



Tools *for* Takeoff


A guide to important conversations
for you and your High School senior.
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Tools *for* Takeoff

6048 hours
252 days
36 weeks
36 nuts
36 conversations

...until
HS graduation!

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There is so much to say to our emerging adults and so little time.

As a mom of 4 kids ages 24, 22, 18 and 16, I know how complicated it is to walk with them through their senior year. Some days it's hard to imagine the house without them and other days you think it will be nice to come home to peace and quiet and a full refrigerator.

You and your senior are full of emotions, anxiety, stress, pride, eagerness, and yes excitement! With my oldest, I was taken aback by the emotion at drop off to college, and knowing it was coming didn't make it any easier with our next ones. But hindsight has been a great teacher, and shown me some of the ways we could have navigated this season better.

This workbook is a compilation of ideas for making the most of this season with your emerging adult. Take what works for you and your senior and leave the rest. Do all of the activities or only some. This isn't about making you feel guilty, depressed or anxious, but about not living in denial (Joiner & Ivy, p. 23). Your child is growing up and will be moving out (eventually you hope, but maybe not too quickly!) It's about making the most of this time.

Blessings on this season for you and your family!



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The toolkit

In order to help you embrace this time we are giving you a toolkit including:

This workbook with conversation guides, journal prompts, and scripture (more about that on page 6)

A journal bible (*see pages 8-9)

A jar

36 nuts



36 nuts?

Are you nuts? Not at all. These are to make a visual countdown. There are approximately 36 weeks until graduation. So place 36 nuts in a jar and put it some place where you will see it regularly as a reminder to make the most of this season.

If you like, start a simple ritual:

Remove one nut every week

Decide what you want to do when you remove a nut from the jar. It is up to you. You can do all of these or none of these.

- Pray for your child
- Write in your own journal
- Have an important conversation with your child (see prompts in this booklet)
- Write an encouraging text or note to your child
- Write in a journal bible for them
- Share a memory with your child

(Ivy & Joiner, 2016)



This workbook:

Research shows your 12th grader needs:

LOVE: to give them a sense of worth

HEALTHY HABITS: boundaries and skills for healthy lifestyle

CHARACTER: to face the challenges ahead

RESPONSIBILITY: to give them significance

FUN: to give them connection

WORDS: to help preempt, plan and give them direction

TRIBES/RELATIONSHIPS: to give them belonging

STORIES: to give them a sense of perspective

AUTHENTIC FAITH: to trust in Jesus in a way that transforms them, and how they interact with the rest of the world.

(Ivy & Joiner, 2017)

Beginning and ending with love, this workbook will guide you and help facilitate prayer, communication and discussions surrounding these topics. It is a collection of 'recipes,' if you will, do them all or pick and choose the ones that suit your (and your senior's) palate.

Let yourselves be vulnerable with each other (the more you share, the more they will share), and be sure to plan some fun for each week too! Sometimes a fun activity is a great time to talk (take a hike, have dinner out, do something you both enjoy!)

If you and your senior aren't already in the habit of regular one on one time, the following tips may help you get started:

1. Share funny stories meaningful memories.
2. Be brave and vulnerable about sharing your own thoughts and feelings
3. Be mindful of your tone and nonverbal body language.
4. Listen to your teenager, try to understand not defend or change their thoughts.
5. Show you are listening by paraphrasing and asking clarification questions.
6. Speak in a way that makes it easier to listen, i.e., lead with positive, focus on present not past. Make room for dialogue...pause.

(Hargrave, Furrow, & Sok, 2018)

The journal bible:

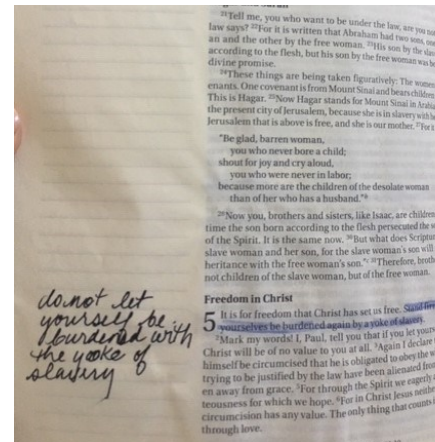
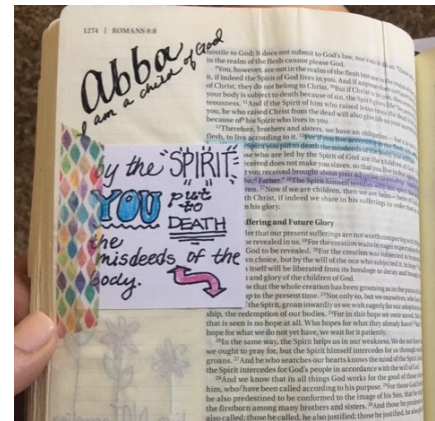
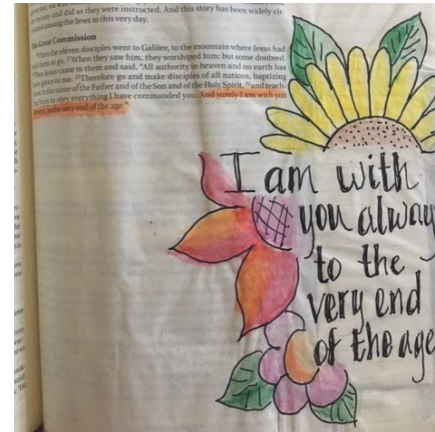
Journal bibles are printed with space in the margins for notes, prayers or thoughts.

Think of *this* journal bible as a keepsake, a love letter from God with added notes from you for your senior.

If you haven't written in your bible before it might feel strange at first. Everyone's journal entries will look and sound different. There are scripture references and journal prompts in this workbook. Feel free to use those or write your own thoughts. You may choose to simply write in the journal bible's margin, or if you want to brighten it up, feel free to add color, stickers or drawings.

Every individual is different, so make your journal bibles a reflection of you and your senior.

Some sample entries are shown on the next page.





Love



Topic: Sense of worth

Prepare to Share: Write down some of your senior's attributes that you admire and that impress you.

Share these with your child.

(Hargrave, Furrow, & Sok, 2018)

What are some of your anxieties about the coming years

Discuss: Ask your child what are their hopes and dreams? For themselves? For your family? What are their anxieties? Share these with each other.

Read & Pray. Psalm 139:14 "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."

Journal Prompt: Write a note about how much you value your senior and what he/she means to your family next to the verse above in the journal bible. Or, write a short prayer in the Bible thanking God for your Senior



Topic: Support interests

Prepare to Share: Write down some of your senior's interests and some ways you can support them in these right now.

What are some of the interests you and your senior (or your family and your senior have in common:

Discuss: How can these interests help us stay connected as a family?

Read & Pray. Philippians 2:3-4 "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Journal prompt: Write a note in their bible next to the verse noted here about the ways you'd like to support your child's interests now and in the future.



Health



Topic: Maintaining healthy habits

Prepare to Share: What are some struggles with eating healthy you had in college/first living on your own?

Share these with your child.

Discuss: Brainstorm ideas for healthy meals on the go. Make a plan with your senior for them to plan and prepare a meal or meals with you.

Read & Pray. 1 Corinthians 3: 15-16
"Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple"

Journal prompt: Write a note affirming the sacred nature of the temple that is your child's body.



Topic: Maintaining healthy habits

Prepare to Share: How would you describe your exercise habits? Your seniors?

Discuss: Plan some exercise you can do together. (Parenting your 12th grader)

Read & Pray. 1 Timothy 4:7b-8
"Exercise daily in God – no spiritual flabbiness, please! Workouts in the gymnasium are useful, but a disciplined life in God is far more so, making you fit both today and forever."

Journal prompt: In the margin of the journal bible next to the verse below, write a note of encouragement to your senior to continue a 'disciplined' life.



Topic: Balancing work and play.

Prepare to Share: How well do you intentionally balance work and play?

What type of play equips you for your work? What type of play drains you? Recharges you?

Discuss: Share with your senior and ask them... How much time a week do you spend on recreation? What things refresh and recharge you? Do your recreational activities become detrimental? Do you feel you balance work and play well? If not how would you adjust?

Read & Pray. Matthew 6:33 "But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Journal prompt: In the margins of the journal bible next to this verse write a prayer for your child to achieve healthy work life balance. Pray for God's guidance to help them balance priorities (Chediak, 2011)



Topic: Healthy boundaries & sexual integrity

Prepare to Share: Has your attitude toward healthy boundaries in relationships before marriage changed from when you were in college? Describe your attitude and how it has changed or not?

Discuss: Ask your senior what they think healthy boundaries in a relationship before marriage look like. Is that what society thinks? What you think? What the bible teaches? (Ivy & Joiner, 2017)

Read & Pray. Romans 12:2 "Do not conform to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Journal prompt: In the margin of their journal bible next to this verse, write a prayer for their future relationships.



Character



Topic: Technological Responsibility

Prepare to Share: What makes technology bad or good?

Is the technology or how humans use it the problem?

Discuss: Think about ways the two of you can leverage technology to stay connected after high school (Ivy & Joiner, 2017)

Evaluate each others time management and boundaries with technology. Try not to defend or judge. Maybe make it a game or challenge.

Read & Pray: Ephesians 5: 15-16 "Be very careful, then, how you live-not as unwise, but as wise; making the most of every opportunity."

Journal prompt: In the margin of their journal bible next to this verse, write a list of ways you see them being 'wise' now.



Topic: Maturity & Faithfulness

Prepare to Share: Identify characteristics in your senior that make you proud of their character, maturity and faithfulness.

Share those with your senior.
(Hargrave, Furrow, & Sok, 2018)

Discuss: Can character and attitude affect your destiny?

Read & Pray: Proverbs 22:1 "A Good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold." Galatians 6:7 "A man reaps what he sows"

Journal prompt: In the margin of the journal bible next to this verse, make a list of those characteristics you identified above.



Topic: Career & Character

Prepare to Share: Share something you wish your parents had told you before you left home/went to college.
(emotional, spiritual, organizational?)

Share John Wooden's quote "There is only one kind of life that truly wins, and that is one that places faith in the hand of the savior." (Chediak, 2011)

Discuss: Ask what kind of input your senior wants? (Hargrave, Furrow, & Sok, 2018)
What 'end goal' do they have in mind?

Read & Pray: Ephesians 2:10 "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Journal prompt: Write a note next to the verse noted here, about the good works you already see in your child's life.



Topic: Faith & character

Prepare to Share: Describe a time where God has grown your faith or character using a trial, stress or difficulty...and if possible, how it was used for eventual good.

Share this with your senior. (Hargrave, Furrow, & Sok, 2018)

Discuss: Share something positive and affirming that you see God developing in your young adult.

Read & Pray: Philippians 1:6 "And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Journal prompt: Next to the verse above write about that positive quality you in your senior.



Responsibility



Topic: Sense of significance

Prepare to Share: How have you seen your senior grow in taking on responsibilities?

What are some ways you can give your senior some (or more) responsibilities? (e.g., running family errands, helping with chores.)

Discuss: Share how you have seen them grow in taking on responsibilities. Let them know that to be successful after high school young adults need to learn to assume responsibility (Chediak, 2011)

Read & Pray: Colossians 3:23-24 "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord, and not for men...You are serving the Lord Christ."

Journal prompt: Write about ways you have seen them shoulder responsibility and grow in that area next to this verse in their journal bible.



Topic: Struggles with responsibility

Prepare to Share: Share some of your personal struggles with responsibilities and how you manage them? (avoidance, procrastination, time management, motivation etc.)

Discuss: Ask your senior how he/she would say they are doing in taking responsibility for themselves? Share your struggles with responsibilities. Ask your senior to share any struggles they might have with responsibilities.

Read & Pray: 1 Corinthians 15:57-58 "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

Journal prompt: In the margin of the bible next to the verse above, write a prayer substituting your senior's name in the verse above.





Topic: Becoming Independent

Prepare to Share: How well prepared is your senior to be independent? What skills have they mastered? Need to master still? (budgets, laundry, cooking, shopping, etc.)

Discuss: Make a plan with your senior to master skills they will need after HS. (Budgets, laundry, cooking etc.) (Ivy & Joiner, 2017)

Read & Pray. Proverbs 12:27 "A lazy man does not roast his prey, But the precious possession of a man is diligence."

Journal prompt: Write a word or two describing ways you have seen your senior be diligent next this verse in your child's bible.



Topic: Staying Motivated

Prepare to Share: Do you ever have trouble staying motivated? How do you handle that?

Discuss: Talk to your senior about their motivation? Is it easy or hard for them to stay motivated? Does it depend on the task? What strategies do they use when they are struggling to stay motivated?

Read & Pray. Romans 12:11-13 (MSG) "Don't burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder. Help needy Christians; be inventive in hospitality."

Journal prompt: Write a note affirming your student for staying motivated through challenges in their bible near this verse.



Fun



Topic: Fun & Connection

Prepare to Share: Write down some of your favorite holiday memories of your senior.

Share them with your senior.

Discuss: What are some of their favorite holiday memories?

Read & Pray: Isaiah 7:14 " Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."

Journal prompt: Write a holiday prayer or memory in the margin of your child's bible.



Topic: Fun & connection

Prepare to Share: What are some of your favorite family traditions?

Discuss: Ask your senior what traditions they would like to continue as a family this year? Talk about how Family traditions are like glue for families. (GotQuestions.org, 2017)

Read & Pray: Proverbs 22:6 "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it."

Journal prompt: Write a prayer or note that your family traditions will help your son or daughter stay connected to your family but more importantly to Jesus.



Topic: Fun & Connection

Prepare to Share: What are some tasks that your senior can do better than you?

Is there something they do well with which they could help you (or your family)?

Discuss: Ask your senior to be the expert, ask them to help you learn or do something new. (e.g., Get connected with social media, develop a website, run a 5k, go on a biking tour, learn about an artist, take a class, follow a podcast) (Argue & Powell, 2018)

Read & Pray: 1 Peter 4:10 "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."

Journal prompt: Express your gratitude for the gifts you see in your senior in their journal bible next to this verse.



Topic: Fun & connection

Prepare to Share: What is something you enjoy doing with your senior? Someplace you enjoy going together. Something they would like to share with you?

Discuss: Talk to your senior about these things and ask them if they'd like to plan an activity for the two of you (or your whole family) to do together?

Read & Pray: 1 Thessalonians 2:8 "Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well."

Journal prompt: Write a note or prayer describing how much you enjoy spending time with your senior.



Words: Preempt & Plan



Topic: Priorities

Prepare to Share: What are your top 5 priorities?

What do you think are your senior's top 5 priorities?

Discuss: Ask your senior to share their top 5 priorities. See if they match what you wrote down. Defining priorities is essential to maintaining focus and boundaries. (Chediak, 2011)

Read & Pray: Hebrews 12:1 "let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us..."

Journal prompt: In the margin of their journal bible next to this verse, write a note of encouragement or a prayer for them to 'run with perseverance'.



Topic: Actions

Prepare to Share: How well do you think your actions match your priorities?

Discuss: Ask your senior the same question. Evaluate each other on how well they match.

Read & Pray: 1 John 3:18 "Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."

Journal prompt: Write a prayer that your senior's actions point other to Jesus and represent their priorities well.



Topic: Strengths

Prepare to Share: What qualities to you see in your emerging adult that will be strengths as they mature and become adults?

Discuss: Share these strengths with your senior. Affirm the qualities in them that you see developing.

Read & Pray: 1 Thessalonians 5:11 "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

Journal prompt: Write some of these strengths in their bible.




Topic: Overcoming

Prepare to Share: What do you think will be your emerging adults biggest obstacles/challenges post HS?

Discuss: Ask your senior what he/she thinks will be their biggest challenges post HS? Listen, don't judge. When they are done, ask how you can support them?

Read & Pray: Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

Journal prompt: Write a note letting them know that they can do all things through Christ.



Tribes & Relationships



Topic: Build or affirm support system

Prepare to Share: List 5 (or more) adults who positively influence your senior. *

Research has shown a web of adults has a positive impact on lifelong faith. (Powell & Clark, 2011) (Ivy & Joiner, 2017)

Discuss: Talk with your senior about adults that positively influence them and their faith.

Read & Pray: Proverbs 13:20 "Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm."

Journal prompt: Write a prayer of thanks for all the people who have and will positively guide your senior.

*Ask some or all of these people to write a prayer or note to be shared with them at the Senior Summit (Baccalaureate at VPC).



Topic: Be intentional about friends and mentors (Chediak, 2011)

Prepare to Share: Describe how some friends have helped support you and helped you grow in faith.

Discuss: Ask your senior How intentional they are in seeking out quality friends? Do any of your friends bring you down or pull you away from God? Name two friends that help you be a better person. How do they help you love God more?

Read & Pray: Proverbs 27:17 "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."

Journal prompt: Write positive qualities you see developing in your senior through time spent with Godly friends.



Topic: Connecting to a Christian Community

Prepare to Share: List some Christian friends who will continue to check in with your senior after HS.

Discuss: Together make a list and a plan for your senior to stay connected to friends and adult leaders who follow Jesus? If you know where your senior will be living talk about how you can help them find a new faith community or how they can redefine the way they connect with their present community? (Ivy & Joiner, 2017)

Read & Pray: Proverbs 17:17 "A friend loves at all times"

Journal prompt: In the margin of their journal bible, write a prayer for your senior to discern their divine calling and to connect with Christian friends and community.



Topic: Attracting the right kind of person

Prepare to Share: Share qualities you see in your child that they will bring to a relationship.

Based on what you know about your child what qualities do you hope they find in their spouse.

Discuss: What qualities is your senior looking for in a girl/boyfriend / spouse?

Ask your senior how they are doing at becoming the sort of person someone would like to marry. (Chediak, 2011)

Read & Pray: Genesis 2:24
"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

Journal prompt: In the margin of their journal bible next to this verse, write a prayer for their future spouse.



Stories





Topic: Fun & connection

Prepare to Share: Share a book or a movie with your senior (Ivy & Joiner, 2017)

Discuss: Talk about the characters in the book/movie what you like about them?

Read & Pray: Ecclesiastes 8:15 "So I recommend having fun, because there is nothing better in this life for people to eat, drink, and enjoy life."

Journal prompt: Write about some of your favorite 'fun' memories in their bible next the verse noted here.



Topic: Practicing vulnerability

Prepare to Share: Write down one or two stories of your past about challenges to your identity or sense of safety as a child. (Hargrave, Furrow, & Sok, 2018)

Share this with your senior.

Discuss: Invite your child to ask questions? Share any similar experiences or feelings

Read & Pray: Romans 8:28 "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."

Journal prompt: Write a prayer for this verse to be visible in the life of your senior next this verse in their bible or write a description of a time you saw this verse lived out in their life.



Topic: Recognize challenges are required for growth and support is essential in these times.

Prepare to Share: Write down a time as an adult when you were in a difficult spot and people helped you.

Describe a time when you saw your senior grow and overcome a challenge with support of friends.

Share these with your senior.

Discuss: Talk about the benefit of friends and hindsight.

Read & Pray: Ecclesiastes 4:12 "Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

Journal prompt: In the margin of their journal bible next to this verse write a prayer that they find Christian friends that will support them.



Topic: Share your faith story

Prepare to Share: Briefly describe how you came to follow Christ.

Discuss: Share this with your senior and let them ask questions

Read & Pray: Proverbs 3:5 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding."

Journal prompt: In the margin of their bible next to this verse, write a note of encouragement for your senior as they continue their faith journey.



Authentic Faith



Topic: Define the goal...Own your own faith

Prepare to Share: what are doubts you may have had (or still have) about the Christian faith. What you have done, or are doing to address them? (Chediak, 2011)

Share these with your senior.

Discuss: Ask your senior to share any doubts they might have. Ask them what they are doing to address them (or help them make a plan to address them.)

Read & Pray: James 1:5-6 "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind."

Journal prompt: In the margin next to this verse, write a prayer for your senior that they find people to help them wrestle with their doubts in positive ways.



Topic: Define faith

Prepare to Share: Write down and share what you believe about the bible and salvation

Discuss: Ask your senior how they are taking time to understand what they believe.

Read & Pray: Hebrews 2:1 "We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away."

Journal prompt: In the margin of their journal bible next this verse, write a personalized version of this verse substituting their name for 'we'.



Topic: Grow in faith

Prepare to Share: Write down what things/activities make you feel closer to God.

Share with your senior.

Discuss: Ask how they feel closer to God? Ask "How can I pray for you today/this week?"

Read & Pray: Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were sinners Christ died for us."

Journal prompt: In bold letters next to this verse in their journal bible write the words, GOD LOVES YOU SO MUCH!



Topic: Identify the foundation of your faith


Prepare to Share: Write down ways your faith was tested/shaped in college.

Share this with your senior. Let them know their faith will be tested and shaped in college, but nothing can change how much God loves you.

Discuss: How can we prepare for that test? How can we take responsibility for our personal choices and our faith? (Brown)

Read & Pray: Mark 12:29-30 Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'"

Journal prompt: Write "Nothing can change how much God loves you." in the margin of their journal bible next to this verse.



Love



Topic: Celebrate

Prepare to Share: Plan your senior's send off or graduation celebration

Discuss: Ask your senior what they want to do to remember this special time!

Read & Pray. Psalm 150:1-6 "Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness! Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!"

Journal prompt: In the margin of the journal bible for your senior, write a list of the reasons you are celebrating!



Topic: Plan for challenges

Prepare to Share: Let them know no matter what you love them... "I love you today, we can handle tomorrow, let's think together about your best next step."

Discuss: How can you be a resource to your senior. If your emerging adult has specific mental or physical health concerns, make a plan for checking in/ monitoring that when they are out of the house.

Read & Pray. Psalm 34:18-19 "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. The righteous person may have many troubles but the Lord delivers him from them."

Journal prompt: In the margin of their journal bible, next one of these verses, write a list of some ways you have seen God deliver your senior from difficult situations.



Topic: A letter to your senior

Prepare to Share: Write a prayer or note in your senior's bible, before presenting it to them at the Senior Summit.

Discuss: Participate in Senior Summit (Baccalaureate program at VPC)

Read & Pray: Philippians 4:4 "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice."

Journal prompt: In the margin of their bible, share a word of encouragement to keep looking until they find a Christian community that supports them.



Closing Thoughts:

This journey needs to fit *you* and *your* senior. Do all the activities or only some. Do them in the order as they are printed or skip around. Here is a list of all the topics if you'd like to hunt and peck. Or, if you prefer a calendar see page 59.

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