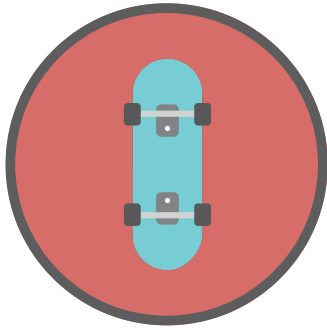


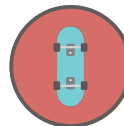
# ***PARENTING PLAN***

***YEAR 14:***

***PERSONAL GROWTH***



# 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 14, we want to focus on **Personal Growth**.

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.

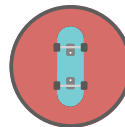
During this first phase of your child's life we label as the **Mobilize** Phase, we focus on **starting to put your faith to action**.

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](mailto:evalina@churchanywhere.us)  
Marianne Rader - [marianne@firstcapitalchristian.org](mailto:marianne@firstcapitalchristian.org)  
Spencer Roberts - [spencer@firstcapitalchristian.org](mailto:spencer@firstcapitalchristian.org)  
Patrick Crawford - [patrick@churchanywhere.us](mailto:patrick@churchanywhere.us)

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

# WRITE A LETTER TO YOUR FUTURE 18-YEAR-OLD

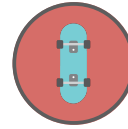


Each year throughout the parenting plan, take time to write your child a letter. Below are some ideas of things to include that will speak life and love into your child, as well as give them an invaluable collection of insights into their upbringing and a storyline of memories to be cherished for the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

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.

# PERSONAL GROWTH

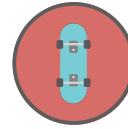


**While much of the effort in these parenting packets have encouraged your family to participate in activities or conversations together, this year we want to encourage you to focus on giving your child the tools and challenge of taking the initiative with their own personal growth. Help them experience 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.**

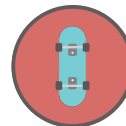
**“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place where he prayed.” Mark 1:35**

# NOTES



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# PERSONAL GROWTH

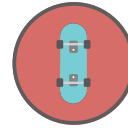


Just because you are focusing on them developing the holy habit of personal prayer and scripture intake, it doesn't mean you have to give up family times of prayer and Bible reading... but it might. You might need to shorten what you have done as a family, or you might have to turn it into once a week, 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. 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.

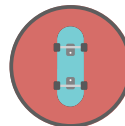
**BE AN EXAMPLE:** If you already have a quiet time of your own, this doesn't mean you have to do them in front of your kids, although that would be good too. But make sure that they know you practice this as well. If you have not made this a part of your faith experience, use this year as a fresh start 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.

# NOTES



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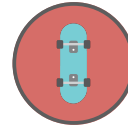
# PERSONAL GROWTH



**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.

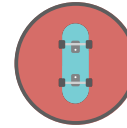
**CREATE SPECIAL TIMES:** Investing in retreat times with your child can help them find the joy in disconnecting from the world a little, in order to connect with God in a special way; whether it's a camping trip to the mountains with a spiritual emphasis, spending a weekend at a retreat center, adding 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.

# NOTES



A large, empty rectangular area with a red border, intended for taking notes.

# GUIDE FOR 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.

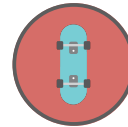
**QUIET** Get in a quiet place and quiet your mind and thoughts before the Lord.

**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.

# GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES



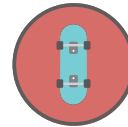
There are a lot of different spiritual disciplines along with prayer, bible study, silence and meditation which naturally occur as a part of quiet times. Think about ways to encourage your child to grow in other areas of their lives. Here are some suggestions below.

**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 for kids ministry; tech teams, worship team etc. 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.

# **GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES**

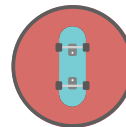


**Responsive Giving:** Along with giving in a disciplined way to the ministry of the local church, there are other opportunities to give that you can help your son or daughter think through. There are times where there are special offerings taken at church for missions work or charity initiatives. There 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.

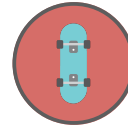
# **GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES**



**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.

# PROTECTING YOUR KID: TECHNOLOGY HELP



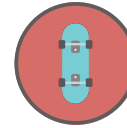
## 3 Steps to Protecting Your Child Online

**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](http://family.org) and [covenanteyes.com](http://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.

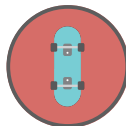
**Love and Respect - Write an Annual Letter:**

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

