

## A Family Constitution

*We can teach our families the value of a Constitution by creating a family constitution for the governing of the family. If this Constitution is patterned after the US Constitution, family members will develop a deeper understanding and respect for this great document. The following Constitution is just an example . . . each family is encouraged to come up with a Constitution that works for them.*

### Preamble

We, the members of the \_\_\_\_\_ family, in order to form a more united family, establish rules and individual rights, insure peace in the home, provide for the common needs of family members, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of agency based on responsibility, do set forth and establish this Constitution for our family.

As individuals within this family, we do agree that families exist for the mutual teaching, righteousness, shelter, nourishment, convenience, and joy of all the members, and that each member is endowed with certain rights, which are:

1. Examples of truth and wholesome conduct
2. Love and understanding
3. Reasonable discipline tempered with love
4. Education leading to self-sufficiency
5. Nourishing food
6. Clean clothes
7. Sufficient privacy
8. An orderly and comfortable home

Within this family, as elsewhere, we recognize that rights are inseparably linked to responsibilities. Each member of this family has a responsibility to uphold the rules which follow. In mutual agreement that to the best of our ability we each promise to live by these rules, we hereby sign our names on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ in the year of \_\_\_\_\_.

## Mission Statement

*A unique family mission statement serves as a valuable guide for goal setting and disciplining of family members. The following mission statement is an example. The bullet points in this statement are specific to the personalities and desires of this particular family. Every family is encouraged to create their own unique mission statement.*

We are children of a loving Father in Heaven who has sent us here to love, support, and be united together as the \_\_\_\_\_ Family. We are dedicated to building an atmosphere of trust, faith, and learning in our home. We seek learning from the best books and experiences. We spread love and happiness to others as we

- Seek truth in thought and deed
- Exercise patience and wisdom in relationships
- Find joy in simple things
- Employ a healthy sense of humor, and
- Engage in wholesome recreation.

We know that as we exercise faith in Jesus Christ, He will guide and direct us towards fulfilling each of our life's mission on earth.

### **Article I – Legislative Branch - Powers and Specifications of Family Government**

#### **Section 1 – Family Governing Body**

A. Children and long-term guests will serve as members of the family governing body. All persons residing in the home presently, as well as anyone who has been within the confines of this home for the sum total of more than forty-eight hours – regardless of race, creed, color, or sex shall be considered members of the family-governing body, and none shall deny them life, liberty, equal opportunity, or the pursuit of happiness without the due process of law.

B. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families may be called upon to lend additional support when needed.

#### **Section 2 – Family Meetings**

A. The family will meet together at least once a week and shall be called to order by the Family President or Vice-President.

B. The family meeting shall not go longer than 20 minutes unless members of the family council vote in the affirmative for an extension of time for specific discussions.

### **Section 3 - Family Record Book**

A family meeting binder will be kept to record notes and decisions made at each meeting. A blank form will be provided and the speaker of the house will record the date and time of the meeting along with any important decisions and rules established by common consent of the family.

### **Section 4 - Structure of the Family Meeting**

A. The family meeting will consist of the following activities:

- Opening Prayer
- Announcements (exciting news and events, accomplishments, and weekly schedule)
- Discussion topics
- Family decision or vote

B. A “topics to be discussed” list will be maintained on the family bulletin board. If something comes up during the week that needs to be discussed in a family meeting, family members are invited to write it down on the list.

C. Discussion topics may include but are not limited to the following: family activities, family problems, chores, standards, motivational systems, and consequences.

D. Family activities and schedules should include opportunities to build faith, and to participate in prayer, repentance, forgiveness, compassion, work and wholesome recreation.

D. Rules of conduct.

1. Principles of respect and love will be the guiding standard for all family discussions.
2. Rules for discussion. When the family meets together to discuss problems, they must work together as a group. Finger pointing will not be allowed. A problem may be introduced with the phrase, “I have noticed . . . ” or “our family seems to have a problem with” without isolating the offending individual.
3. Rationales. When a topic is brought to the attention of the family, there has to be a reason for addressing the topic. The family member introducing the topic will be asked to explain the positive benefits of having a family discussion on this topic. Suggested words for rationales include fair, effective, concern, and pleasant.
4. Suggestions. The person who brings up the topic will have the first opportunity to present a solution for the problem. The leader of the discussion will then ask for other ideas.
5. Voting. After all suggestions have been made, the discussion leader will call for a vote. The speaker of the house records the decision about the issue, the benefit that will come to the family, and the positive or negative consequence if the decision was in regards to a family rule.

## **Article III – The Executive Branch**

### **Section I: Executive Powers**

The President/Vice President of the family is a rotating assignment among family members. Each Executive team will serve for a term of three months.

1. No person shall serve as President who has not attained five years of age, who cannot count to fifty by ones, and has not been a resident in the home for more than one month at the time of election.
2. The President will be the leader of the family council meeting to practice the important life skill of conducting meetings. The Vice-President may assist the President as needed in this responsibility.

### **Section II: Duties of the President**

1. The President shall act as the Chairman of the Family Meeting.
2. The President will be allowed to present his opinion on matters of business to the family after all have had the opportunity to share their points of view.
3. The President may appoint special duties as well as ambassadors. These duties may include but are not limited to the following:
  - a. Attend City Council meetings and report to the family.
  - b. Research and discovery of needed information for upcoming family events.
  - c. Preparation of the family budget.
4. The President will present at least one State of the Family address during his/her term as president.

### **Section III: Duties of the Vice-President**

1. The Vice-President shall act as the chairman of the Family Meeting when the President is not present.
2. The Vice-President shall record proceedings of the family meeting and maintain the family meeting record book.
3. The Vice-President shall assist the president in maintaining proper conduct of family meeting members during the meeting.

## **Article IV – The Judiciary**

### **Section I: Members and Duties of the Judiciary**

A. The Judicial leaders of this family will include both a father and a mother as long as both are living. As husband and wife, they have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and the children. They have a sacred duty to rear children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them how to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives – mothers and fathers, will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

1. **Father/Patriarch:** The father is required to rule the family in love and righteousness. He will assume all judicial powers and be known as the Patriarch. The father is the protector and provider in the home. The father is considered as the primary provider of the basic necessities (food, clothing, and shelter) as well as educational opportunities to develop job skills and self-reliant character traits in children. The father has the right and responsibility to protect the family from physical, emotional, spiritual, and moral harm. By divine design, the father is to preside over the family in love and righteousness.

2. **Mother/Homemaker:** The mother has the honor and responsibility of “making the home” a safe haven where members are fed, nourished, and sustained physically, emotionally, spiritually, and morally. The mother of the home will be honored and strengthened as she is responsible for developing society’s greatest masterpiece – a human being. This role requires a wide variety of skills and therefore the mother will be encouraged to be a life-long learner to develop mind and talents with a high degree of excellence and discipline.

3. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners.

B. All children are entitled to regular (at least weekly) mentor sessions with either one or both parents to discuss goals, progress, accomplishments, and concerns.

1. Mentor sessions are considered an opportunity for relationship building. Parents will allow discussions to continue until goals have been met.

2. A mentor session is a crucial part of a child’s healthy development and, when conducted appropriately, the child will feel inspired and motivated to do new things.

3. Children will be given an opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings freely. Important topics for discussion include exciting news, goals, concern, education, and commitments.

## **Section 2. Powers granted to the Patriarchal Judiciary**

A. The Father shall assume all judicial powers and be known as the family Patriarch. He will maintain this position until he either resigns or dies.

B. All cases of the violation of the rights of others or rules will be brought before the Patriarch, and he will judge wisely, hearing all testimony.

C. The Patriarch will consult with the mother of the home about cases that have been presented to him.

D. The Patriarch may delegate judicial authority to the mother of the home for specific actions that occur when the Patriarch is not present.

### **Section 3. Restitution and punishment**

Any restitution or punishment that the Patriarch or his delegated representative imposes must be carried out completely.