



Rite of Passage Planning Guide

Even the most simple rite of passage experience can have a powerful impact in your teen's life. Ask yourself the following questions to plan the best approach for your son or daughter.

ASSESS

- Is our relationship strong enough for the experience to feel authentic vs. forced?
- Does my child have other adults in his/her life who have had enough influence to participate in such an experience?
- Does my teen show signs he/she is willing to move toward adult responsibilities and attitudes?

If you answer no to any of these questions it might be better to plan a special dinner alone together to begin meaningful dialog rather than attempt the full rite of passage experience.

WHEN

- What day is best to make this event special? On a birthday? In conjunction with a holiday? As a special day of it's own?
- What date would work best for those who might need to travel to participate?

WHO

- What relatives should participate? (Grandparent? Respected aunt or uncle? Older brother or sister?)
- Is the child close to a pastor, youth minister, teacher or coach he/she respects?
- If you are not planning the event as a surprise, invite your teen to suggest who he/she would like to be included.

HOW

- Would my child prefer a formal event or casual experience?
- What would be a good setting for the event? The house? Grandparent's home? A favorite restaurant? The church? A park?
- What kind of fun activity would our child enjoy doing with the older men or women before the formal portion of the event? (For example, a teen boy might enjoy going to shooting range or golfing while a girl might prefer shopping or tennis.)

To help you explain the event to those you invite to participate and provide them with guidance for crafting a meaningful letter use the planning guide that follows.

For additional ideas on planning we recommend the book *Spiritual Milestones* by Jim & Janet Weidmann & J. Otis and Gail Ledbetter. (Available from heritagebuilders.com)

Sample Letters for Teen's
RITE OF PASSAGE CELEBRATION

This collection of documents is intended to help you create a meaningful rite of passage experience for your sixteen, seventeen or eighteen-year-old child. As you plan an event to celebrate the transition from childhood into the world of emerging adults feel free to copy, edit or borrow from these sample materials. Consider them mere suggestions and guidelines as you do what best fits your family.

Pages 3-9	Son's rite of passage event summary & letter suggestions
Pages 10-16	Daughter's rite of passage event summary & letter suggestions
Page 17	Sample Blessing Prayer

SON'S RITE OF PASSAGE EVENT SUMMARY

Use this template to include with letters you send to the men you ask to participate.

SON'S NAME Rite of Passage

Date/Time of Event

THE PURPOSE: To celebrate SON's transition toward an emerging adult and to formally invite him to join the ranks of men by accepting responsibility for his own spiritual growth.

THE PLAN: Several Christian men who have influenced SON's life will spend time discussing manhood and inviting him to move beyond childhood by accepting responsibility for becoming a man of God.

THE EVENT: Each man is asked to write a short letter to SON on the assigned topic to read during the evening ceremony and present some small item/gift that is symbolic of their topic/charge. SON will be invited to read his own letter accepting the invitation to manhood and then DAD'S NAME will lead the men in a blessing prayer. The day/evening agenda is as follows...

TIME: GUY ACTIVITY: The men and SON will go someplace in the afternoon together to enjoy some guy activity (i.e. shooting range, go cart racing, Frisbee golf, bowling, etc.) after which all will go to dinner or coffee for an informal discussion about your own experience of accepting the responsibilities and challenges of manhood.

TIME: CEREMONY: We will gather with the women/children at LOCATION for the formal ceremony. Your assigned topics are listed in the agenda below and suggested ideas for your letter are attached.

Invitations to Godly Manhood

- A Man and His Relationships (NAME OF MAN ASSIGNED)
- A Man and His Work (NAME OF MAN ASSIGNED)
- A Man and His Ministry (NAME OF MAN ASSIGNED)
- A Man and His Children (NAME OF MAN ASSIGNED)
- A Man and His Marriage (NAME OF MAN ASSIGNED)
- A Man and His God (NAME OF MAN ASSIGNED)

Acceptance

SON will make a few informal comments and/or read his own letter expressing his desires for manhood and acceptance of responsibility for future spiritual growth.

Blessing Prayer

Men lay hands on SON as DAD prays a blessing prayer.

Thank you, in advance, for joining us for this important milestone in SON'S life!

A MAN AND HIS RELATIONSHIPS

(Assigned To: NAME)

Goal of Letter:

As a man who has modeled what it means to be a good friend, NAME will charge SON to make relationships a priority in life.

Possible Bible Passages:

- Proverbs 27:17 (Friends sharpen one another)
- John 15:13 (Friends sacrifice for one another)
- 2 Corinthians 6:14 (Good friends share common beliefs)

Suggestions:

- Tell about the time OFFER IDEAS FROM SHARED MEMORIES
- Tell stories of your own important friendships over the years
- Describe your own close, lifelong friends – perhaps reflecting on times you’ve been there to support one another in difficult days and/or times you enjoyed laughing together, etc.
- Talk about what it means to sacrifice yourself your others and how real men are willing to move beyond themselves to serve others

The Charge:

End the letter with a “charge” to SON to take responsibility for becoming a true friend to others by serving them, supporting them when they need it and modeling Jesus’ example of “laying down one’s life for a friend.”

Possible Gift/Symbol:

A metal file – signifying that iron sharpens iron

A MAN AND HIS WORK

(Assigned To: NAME)

Goal of Letter:

As a man who has demonstrated success in his career and the discipline of hard work, NAME will charge SON to take an appropriate pride and honor in his work.

Possible Bible Passages:

- Proverbs 13:4 & 20:4 (Hard work brings reward)
- I Timothy 5:8 (Manhood means providing for yourself and family)
- Colossians 3:23 (Work as unto God, not men)

Suggestions:

- Tell about your first job, your worst job, your best job.
- Describe the satisfaction of a job well done and of providing well for your wife/children.
- Describe times you've been able to give to the needy and how it feels for God to use you as a blessing to others thanks to your hard work earning money.
- Talk about the ultimate purpose of work = worship by building something to God's glory.

The Charge:

End the letter with a "charge" to SON to take responsibility for becoming a successful man in his work by dedicating all he does to God's glory and by taking his role as leader of a family who provides for his own.

Possible Gift/Symbol:

A dollar bill – signifying the rewards of hard work and the role of a man as provider

A MAN AND HIS MINISTRY

(Assigned To: NAME)

Goal of Letter:

As a man who has been an important “minister” in SON’S life NAME will charge SON to fulfill his part in the larger body of Christ.

Possible Bible Passages:

- I Corinthians 12:27 (We are an important part of the body)
- I Timothy 4:12 (Even young men should minister)
- 2 Corinthians 5:18 (All are called to the ministry of reconciliation)

Suggestions:

- Tell about when/how you knew you were called to minister
- Tell why “ministry” isn’t just limited to those in vocational church ministry
- Talk about the need to remain connected to the church and to eventually lead a wife/family by taking them to church and serving, etc.
- Emphasize the overall “ministry of reconciliation” to which all men are called
- Possibly touch upon how you’ve seen SON serve and possible places/situations in which he may be called to “minister” in the future such as in college, the workplace, at church, at home, in the community, etc.

The Charge:

End the letter with a “charge” to SON to take responsibility to always seek a place to use his gifts in God’s service.

Possible Gift/Symbol:

A toy hand/ear/foot – signifying that SON is part of the larger body of Christ

A MAN AND HIS CHILDREN

(Assigned To: NAME)

Goal of Letter:

As a man who has modeled what it means to make being a dad his highest priority, NAME will charge SON to look forward to and prepare himself for fatherhood.

Possible Bible Passages:

- Proverbs 20:7 (Integrity is caught by our children)
- Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Psalm 78:4 (Teach your children)
- Ephesians 6:4 (Fathers must be patient, humble, etc.)

Suggestions:

- Describe the feeling of becoming a father.
- Discuss how a father should model the character of God to his children which makes fostering virtue through spiritual disciplines very important.
- Discuss how manhood = sacrificing yourself for your children rather than living for yourself.

The Charge:

End the letter with a “charge” to SON to take responsibility for developing habits of integrity, patience and selfless service NOW in anticipation of the honor of someday becoming a father.

Possible Gift/Symbol:

A hat – signifying that SON can look forward to someday becoming “head” of a home and/or wearing things that will embarrass his future children!

A MAN AND HIS MARRIAGE

(Assigned To: NAME)

Goal of Letter:

As a man who has demonstrated what it means to be a Godly husband, NAME will charge SON to start being faithful to his future wife now by keeping himself pure.

Possible Bible Passages:

- Genesis 2:18 (Not good to be alone)
- Proverbs 5 (Warnings of the temptress)
- Ephesians 5:25 (Cherish your wife)
- Philippians 4:8 (Keep mind pure)

Suggestions:

- Tell a story of the excitement of falling in love with your wife.
- Describe how a pure & passionate husband/wife relationship is a wonderful gift from God – something SON should be eager to find and jealous to protect even before marriage.
- Talk about how much more dangerous it is today than in the past re: pornography, temptations, etc.
- Talk about sexual purity as one of the ways a husband honors/cherishes his wife.
- Describe the “for better or worse” realities of dealing with difficulties in marriage and how a real man remains true to his commitment/fidelity regardless of what comes.

The Charge:

End the letter with a “charge” to SON to guard his mind and body re: purity in order to begin fidelity and faithfulness to his future bride NOW. Also, charge him to eagerly anticipate the wonderful gift of intimacy with his bride.

Possible Gift/Symbol:

An extension cord – signifying God’s design of men (male end) and women (female end) is a wonderful gift that, if used according to His design and in His time, connects us to one of God’s most empowering experiences in life!

A MAN AND HIS GOD

(Assigned To: NAME)

Goal of Letter:

As a man who has demonstrated what it means to love and serve God, NAME will charge SON to take responsibility for his own spiritual growth.

Possible Bible Passages:

- Proverbs 19:23 (Fear of God = Life)
- Ecclesiastes 12:13 (Whole duty of man)
- Mark 12:30 (Love God with whole heart, soul and mind)

Suggestions:

- Tell SON about your own faith journey including when and how you first became a follower of Jesus.
- Describe your hopes and prayer for SON as he continues to grow in faith and pursue the God you love.

The Charge:

End the letter with a “charge” to SON to take responsibility for developing his own relationship with God, building on but no longer relying upon his parents’ faith.

Possible Gift/Symbol:

A Bible or an appropriate Christian book such as SUGGEST A SPECIFIC BOOK YOUR SON MIGHT LIKE.

DAUGHTER'S RITE OF PASSAGE EVENT SUMMARY

Use this template to include with letters you send to the women you ask to participate.

DAUGHTER'S NAME Rite of Passage

Date/Time of Event

THE PURPOSE: To celebrate DAUGHTER's transition toward an emerging adult and to formally invite her to join the ranks of women by accepting responsibility for her own spiritual growth.

THE PLAN: Several Christian women who have influenced DAUGHTER's life will spend time discussing womanhood and inviting her to move beyond childhood by accepting responsibility for becoming a woman of God.

THE EVENT: Each woman is asked to write a short letter to DAUGHTER on the assigned topic to read during the evening ceremony and present some small item/gift that is symbolic of their topic/charge. DAUGHTER will be invited to read her own letter accepting the invitation to womanhood and then MOM'S NAME will lead the women in a blessing prayer. The day/evening agenda is as follows...

TIME: GIRL ACTIVITY: The women and DAUGHTER will go someplace in the afternoon together to enjoy some fun activity (i.e. pedicure, shopping, girl movie, etc.) after which all will go to dinner or coffee for an informal discussion about your own experience of accepting the responsibilities and challenges of becoming a woman.

TIME: CEREMONY: We will gather with the men/children at LOCATION for the formal ceremony. Your assigned topics are listed in the agenda below and suggested ideas for your letter are attached.

Invitations to Godly Womanhood

- A Woman and Her Relationships (NAME OF WOMAN ASSIGNED)
- A Woman and Her Work (NAME OF WOMAN ASSIGNED)
- A Woman and Her Ministry (NAME OF WOMAN ASSIGNED)
- A Woman and Her Children (NAME OF WOMAN ASSIGNED)
- A Woman and Her Marriage (NAME OF WOMAN ASSIGNED)
- A Woman and Her God (NAME OF WOMAN ASSIGNED)

Acceptance

DAUGHTER will make a few informal comments and/or read her own letter expressing her desires for womanhood and acceptance of responsibility for future spiritual growth.

Blessing Prayer

Women lay hands on DAUGHTER as MOM prays a blessing prayer.

Thank you, in advance, for joining us for this important milestone in DAUGHTER'S life!

A WOMAN AND HER RELATIONSHIPS

(Assigned To: NAME)

Goal of Letter:

As a woman who has modeled what it means to be a good friend, NAME will charge DAUGHTER to make relationships a priority in life.

Possible Bible Passages:

- Proverbs 27:17 (Friends sharpen one another)
- John 15:13 (Friends sacrifice for one another)
- 2 Corinthians 6:14 (Good friends share common beliefs)

Suggestions:

- Tell about the time OFFER IDEAS FROM SHARED MEMORIES
- Tell stories of your own important friendships over the years
- Describe your own close, lifelong friends – perhaps reflecting on times you’ve been there to support one another in difficult days and/or times you enjoyed laughing together, etc.
- Talk about what it means to sacrifice yourself your others and what it means to move beyond self to serve others

The Charge:

End the letter with a “charge” to DAUGHTER to take responsibility for becoming a true friend to others by serving them, supporting them when they need it and modeling Jesus’ example of “laying down one’s life for a friend.”

Possible Gift/Symbol:

A packet of flower seeds – signifying the potential beauty that comes from nurturing friendships

A WOMAN AND HER WORK

(Assigned To: NAME)

Goal of Letter:

As a woman who has demonstrated success in her career and/or managing a home well, NAME will charge DAUGHTER to take an appropriate pride and honor in her work.

Possible Bible Passages:

- Proverbs 13:4 & 20:4 (Hard work brings reward)
- Proverbs 31:13-18 & 31:27-31 (A diligent woman)
- Colossians 3:23 (Work as unto God, not men)

Suggestions:

- Tell about your first job, your worst job, your best job. (Paid jobs and/or volunteer roles)
- If you have become a full-time homemaker describe the rewards and challenges of managing a home with excellence.
- Describe the satisfaction of a job well done.
- Talk about the ultimate purpose of work = worship by building something to God's glory be it a business, a charity or a happy home.

The Charge:

End the letter with a "charge" to DAUGHTER to take responsibility for becoming a successful woman in her work by dedicating all she does to God's glory.

Possible Gift/Symbol:

A blue ribbon – signifying the rewards of hard work

A WOMAN AND HER MINISTRY

(Assigned To: NAME)

Goal of Letter:

As a woman who has been an important “minister” in DAUGHTER’S life NAME will charge DAUGHTER to fulfill her part in the larger body of Christ.

Possible Bible Passages:

- I Corinthians 12:27 (We are an important part of the body)
- I Timothy 4:12 (Even the young should minister)
- 2 Corinthians 5:18 (All are called to the ministry of reconciliation)

Suggestions:

- Tell about when/how you knew you were called to minister
- Tell why “ministry” isn’t just limited to those in vocational church ministry
- Talk about the need to remain connected to the church and to eventually guide a family by taking them to church and serving, etc.
- Emphasize the overall “ministry of reconciliation” to which all of us are called
- Possibly touch upon how you’ve seen DAUGHTER serve and possible places/situations in which she may be called to “minister” in the future such as in college, the workplace, at church, at home, in the community, etc.

The Charge:

End the letter with a “charge” to DAUGHTER to take responsibility to always seek a place to use her gifts in God’s service.

Possible Gift/Symbol:

A toy hand/ear/foot – signifying that DAUGHTER is part of the larger body of Christ

A WOMAN AND HER CHILDREN

(Assigned To: NAME)

Goal of Letter:

As a woman who has modeled what it means to make being a mom her highest priority, NAME will charge DAUGHTER to look forward to and prepare herself for motherhood.

Possible Bible Passages:

- Proverbs 20:7 (Integrity is caught by our children)
- Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Psalm 78:4 (Teach your children)

Suggestions:

- Describe the feeling of becoming a mother.
- Discuss how a mother should model the character of God to her children which makes fostering virtue through spiritual disciplines very important.
- Discuss how Godly womanhood = sacrificing yourself for your family rather than living for yourself.

The Charge:

End the letter with a “charge” to DAUGHTER to take responsibility for developing habits of integrity, patience and selfless service NOW in anticipation of the honor of someday becoming a mother.

Possible Gift/Symbol:

A pair of baby socks – signifying that DAUGHTER can look forward to bringing other lives into the world through the self-sacrificial beauty of motherhood.

A WOMAN AND HER MARRIAGE

(Assigned To: NAME)

Goal of Letter:

As a woman who has demonstrated what it means to be a Godly wife, NAME will charge DAUGHTER to start being faithful to her future husband now by keeping herself pure.

Possible Bible Passages:

- Genesis 2:18 (Not good to be alone)
- I Timothy 2:9 (Protect modesty)
- Ephesians 5:33 (Respect your husband)
- Philippians 4:8 (Keep mind pure)

Suggestions:

- Tell a story of the excitement of falling in love with your husband.
- Describe how a pure & passionate husband/wife relationship is a wonderful gift from God – something DAUGHTER should be eager to find and jealous to protect even before marriage.
- Talk about how much more dangerous it is today than in the past re: temptations, giving away your heart/body, etc.
- Talk about sexual purity as a gift to herself and her future husband.
- Describe the “for better or worse” realities of dealing with difficulties in marriage and the call to remain true to her commitment/fidelity regardless of what comes.

The Charge:

End the letter with a “charge” to DAUGHTER to guard her mind and body re: purity in order to begin fidelity and faithfulness to her future husband NOW. Also, charge her to eagerly anticipate the wonderful gift of intimacy with her husband.

Possible Gift/Symbol:

An extension cord – signifying God’s design of men (male end) and women (female end) is a wonderful gift that, if used according to His design and in His time, connects us to one of God’s most empowering experiences in life!

A WOMAN AND HER GOD

(Assigned To: NAME)

Goal of Letter:

As a woman who has demonstrated what it means to love and serve God, NAME will charge DAUGHTER to take responsibility for her own spiritual growth.

Possible Bible Passages:

- Proverbs 19:23 (Fear of God = Life)
- Ecclesiastes 12:13 (Whole duty of man)
- Mark 12:30 (Love God with whole heart, soul and mind)

Suggestions:

- Tell DAUGHTER about your own faith journey including when and how you first became a follower of Jesus.
- Describe your hopes and prayer for DAUGHTER as she continues to grow in faith and pursue the God you love.

The Charge:

End the letter with a “charge” to DAUGHTER to take responsibility for developing her own relationship with God, building on but no longer relying upon her parents’ faith.

Possible Gift/Symbol:

A Bible or an appropriate Christian book such as SUGGEST A SPECIFIC BOOK YOUR DAUGHTER MIGHT LIKE.

SAMPLE BLESSING PRAYER

The following is an example of a blessing prayer a parent might pray over his or her child during a rite of passage event to affirm the child and cast a vision for his/her future.

Dear Heavenly Father:

Thank you for the gift CHILD'S NAME is to me, to our family and to every person in this room. I give you praise for creating HIM/HER with such unique gifts.

- **MENTION SPECIFIC EXAMPLES.**

I am so proud of the young MAN/WOMAN CHILD'S NAME is becoming and I ask you to give CHILD'S NAME strength and grace as HE/SHE continues moving from the world of childhood into the joys and responsibilities of becoming a Godly MAN/WOMAN. In this moment we celebrate the life CHILD'S NAME has lived so far and the exciting road HE/SHE will travel into a special future.

- **MENTION SPECIFIC GOALS/OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD**

Lord, you know how much I love CHILD'S NAME. You know that I will do anything within my power to help HIM/HER reach HIS/HER God-given potential. But, unlike the years behind us, CHILD'S NAME is moving into the season of life in which HE/SHE must own more of HIS/HER own faith and character formation. Please guide CHILD'S NAME on that journey and continue to nurture within HIM/HER a passion for you and the wisdom to make wise choices.

Finally, I ask you to pour out your blessings on my SON/DAUGHTER'S future. I can't wait to see how you will use HIM/HER in coming days.

In the name of Christ our Lord, Amen.