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Top Ten Reasons to Hold Family Meetings

By Dan and Suzanne Bond

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From CoachVille's "Awesome Dads, dare to be a hero!" community.

Check us out at: <http://dbc593.cvcommunity.com>

1. Make stronger connections among individuals and, therefore, creates a closer family.

In this very busy world, designating this time every week is one way to ensure that family members stay connected with one another. Relationships are living things, and must be nurtured. Family meetings are about nourishing our relationships with the most important people in our lives. Form the habit of connecting regularly.

2. Create family value statements and operating principles.

Family meetings give you a chance to discuss what's important to you as a family and to create family value statements, which reflect your collective thoughts. Similarly, they give you a chance to talk about how you want to operate together as a family and treat one another, by developing family operating principles.

3. Share appreciations and give thanks for our many blessings.

This is a way to give children and adults permission to let one another know how much they are appreciated, and to share the many things they have to be thankful for. It is far too easy to take the blessings in our lives, and our loved ones, for granted if we do not form the habit of appreciating on a regular basis.

4. Improves family communication

More and more today, family members are going in different directions and at break-neck speed. Add to this the fact that each person is unique and perceives the world in his or her own way.

Miscommunication can cause hard feelings. It is crucial to never assume that what you are saying is being understood the way you intended it, or that you are understanding what others are trying to tell you. Always take the time to check perceptions. The family meeting can be a "rest area" where time is

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set aside to make certain that communications are clear.

5. Provide leadership experience

Everyone gets a turn at leading the family meetings. This is a great way for children to get early leadership experience. Be certain that their contributions in this regard are honored and respected. You will be building a confident future leader, who will experience the joy of positive leadership.

6. Offers an opportunity to stay current regarding upcoming commitments, activities, and events.

Family meetings are wonderful opportunities to review the family calendar, clarify who needs to be where and when, as well as who will be taking responsibility for what. Once again, clear communication and joint planning can relieve the ongoing stress of busy lives.

7. Gives an avenue to celebrate each other's successes.

This is most important. Family meetings should always contain a time to celebrate successes of each family member during the week. These need not be big, monumental events but can simply be every day successes. This not only creates pride and joy in daily life, but also forms the habit in each family member of looking for the positive in one another.

8. Provides time to plan family vacations, activities, and special events.

This gives everyone in the family a chance to give their input into a family trip or experience, rather than the adults always doing the planning. When the whole family is involved, everyone is much more likely to enjoy the event. Investment in family activities, for each member, is often directly proportional to his or her involvement in the planning. A richer shared experience is most often the result.

9. Establish a safe, respectful environment to problem solve.

By following the family's operating principles, and with open and honest communication, children will learn that problems can be discussed openly and solved respectfully together. Creating win-win solutions takes practice, for adults as well as for children and youth.

10. Have fun together

These meetings provide a great opportunity for the family to participate in fun family activities. As family members get to know one another better, share stories, laugh, and problem solve together, deeper relationships develop. Try to weave fun into every family meeting.

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I earned my doctorate degree from Seattle University in 1982. I recently retired from the superintendent's job and work just part time as a coach to people who are studying to become principals and superintendents. I am excited to provide this same kind of support to parents and other educators who may learn of my services.

Family Meetings 101

Top Ten Reasons to Hold Family Meetings

By Deborah Shelton

Family meetings provide opportunities for feelings to be aired and validated. They also allow younger children to feel they are an important part of the decision-making process when it comes to family vacations and other major and minor family functions.

Before the first meeting commences, set a few ground rules such as: Speak in a calm tone. Avoid name-calling, finger-pointing, and sarcasm. Turn off the TV, radio and telephones. Allow each person to voice his or her concerns and ideas. Listen to all opinions before making a decision. If a person voices a complaint, they must also bring to the table at least one possible remedy to the situation.

Locations for future family meetings may also be brainstormed at the first meeting. Here are a few examples:

Circle Time

Very simply, sit on the floor together, in a circle. Designate an object as a "talking token". This can be a small stuffed animal, a necklace to be worn, a hat, or any other item that will be passed around. Whoever holds the talking token may speak. Once they are finished, they must pass the token to the next person.

Restaurant Rendezvous

Take turns choosing a favorite restaurant to host your family meetings. For this option, choose an afternoon or evening in the middle of the week, or at off-peak times, to avoid heavy crowds. End the meeting before dessert arrives, so everyone can indulge their sweet tooth happily.

Hobby Haven

I know of several families who hold their meetings at places that cater to their favorite hobbies. For instance, one family conducts their meeting at a bowling alley. Once the meeting is over, they enjoy bowling together. Another family combines their gathering with their love of books, by meeting at a café in their favorite bookstore. And yet another family I know holds their weekly meeting after a joyful round of put-put golf. This option combines family communication and fun.

However, and wherever, your family decides to host the meetings, remember this all-important point: Always end each meeting with a hug!

Deborah Shelton is a mother, freelance writer, and author of the brand new book, "The Five Minute

Parent: Fun & Fast Activities for You and Your Little Ones." Visit Deborah's website for more family-friendly ideas:

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Top Ten Reasons to Hold Family Meetings

Top Ten Reasons To Give Blood

Top Ten Reasons To Let Go

Alcoholics Meetings – Know The Truth And How It Can Help You

Top Ten Reasons To Pick A Vacation Rental

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