

How To Create A Family Mission Statement

One way to clarify what your family is all about is to take some time to write a family mission statement. Companies have them, so why can't you? Steven Covey, author of "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families" says: "A family mission statement is a combined, unified expression from all family members of what your family is all about – what it is you really want to do and be – and the principles you choose to govern your family life. It's based on the idea that all things are created twice. First comes the idea, or the mental creation, and then comes the reality, or the physical creation. It's drafting the blueprint before constructing the building, writing the script before performing the play, creating the flight plan before taking off in the airplane. It's like the carpenter's rule: 'Measure twice, cut once.'"

Preparing a mission statement takes some thought and time, so you might want to present these questions to your family members over the course of a couple of weeks to give them time to ponder the questions before crafting your first draft. After you've given your answers some thought, light the fire, pop some corn, get out some paper and pencils and discover what your family is all about.

Questions To Consider:

What's the purpose of our family?

What kind of family do we want to be?

What are our values?

How do we want to resolve our differences?

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

How do we have fun?

What kind of relationships do we want to have with 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 traditions do we want to create and keep?

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?

After answering these questions, prepare a four to five sentence mission statement that best describes what is important to your family. If you have the time and inclination, you can also create a family crest with symbols representing or illustrating the elements you identified for your mission statement. Have your children decorate it with stickers or pictures they've drawn or cut out from magazines. Finally, don't forget to hang your family mission statement in a prominent location where it will serve to remind all members what your family stands for.

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