



# LAUNCH

It's possible to go a little crazy in your parenting during your student's senior year. The transition from dependence to independence comes to a jarring climax sometime during this year. The reality that the baby you once held will soon live a life fairly separate from yours can be overwhelming. It is normal to feel slightly crazy. First it looks a little like smothering. Then it can revert to parenting like you did when your student was ten. It might have an extra dose of sadness or anger to it. Or it may look like an erratic attempt to cram in every lesson you haven't had the chance to teach. No matter what, chances are during your student's senior year, your son or daughter may think you've gone a bit loco!

The insanity and that unexplained behavior is often rooted in the fear of letting go instead of trusting God to get His work done in your student's life. If you understand that, you'll be able to keep these truths in front of your senior as he or she anticipates the thrill of the journey ahead!

This Milestone Experience includes the opportunity to **ENGAGE** your student in a conversation to ensure he or she is prepared for the year after graduation. You will also be able to **AFFIRM** your son or daughter through a special blessing ceremony. Let's get started. It's time to launch your student into adulthood.

## STEP 1: PREPARE

We want to help you maximize the potential of this Milestone Experience so first read through the entire Milestone Experience Guide. Then, set aside a time to **ENGAGE** with your student in conversation. We have included several topics below. It would be ideal to have these conversations outside of the home so you and your student feel like this is a special time between you. What matters most isn't the location but the quality time you will have engaging your senior as you talk to him or her about life after high school. After your time together, you will have the opportunity to **AFFIRM** your student by presenting him or her with a special blessing ceremony.

A blessing is a powerful tool to communicate value to your student. The word "bless" or "blessing" is used almost seven hundred times in scripture. You will write a blessing to your student and read it aloud at the blessing ceremony you plan. This will be a time where you will convey to your child that he or she has now reached adulthood and **empower your senior to move forward and embrace all that God has for him or her and the future**. There are many 30 to 40-year-old men and women who act like children because no one ever told them they were men and women. Based on God's authority that He has given you as a parent you can bless your son or daughter into manhood or womanhood.

### HERE ARE SOME TIPS ON PLANNING THE BLESSING CEREMONY:

- *Discuss the ceremony with your 12th grader. Should it be a large party or a more intimate gathering? Will it be formal or casual? Your son or daughter will probably have an opinion on the format.*
- *Decide on your guest list. This is a great time to invite key people in the life of your teenager to join you. Send your guests not only the details of the evening but also give them an idea of what you would like for them to share at the ceremony so they can prepare.*
- *Be ready for questions. Your teenager might see this as strange or awkward, which is actually pretty typical. It will be something that will be more easily understood when experienced. Learn to be comfortable with questions and utilize the answer, "You'll have to just wait and see" quite a lot.*
- *Prepare to give your son or daughter a symbol. Decide what you will give your student and what meaning you are going to attach to it. Perhaps you would like to pass down a family heirloom. If you can, try to make the symbol a surprise for your 12th grader. Surprises are typically pretty fun.*

## PLANNING THE BLESSING CEREMONY CONTINUED...

- *Write down what you plan to say. Not only will it calm your nerves to read it, but you can also give a written copy of it to your 12th grader to keep. For help in planning what to say and creating an agenda for the ceremony, see our AFFIRM section below.*
- *Bless identity, not performance. Remember this is an opportunity to hold a figurative mirror up to your son or daughter's soul and give your child a glimpse of who God created him or her to be.*
- *Be creative. Every ceremony is completely different because it comes from the heart and mind of the parent.*
- *Pray. Give all of the guests an opportunity to pray over your teenager.*

## STEP 2: ENGAGE

Now that you have had an opportunity to **PREPARE**, take some time to **ENGAGE** your student in conversation about the following topics.

### **KNOWING WHO I AM AND WHOSE I AM**

Letting go is wonderful and painful all at once. Don't be afraid to enter into that discontinuity.

The most frequent questions our seniors in high school will receive are "Where are you going to college?" and "Have you chosen a major?" or "What do you want to do with your life?" While none of these questions are inherently wrong, they are not the most important questions. What if we spend more time asking our students, "Who do you want to become?" Help them make a list of answers to that question and then show them you aren't afraid to wade into the answers they come up with. Chances are they won't even use their college degree in the same field or stay with the same career for more than seven years. Why set them up for an identity crisis that is based on what they choose to do?

God loves to surprise us with a different plan than we had in mind. He calls us to trust His plans, not our own. Sometimes His plans for our students mean they won't go to college right away, or ever! Yikes! This may be one of the hardest truths for us to live out as parents. We feel safer when our kids have a normal, safe plan for their lives and look like they can take care of themselves.

*Why not help our students shape their plans for the future based on the truth of who they are and whose they are? If they know they are a child of God, created to do good works, no matter where their feet land, they will not question their purpose or identity. They will enjoy the adventure of living out that identity and purpose in creative ways.*

## HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO CONTINUE TO ENGAGE YOUR STUDENT DURING YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER'S SENIOR YEAR:

- *Make college visits with your senior and intentionally discuss how God can use your child on that campus in the future.*
- *Have breakfast, lunch or dinner once a week together outside of the home. Perhaps go through a specific book or resource together or just meet to hang out and chat.*
- *Plan and pay for five adults who are significant in your student's life to take your son or daughter to lunch during his or her senior year and to pray for your child's future.*
- *Begin praying with your student that God would provide a mentor for your child for the first semester of college.*
- *Set your student up for success by ensuring your senior knows how to do laundry and perhaps sew a button. Make sure your child knows basic car skills like checking tire pressure or oil. Teach your student how to prepare a few nutritious meals, create a budget, and how to find a good church and get plugged into ministries in a new town. Make a plan for your student to know where to go if he or she gets sick away from home.*
- *Ask your student what he or she needs from you during his or her senior year in order to finish well.*

## STEP 3: AFFIRM

Now that you have had an opportunity to **ENGAGE** with your student in conversation you can **AFFIRM** your son or daughter with the blessing ceremony you have planned. Remember that when you unleash your blessing as a parent, you're unleashing your senior to change the world.

### SAMPLE BLESSING CEREMONY:

*Lunch or dinner or dessert*

*Welcome and invite guests to share their blessings and encouragement with your student*

*Parent(s) share the written blessing aloud (Remember to state to your student that he or she is no longer a child or an adolescent but has now reached adulthood. It is important to write down the blessing so you can give it to your senior as a keepsake after the ceremony)*

*Present the symbol you have chosen to help your student remember the night that you declared him or her an adult*

*Close in prayer and ask guests to pray over your student as they feel comfortable*

## SAMPLE BLESSING LETTER:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

*I received you as a gift from God on (birthdate/adoption date). I am so thankful to God for you and being your parent has been one of the greatest privileges of my life. Even though our everyday relationship will change after this year, my love for you will continue to grow.*

*As you enter this exciting new season of life, I will pray that God will enable you to have integrity and wisdom as you face inevitable temptations and struggles.*

*God made you for a purpose and I have already had the honor of seeing how He has used you thus far. I am excited to have a front row seat to how He will use you in the years to come.*

*Through the years I have noticed (mention your student's specific talents or skills). I have been amazed by not only what you do but more importantly who you are (mention specific character traits your child currently exhibits or is developing).*

*I want to encourage you to move forward and embrace all that God has for your future. I would like to share these scriptures with you as you move into this new phase of life (share one or two scriptures with your child).*

*I want you to know how proud of you I am. You are no longer a child and no longer an adolescent. You are now an adult. You have my blessing. As you leave this home, may you always remember that I believe in you and who God created you to be.*

*I love you, (name).*

*Love,  
(Parent name and date)*

*Here are some Scripture references that you could read during the ceremony. You may want to choose one or two or more.*

**NUMBERS 6:24** *May the LORD bless you and protect you.*

**DEUTERONOMY 6:6-7** *These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.*

**JOSHUA 1:8-9** *This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*

**PSALM 119:11** *I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*

**PSALM 127:1** *"...Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain."*

**PSALM 127:3** *Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a reward from him.*

**PSALM 139:13-18** *You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!*

**PROVERBS 1:8** *Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.*

**PROVERBS 4:18** *The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn that grows brighter until the full light of day.*

**PROVERBS 22:6** *Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

**PROVERBS 23:24** *The father of a righteous child has great joy; a man who fathers a wise son rejoices in him.*

**JEREMIAH 29:11** *"For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."*

**MATTHEW 22:37-40** *Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."*

**ROMANS 8:28** *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 13:11** *When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.*

**2 TIMOTHY 2:22** *So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.*

**1 PETER 2:9** *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

*Every great story needs to have a grand finale. This blessing ceremony is the grand finale to the story of your teenager's childhood and adolescence. Through this expression of authority, you are launching your student into adulthood with your blessing. There is nothing more powerful than that!*