



## Overview Instructions

1. Brainstorm a list of people who you think could contribute to the notebook by speaking into the life of your son or daughter. Write their names and address down in the example database provided
2. Ascribe a character trait to each name you listed down (you'll find a list of suggested Character Traits on the right-hand column of the database). This will be focus you will be asking them to speak about in their letter.
3. Create your own invitation to the people you listed down using the sample letter or email template provided. Be creative and inspiring. You want this "ask" to stand out and get people excited so as many of these testimonials come back as possible.
4. Produce individual letters from this template. (With the correct names and character traits which you have previously ascribed.)
5. Send out your letters. You may decide to mail by post or email – whatever is most appropriate.
6. Compile the letters that comes back in whatever form you wish. The finished product doesn't have to be a notebook; alternatively you could compile the letters in a scrapbook or file folder. It's completely up to you and your creative vision.



## Walk Through Instructions

The following ideas are from others who have completed the Coming of Age project. We hope you find them helpful as you begin compiling your child's keepsake notebook.

### *Getting Started – collecting the letters*

The variety of insights and wisdom from others is just one of the things that will make this project special. Brainstorm for ideas of who could contribute to the notebook. It's important to consider what topic you'd like each person to write about as you select them:

- Friends and peers
- Pastors and youth leaders
- Teachers – school teachers, music teachers, other mentors
- Church Members
- Coaches
- Neighbours
- Employers (If your teen works)
- Friends of the family
- Family members: grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, siblings, cousins.

A project this large may take some attention to the details, but the finished product will be well worth it to your child!

1. Now put your list of names and addresses into the sample Excel database provided. (or use your own database) Then allocate next to each name a certain quality of your child you would like them to focus on in their letter.
2. Use the letter/email template provided to edit your letters, dropping in different names and character qualities where appropriate.
3. Ask all participants to hand deliver, email or snail mail letters to addresses your child won't be aware of so that the project will be secret. (e.g. arrange beforehand for a friend, neighbour or relative to receive the letters)

## Putting It Together

Once you've collected all the letters, you'll need to assemble them together into a format for presentation. Be creative and try to personalise the notebook to fit your young adult's unique character. Here are some suggestions:

- Hole-punch letters and place them directly into a binder.
- Slip letters into plastic protective sheets (available at office supply store), put the plastic sheets into a binder.
- Have your letters case-bound into a book. Here are the details for a binder we recommend, Louisa James; or you can check the Yellow Pages for other printing and binding services in your area. The outside of the book could be embossed with your child's name.
- Most importantly, be creative when you're putting the book together! Consider including pictures or other small mementoes in the book. You could even use a Creative Memories format for the book.

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## *Presenting the Finished Product*

Now that the notebook is ready, it's time for the presentation! The most important thing is to make the gift-giving time special and memorable for your child. Any of the following would be a great time to present your gift:

- A reception with those who contributed to the notebook (some guests may like to read their letters out loud)
- A family dinner
- An 18<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> birthday