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Podcast summary: Who do you invite to a reunion anyway?

Hi. I'm Edith Wagner. I'm editor of *Reunions magazine*, and these podcasts are to help you with your reunion planning. We hope you enjoy them, learn from them and will let us know if they help.

This time we're going to talk about the who of reunion. Who do you invite to your reunion?

Class reunions bring together people who attended school at the same time — any level, but usually high school and college. Or some schools have all-class or all school reunions. Class reunions are almost always at or near the school classmates attended — although we see more and more older class reunions particularly traveling, to resorts or sometimes on a cruise.

Military reunions assemble people who served together, neighbor reunions gather people who lived in the same neighborhood, and co-worker reunions bring together people who worked together.

There are no such obvious rules, however, for family reunions.

For a family reunion, you must define who constitutes the family. The family can be mom and

dad, their children with spouses and grandchildren. Or is it you, your brothers and sisters and all your children and grandchildren? Or everyone descended from your grandparents or great-grandparents? Or everyone descended from a couple who settled in Lake County, Illinois, in 1851? Or anyone with the same family name who emigrated from Bavaria in Germany? Or all the women in the family? Or even everyone with the same last name (usually an uncommon name), even if you've not yet discovered the relationship? The reunion can be an opportunity to try to figure it out.)

You see, there are many ways to define family for the sake of forming a reunion and you probably know even more ways.

And when you decide on a "definition," you must (and this is only my rule) invite everyone. A family reunion is not a wedding where you pick and choose who to invite. A family reunion should include everyone or at least you should invite everyone. Occasionally there may be family members you'd rather not encounter. On the other hand, not everyone wants to come, either, which is how it often works out.

So who is your family reunion?

Reunions start in the heads and hearts of people who are committed to their family. One person is usually the spearhead or spark plug ... the person who sticks to it.

But it is never wise to organize a family reunion alone. It's far smarter indeed, to share the responsibility. Assess interests, skills, talents and specialties in your own family. Don't overlook any age group. For example, kids have access to the Internet and skills that will help elders achieve goals. Evaluate how each family member can contribute in time, talent, skill and money. Then *ask*.

Ask everyone to bring food to a potluck. Ask the genealogist or family historian to make a family tree and a family history presentation. Ask a student to help with a newsletter and ask everyone to help with phone calls.

Most families, particularly extended family reunions, must keep a close eye on money — where it's coming from and where it's going. Ask someone who is a bookkeeper or accountant to handle the money.

Be prepared to confront sometimes thankless tasks, late registrations, and unnecessary complaints. Odds are that your efforts will be well appreciated. Start now, use the suggestions in these

podcasts and on this website and you can expect success short of predicting or controlling the weather!

At Reunions magazine, we are always looking for ideas you've tested at your reunions. Feel free to email them to reunions@execpc.com or send them to *Reunions magazine*, PO Box 11727, Milwaukee WI 53211 or post them at our forum at <http://forums.reunionsmag.com>.

There are lots of ways to communicate about reunions.

If you've never seen *Reunions magazine*, you can request a free copy at www.reunionsmag.com.

Thank you for downloading and listening to this podcast.

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