Writing a Family Creed

A creed is a “system or statement of principles and beliefs.” In the church we use the Apostle’s Creed to commonly share what we believe together as one family of God. A family creed helps us focus on and share the principles (or beliefs of what our family is all about) that guide the direction and life of the family.

Why write a family creed?

Author Steven Covey gives several reasons for the importance of writing a Family Creed (or mission statement). Family creeds (or mission statements) define your destination and help your family to create a vision. Without vision or a destination in mind is to have no mental creation, no envisioning of the future-to just let life happen, to be swept along with the flow of society’s values and trends without having any sense of purpose.

Family creeds (or mission statements) help you as a family to decide what kind of family you really want to be and identifying the principles that will help you get there. And that decision will give context to every other decision you make. It will become your destination. It will act like a huge magnet and keep you on track.

We can look at that family creed together to see if our actions match our statements. Are we living up to what we said we would do? That is why it is very important for all the family members to be involved.

(From Stephen R. Covey’s book – The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families)

Definitions of a Family Creed:

“A family creed defines the reason for your family’s existence.” (Ben Freudenberg)

In the Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families, author Stephen R. Covey defines a family creed (or mission statement) as: “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.”

Family Creeds from the Bible:

In a defining moment, Joshua spoke to the fledgling nation of Israel saying: “But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” Joshua 24:15
King David is preparing his son, Solomon, to follow in his footsteps and reign in his place. He tells him: “So be strong, show yourself a man and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in His ways and keep His commands, His laws and requirements, as written in the laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go, and that the Lord may keep His promise to me: If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before Me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.” 1 Kings 2:1-4

There is debate as to whether Paul was ever married or not, but he certainly had a Personal Creed he lived by. To the church at Philippi, he wrote: “But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” (Phil 3:13-14)

In your family groups begin working on your family creed

Questions to ask when working on your Family Creed:

What is most important to us about our family?

What kind of family do we want to be?

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

What are our responsibilities as family members?

What families inspire us and why do we admire them?

How can we contribute to society as a family and make the world a better place in which to live?

If your children are very young, what do you do?

One family with small children did their mission statement like this: The question was asked what they thought a family means. They wrote down some of the following words: love, sharing, no fighting no pushing, sharing, etc. They wrote the words and their children colored them in. This is one way to do this activity with small children.
If you are married, you may want to include a section of the Creed addressing questions such as:

What kind of marriage partners do we want to be?

How do we want to treat each other?

How do we want to resolve our differences?

How do we want to handle our finances?

What kind of parents do we want to be?

How do we give back?

If you have grown children or grandchildren you may want to add these elements:

What can we do to promote the growth and happiness of our children and grandchildren?

What principles should govern our interaction with them?

In what ways can we appropriately be involved in their lives and their families?

How can we help them develop their own family mission statements?

How can we help them want to give back?

Discuss the questions and follow these guidelines when creating your Family Creed

First, listen with respect
Second, restate accurately to show you understand
Third, consider writing down the ideas but it doesn’t have to be long (A typical Family Creed says in 25 words or less the reason your family exists.)

How does the Family Creed of a Christian family differ?

Since Christ is the center of a Christian home, He would obviously be reflected in who we are together as family. So elements that might be a part of your Family Creed might include:

Growing in faith
Service to the world
Witness to the world
Developing gifts to impact the world
Examples of Family Creeds:

The mission of our family is to create a nurturing place of faith, order, truth, love, happiness, and relaxation, and to provide opportunity for each individual to become responsibly independent, and effectively interdependent, in order to serve worthy purposes in society. (Obviously from a college professor type)

Our family mission:
To love each other…
To help each other…
To believe in each other…
To wisely use our time, talents, and resources to bless others…
To worship together…
Forever.

Our home will be a place where our family, friends, and guests find joy, comfort, peace, and happiness. We will seek to create a clean and orderly environment that is livable and comfortable. We will exercise wisdom in what we choose to eat, read, see, and do at home. We want to teach our children to love, learn, laugh, and to work and develop their unique talents.

Be thankful for what we have and what we can give to others.

Live Simply
Grow
Honor relationships
Celebrate