

CHOOSING YOUR

*Family
Theme*

THE AWESOME GUIDE
THAT SHOWS YOU HOW!

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About the Authors

Marcus and Ashley help overwhelmed newlyweds adjust to married life, and inspire married couples to improve their marriage so they can become better husbands and wives.

They do this by using their own marriage experiences, gleaning wisdom from other married couples, and sharing what works (and doesn't work) for them through their website and marriage podcast, *The First Year Marriage Show*.

To learn more about them, visit: www.ourpeacefulfamily.com.

Also, you can click on the link below to see more of our best-selling books:

www.ourpeacefulfamily.com/ourbooks

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Introduction

A Family theme is a unique way to describe the values your family reflects. Considering it will vary from one family to another, the best way to choose yours is by knowing what you *truly* want your family to exemplify or be known for. In addition, a family theme has lots of benefits, with one benefit being a common goal for your family to work towards.

One of the fulfilling experiences that comes from having a family theme is when people describe your family with your family theme word. For example, we love to hear friends, relatives, and even strangers call our family “peaceful” since our family theme is *peaceful family*.

We vividly remember when a stranger approached us at a local store in 2011 just to tell us we send out a peaceful loving vibe; that was certainly proof that having a family theme can positively impact other lives. Imagine if instead of our family it was yours, how would you, and your family or partner feel?

Due to the success, we have had with our family theme, we want to share the steps we used to create it with you. We have compiled these steps into five simple sections. Each section is filled with information that will help you and your family to choose a family theme that suits your family. Section 5 of this short eBook is about our family theme and how we apply this theme in our family every day.

Now, let's get started.

Section 1: Understanding Family Themes

Are you ready to choose your family theme? Choosing a family theme played a very big role for us having a peaceful family, it is also what we want to be known for. This *family theme* is not just any aspiration that we set for the New Year; it's the vision for our family. Our family theme is very simple, yet a profound guidance for every decision we make. Therefore, we invested a lot of time in picking ours; **a peaceful family.**

We wholeheartedly believe that once our family is peaceful, all other endeavors we pursue will yield better results. A simple family theme will not only impact your family positively, but it will also be the yardstick to determine if your family should pursue certain endeavors or not.

If you and your partner don't have a *simple* family theme that you both agree, and are *committed* to accomplishing, we certainly agree you should invest some time this week into choosing one for your family.

Even if you are a single-parent, divorced, or single, choosing a family theme will go a long way for your family or future family. It could simply be being a debt free family, a peaceful family, a healthy family, a hardworking family, a giving family, etc.

Pick something positive that you wish your life to reflect in your home, which by default will transcend into your environment, and outside your home. Let your family theme describe the essence of your family.

Section 2: Define Your “Why” For Your Family Theme

Are you ready? If you are, then grab a pen or pencil, and a sheet of paper; this section involves brainstorming. Go through this section with your partner, answer each question and write down all your answers. At the end of each question, we share our answer to provide you with a better understanding of the process.

1. Why do you want this theme for your family?

We want our home to be known as peaceful, nurturing, and loving.

2. Why will a family theme be so important for you and your partner?

It will enable us to provide a safe environment for us to live, grow, and learn with our children. Also, it sets the tone and temperament for every choice, and response we make as a couple, and as parents.

3. Why do you believe in this theme?

To put it lightly, we love living a stress-free life, and our family theme enables us to do so. In addition, we believe wherever peace exists, there is unity, productivity levels increase, and almost everything becomes more relaxed and joyful.

I love living a chaos-free lifestyle, little to no stress if possible, and simply enjoying a quiet peaceful home. I have always tried to live this way since it protects me from avoidable events, it doesn't imply I don't take risks; because I enjoy the thrills of taking calculated risks.

As a result, choosing a family theme wasn't difficult for us since we shared similar ideas and knew what we wanted our future family to be. But it was only through our brainstorming sessions, and understanding our WHY that we agreed to choose a "peaceful" family for our family theme. - Marcus

I believe having a family theme is such an integral part of any family. Someone with goals has that push to always improve themselves, and move forward, someone without goals just kind of wanders through life. The reason why this theme is so important to me is because of my earlier life.

Before I became a wife and mother, I was the total opposite; always filled with high stress, unbalanced, and life was full of unpredictable things. By choosing a theme for our family, I have comfort as a wife, knowing my husband and I are working together as a team to provide a nurturing, and an encouraging home for our children. - Ashley

Did you notice the words Ashley uses to describe how she views a "peaceful" family and the words Marcus used? Remember, if you are going through this section with your partner that you both communicate differently; see where your ideas connect, and go from there.

Section 3: Why Is “Why” Important for Your Family Theme?

During Section 2, you answered three questions in what was a brainstorming session. We found a very enlightening and inspiring TED Talks video, *Start with Why*, by Simon Sinek to watch. This video helped us to further understand our **WHY**, and will help you too.

Click on the link below to watch Sinek’s Start with Why video right now:

www.ourpeacefulfamily.com/startwithwhy

Note: You need to complete watching the video so you can better understand your WHY, and the rest of this section.

In this video, Simon Sinek uses excellent and simple to understand examples to show us why starting with your WHY is critical for your success. Infact, it’s one of the best and most watched TED Talk videos you would ever invest a few minutes of your life watching. We promise your return on time invested will be worth it.

Once you are done watching the video, answer the three questions in Section 2 again, and make corrections if needed. Below are the questions:

1. Why do you want this theme for your family?
2. Why will a family theme be so important for you and your partner?
3. Why do you believe in this family theme?

The lesson we learned from this video helped us to *clearly* define our reason for making certain decisions, setting goals (in this case choosing a theme for our family), starting our side business (which is now small business) and other events in our life.

In this video, Simon Sinek gives such a great example on why it is so important to have a main *belief, goal, or “why”* for a business. This lesson is just as important for other systems like your family. In just the first seven minutes, he explains the “golden circle” and the trickle effect.

An example that’s close to home for us would be:

A) We want a peaceful lifestyle.

B) How do we have a peaceful lifestyle?

C) Maybe we stop there, or maybe we continue to the third circle of “Why”, which is the central belief, the core of why we want a peaceful lifestyle.

Simon explains this system is backwards and we should instead think C, B, A instead of A, B, C. Does it make sense to you?

Using the same example above, let’s start choosing our theme with C. WHY should we have a theme for our family? For us it is to have a peaceful family to enjoy life, raise responsible, independent, and critical thinking individuals, and living life at the absolute fullest.

Then B, we lay out our ground rules, boundaries, and put systems in place to help us structure our HOW.

Lastly, C, the results from our theme are a warm inviting home, with minimal stress, and no fighting. In other words, a peaceful lifestyle for our home.

This explanation is just an example that we hope you find helpful on your journey to choosing your own family theme.

Did Sinek's video enable you, and your partner to rethink your **WHY** and come out with better answers? Even though most people will prefer watching Sinek's video before brainstorming, we have observed that you are very likely to produce better answers this time around.

Section 4: Family Theme Actionable Steps

After Section 3, you and your partner should at least have an idea about what your family theme should be, if not already chosen, but have you thought about the pros and cons of this theme? What will the *positive* and *negative* impacts of your chosen theme have on yourself, your partner, children, relatives, and society?

For our theme (peaceful family) negative impact was none. Some of the positive impacts included inner joy, great environment for family bonding, improvement in communication, people feeling very relaxed at our home and relaxed learning.

Below are the four actionable steps for you to take:

1. What do you and your partner need to do to everyday to accomplish your family theme?

For us, we fight fair and learned to communicate through empathy. Of course, we disagree sometimes as we are human, but we make sure to resolve all issues as soon as possible. We no longer have those heated arguments because we started using the 7 effective and proven communication steps in the article below:

www.ourpeacefulfamily.com/communicationsteps

We also organize our home as often as we can.

2. When do you want to vividly see the results of your family theme?

A maximum of one year after our marriage but we saw results three months into our marriage. We decided on one year since we should have accomplished this important goal by then, if not then something was wrong somewhere for us and we needed to adjust our plan of action.

3. How will you hold each other accountable towards making your family theme a reality?

We both ensure our home is clean and organized, as much as possible with young children. It is not 100% perfect but enough for our satisfaction. In addition, we asked each other questions about our family theme, especially whether we were headed in the right direction. We make sure our calendar is updated and organized, but not over scheduled.

4. How do you want to achieve this theme?

Laugh and smile often, hug and kiss before leaving home for work, communicate effectively and empathetically, decorate our home accordingly, being more patient, and making it a priority to have a peaceful family.

Some of the results and benefits we experienced after going through the above action steps was better communication, less stress and chaos at home, increased productivity with work, and when either one of us leaves home we know we will come back to a peaceful home.

In addition, always remember the benefits your family theme will bring to, not only your family, but those around you and the generations to come; since it will increase your desire to make it a reality.

Lastly, your family theme must be specific (simple), measurable (how will its results or progress be measured), attainable (can it be done, is it actionable), realistic (real not vague or something impossible like a perfect family, no one is perfect), and time bound (when should the theme be seen by others, or reflect your family actions, image, etc.)

Section 5: Our Family Theme

As a couple, we believe it is essential to have common, yet integral goals for your marriage, and family. We made having a *peaceful family* one of our goals for the kind of home we would like to have and raise our children in. Communication, hand in hand partnership, working together as a team, agreeing on finances, and lots of patience are some of the skills we use to make this happen.

We wanted this peaceful family theme for our home because of our future goals and past experiences. Plus, we did not want to repeat some of our childhood family experiences, or even let our children go through them.

We quickly realized the best option moving forward was to identify what our past was, what our present is, and what we want our future to be. We both had different upbringing hence by identifying these, we were able to choose our family theme; peaceful family.

Due to my upbringing, I didn't know how to properly "disagree", I was very quick tempered, and had no patience the first year we were married. Slowly and painfully, I swallowed my pride and took the steps required to work on these things, as well as the insecurities that popped up. What helped us survive our first year of marriage was my husband being incredibly patient and understanding with me. - Ashley

I had to learn to understand where Ashley was coming from, I needed to loosen up, listen attentively to her needs and not be rigid due to my vastly different upbringing. Whenever we talk about our first year of marriage, I tell my wife honestly if we hadn't changed, thus improved

ourselves, we would probably be divorced because neither of us wants to LIVE an unhappy life. She agrees, as we both have done a lot of growing and changing. - Marcus

By working together as a team, trusting each other, listening to each other's healthy critiques, planning, sharing duties and responsibilities, organizing our home to prevent clutter, we were able to *build a strong foundation for our marriage*. When we want to have deeper conversations, we simply use the conversation starters in our best-selling book, *Questions for Couples*.

In addition, we have joint bank accounts, budget monthly (we are still learning to have a zero-based balanced budget), agree on child upbringing, respect each other, read at least one marriage book together each year, plan yearly goals for our family, enjoy every moment of our daily family time together, and believe that we can handle whatever life throws at us together; this helps us not to stress so much.

The awesome result of choosing a family theme has enabled us to grow together over the past few years in our marriage, while nurturing our peaceful family.

Here is the takeaway:

We believe you can have a successful family theme to help shape the lives of you and your partner and the generations to come.

Final Thoughts: What Is Your Family Theme?

Wow, congratulations on reading this far! The next pages have worksheets to use for Sections 2, 3, and 4. Complete each worksheet and let us know the theme you choose for your family by messaging us at firstyearmarriage@gmail.com.

If you need help setting one, just send us a message and we will be glad to help you come up with a theme that is **integral** and **vital** to your family's aspirations.

Thank you for reading,

Marcus & Ashley Kusi.

Enjoy your marriage, enjoy your life!

Marriage is a lifelong journey that thrives on love, commitment, trust, respect, communication, patience, and companionship. - Ashley and Marcus Kusi

Books by Ashley and Marcus

Note: To instantly see all our books, click on the link below:

www.ourpeacefulfamily.com/ourbooks

1. *Questions for Couples: 469 Thought-Provoking Conversation Starters for Connecting, Building Trust, and Rekindling Intimacy*
2. *Communication in Marriage: How to Communicate with Your Spouse Without Fighting*
3. *Our Bucket List Adventures: A Journal for Couples*
4. *First Year of Marriage: The Newlywed's Guide to Building a Strong Foundation and Adjusting to Married Life*
5. *Emotional and Sexual Intimacy in Marriage: How to Connect or Reconnect with Your Spouse, Grow Together, and Strengthen Your Marriage*
6. *Mama Bear Kusi's Blank Recipe Book: A Journal with Templates to Write and Organize All Your Favorite Recipes*
7. *Mama Bear Kusi's Weekly Meal Planner: A 52-Week Menu Planner with Grocery List for Planning Your Meals*
8. *My Tandem Nursing Journey: Breastfeeding Through Pregnancy, Labor, Nursing Aversion and Beyond*

Worksheet for Section 2

1. Why do you want this theme for your family?
2. Why will a family theme be so important for you and your partner?
3. Why do you believe in this theme?

Worksheet for Section 3

1. Why do you want this theme for your family?

2. Why will a family theme be so important for you and your partner?

3. Why do you believe in this theme?

Worksheet for Section 4

1. What do you and your partner need to do to everyday to accomplish your family theme?

2. When do you want to vividly see the results of your family theme?

3. How will you hold each other accountable towards making your family theme a reality?

4. How do you want to achieve this theme?