

**Vows to Your New Children --- It's Never Too Late**  
**With Sample Vows**  
**by Moe & Paige Becnel**

When two people marry they usually exchange vows with each other, which are promises to each other that they will love, honor, help and uphold each other through ALL circumstances that life may bring.

Vows are important because they bring to light the seriousness of the marriage covenant that they are making with each other. They also express the depth of the love relationship between the couple.

**Why Make Vows To the Children?**

Too often, spouses *underestimate* how much of a part the “new” (“step”) children will play in the new marriage, regardless of their age. A child who does not feel a part of the new marriage and family, or who are resistant to the new spouse or family, can create great turmoil in the weeks, months and years ahead.

In a child's defense, we need to realize that:

- The children probably didn't ask (and likely did not choose) to be in this new family.
- Our spouse's children are *NOT extra baggage, along for the ride, or someone else's problem.*
- The children involved may still be hurting from a previous divorce, loss of a parent through death, missing their other bio parent, still hoping their bio parents would get back together, and/ or some other negative emotions or situations.

The reality: Our spouse and their children were/ are “one” before we vowed to become “one” in marriage. *Vows with our spouse do not circumvent the relationship our spouse has with their children.* When we married our spouse, we really also married their children. When we treat our new children with value and acceptance, our marriage and family will grow.

Many spouses have tried making their spouse choose between them and their bio children, or by causing a child to feel unwelcome in the home. These marriage relationships suffer severely – and many fail.

Here is a solution: Instead of making our spouse have to periodically make an *unfair* choice between spouse and bio child, **we choose to be in covenant with their children.** Choose to love them. Choose to make them an integral part of our life.

Just as you made vows to your spouse, make vows to your spouse's children!

Sharing vows with children will do these things for your marriage and family:

1. We will make the children feel “significant” – that they are a vital part of our life and the new home. The sooner you create the right atmosphere, the better.
2. The attention that we give them during the vows will let them know that they are important to us and the new family.
3. We will become more aware of their presence in your home, and of your responsibility toward them.
4. We will enhance the relationship between us and our spouse. When we embrace our spouse's children, we embrace our spouse more completely.

**Already Married? Do it anyway!**

Maybe we chose the out-of-town island wedding. Perhaps our children were too young when we married, or maybe we just did not think of including our children to this extent. That's OK!

The good news is that it's not too late to share vows with our “new” children!

### **Need A Great Sample Vow?**

Brian and Ashley VanDreumel allowed us to share the following vows they wrote and shared with each other's children on their wedding day. (We had the privilege of officiating the VanDreumel's wedding.) They each stooped down and looked the children in the eyes as they spoke these vows into their lives.

**Groom:** “       (children's names)      , I want you to know that I dearly love your mother. We have become very good friends over the weeks and months and we have learned to love each other. As you have so graciously shared this wonderful woman with me, so will I share the love I feel for her with you. Together, we will learn much more about each other. I promise also to be fair and to be honest, to be available for you as I am for your mom, and in due time, to earn your love, respect and true friendship. I will not attempt to replace anyone, but to make a place in your hearts that is for me alone. I will be father and friend, and I will cherish my life with all of you. On this day when I marry your mom, I marry you, and I promise to love and support you as my own.”

**Bride:** “       (children's names)      , I want you to know that I dearly love your father. We have become very good friends over the weeks and months and we have learned to love each other. As you have so graciously shared this wonderful man with me, so will I share the love I feel for him with both of you. Together, we will learn much more about each other. I promise also to be fair and to be honest, to be available for you as I am for your dad, and in due time, to earn your love, respect and true friendship. I will not attempt to replace anyone, but to make a place in your hearts that is for me alone. I will be mother and friend, and I will cherish my life with both of you. On this day when I marry your dad, I marry you, and I promise to love and support you as my own.”

There were not many dry eyes in the wedding hall when they finished!

We hope that this helps you understand the great value that children's vows can play in laying a foundation to build your family upon.

Start planning how you will make sharing children's vows in your family a special event. Then watch the attitudes of all involved begin to change!

### **Should Your Children Make Vows?**

We suggest not. We believe that expecting a child to make vows to an adult that they have not chosen to be a part of their life can put pressure on the child. Remember that the child likely did not request the marriage. *Let children be children, and let the adults take the responsibility for building the family.*

***If your family needs change, you change first!***

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