
Session Four: Formulating a Plan

Description

Core to many religions, including Christianity is the belief that loving other people is a response to God's love for us and for humankind. In the case of Christianity, we believe that Jesus' sacrifice for us was the ultimate act of selfless love. This first Benedictine Practice of *Loving God and Loving Others (Sessions 1-5)*, is partly about grounding our lives in the practice of sharing love freely and committing to the well-being of others including our family and our neighbor. In doing so, we also demonstrate our love for God. In today's culture, our lives are filled with commitments, many of them admirable! Commitments are important and we need to honor them.

What would happen if one of our most important commitments was to nurture compassion and empathy toward others?

Our actions reflect our values. We might say that we value something, but our actions might tell another story. When we truly value something we prioritize it. This is where the rubber hits the road.

In Session Three you decided on two Vital Behaviors for each of your family's four Core Values. Then you discussed (realistically) how often you could do those things.

In this session you will formalize your Family Rule of Life, commit to it, and then decide on the format that will help you stick to your plan.

Materials Needed

Last session's poster board with your family's four Core Values and two Vital Behaviors underneath each Core Value. Handouts: 1-each –Family Rule of Life examples (1-4) and Family Rule of Life Commitment Template. Your family's calendar in any form. Writing utensils. Colors for smaller kids.

Handouts

Family Rule of Life Commitment Template, Weekly Family Rule of Life Activity Sample, Weekly Family Rule of Life Activity Template, Family Rule of Life Monthly Calendar Sample, Family Rule of Life Monthly Calendar Template

Formalizing our plan

Read aloud the quote or scripture

“Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least.” – *Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe*

Questions for discussion (10 minutes)

1. What is the difference between how God loves you and how you love God? If you are not sure about God, why do humans feel love?
2. Is love reliable? Can you count on it? (Yours, God's, Others)
3. Have you ever stopped loving someone? Do you feel like someone has ever stopped loving you? Do you think God sometimes doesn't love you?
4. Do you love God with your whole self? What does that mean? Do you love others with your whole self? Do you hold back? Why or why not?

Rule of life activity

Are you willing to make time for your Core Values?

1. Get your poster board from the previous session.
2. As a family go through each (of the two) Vital Behaviors for each Core Value and discuss two things. 1. Decide (and agree together) on expectations associated with that Vital Behavior. 2. List any challenges you think you might run into trying to do that Vital Behavior with that proposed schedule. Examples:
 - a. Core Value: Family Time - Vital Behavior: Dinner together with no cell phones.
 - i. **Expectations:** All electronics turned off. No electronics at the table. Everyone helps cook or clean up. Everyone gets to participate in the conversation if they want to.
 - ii. **Challenges:** Change in the family schedule due to kid's activities. One parent has to work late. Parent is out of town.
3. Now discuss as a family some solutions that might address the challenges. Write them down. Examples:
 - a. Change in the family schedule due to kid's activities
 - i. Pick up dinner and sit in the car together eating and talking before the activity.
 - ii. Eat dinner before or after the activity.
 - iii. Do dessert together instead of dinner and do it after the activity.

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- b. One parent must work late
 - i. Instead of dinner, have dessert as a family when the parent gets home.
 - ii. Agree to add an additional family dinner onto the schedule for another day.
 - iii. Do breakfast the next morning instead.
 - iv. Give grace and continue the normal schedule next week.
 - c. Parent is out of town
 - i. Break the electronics rule and Facetime or Skype the parent into the dinner. Set the phone/computer at the end of the table and the parent can join your dinner.
 - ii. Give grace and get back on schedule next week.
4. Discuss the best way to stick to your plan, ie; Write it on a calendar and put it on the fridge? Put it in your electronic calendars? Parent sets reminders in their phone? Put a colorful sheet up on the fridge at the beginning of each week showing the Family Rule of Life schedule for that week? (See sample handouts for ideas)
 5. Get the Family Rule of Life Commitment Template. As a family fill it out and everyone in the family (even little ones) signs it.
 6. Decorate your Family Rule of Life Template anyway you want. Duplicate it if you'd like. Put it up where everyone in the family can see it, possibly in bedrooms as well as kitchen.
 7. Congratulations! You have all the elements you need to begin your Family Rule of Life. In the next session you will finalize everything, create your schedule and begin!

Examen

How did it go? Debrief highs and lows

1. Each person shares their favorite part of the conversation / activity and why.
 2. Each person shares their least favorite part and why.
 3. Did you do a Serving/Giving activity last week? How did it go?
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Practice

LOVE



Serving /giving ideas for any time this week: Choose one or create your own. These can be done individually or as a group. You will be sharing your serving experience in the next session.

- As a family, volunteer to clean (with a wipe cloth) / pray over every chair in the sanctuary at church or temple.
- Create Manna Bags and keep them in your car / hand them out. (Storage bags with non-perishable food items, a water bottle, socks etc.).
- Find someone who is sick or pregnant and offer to clean their house for them.
- Pick up trash at a local park.
- Sign up to serve a meal together as a family at the local homeless shelter.