



A RULE OF LIFE FOR FAMILIES

What is a Rule of Life?

A Rule of life is an intentional rhythm or pattern that individuals or families covenant to living.

What Should a Rule of Life Look Like?

Every Rule of Life looks different. It is important that it is authentic to your current life circumstances and achievable in your daily life. Setting goals can be helpful if they are realistic for you or your family. The purpose of your Rule is not to induce guilt when you don't live up to your expectations, but to provide a foundation for a meaningful and intentional way of being together.

Where Does a Rule of Life Come From?

Early monastic communities created Rules of Life as a covenant for how they would live together. They often involved practical guidance about how to treat each other, share a home, and spend time with God.

Why Should I Create a Rule of Life?

A rule of life is a helpful spiritual tool to keep us accountable to our individual and shared desires for a deeper life in relationship with each other and God. Often we have good intentions, but the busyness of life gets in the way. Expressing and committing to a rhythm of life can help us prioritize what matters most.

Preparing a Rule of Life: Questions for Reflection

As you consider what you want to put in your rule of life, consider the following questions.

- When do we feel most connected with each other?
- When do we feel most connected with God?
- When we pause to think about our life, what causes us to feel gratitude?
- When do we feel like the truest version of ourselves together?
- When are we most receptive to listening to God, ourselves, and others?
- What have we learned about how to treat each other when things get hard?
- What habits, practices, and activities are most life-giving?
- What habits, practices, and activities are most life-draining?
- What is most important in our life together?
- What needs to be released from our schedule to make more room for what matters most?
- How is God present in the daily tasks of shared life and space?
- What are our most cherished memories as a family? How can we cultivate more moments of sacred memory?
- When are we most *present* with each other?
- How are we invited to grow? Where could we challenge ourselves and each other on our shared formational journeys?
- What nourishes our souls?

What foundation are you creating as a family for all the circumstances of life?

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock.” –Matthew 7:23-25, NRSV



Community of Christ

Created by Katie Harmon-McLaughlin, *Spiritual Formation Ministries*

Creating a Rule of Life

Our General Rule

(This is our shared vision for how we want to be as a family, treat each other, and live our values.)

Regular Family Practices *(We commit to the following habits, practices, and activities.)*

Daily

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Weekly

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Monthly

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Yearly

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



Example of “Our General Rule”

As a family, we trust that God is our foundation. Each one is beloved of God. Every person in the family is of equal value and worth. We covenant to treating each other with respect and expressing love for each other even when it’s hard. Together, we want to live these values:

- Loving God
- Participating in our Community (Church, Neighborhood, Friend Group, City, etc.)
- Caring for the Planet
- Sharing Hospitality with strangers and friends
- Using time intentionally and making time for each other
- Being wise with our resources and not using more than we need
- Taking care of our physical bodies by making healthy choices

Examples of Regular Family Practices: *Come up with your own ideas! What is important to include in your Rule of Life?*

1. Daily Prayer/Spiritual Practice Individually and Together (Prayer of Examen, Intercessory Prayer, Prayer for Peace, etc.)
2. Take a family walk through the neighborhood and get to know our neighbors ____ times a week.
3. Play outside
4. Go hiking
5. Study Scripture
6. Share a random act of kindness with a stranger
7. Practice Sabbath ____ times a week/ month.
(Sabbath for us looks like... no technology? Time together? Time in nature? Rest from chores?)
8. Create Listening Space to listen to each other’s experiences, stories, and prayer hopes and concerns.
9. Pay attention to how we speak to each other. Create shared rules for treating each other with respect.
10. Family Reconciliation Meeting when we get into a fight or have hurt each other.
11. Daily: Say “I love you” to each other.
12. Daily: Pray for each member of the family.
13. Make time to talk to extended family who may live far away through Skype or Phone.
14. Exercise ____ times per week
15. Go to church or participate in some form of spiritual community.
16. Keep a journal
17. Take a family trip to a place that fosters quality time together (even if it’s close to home and inexpensive like camping at a nearby campground!)
18. Practice Hospitality: Invite friends/family over for dinner ____ times a month/year.
19. Welcome the Stranger: Invite someone we’d like to know better over for dinner ____ times a month/year.
20. Spend no more than ____ hours a week watching TV. Encourage playing games, going outside, reading books, and engaging in shared activities.
21. Respect the Earth: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!



22. Help with Tasks at Home: Dishes, Laundry, Cleaning, Yardwork (Practicing the Presence of God in everything we do.)
23. Try a new spiritual practice
24. Family Dinner at home _____ times per week.
25. At dinner, have everyone share their highs and lows from the day.
26. Spend time doing things that nourish our souls!
27. Watch the sunset together
28. Read together _____ times per week.
29. Monthly family meeting
30. Monthly family worship
31. Wise Money Management: Practice sharing our resources as a family with the church, local charities, and savings.
32. Have conversations _____ times a month about what we really need and what we can give away.
33. Volunteer our time to help others _____ times a month.

