



STEPPING UP™

A CALL TO COURAGEOUS MANHOOD

COMMISSIONING CEREMONY

FamilyLife Publishing®
Little Rock, Arkansas

HONORING THOSE WHO STEP UP

One thing you may want to consider that will make your group's experience with *Stepping Up* memorable is including a commissioning ceremony at the end. The men will have put in a lot of hard work, and anything you can do to honor their effort will help them successfully live out the commitments they have made over the course of the ten-week series.

To help prepare for the ceremony, it will be important to spend time thinking about each man involved in your group. Take note of any areas where you have seen growth or where each one has expressed interest in stepping up.

We encourage you to gather the group for one additional meeting the week following the final video (session 10) to give them the opportunity to discuss some of the big commitments they have made along the way. You could hold the commissioning ceremony during this final meeting, or you could plan a separate retreat/getaway where the guys could spend a little more time processing what they have learned. The latter option would make for an even more memorable experience while further strengthening the brotherhood within the group.

RECOMMENDED STRUCTURE FOR THE COMMISSIONING CEREMONY

INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

You'll want to begin the commissioning ceremony by reviewing the highlights from the ten-week study, emphasizing any outstanding memories and group-wide breakthroughs. This isn't meant to be a review of all the content ("Session one was about . . . and then there was session two . . ."), but rather a remembrance of the overall experience. For example, you might say something like: "When we started, I thought a man was defined by _____, but now I hope we are seeing a biblical vision for manhood." Or, "Do you remember when Joe told our group about _____? That really set the tone for us." Also, share some of the funny things that happened within your group.

IMPORTANCE (5 MINUTES)

Next, talk about the content in general and emphasize the critical nature of it in today's culture. Talk about the importance of what these men have experienced and why this commissioning ceremony is important. For instance: "We live in a culture where manhood is neglected, where men have very little idea what it means to stand firm, take initiative, engage with wisdom and grace, and plan ahead and provide. Tonight we are changing the destiny of manhood in this generation for at least one group of guys. We are here to celebrate what God has done and to commission this group as men who are committed to intentionally step up in all aspects of life."

HONORING INDIVIDUALS (10 MINUTES)

Assuming that your group size was 6–8, you'll now want to spend some time talking briefly about each man. Share any of your reflections about the growth you've seen in each one and the strength of his character. (NOTE: If you have multiple groups gathered for the ceremony, you'll probably want to break up into the smaller groups in order to keep things moving along.)

COMMISSIONING (5-10 MINUTES)

Invite the men to stand, then say:

We have gathered here because each of us desires to continue stepping up to be the men God has called us to be. I hereby ask you to make this pledge as a public declaration of your intent.

With God and these men as your witnesses, will you, by God's grace and with all your might commit to the following by affirming each question with a verbal "I will":

Will you be a man who lives with integrity in all aspects of life, remaining faithful to your loved ones, and pursuing truth while disdaining falsehood?

(Group responds) I will.

Will you seek to display courage by doing the right thing, no matter how difficult and even when no one is watching? By staying at your post as a godly man, husband, father, and friend, even when your feelings falter?

(Group responds) I will.

Will you pursue godliness by receiving and believing a biblical vision for manhood and by setting God and His word as first place in everything?

(Group responds) I will.

Will you make a difference in this world by believing that God has a unique purpose for your life, one that is eternally significant, and will you live and lead by faith, trusting fully in God?

(Group responds) I will.

Will you step up and be the man God has called you to be?

(Group responds) I will.

And now I pronounce this blessing over you:

May God, who created man and woman, perfectly equip and inspire you to live out your calling as a man. May you always look first to His word for wisdom and direction in life, and may He grant you the strength to live out this incredibly high calling even under difficult circumstances and challenges. May you practice wisdom and protect your heart, mind, and soul from wandering off the narrow path toward that which draws men away from God. May He help you to become the man God has called you to be from the moment you entered His mind.

And now, men, you are commissioned to go forth into your world—your workplace, community, church, and home—to continue stepping up and calling other men to step up with you. May God give you strength.