



Milestones





WHAT IS LAUNCH?

After years of saying, “When I grow up, I’m gonna be...” there comes a point in which your children start going through the steps of actually making it happen. Dr. James Dobson calls ages 16 to 26 the “critical decade” as young people transition from childhood to adulthood. We’ve all heard the phrase “failure to launch” describing young men and women who don’t make that transition for one reason or another. Unfortunately, more and more parents are inadvertently keeping their children from growing up by protecting them from the risks necessary to adulthood. How can you be intentional about successfully launching your older children? How can you lead your young adult children to determine their calling in life?

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF LAUNCH?

Between the ages of 16 and 18, parents must help their students develop the practical and spiritual skills to leave home. We want to lead you in how to prepare your high school senior for the world outside of the nest. This time is also a transition for parents. Your role with your son or daughter must change to a loving mentor and advisor. He or she will soon live on their own and make decisions without your direct input. One goal of the *Launch Milestone* is to help you make this transition. We also want to lead you in how to write out a spiritual blessing to share with your graduate and help you lead your young adult children to determine their calling in life. These important years of discipleship are our last opportunity to shape the faith of our children before they are on their own.

BE A GOOD COACH

As the parent of a teen on the verge of adulthood, you are in the prime of the coaching years. You can motivate, encourage, challenge and advise, but you can't force feed. You can help your son or daughter articulate what they believe, challenge their thinking, and remind them of the "basics" they learned during their earlier years, but the time has come for them to truly own their beliefs. Throughout this process, you can provide a safe environment to wrestle with and even question the values they learned as children. The key to your influence at this point is in maintaining a strong relationship and frequent, open dialogue.

MOTIVATE, ENCOURAGE, CHALLENGE, ADVISE

SHARE A BLESSING

The written blessing is a lasting memory you can give your son or daughter. The blessing they receive from you will literally empower them to move forward in becoming an adult and embrace all that God has for his or her future. One precedent for such a blessing can be found when God the Father spoke to Jesus the Son at His baptism. Many children leave home without ever receiving or perceiving a blessing from their parents. This opportunity will allow you to express your love and dreams for your son or daughter. You can refer to "Understanding the Blessing" Milestone guide to assist you.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heavens said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Matthew 3:16-17

REMIND THEM OF GOD'S PLAN FOR THEM

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.
Jeremiah 29:11

God has a great plan for your son or daughter, and it is important for them to continually hear that. They will face confusion, failure and disillusionment throughout their college and early career. Remind them of the story of Joseph.

Important principles from Joseph's life:

- God is in control and has a plan (*Genesis 37:1-11*)
- We are not always perfect in handling God's plan (*Genesis 37:1-11*)
- God can use horrible evil and create amazing good (*Genesis 37:12-36*)
- Life is challenging, even when we are faithful (*Genesis 39*)
- God uses us on His timetable (*Genesis 40-41*)
- It is all for God's glory; it is His plan (*Genesis 42-47*)

While it isn't likely your son or daughter will endure the injustice experienced by Joseph, they will face real challenges. Guide them to remember God's good plan for them.



**THE KEY TO YOUR INFLUENCE AT THIS POINT IS
IN MAINTAINING A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH
FREQUENT, OPEN DIALOGUE.**

GIVE A VISION FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Parents today often go to extremes to help their children get ready for college and the workforce, but don't know exactly what they can do when it comes to preparing them for the more important work of marriage and family. While a small minority will be called to life-long celibate service, most are called to marriage and family (Genesis 2:18-24). We sometimes overlook how much marriage and family serve as the organizing structure of life and the prime arena for our spiritual development. Even if the culture discourages you from taking an active role in this transition, you have a vital part to play in helping your children "leave and cleave." Actively modeling a Christian family is the foundation and daily prayer for your child's future spouse and children is an important commitment. Also, our highly sexualized and anti-marriage culture makes it essential that you provide guidance and oversight to help your children form strong families as a key emphasis of their launch into adulthood.

"The Lord God said, 'It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'"

Genesis 2:18

So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said,

*"This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman,'
for she was taken out of man."*

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Genesis 2:21-24

RESOURCES

Freshman: The College Student's Guide to Developing Wisdom *by Mark Matlock*

How to Stay Christian in College *by J. Budziszewski*

The Reason for God *by Timothy Keller*

The Blessing *by John Trent and Garry Smalley*

The Case for the Creator *by Lee Strobel*

Discovering God's Way of Handling Money - Students *by Crowne Financial*

Discovering God's Way of Handling Money - Leader *by Crowne Financial*

Visionary Marriage *by Rob Reinow*

Life on the Edge *by Dr. James Dobson*

Surviving Your First Year of College *by Mike Kipp*

EVENTS

What's Next Senior Retreat

Graduation Sunday