focus on blessing your child will develop a lifelong practice. We not only want to describe a blessing, but also give you some ideas for blessing your child during the natural rhythms of your day. Everyone needs to experience unconditional love and acceptance from their parents. Those who didn't receive it can spend later years trying to fill the void missed at home. Those who did receive the blessings have a tremendous advantage in life.

WHEN SHOULD YOU GIVE IT? You can take advantage of special occasions and scheduled events to give a blessing in an intentional manner as well as capture informal, more spontaneous moments. You might want to start a nightly routine of blessing before bedtime or as you drop your child off at school or daycare.

BLESSING YOUR CHILD

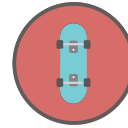


WHAT SHOULD I SAY? You can begin to bless your child with simple phrases about how special they are, always grounding these affirmations in Jesus. For example, as your child is lying in bed, gently rub his head and tell him “God made you so special. He made you very kind. I saw you singing to your baby sister. You are a very important big brother and I know how much you love her. You will take good care of your sister her whole life, won’t you?”

Just simple things that affirm good things you see in him, along with a gentle touch, will make a big impression on who they become. “Every child you encounter is a divine appointment. With each one you have the power and opportunity to build the child up or tear the child down. A life can be launched with as little as a single phrase, an uplifting word, or an act of kindness. The spirit of a little child is a lot like wet cement. When a child is young, it takes little effort to make an impression that can last a lifetime.” Wess Stafford (*Too Small To Ignore*, WaterBrook 2006).

Every child needs to experience a blessing from his or her parents. This guide can help you begin giving the kind of blessings only a parent can give.

FIVE ELEMENTS OF BLESSING



There are five basic elements of a blessing that, combined, have a tremendous impact. While blessings range from promises to affirmations, this acrostic can help you have an idea of the helpful ways to bless your child.

BE COMMITTED: The blessing is not a fleeting moment or mere symbolic event. It includes an active, long-term commitment to the child's well-being by accepting responsibility to help them become all God intends.

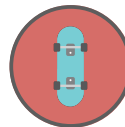
LOVINGLY TOUCH: The power of a hug or placing your hand on your child while affirming him or her creates an important physical connection and communicates warmth, acceptance and relational health.

EXPRESS VALUE: We add to a child's life when we use words that attach high value to them as a person. A child whose parents spoke truth and life into them as they've grown up, creating an identity in Christ in them, will have a security to help combat the lies of our enemy as they get older.

SEE POTENTIAL: Parents have a front row seat to see a child's natural strengths and foresee possibilities for their future. Giving a blessing includes picturing a special future and cheering them toward achieving their potential.

SAY IT: An effective blessing must be put into words whether spoken, written or both. Simply being present is not enough to communicate a blessing. Words of affirmation are necessary for the child to know he or she is appreciated and accepted.

DAILY PRAYERS FOR BLESSINGS



One way to bless your child is to speak scripture over them, asking God to bless their lives as you go throughout the normal activities of your day. Below are some ideas to get you started.

MORNING BLESSING - Psalm 143:8 In the morning let me hear about your faithful love, because I've put my trust in you. Show me the way I should live, because I trust you with my life. Bless my child to know your faithful love, to trust you and to live for you.

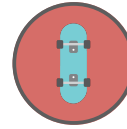
BATH TIME BLESSING - 1st Corinthians 6:11 Some of you used to do those things. But your sins were washed away. You were made holy. You were made right with God. All of this was done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was also done by the Spirit of our God. Bless my child and wash his sins, make him holy and keep him pure.

TRAVEL TIME BLESSING - Joshua 1:9 This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Bless my child with courage and strength and the faith to know you are always with him.

MEAL TIME BLESSING - Psalm 107:8-9 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things. Bless my child with daily bread and a grateful heart.

BEDTIME BLESSING - Psalm 4:8 In peace I will lie down and sleep. Lord, you alone keep me safe. Bless my child with sweet sleep in the peace from knowing You're here.

BEDTIME BLESSING



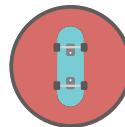
One of the practices we strongly recommend as you raise your child is to put your child to bed instead of sending him to bed. Bedtime is a natural rhythm of every day. Starting early in life and maintaining this practice even through their teenage years will provide you with some irreplaceable quality time over the years.

There is something very powerful about your child having some unrushed time at the end of their day to talk, pray, read stories, talk about their day, or ask important questions that they only think about while their day quiets down. You might consider having a bedtime routine that gets them to bed 15 minutes earlier than you normally would, just to create that special time.

SUGGESTED BEDTIME FLOW:

- **Sit beside them as they lay in bed.**
- **Gently rub her forehead or hand and look into her eyes.**
- **Tell her something you love about her or something good you saw her do today.**
- **Say a blessing over her and kiss her goodnight.**

BEDTIME BLESSING VERSES

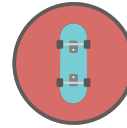


You might consider having a verse from the Bible that you use as a blessing over your child as they go to bed. Perhaps you could print the verse out and place it in a frame in their room to help you remember the words. Here are a couple of suggestions:

“May the Lord bless you and take good care of you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.” Numbers 6:24-26

“The Lord your God is with you; He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you; He will quiet your fears with his love. He will rejoice over you with singing.” Zephaniah 3:17

BLESS YOUR CHILD BY BUILDING A STRONGER MARRIAGE



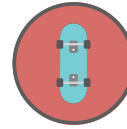
Each year we want to encourage you to make a plan to keep your marriage healthy. One of the most important gifts you'll give to your child is the love you give to your spouse. When mom and dad love each other and demonstrate the traits of a healthy (NOT PERFECT!) marriage, it not only sets a good example 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!

BLESS YOUR CHILD BY BUILDING A STRONGER MARRIAGE



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.

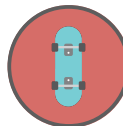
Love and Respect - Write an Annual Letter:

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.

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

