



### **What is this resource?**

Invite graduating seniors and their parents to a four-week small group experience preparing them for the transition into the next phase of life.

### **Goal:**

This resource is a tool to implement four-weeks of preparing seniors and their families to transition well into the next phase of their life in college, trade school, or a gap-year. It is a small group discussion-based resource that can be used as a four-week stand-alone event or during regular small group time. Through parent and student components, challenge seniors in the four areas of greatest transition: social, communal spiritual, personal spiritual, and school/schedule.

### **Breakdown:**

**Week 1:** Social Transitions: choosing the right friends, how to make friends, grieving old friends, the temptation to go home

**Week 2:** Communal Spiritual Transitions: accountability, serving, plugging-in quickly, what to look for in a Christian community

**Week 3:** School & Schedule Transitions: prep for work/life balance rhythms, the role of calling in a career, avoiding apathy and overprogramming

**Week 4:** Personal Spiritual Transitions: the key role of repentance, owning their faith, “feeding themselves,” doubts, personal time with God

### **Ideas To Implement:**

- Provide a meal or good snacks and coffee/drinks each week of the series.
- Invite seasoned parents to lead the parent small groups (either from the direct next stage of life, empty nester, or some who just did it successfully whose kids are still in college) or have parents lead themselves using the provided parent small group guides.

- Have students' regular small group leaders still lead their groups. Make sure you give them the material well in advance, so they have time to prepare.
- Provide an opportunity for Q&A each week. Invite college/young adult pastor, local community campus ministry staff from colleges/trade schools, young professionals, or even invite some college freshman or sophomores who transitioned well to come back and share.
- You can go with fancy with decorations, mailer invites, music playlist, and food or keep the event really simple. You choose!
- I have always done this four-week small group during normal small group time on Wednesdays since it is already blocked off for families. But if that won't work, try another easy access point like before or after church service on Sundays for breakfast or lunch.
- An ideal time to run this series is after they have made their future decisions. I have always done it in March, April, or May. But if your group doesn't cease to exist in the summer—June could be an ok time too.
- Get this event on family calendars at least a month in advance, if possible, if not at the beginning of the school year since the end of a school year is a busy time. Even if you can't give them that much notice this year, get in on the calendar NOW for next year so you can build this as a "baton passing" or "milestone" event for years to come.
- Consider how you might leverage your current small group leaders of seniors to "follow" their students through their first year of college. Instead of asking them to move down with a new class of freshman or 6<sup>th</sup> graders, see if they might try to stay connected with the grads instead for one year or one semester and then jump back into student ministry. If you do give them a new group next year, think about providing them with a short checklist of three goals to touch base with their former students in the fall and spring. Those three goals could be:
  1. Give them a box of stationary and ask them to write one card and send it to each student in September.
  2. Give them USPS flat rate boxes and ask them to send a care package to each of their grads in October.

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