

## Your Co-op's Purpose and Vision



candidly  
Katie did

From the title of this post, you'd think I was about to invite you to church or to join some multi-leveling marketing mania. And it's true, we don't always use those words to describe ordinary things.

But I would encourage you to bear with me for a moment as I show you a way to make your co-op run more smoothly and make your decisions more simply.

### Purpose

Your purpose is the thing you use to advertise your co-op to others. It makes you sound like you know what you're doing.

In broad terms, the purpose of any homeschool co-op is the same: to share the burden of teaching, to have access to classes or activities that are simply easier with a group, and to create a community of learning and support. [you can totally copy that for your own group; I won't even charge you for it!]

But sometimes you might like to add things in, or spice it up a little. You can add in great words like: support, fun, edification, organization, field trips, projects, socialization, play... anything you want, you really. That's your purpose. It is what you decide it is. You don't need to go door to door, you don't need to get religious about it if that's not who you are.

If religion does factor into your co-op, your purpose will likely have some added words: equipping, training, discipleship, service, accountability, worship... the Lord is telling you what your purpose is. It is what he decides it is. That means you have the responsibility to follow his plan for your group, curating your classes and activities for God's glory.

## Vision

This is a little bit more abstract to nail down. Essentially, it's the picture of what your co-op looks like when it's running perfectly, full of all the right people doing all the right things all for the right reason. It's the thing you want to become. [It's not too late, by the way, even if you're an established co-op flying by the seat of your pants in a wild direction. Or even if you're walking calmly in a nice direction that you just want to tweak.]

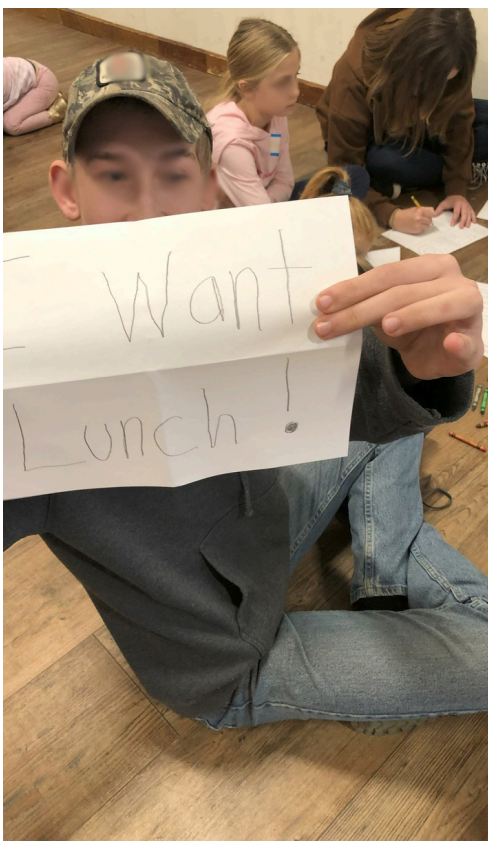
aFind your vision by writing down all the things you want for your co-op. The current trend is to call this a brain dump. When I was learning to write we called it barfing on the page. [That tidbit was free, too.]



I like to brain dump by hand because writing it down feels nice, and also a little more mindful. If you're dumping as a leadership team, you can all have some sticky notes to write your thoughts down and when you're done you can have a colorful collection to contemplate.

Now sort through all those lovely thoughts. Some of them may be far-fetched [at least I hope they are! If not, please go back and start over and have a little more fun with it], so you will need to lovingly let those dreams float off to Neverland or something. But what is it that you see that really moves you? What did you write down that you could never let go? What are the pictures that are strong in your soul? Those are the ones that become your vision.

Perhaps you see your co-op as a hive of bees, moving through the intricate dance of learning and growing in cooperation with respect and kindness.



Maybe what you picture is a community of loving families spurring one another toward love, good deeds, and a lifetime of learning and worship.

Are you imagining children joyfully exploring nature, peacefully diving into their interests together, and reading books aloud?

Or are they running around, inventing games together, sharing good food, and swapping science experiments?



Whatever it is that makes you excited about your homeschool co-op, that is the thing you want to move toward. You can take baby steps if you want. If you have inherited a co-op that needs a makeover, make one or two changes for your next year. If you're starting from scratch, make two lists: a MUST HAVE list and a WANNA HAVE list. Start with your Must Haves and make them happen. If you have the resources, you can add items from your Wanna Haves.

And remember, nothing is set in stone. The leadership team for our co-op has had to make tweaks on the fly depending on our attendance from year to year. That's okay, because we have our big picture in mind.

Bonus tip: find an organization or two that you admire and read their purpose, vision, and mission statements. That might help you organize yours.



What is pressing on your heart and soul as you consider your homeschool co-op? What is one small change you can make to be part of making it happen?