

Learners and Leaders Who Love God

When our son, Brock, was a baby, Bill was a youth pastor and one day I was praying for our son and I prayed, "Lord, it seems that some kids at 18 soar and succeed. And others stumble and fall. What's the difference?" Then I began to list the traits, qualities and skills of successful kids and families. Out of that day, came many of our own family traditions.

Let me share it through the lens of an important day in our family:

For our twenty fifth wedding anniversary, we gave our sons a tie tac with a family moniker (or crest) Bill and I designed. We wanted the boys to have an heirloom that could be passed down from generation to generation that would symbolize the values the Farrel family stands for. In *10 Best Decisions a Parent Can Make*, we describe and show a picture of our crest and how to design your own. So let's see if I can use words to aptly capture our crest:



It is a circle and inside are three L's down the center that stand for Learner, Leader, Love God. These are the three core values we prayed (since before they were born) that our kids hold on to. We want our sons to be known as:

Learners. Those who want to compete in life so they are willing to do the hard work to learn and become excellent.

Leaders: In their sphere of influence using their own unique leadership style we desire they be difference makers that lead rather than follow the crowd.

Love God: We want them to own their own faith and walk out their own personal relationship with God.

Each year from the time our oldest was four, we have had a "Learner and Leader" Day. That's the day we negotiate privileges and responsibilities, select one leadership trait to focus on for each son each year and we give a gift that applauds the uniqueness (passion, bent, calling, platform) we see God building in each of their lives. (We have a Learner Leader privileges and responsibilities list in *10 Best Decisions a Parent Can Make* too because often we parents forget kids CAN do more around the house than you might think!)

Back to our crest: Also in the circle is a cross with the star rising from it represents that we want them to seek God's vision for their life. We want the source of all their hopes, dreams and desires to come from God's heart. We believe if a child, tween or teen develops a vibrant relationship with God, it will be easier for him or her to sense where God what life path God created for them to walk.

The two interlocking hearts represent integrity and commitment. When a Farrel says something we want it to be truth and we want to be known as a family that keeps all of our commitments, especially the marriage covenant.

The verse inscribed on the back of the tie tac, or what is framed under the crest framed that hangs in our home is the phrase we used as the motto by which we raised our sons: "Those who honor God, God honors." (1 Sam 2:30 paraphrased)

Each fall for over 20 plus years we held a Learner and Leader Day. We'd have a fun family activity, (a day at amusement park, lake, beach, favorite place to eat, etc.) On that day we'd also complete the Learner and Leader contract for each child, choose one verse to pray over his life for the year, and one leadership trait to focus on and equip that child to successfully possess by year's end.

On the contract are privileges and responsibilities. (We keep the list on our computers so we can update, add to and remove items easily). We pray about what trait to focus on for each child for a few weeks before Learner and Leader Day, and as the kids mature, we draw them into this discussion and decision.) We teach the kids how to select their verse for the year (type in keywords to www.LOGOS.com or www.Bible-gateway.com) Then we select a "learner and Leader" gift for each child.

The gift is 3 things:

Personal: We thought of each child's needs and unique strengths.

Practical: Something that child would need any way so it is part of the family budget.

Prophetic: The gift encourages the promise of potential of that child's giftedness and calling

We'd also review our family motto and "moniker" (or crest) on Learner and Leader Day—a simple reminder of "This is what the Farrels stand for!"

If you asked us, "What one parenting decision are you glad you made?," this one would be at the top. Having a family moniker (crest) and family motto and those yearly Learn and Leader Days helped our sons to have an inner compass to guide them. And the fruit is sweet. Now over 20 years later, our three sons are all adults, and they all walk with Jesus and serve God. We now have grandchildren they are having their own "learn and leader" days! And our sons and their wives have their own family missions, mottos, and monikers! Passing the baton of faith!

Adapted from [The 10 Best Decisions Every Parent Can Make](#) by Pam and Bill Farrel (This book and many other parenting helps and resources can be found at www.Love-wise.com) To fully implement a Learner and Leader Day, we recommend you purchase: [The 10 Best Decisions Every Parent Can Make](#) book, the [10 Best Decisions Every Parent Can Make 1 session audio CD](#), and the [Learner and Leader Chart](#)