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Podcast Summary: Why do people have reunions?

Hi. I'm Edith Wagner. I'm editor of *Reunions magazine* and I'm presenting these sessions to help you with your reunion planning.

The purpose of this session is to talk about why people have reunions.

Constructing a reunion from scratch requires answers to the questions: who? where? why? when? how and how much? It takes a commitment to your family or your reunion group and a willingness to work at making a special gathering for some very special people.

A reunion is a gift to your family.

Treat your family to a reunion.

Why you have reunions can be for as many diverse reasons as there are families having them. Yours may start as a gathering for a grandparent's 80th birthday or a 50th anniversary — milestones that deserve the effort for everyone to get together. Many times it's called a reunion and almost always it is so much fun, everyone agrees it should happen again. And then, again turns into again and again and before you know it you have a family reunion tradition. Milestones are always a good reason for

celebrating, reminiscing and learning about family history and a very good reason to start a reunion.

Another very common way for reunions to start is first someone — then many someones — saying, “We must stop meeting at funerals.” There comes a time when we seem to be going to funerals of a whole generation. If you get the idea in time, you can still enjoy and celebrate that older generation. I’ve often heard it said, “If we hadn’t started the reunion, we would have missed those happy times with aunts or uncles so-and-so.”

Margaret L. Smith, Port St. Joe, Florida, wrote that when her dad died her mother was upset to discover that her grandchildren didn’t know one another — which led to their first family reunion.

It’s particularly important for young children to spend quality time with older relatives. They will carry these memories of their link with history and cherish them for a lifetime.

In surveys we’ve done of family reunion organizers, the principal reason cited for having a reunion is to keep the children connected.

Sometimes cousins who grew up attending reunions grow apart as they enter adulthood and get on with their lives. Or siblings don’t see as much as they’d like of one another. Then they start having children and someone decides it’s time to

gather this group again. A reunion becomes the opportunity they've been looking for.

Not everyone is able to get home for major holidays, so many families make the reunion their own special family holiday. In other words, it is understood that you may have other obligations for Christmas, but everyone makes an effort to be with the family for the reunion in July or August when everyone commits to gathering.

Nostalgia and love, memories and laughter are loaded into all reunions. But these events also provide the strength of family that needs rekindling from time to time.

Gail Reed of Washington, DC, explains that the reason — which may be true for many families — for having the 100-member Williams Family Reunion is “to bring together the old and young members of the family in activities designed to promote and retain our history and strengthen family relationships.”

Life has a way of keeping us apart, but a (formal) reunion can be the cement that glues a group back together.

Haven't seen your cousins for a while? Need an excuse to have a reunion? Getting to see everyone is not a bad reason for a reunion. And if you

haven't seen your cousins, what are the odds your children don't know their cousins, either?

Reunions do keep generations connected, which is, after all, the reason often given for why to have a reunion.

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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