

The Family Mission/Vision Statement

This handout will guide you in creating a family mission/vision statement which is an integrated expression from all family members of what the family is all about and the principles that will govern family life. We must decide what kind of family we want and then identify principles that will help us get there. There are three steps to follow in creating a mission statement so gather the family, grab a pen, and let's get started:

Step 1: Explore what your family is all about

Get everyone's feelings and ideas out on the table. The following questions are helpful. In the discussion phase there are three ground rules:

- (1) listen with respect;**
- (2) restate accurately to show you understand; and**
- (3) write down the ideas that are generated.**

What is the purpose of our family?

What kind of family do we want to be?

What kinds of things do we want to do?

What kind of feeling do we want to have in our home?

What kind of relationships do we want to have with one another?

How do we want to treat one another and speak to one another?

What things are truly important to us as a family?

What are our family's highest priority goals?

What are the unique talents, gifts, and abilities of family members?

What are our responsibilities as family members?

What are the principles and guidelines we want our family to follow?

Who are our heroes? What is it about them that we like and would like to emulate?

What families inspire us and why do we admire them?

How can we contribute to society as a family and become more service-oriented?

Step 2: Write down your family mission statement

Now you need to refine, distil and pull together the ideas into an expression that reflects the collective feelings of all those who contributed. It should be viewed as a rough draft - as family members need to look at it, think about it, live with it, discuss it and make changes to it.

1. Take a break! Have a snack. Go for a walk. Just walk away from the table for a few minutes before you go any further.
2. Now, go back and circle the words and ideas that stand out to you in your answers from Step 1. Try to identify any recurring themes.
3. Take a look at some examples of family statements like this [one](#).
4. Write your family's rough draft.

Step 3: Use it to stay on track

It is the constitution of your family life. A mission statement is valuable because it helps with parenting; with the setting and meeting of standards; with the creation of bonds between family members; and with the keeping of marriage and parenting vows. When developing a mission statement, avoid the following:

- (1) **Don't announce it** - everyone must work on it and help to create it. If there is no involvement, there will be no commitment.
- (2) **Don't rush it** - the process is as important as the product - it takes a lot of listening to one another.
- (3) **Don't ignore it** - the mission must be translated into everyday living - so you must always keep it before you, reflect on it and use it as a constitution for family life.

Adapted from *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families* by Stephen Covey