



A family mission statement can serve as a family compass, keeping your destination clear and on the right path. It does not have to be a big, formal document. It can even be a word or a phrase, or something creative and entirely different such as an image or a symbol. The family mission statement literally becomes the DNA of family life.

Tips for writing a family mission statement.

p Step One: Explore What Your Family Is All About.

The goal here is to get everyone's feelings and ideas out on the table. Whatever method you use to do this; it is important to remember that the process is as important as the product. Make it fun. Include every member of the family and make sure everyone has a chance to give input. Listen with respect. Don't judge negative expressions. Write down the ideas.

p Step Two: Write Your Family Mission Statement

Whatever you come up with at first will be a rough draft. Family members need time to look at it, think about it, live with it, discuss it, and make changes, until everyone agrees that "This is what this family is about. We are ready to commit to live it."

p Step Three: Use It to Stay on Track

Post your family mission statement in a highly visible place in your home where all can see it and be reminded regularly of the values and statements it holds. Just as the United States Constitution has survived for more than two hundred, sometimes turbulent, years, your family constitution can be the foundational document that will unify and hold your family together for decades, even generations to come.

Questions you can use to engage family members in the process:

- *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?*