

Family Values Conversation Guide

What are Family Values?

For our purposes here, we're defining Family Values simply as those things that we stand for as a family, the things we care most about. These are ideals we uphold most – both in our family and in our contribution to our community and the larger world – the principles that make our lives worth living.

Gemeinschaftsgefühl: The importance of social interest

Gemeinschaftsgefühl is a term coined by Alfred Adler that we will briefly share here, as it can prompt thinking around the things you and your family value most.

The term itself is made up of three separate German words:

- *Gemein*: together, belonging and community
- *Schafts*: a ship, the whole, the group
- *Gefühl*: feeling

Adler used the term to describe a feeling of togetherness and wellbeing that springs from considering and caring for the whole. [Recent research](#) shows that children are not solely focused on themselves. Even the youngest children are concerned when someone is needing help or in trouble. We come wired to look beyond ourselves.

This sense of togetherness and care for the whole is something that can be fostered by a family in many ways. Part of your Family Values conversation can include a sense of “taking care of our community - that’s just what we do!” It can be done with love and humor - whether it’s a volunteering practice or the way you greet strangers - and will be a unique expression for every family. Being interested and engaged in a focal point beyond your family creates incredible returns, and that can happen at the earliest ages. Have this conversation be fueled by your own *Gemeinschaftsgefühl* and enjoy the discovery into how your family brings it to life.

Questions to Consider

- What is a value? What does it mean to you?
- What is a Family Value? How do groups of people share values?
- Why should a family define their values? What benefits do you see?

What are our Family Values? Consider these questions:

- What makes life worth living?
- What makes happiness?
- How do we make a difference for someone outside of ourselves?
- What do you enjoy doing that helps grow you and your skills?
- What do we want to be known for?
- What activities make you feel good about yourself?
- What is important in a life well-lived?
- What do you enjoy doing to help others?
- What do you enjoy doing that makes you healthier or stronger?
- What do you think matters in life?
- How do you like to be treated and how do you like to treat others?
- What do you like to do together as a family?
- What are your favorite family memories?

