

WHY: Create a Family Mission Statement?

Sadly, many parents find a reason to think about family values *after* something has gone wrong. By then it's usually too late – things have already begun to unravel, and it will take much more time and effort to right the ship. The best time to begin creating a family culture is as early as possible (*like right now!*) – when things are still good (*but you want them to be even better*). A family mission statement lays out a vision for your family of where you want to go and how you want to get there. It provides a path and guideposts pointing the way ahead and illuminating the curves and bumps along the way.

Having a shared vision – a shared sense of values and purpose – bonds families together. It guides your parenting decisions and offers your children clear ideals to strive for and guidance in what choices to make. A mission statement also articulates the standards by which each member of the family can evaluate each other's behavior, and children and parents will ideally check and encourage one another as they make their way down this agreed upon path.

Another benefit is that a family mission statement serves to distinguish your family from others – providing its members a sense of meaning and identity and giving your children the feeling of being part of something important and special.

HOW: Where to begin

The purpose of this activity will help you to learn what's most important to each person in your family; **your values**. When you talk about what you value, it can help you to get along better in the future. Values are deeply held views of what we find worthwhile. Talking about our values together as a family can help us to understand our motivation behind our actions and be used as a decision making tool.

Tips:

- ✓ *Review the "Personal Values" worksheet FIRST.*
- ✓ *Spend time really thinking about your personal values and what they mean to you. Don't just pick words quickly. This is not just an intellectual exercise. It should also have a connection with your feelings.*
- ✓ *When you start the family exercise, listen and ask questions. The intention is to explore and learn about one another's values, not to impose your values on others.*
- ✓ *At the end, take time to reflect on what was most meaningful about your conversation.*

Step 1. Review your *“Personal Value”* worksheet together and best understand each other’s core values. *Make sure that there is a strict rule that no one is allowed to laugh at or judge another’s thoughts.*

Step 2. Together with your spouse answer the following questions:

- *Why did we get married?*
- *Why did we start a family?*
- *What do we want our family to look like in 20 years?*
- *What do we want our children to learn from us?*
- *Do any scriptures come to mind that we want our family to live by?*
- *What makes our family unique?*
- *What are the noticeable gifts and strengths of each member of the family?*
- *What are the noticeable weaknesses for each member of the family?*
- *When is our family at its best?*
- *When is our family at its worst?*
- *What is our family’s favorite way to spend time together?*
- *What are practical ways we can serve one another?*
- *What three words best describe our family?*
- *What do other people say about our family?*
- *What do we want others to say about our family?*
- *How do people feel when they walk into our home?*
- *How do we want people to feel when they walk into our home?*
- *What is the main purpose of our home?*
- *What is the secondary purpose of our home?*
- *How can we support one another in our collective goals?*
- *What families inspire us?*
- *What about them do we want to emulate?*

Step 3. Together with your spouse, from the list below, pick the ten words or phrases that are most important to you and line up with your Personal Values. *Feel free to add your own words!*

- | Parents' Words | Kids' Words |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> accountability..... | <i>doing what you say you will do</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> achievement..... | <i>reaching your goals</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> balance (home/work)..... | <i>balancing school, work and play time</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> commitment..... | <i>working hard on what we believe in</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> compassion..... | <i>being kind and understanding</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> competence..... | <i>being good at what you do</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> continuous learning..... | <i>always learning</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cooperation..... | <i>working well with other people</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> courage..... | <i>being brave</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> creativity..... | <i>using your imagination</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> enthusiasm..... | <i>being excited and confident</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> efficiency..... | <i>making good use of time</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ethics..... | <i>doing the right thing</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellence..... | <i>doing excellent work or sport</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fairness..... | <i>being fair</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> family..... | <i>family</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> financial stability..... | <i>having enough money</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> friendships..... | <i>having friends</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> future generations..... | <i>caring about children of the future</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> health..... | <i>keeping healthy</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> honesty..... | <i>telling the truth</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> humor/fun..... | <i>laughing and having fun</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> independence..... | <i>able to do things on your own</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> integrity..... | <i>being honest, trustworthy and live a balanced life</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> initiative..... | <i>making decisions for yourself</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> making a difference..... | <i>making life better for others</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> open communication..... | <i>talking openly and freely with others</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> openness..... | <i>telling others about thoughts and feelings</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> personal fulfillment..... | <i>having a full and happy life</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> personal growth..... | <i>improving myself</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> respect..... | <i>showing respect</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> responsibility..... | <i>being responsible</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> risk-taking..... | <i>being brave to try something new</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> self discipline..... | <i>controlling my behavior</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> success..... | <i>being successful</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> trust..... | <i>trusting others</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wisdom..... | <i>being wise</i> |

Step 4. Be sure to include *fun* values as well as more serious values. Your list will likely be very long initially. You might need to get together more than once to whittle it down. The end goal of creating your family mission statement, which will be a memorable sentence or short paragraph. When you are ready, pick your top three words from the above list and go on to **Step 5**.

Step 5. Now that you have identified your three family values, complete the worksheet below:

Write down your 3 most important values:	Why are these values important to you?	How do you show people these values? What are your behaviors?
1.		
2.		
3.		

Step 6. Now that you have identified your three family values, apply Scripture to each value.

(*Tip: Go to <https://www.openbible.info/topics/> and type in your values to match Scripture verses.*)

Step 7. Discuss what you’ve learned from this exercise with each other and write a narrative of values and how you plan to live those values from your list above. This narrative becomes your family mission statement. It’s important that you take the time to really talk about it and own it. The real learning occurs when you slow down, connect, and listen with your hearts and then activate what you’ve learned. Taking the time to figure out what your family is meant to be a **transformative experience**.

Sample Family Mission Statements:

#1: The Jones Family Mission Statement:

The mission of our family is to create a nurturing place of ministry. We will first minister to the needs within our family, first between husband and wife and then to our children. We will cultivate a loving atmosphere where we can grow closer to each other and to God. As a family and individually, we will then minister to others as a reflection of our faith in Christ.

#2: The Criswell Family Mission Statement:

More than anything else, it is our desire that this family be built around God's plan, purpose, and desire for the family. We will reflect Him in everything we do.

- *We will be a family of worship. Both formally and informally, at church and at home, worship will be a priority in our life.*
- *We will be a family of prayer. Together and individually, we will pray for and with each other, about everything.*
- *We will be a family of service. We will serve each other within our family, and we will serve each other in the world around us.*

What to Do with Your Family Mission Statement

Now that you have developed a family mission statement, post it anywhere your family can refer to it often.

Refer to your family mission statement daily and try to memorize the words, write them on your hearts, in order that you may live them out loud.

Your family mission statement can now be the foundation by which all of your decisions, plans and routines are established.

Other ideas for displaying your mission statement:

- *Frame it as a wall decoration*
- *Post it on your bathroom mirror*
- *Put it in your Bible*
- *Put it with your calendar*
- *Use it as a background on your phone or computer*

In the end, your mission statement will be your go-to resource when making ALL decisions!