

Your Will

An act of Christian stewardship

No matter how large or how small your estate, a will should be one of your first acts of stewardship. It is your chance to care for those you love: your family, your friends, and your church.

Who needs a will?

Every adult should have a will. If you die without a will, the laws of your state will determine how your assets are distributed. That might not be in accordance with your wishes and sometimes creates extra expenses and taxes.

You may designate someone to represent you after your death. These representatives can include:

- an executor or personal representative who works with your attorney to settle your estate.
- a guardian nominated to care for minor or dependent children.
- a trustee, such as MMA Trust Company, who manages the assets of any trust your will may establish.

You should choose alternates for each of the people named above in case the first person named cannot serve.

How to write a will

Writing a will is a task for a trained professional. The Fuller Center and Mennonite Foundation recommend consulting an attorney who can express your wishes in proper legal language. Most attorneys will write a simple will for a reasonable fee. For

Advantages

- You determine how your assets will be handled, not state laws.
 - You select persons to care for your minor children, not a judge.
 - Plan for a business or farm to remain in the family.
 - Provide for special family needs.
 - Extend your Christian stewardship values beyond your lifetime.
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large estates, it may help to include a Certified Public Accountant as part of your estate planning team.

It may also be helpful to consult a Mennonite Foundation representative before seeing an attorney or accountant. We can help you with your estate planning objectives with a Christian perspective in mind.

How to provide for loved ones

The economic needs of your survivors is a primary concern when writing a will, and these needs change over time. The Fuller Center and Mennonite Foundation recommend that need be a major consideration in deciding how your estate should be distributed. Here are some examples:

- If a spouse with young children survives, the entire estate should generally go to the surviving spouse.
- If both parents die and minor children survive, only the children should benefit from the estate in most cases.

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