

FAMILY SHIELD EXERCISE

Desired Outcome: Participants will identify guiding values or characteristics in their life, describe them in their own words, and walk away from this exercise with a visual representation they can refer back to and modify over time. Family members may share these with others and develop greater understanding between each member of the family and even help create the overall Family representation of what matters most.

TIME

15 minutes to 2 hours depending on use and outcome desired

PARTICIPANTS

All possibilities from a single person to large group

RESOURCES

- Blank paper and pen or pencil for each person.
- Easel, paper and markers for facilitator, if doing a large group.

DESCRIPTION OF EXERCISE

This is an exercise that allows people to identify important values, goals, and guideposts in their life.

- **Ask** each participant to draw a shape on their piece of paper that represents their family shield. This can be a simple circle or any creative design and is solely up to them. Or make copies of the image on the second page.
 - Divide the shape into 4 equal quadrants.
 - Each participant puts a word, symbol or picture in each quadrant that describes them.
- **For families:** "Ask each participant to share the words or pictures they have written "Then write all of the family responses on the flip chart with their explanations of what their words/pictures mean. It is very important that all members have the opportunity to share their words/pictures. Also, the facilitator needs to make sure that all comments about others ideas and pictures are respectful and stay positive.
- Then ask them, "as we identify the Family words/pictures/values, should we be looking for your individual identities, or the group identity of the family?" (Ultimately, they will agree it should be the group.
- Then have each of them identify 4 words/pictures/values from the flip chart list that represent what they want their FAMILY to be known for. Put all of those on a new flip chart(s).
- Then, as a group, have them come to agreement of the 4 words/pictures/values that they would want their family to be known for. This can be done with voting and a process of elimination until you reach the final group. (And, you are not limited to 4... it can (but rarely is) less than 4, and we want to limit them to no more than 6).
- Share: "Each word or picture that you used has meaning to you. There is probably a story or event that helps you identify the meaning of that word for you. We want to explore that just a bit."
- Ask each participant to write a sentence or brief description of that story that helped them identify that value, word, or picture.

OPTIONAL FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

- What did you learn?
- What would it mean to you if the people who know you or are touched by you identified you by these traits?
- What can you do to get there?
- What does this mean to you?
- Does anyone want to share?
- How does this apply to you or your family?

KTM

