

# Getting Started with a Family Media Covenant

from *Every Parent's Guide to Navigating Our Digital World*

*Ultimately, we want to help our kids develop an awareness of why they feel an impulse to use media. This sense of awareness is what will allow them to make more thoughtful and intentional choices both now and as adults someday, no matter what context they're in or what new technologies come along.*

Think about a **mission statement** that defines why you use media and the benefits or value you hope to derive from it.

- Explain the role you see media playing in your home.  
Example: "Media will be used as tools for building stronger relationships, learning, creating, and exploring interests and hobbies."
- Be **intentional** about wanting to use media for something (communicating, learning, family connection, even relaxation) as opposed to having media become a way of "doing nothing," and, in the process, being used by it.  
Example: "We set the following limits so that we will not become zombies who go through life glued to a screen."
- Affirm that, when used as tools, media can enrich our lives in significant ways. Project the positive outcome that will result when your family follows the rules and provisions of your covenant.  
Example: "Media can be something that draws us closer together as a family, and we are grateful for that!"

Think about boundaries and rituals.

- **Where:** Where do we use media together or separate throughout the house?  
Example: No phones at the dinner table (at home or out). No phones in bedrooms.
- **When:** When do we typically use media during the day and throughout the week?  
Example: On school days, one hour of free time after school, then homework, dinner, and free time until bed. No phones from 10:00 pm - 6:00 am.
- **Who:** Who do we use digital media with or without — family, friends, teammates, adults at church? What are appropriate ways to use media in those different relationships?
- **Work:** What times and places are devoted to work and to homework, and how are those distinct?
- **Play:** When and where does play happen, and how is that uniquely set apart from work?
- **Rituals:** With these previous categories in mind, what might be a few consistent family rituals, with and without media, you can try to "carve in stone" on your family's calendar?