

Session Three: Aspirational Behaviors

Description

Being in right-relationship (loving others) takes time and intentionality. If we want to build physical muscle, we make the time to exercise. Notice I didn't say "take" the time to exercise. Our lives today are busy and often our calendars are full. Without intentionally eliminating something from the schedule, sometimes there is no extra time to "take". Once we establish what matters to us as a family, we can "make" time for those things. If physical health is important, we block out the time to take care of our bodies. The same is true for our spirituality and relationships. It takes time and intentionality to build these muscles.

It starts by asking; "What kind of family do we want to be?"

A Family Rule of Life is meant to provide a sort of scaffolding. This scaffolding helps us prioritize what matters most to our family and to God. Your Family Rule of Life should be both descriptive and prescriptive - describing your family values and then making a plan to live them out. Your plan might come in the form of a calendar, a chart, a few paragraphs or a colorful pictograph. It's up to you! Whatever it might look like, it should reflect the kind of family you want to be and how you intend to get there.

Brain science tells us that it takes on average more than two months to develop a habit (66 days if done daily). Be kind to yourselves. It may take some time to stick to your plan. And your plan will change as you change. That's ok too. The important thing is to keep communicating and keep trying.

What does your weekly schedule look like? Has your family scheduled intentional time to be together?

In Session Two you examined your family's **current** activities/behaviors as they relate to your core values.

In this session your family will decide on a list of activities/behaviors which you feel will truly demonstrate your core values. You might decide to eliminate some current activities/behaviors or add some activities/behaviors. You will also discuss an aspirational schedule. Be realistic.

Materials Needed

Last session's poster board with your core values and list of potential behaviors under each value, circled in red or green. One new poster board or large sheet of paper and a black marker. Your family's monthly calendar/schedule. (This could be in paper form, on a mobile phone, computer – whatever you use to keep track of your family's schedule.)

Handouts

Sample of Family Rule(s) of Life

What behaviors demonstrate your family's core values?

Read aloud the quote or scripture

"Jesus replied; "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself".
- *Matthew 22: 37-39*

Questions for discussion (10 minutes)

1. Is love a noun (a thing) or a verb (an action) or both? Examples?
2. Tell about a time (without using names) when it felt difficult to love someone? Why was it difficult?
3. What might you do to show love to someone who seems difficult to love?
4. Have you ever found it difficult to love yourself? Explain.
5. Have you ever found it difficult to love God? Explain.

Rule of life activity

What kind of family are we going to be? What vital behaviors will get us there?

1. Get your poster board from the previous session and revisit your list of activities/behaviors circled in red or green. Is there anything you want to change? If so, adjust accordingly.
2. Take a clean poster board or large paper and write each of your four core values at the top.
3. Talk as a family about each of the activities/behaviors circled in green from last week and select the two most important activities/behaviors for each core value. If you could only do the two most vital things that would demonstrate that your family lives out that core value, what would those two things be?
4. On the new poster board, write those two Vital Behaviors under Core Value #1. During Session Four you will get more specific with the Vital Behaviors. For now, keep it simple.
5. Repeat for each of the other three Core Values.
6. You should now have a poster board with four Core Values at the top and two Vital Behaviors under each Core Value. Put the poster board aside.
7. As a family, examine the (handouts) Family Rule of life samples.
8. Open your family's calendar.
9. Talk about where (in your current schedule) you could fit your Vital Behaviors and how often.
10. Are there things you might remove from your schedules in order to fit your Vital Behaviors in? Remember this isn't about squeezing more into the schedule. We don't want to add stress.

We want to intentionally do things that help us grow

- spiritually, bring us joy as a family and give us peace.** It's about deciding what kind of family you want to be and making the choice to be intentional about it. Ideally, your schedule should (at least in part) reflect your family's Core Values.
11. Go back to your poster board that has four Core Values and two Vital Behaviors under each.
 12. Next to each Vital Behavior, have one person take a marker and write how often your family would like to do this vital behavior based on decisions you've made about your schedules.
 13. Examples:
 - a. Core Value: Family Time - Vital Behavior: Dinner together with no cell phones. Write down how often you'd like to do this. Weekdays? Weekends? One time per week?
 - b. Core Value: Physical Health - Vital Behavior: Exercise together, write down how often you'd like to do this. Weekly? Monthly?
 - c. Core Value: Giving to those living in poverty – Vital Behavior: Save and give together, write down how often you want to make gifts. Monthly? Annually?
 - d. Core Value: Spiritual Development - Time with God – Vital Behavior: Morning/evening devotions as a family, write down how often you want to do this. Every morning? Every Sunday evening?
 14. Put this poster board aside for Session Four. In the next session your family will:
 - a. Make a final decision on your Vital Behaviors (which reflect your Core Values).
 - b. Decide on the details of what those Vital Behaviors could entail.
 - c. Create a calendar that works for your family.

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?

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.

- Everyone in the family pitch in some money and deliver together to your favorite charity.
- Bake something and take it to a neighbor.
- Tell a grocery store clerk (or other worker) thank you for the work they do.
- Call your church and ask if there's a senior citizen that needs a ride on Sunday.
- Purchase tickets to a sporting event or play and donate them to the Boys and Girls Club or Big Brothers Big Sisters.

**Note: Vital Behaviors are action steps that lead to a desired outcome. They should be attainable, observable and measurable.*