



Innovista

Equipping parents as leaders: how to lead well at home

Being a parent means being a leader. And it means being a leader of a team which is constantly changing as your children grow up! Sam Moore, Director of Innovista Ireland, and Claire Goodman, Executive Coach and Innovista trustee, highlight these enduring leadership principles for parents to lead well at home and see their families flourish.

Look to Jesus

Family life is very busy. Make sure you invest in your own spiritual life by reading your bible, praying, and having fellowship with other Christians. Talk as a family about your faith in Jesus, and how trusting God's promises helps you through hard times. Show you are sorry when you get things wrong and trust that God forgives you. Children see the best and worst in their parents which is a wonderful opportunity for authentic discipleship. Conversations about faith can happen any time, but the kitchen table is often a good place for them.

Share the leadership

Whether you are parenting with a spouse or on your own, share the leadership of your family. Think about who is in your leadership team – other adults in your church, in your family, in your community – and how to create a sense of team. Be in it together, and play to everyone's strengths. That means knowing what everyone's strengths are, and allowing people to take different roles at different times.

Build on a foundation of service

Follow in the way of Jesus and let service of one another underpin your household. Learn about one another - what does it look like to serve each other well? When do you need to give each other space? What are others struggling with? Children can grow in this, and it's never too early to help them play their part – whether it's little ones putting their toys away, or older ones making dinner for their parents.



Self-awareness

Take time to figure out what gives you energy, and how to regulate your energy and emotions. Then communicate these things to your family. Don't make the mistake of assuming that everyone needs what you need – or that needs won't change as time goes by. Aim to enable everyone in your family to have times of replenishment in their week.

Empower your children

Foster independence in your children, empowering them to take responsibility and giving them freedom. The specific outworking of this will vary enormously with age, but the principle remain the same. Ask children questions and ask for their opinions: it develops critical thinking and fosters responsibility and awareness.

Be clear

Clarity is an essential feature of good leadership. Make sure you communicate clearly with everyone in your family, whether it's about timings, boundaries, consequences, plans, or expectations. As well as making sure that everyone is on the same page, this also allows people to raise questions and problem-solve ahead of time, rather than afterwards when everyone thought it was everyone else's job to do the food shop.

Set boundaries

Clear boundaries can liberate creativity – not just in teams and organisations, but within children. Children thrive within a routine of eating, sleeping, activities and down-time. When they know what to expect from a day, they create their own activities and fun within that. This continues to be true as children transition into their teenage years, but as your children grow, let routines and responsibilities grow with them.

Ask questions and listen

It is hard to overstate the importance of listening and asking good questions. Jesus spent a lot of time doing this! Make sure you have enough time to do this with each family member. Remember that children grow up, and family dynamics are constantly shifting. Don't assume that things will stay the same – keep asking questions and keep listening. And be willing to change things as a result of what you hear.

