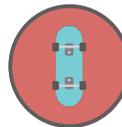


# ***PARENTING PLAN***

## ***YEAR 4: BUILDING QUALITY FAMILY TIME***



# 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 4, we want to focus on **Building Quality Family Time**.

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

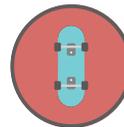
- God Made Me
- God Loves Me
- Jesus Wants to be my friend forever

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](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**

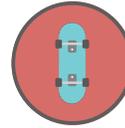


**Each year throughout the parenting plan, take time to write your child a letter. Below are some ideas of things to include that will both speak life and love into your child as well as give them an invaluable collection of insights into their upbringing and a storyline of memories to be cherished for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

- things I've loved about you this year**
- fun stories from the last year**
- favorite toy**
- my prayer for you in the next year**
- 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.**

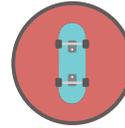
# **BUILDING QUALITY FAMILY TIME**



When your child reaches about four years old, it is a great time to establish a pattern of including fun family times in your schedule to foster communication, laughter, and faith formation. We want to challenge you to take this year to establish an intentional Family Time in your family's rhythm. While it shouldn't replace the unscheduled, everyday type of teaching reflected in our 3rd Birthday booklet, it is important to have a consistent routine of creating intentional moments that will help your family deepen relationships and have faith discussions. Regularly scheduled family time activities are a great way to make that happen.

**PICK YOUR TIME:** For some families, this might be a particular night of the week after dinner. For another family, it might be after Saturday morning breakfast. Decide what works for your unique schedule and then protect that time. You might need to say "no" to some good things to make family times a priority. We suggest scheduling a family time experience weekly, but no less than twice per month. Setting and keeping a regular schedule will show commitment and value to all involved. This booklet will help you with ideas on what you can do to make the most of this time.

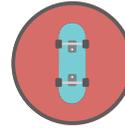
# **BUILDING QUALITY FAMILY TIME**



**PLAN WHAT YOU'LL TEACH:** As you plan this time, find resources to help make your family times a great experience. We have listed several recommended resources in this booklet to help you get started. Keeping your preparation simple is a very good idea until you get into the rhythm of these family times. Don't forget that the Bible is the most important resource God has given us to instill truth in the hearts and minds of our children, and can easily be the only resource you use for your time.

**MAKE IT FUN:** Children are more likely to embrace your beliefs and values if they enjoy time with you. That's why family fun times are a great context for effective faith formation. Start the time out with something fun for your family like a favorite treat or a game everyone likes. Keep things loose and informal. Avoid becoming overly serious, rigid or stressed while leading family times. It's okay for kids to be silly and it's important to fill your home with laughter. The first few times, everybody might end up in time out, including Dad! But don't get discouraged and frustrated. With some effort and commitment, this could be a tradition that becomes so cherished that it lasts in your family well into your children's adulthood.

# BUILDING QUALITY FAMILY TIME

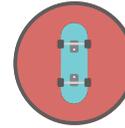


**GETTING STARTED:** Protect a day and time and let your child place a sticker on the family calendar to help build anticipation. Choose a family theme song that you can crank on the stereo to gather everyone together each time. Spend a little time singing, silly dancing, swinging the kids, etc. to get everyone in the mood for the best part of the week! If you have older kids, let them help pick the songs, games, etc. Use one of the ideas in this packet as a family lesson time to teach a spiritual truth to them. Remember this rule of thumb throughout their life when preparing for Family Night. They will have about one minute of attention span for each year of their life (so plan four minutes for a four-year-old). Keep your lessons simple, but if you have older kids, it's okay if your four-year-old hears his siblings talking through faith issues, even if they don't understand it all.

## **IDEAS FOR FUN INTENTIONAL TIMES:**

- Choose a family verse that you want to be an identifying mark for your family. Pick a prominent place in the house and put the verse up for everyone to see often. You could paint the verse on the wall, print it out and put it on the fridge, or many verses can be purchased as a decoration at stores like Hobby Lobby.
- Turn Movie Night into Family Night. Make some popcorn and watch the film together. Afterward, have a “faith talk” about the choices of characters and other aspects of the story that catch your attention. Check out [movienightchat.com](http://movienightchat.com) for some suggested movies.
- Share with your child something that God has been or is teaching you. Be real and vulnerable.
- Cook a meal together each week and use the time for sharing and talking.
- Daily Family Time: ask each member of the family to share his or her “high” and “low” of the day at dinner or bedtime.
- Create a graffiti wall in your home where everyone can write scripture verses, sketches, and quotes that are special to them. This might become the most treasured decoration in the home.

# SHOW GOD AS LOVING PARENT BY CONTINUING A HEALTHY 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!

## 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.

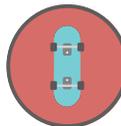
## Love and Respect - Write an Annual Letter:

- 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.**

