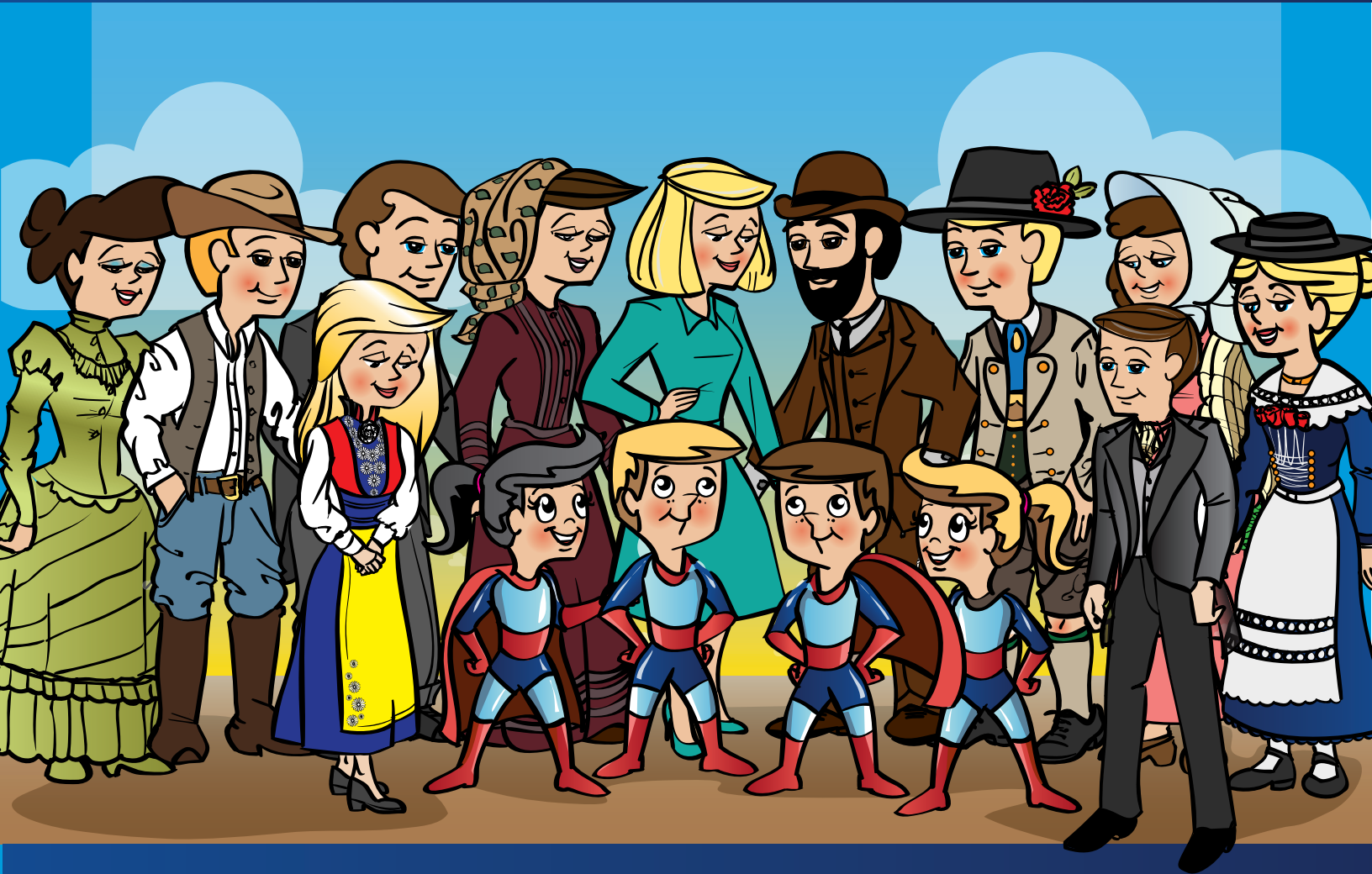


"My Ancestor"

FAMILY REUNION

E-Book



How to have a family reunion that connects generations

Janet Hovorka

Family History for Your Family Reunion



This isn't just another book about how to hold a family reunion. *This book contains the most important piece you can plan for a family reunion—fun, engaging activities about your family history.* When your family spends time learning about their family history together, it creates strong family bonds in a way no other activity can. And guess what? Genealogy can be entertaining and interesting. Inside this book are new ways to look at your family's past that will captivate and teach each person about how important their piece is in the family story. There are plenty of resources out there to help you with general activities for groups. This book will help you plan a family gathering that is more meaningful—one that everyone will remember.

Have you ever been to a family gathering where the kids go off to play together, the teens all sit around and look at their screens and the adults talk in the other room? Or have you ever been to a large family reunion where people didn't know each other well and they were too shy to get to know their distant cousins? *This is the book to show you how to change all that.* Here are some ideas that will have Grandma playing games with her grandchild, aunts and uncles interacting with distant cousins and Grandpa sharing stories with the whole family. A real family reunion has cross-generational activities where everyone gets a chance to interact with their relatives, old and young. Sounds impossible? Keep reading.

At a family reunion you may have a dancer, a football player, a tech geek and people with various other disparate interests. But there is one thing they all truly share—their family history. Learning about your family history together creates a team unity in your family. Your family narrative is the story you share together that no one else can share with you. As you talk about your ancestors, you will find things you have in common with them, things you have in common with each other and you'll learn about what makes you a family. The common identity you share will become connected by the identities of those who came before you. These activities will help you create a family story that everyone can have ownership in and will create a strong family identity for the future.

If you have ancestors who immigrated to a different country, or became a pioneer in a far off place, their children and grandchildren probably didn't grow up learning the family stories at their grandmother's knee. Sometimes the family narrative was lost. Likewise, modern families

can be spread far and wide so that the next generations may be missing the benefits that come from learning about their heritage. Resilience, personal power and a sense of “I can handle it” come from knowing about your family history. With social networking and fun family gatherings we can invent a new way of sitting at grandmother’s knee and give the next generation all the emotional and social benefits their family history has to offer.

Have a great time putting some of these ideas into action at your next family gathering and let me know how it goes. Enjoy the time you have with your family.

Preparations



Publicity

Social Networking Team. In order to have a successful family reunion, you have to tell them about all of the fun you are going to have and then get your family there. Put together a social networking team with some of the older and younger generations of the family to get the word out about your family and your family’s history. A member of the family can set up a family Facebook page, Instagram account and YouTube channel. They can also put together a Twitter account, a blog or a Google+ page. Do a survey of which social networking tools your family members use the most and then focus your efforts accordingly. If family members are spread throughout the different social networking platforms, and you have enough time, consider starting with a blog and then letting your social media team broadcast those blog posts through other social media.

Custom Family Reunion Hashtag. Before you get started with some of the social media ideas below, you might want to designate a hashtag for your family reunion. Something like #FisherGathering15 or #ColsonReunion2015 will help you follow what your family is doing and help you determine the winners of any social media contests you have. Hashtags are labels that help people follow what is going on and search for what your family members have said about the reunion.

Instagram Cousin Tag. Have a contest with your family’s Instagram users to see who can tag the most cousins in a post. You have to follow someone in order to tag them, so the starting person tags all the cousins they follow, and then each of those cousins writes a post with all of the cousins they can tag. The starting person may then learn about other cousins they didn’t know on Instagram and can then request to follow those cousins. As the cousin tag snowballs, you begin to collect a following of cousins. Comments in the posts also expand the connections you have with your cousins. The winner is the person at the family reunion who has tagged the

most cousins in one post. A family reunion hashtag makes it easy to follow who has been following whom.

“Get to Know You” YouTube Channel. Challenge each family to send in a short 3-5 minute video about themselves, their pets, their favorite food, song, activities, etc. If you are comfortable with it, and careful with private information in the videos, you can keep the video “public”. Otherwise, “unlisted” videos could be used but you will need to share the links with family members in order for them to view the videos. The beauty of this activity is that you will get to know those distant family members who you don’t know well. You can have something to talk about with them right when you walk into the family gathering.

Facebook Storytelling Contest. Once you have put together a Facebook page for your family reunion (private by invitation or public) invite your family members to join you in getting excited about the reunion. Post a few intriguing family stories and then invite the members of your family to do the same. Award prizes for the post with the most comments, the most likes, and the best attachment. You could play a “Get to Know You” challenge or “Cousin Tag” game here as well.

Picture Captioning Contest. This challenge works on several different social media platforms. Post a family history photo (or several) and see who comes up with the funniest caption. Votes can be taken online or at the family reunion.

Regular Mail Invitations. Of course not all excitement for the family reunion needs to be confined to the online world. Send out invitations to your family members including pictures of your common ancestors, past reunions or family stories. A photo for a caption contest could be sent and the answers collected at the reunion. You might also advise people about any games you will be playing at the reunion so they can be working on studying the family history or brushing up on their storytelling skills.

Food

Family Recipes. Rather than having a regular caterer or pot luck meal, use some family recipes to reminisce and teach the family about their family history. You could start with some recipes and organize the families to bring certain items, or let everyone bring something they remember. Take some time to let each person introduce what they’ve brought or have cards to label and tell about the recipe on a buffet. If your smaller gathering lasts over several days, you could organize teams to cook each meal and let them choose a meal they remember from previous family history meals. (See the book, *Zap The Grandma Gap*, for the cottage cheese pancakes we often have at family gatherings.)

Family History Desserts and Recipe Exchange. Have each family bring cookies or a dessert they remember previous cooks in the family making. Each family can bring copies of the recipe to share along with the dessert.

Cookie Pedigree. This is still one of my all time favorites. You can see our family's cookie pedigree chart at <http://thechartchick.blogspot.com/2011/08/unique-family-history-presentations.html>. Using cookies, licorice, sprinkles, frosting and M&Ms assemble a pedigree chart with cookie faces for each person. Each person can eat their own cookie at the family gathering.

Cook Together. Did your ancestors use dutch ovens, make tamales, eggrolls, or dip chocolates? If you have the facilities to do it, you could make cooking together part of your family reunion. Sharing Grandma's recipe for wontons is much better if the cousins all get to make them together. Be sure to bring copies of the recipe and share stories about the original cook as you are working. Make sure everyone participates in cleaning up as well.

Decorations.

Charts. Of course I think the best decoration for a family reunion is a family history or pedigree chart. Family ChartMasters (<http://familychartmasters.com>) can help you print out charts with 10-30,000 people and we can color code by branches of the family, add photos, documents or other decorative elements. You can also purchase our card game for a great activity that helps people learn about and explore the chart at <http://zapthegrandmagap.com/charts.html>.

Charts To Collect Family Information. Display a chart with what you know about the family and leave plenty of space on the paper for people to add information about new family members, contact information, social networking contacts or any other family information you want to gather. Family ChartMasters can help you create the chart, you gather the information. Let family members know ahead of time so that they can bring information with them to the gathering.

Map Of Where The Family Lives Now. Use push pins to let each family member show where they live now. Family Atlas software <http://www.rootsmagic.com> can help you plot out the information if you already have it collected, or you can simply purchase a large map and let attendees create the map at the reunion. Colored push pins could be coordinated by branches of the family. You could also color code nametags, t-shirts, bandanas, bracelets, and pedigree charts, etc.

Heirloom Display. Invite your family to bring family heirlooms to display and let them have a show and tell activity. Each heirloom could have a card next to it explaining who it is from or you could take turns with each person telling about the object. Create a space to display the

heirlooms in a safe way. You can make contests with some of the items such as: Guess how many jelly beans in Grandma's vase? How long is Grandma's ball of yarn? How many marbles in Uncle Ben's collection? How heavy are Grandpa's books/tools? How many words are in the newspaper article about Grandpa? How many seeds are in the apple from Grandma's tree? How much did Grandma pay for her tea set? etc.

Photo Table Decorations. Copies of family photos (not the originals) can be used for centerpieces or as part of the table decorations. Check out <https://youtu.be/1qBeC7yKum8> for an easy way to incorporate photos into tablecloths by displaying them under clear plastic vinyl. Or take a look at <http://zapthegrandmagap.blogspot.com/2014/12/making-your-holidays-more-meaningful.html> to see how we created a beautiful table runner using an idea from our Pinterest boards (<http://www.pinterest.com/janethovorka>).

Family Stories and Trivia Activities



Storytelling Contest. Ask the older members of the family to tell an engaging story about someone or something they remember but whom the younger generation doesn't know. Have younger members of the family award prizes for the funniest, most inspiring, most mysterious, most outrageous stories, etc. You may need to put a time limit on each story and warn the storytellers beforehand so that they can prepare. Be sure to capture video or audio recordings of the stories for future generations which can then be posted on YouTube or your family Facebook page or blog.

Story Illustrating Contest. Have an older member of the family tell a story about previous generations of the family and let other family members draw illustrations for the story. Display the illustrations and award prizes for different categories including most colorful, most realistic, most detailed, most inventive, etc.

True or False Storytelling. Ask three family members to tell a family story and ask a fourth family member to tell a false story that sounds true. Have each member of the audience vote on which story is false. This activity can be even harder for the audience when the contestants use pictures. Award a prize to the winning story teller who gets the most votes. At the end, be sure to reveal which story is false so that you don't start any new "family stories."

Family Trivia Board Game. Collect a bunch of family history facts and use them to play your family's favorite board game. Trivial Pursuit works well for this activity, but other board games can be used as well.

Family Trivia Scavenger Hunt. Play a scavenger hunt with family documents (be sure to use copies, not originals). Write one question about each document (such as: how old was Dad in the 1930s census). When the question is answered, give a clue about where the next document is hidden. Hide the questions and documents so that each one leads to the next and the last one leads to some sort of prize for everyone who participated. Optionally, list questions for each document on a worksheet and then give the participants a map showing where the documents are located. Each person can complete the worksheet on their own time and then turn it in for a prize. You can also create a scavenger hunt online and let people work alone or in teams over social networking. Ask questions and give hints to help your family find documents you know exist, and maybe some new ones too.

Family "Amazing Race" Contest. If you are having your family reunion in a location where your family lived, send teams out on an "Amazing Race." Give the contestants a set of envelopes that lead to locations where certain events in your family's history took place (such as Grandma's school, the hospital where your uncle was born, the site of Mom and Dad's first date, the family farm, etc.) Include in each envelope a photo of the place or the people who were there and a short story about the location to read in the car on the way. At each location, the team can take a picture of themselves at the site and post it to an Instagram account, Facebook page, or text it to the contest judge. The first team to visit all locations and get back to the starting point wins.

Family Trivia Sport. Collect a bunch of family history facts and their answers. Combine the questions with your family's favorite sporting game such as croquet or Frisbee golf. At each point in the game the player has to answer a question before they can proceed. You can let them get help from other people, if they need to or play in teams.

Question Beach Ball. Using a permanent marker, write several questions on an inexpensive beach ball. Each person who catches the ball has to answer a question before throwing it to someone else. Questions can involve family members, such as: name three of your first cousins, name two family members who look like each other, name two family members and their favorite hobbies, tell how you are related to the person who passed you the ball, etc. Likewise, questions could involve memories, such as: name the occupations of three ancestors, tell a funny story about Grandpa, name three places the family has lived, tell three characteristics of our family, etc.

Family History 20 Questions. Play 20 Questions with your family by encouraging them to guess some aspect in your family history. The answers could be a particular ancestor, a place

your family has lived, a special heirloom your family has preserved or a story that everyone knows. Let the players uncover the answer with yes or no questions and award a prize if they can come up with the answer in less than 20 questions.

Guess the Heirloom. If you have any unique antique heirlooms in your family, you could teach the younger generations what life was like with this game. Antique kitchen tools, building or repair tools or photos of your ancestors with these items could be used. Have each participant fill out a slip of paper with their guess about what the item was used for and award prizes to everyone who answers correctly. Or play 20 questions with the items in a group. Gather everyone to explain the answer to what each item is and perhaps give a demonstration on how it is used.

Games Your Ancestor Would Have Played. Playing classic children's games can be a good cross-generational activity. Have the older generation teach the younger generation how to play Marbles, Cats' Cradle, Hopscotch, Hot Potato, Duck Duck Goose, Mother May I?, Simon Says, Pick-up Sticks, Rock Paper Scissors, Tic-Tac-Toe, Tiddlywinks or any other game your family remembers playing.

Family Story Musical Chairs. Using an inexpensive camera, set the automatic timer to go off and take a picture. Players sit in a circle and pass the camera around the circle facing the players. When the camera goes off and takes the picture, that family member has to tell a short story about their parents' family. Play one round for a story about the captured person's parents, one round for a story about a sibling, grandparents, etc. This game can also be played with a video camera and music or a self timer. Capture the stories on video as well. After the activity, share the photos and/or videos online.

20 Heirlooms on a Tray. Place several small family heirlooms (such as photos, tools, kitchen items, etc.) on a tray. Cover the tray with a cloth or keep it in another room until game time. Bring out the tray and let your family members study it for approximately 2 minutes. Then cover or remove the tray and have each participant try to list as many items they can remember on a piece of paper. After everyone has completed their list, bring the tray back and describe the significance of each item. The participant with the most correct items on the list is the winner. In another version of this game, the tray is taken in another room and one item is removed. When the tray is returned, the person who can name the missing article wins. You could also choose a model and create the game using articles of clothing or jewelry from an ancestor, letting the participants list the items once the model has left the room. Be sure to tell participants where the heirlooms come from.

Who Remembers? If your family often gathered at one relative's place, you could quiz your family members on what the family house was like. Ask trivia questions about familiar objects such as: How many couches were in the front room? Was there a dishwasher? How many trees

in the back yard? Name a flower from the window box, etc. Pictures of the home help bring this activity to life for younger family members and help settle arguments when necessary. The person who answers the most questions correctly gets a prize.

Family Photo Activities



Guess the Location/Person. Collect and copy photos of your ancestors and your family's history. (Be careful with your original pictures—keep them safe.) Create a display of photos and let your family members guess the names of the people in the pictures and/or the dates and places the pictures were taken. Give small prizes for each photo a participant gets right, or collect everyone together to discuss the correct answers and give a prize to the person who gets the most guesses right. You could also play this game over social media before or after the reunion. This activity is also great for crowdsourcing photos where identities have been lost.

Puzzle with Family History Picture. Check the internet or your local drugstore photo center to find a place that creates puzzles from photos (they are everywhere). Submit some of your family history photos to have a puzzle made. Create a few puzzles that are harder and a few that are easier for different age groups. Lay the puzzles out at the family reunion for people to work on or divide into teams and have a race to see who can finish the puzzle first.

Family Bingo with Pictures. Using the bingo template in Zap The Grandma Gap Power Up Workbook, create a picture bingo game for your family. You could create the bingo game with ancestors, your modern family, or a mixture of both. Simply cut out copies of headshots for each family member and then tape them to the template and copy. Rearrange the headshot cutouts and copy to make a different bingo card. Repeat this process several times to create as many bingo cards as you need. Then fill a container with slips of paper containing each person's name that is on the bingo cards. Play Family Bingo by calling out the name of each person drawn from the container. The first person to fill a row wins, or the first person to get blackout wins.

Guess Who's Grown Up. Collect photos of several family members as children/babies and a get a matching photo of them now/grown up. Create a display of each photo labeled with a number. See who can guess which baby grew up to be which adult. The person with the highest number of correct guesses wins. You could also play this game over Facebook or Instagram, or the family blog letting participants leave their guesses in the comments.

Who Looks Like Our Ancestor? Find a picture of one of your family's common ancestors as a child. Collect pictures of other modern family members about the same age. Create a display of all the children's photos and have the family vote for which child looks the most like the ancestor. The winner receives a prize. This game could also be played over the family's social networking sites.

Group Photos/Family Photos. Give your family members a chance to capture the history you are creating now. Take a large family photo of everyone at the reunion and/or split up into families and take each family's picture. You could provide costumes or props for a photo booth and let people snap random group pictures. You could also create some old fashioned saloon pictures and dress up like your ancestors using a brown paper backdrop or even your family history location.

Nametags/Place Cards. Once you have collected photos of your ancestors and your family members, use them to create nametags for the reunion or place cards. Use the picture of a common ancestor for each branch of the family (Oh you're Darrell's granddaughter...) or use younger pictures of each person on their name tags. You could also create place cards for table settings, mugs, keychains, mousepads, t-shirts, water bottles, pins, magnets, phone cases, luggage tags, tote bags, etc. See Zazzle.com, CafePress.com or the photo counter at your local drugstore.

Family Fashions. Create a display of your ancestor's fashion style. You might collect photos from different time periods or stick to one time period or even one person (Grandmother's hairstyles, Aunt Bea's hat collection, etc.) Again, creating such a collection could be a great activity to play over social networking before or after the reunion.

Recreate Family Photos. Ask family members to pose in the same situations found in some of your family photographs. You can have youth recreate family photos from previous generations or have older generations recreate the photos from when they were younger. My sisters and I re-enacted some of the photos from our childhood for my mother one Mother's Day and I have never laughed so hard in my life. Watching my little sisters as adults recreating the photos my mother took of them as children was hilarious.

Crazy Pictures That Should Have Been Deleted. Create a display of your family pictures that would have been deleted had your family members owned digital cameras. Photos of a child being silly, accidental photos, wild hair, etc.

Caption Contest. Display a few photos and have a New Yorker style caption contest. Put out slips of paper so people can record their caption and display it next to the photos. Award prizes for the funniest caption, the most true caption, the most sentimental caption, etc.

Pin the Photo on the Family Tree. Draw (or order from FamilyChartMasters.com) a large family tree or pedigree chart. Print photographs for each of the people represented on the tree. Give each participant a photograph and have them attach the photo to the correct person on the chart. This game can be played blindfolded, or just as a challenge to see if your family can correctly identify the pictures. This game could also be played with blindfolds and a map, letting each participant see if they can place a pin closest to the town your family came from. Another version would be to enlarge a family photo and cut out various pieces, letting participants see if they can put the photo back together while blindfolded.

Draw the Family Tree. Give each participant a piece of paper and a pencil. Ask them to draw the family tree with their eyes closed (blindfolds may be necessary.) Vocally walk through each branch of the family and let them draw their best representation of how the family looks. No peeking until you are done. When finished, let them open their eyes and see how well they did.

Family Crest Artwork. Look up your family crest in advance to place on display. You could then provide paper and pens/crayons to see who can draw the closest likeness. Or, find a template of a blank family crest and see what kind of imagination runs through your family as people create how they think your family crest should look. Save the artwork for review at your next family reunion while you are at it.

Family Crafts and Projects



Workbook/Coloring Book. Make copies of the pages from the Family Reunion Edition “My Ancestor” Zap The Grandma Gap Workbooks and create a coloring station for children. Choose the workbook relating to your own family’s cultural heritage and add information specific to your family. Some of the puzzles in the workbooks could be used for older children, some of the more simple pages for younger children. Create a place to display finished pages.

Custom Family Puzzles. Create some workbook pages specific to your own family experience. At puzzlemaker.com you can easily create word search puzzles, cross word puzzles, etc., with family names and places important to your history. At reallycolor.com you can upload family history photos and the website will create coloring pages.

Paper Dolls. Using the paper dolls in the Family Reunion Edition “My Ancestor” Zap The Grandma Gap Workbooks (or order pre-printed paperdoll sheets at zapthegrandmagap.com)

create a storytelling station. You can print modern and super-hero clothing for the dolls at zapthegrandmagap.com/downloads.html. While you are coloring and cutting out the dolls together, take the time to tell stories about your ancestors and then ask older generations of the family to associate each paper doll with an ancestor and tell a story about them.

Gift of Family History Ownership. One of the key aspects of impressing young people with their family history is to give them some ownership of preserving the family records in their own life. Set up a station where youth can create a Scrapbook Album or Memory Box to take home. Provide copies of photos, documents, timelines, trees and decorative scrapbooking supplies so that they can collect and preserve their own history. A personalized souvenir of the reunion could spark a lifetime interest in genealogy.

Time Capsule. Create a time capsule for a future family reunion. Ask each family to bring something meaningful from their life to add to the collection. Let each family member add a prediction about what their life will be like at the designated opening time. The date selected to open the time capsule could be far in the future, or fairly close. Collect everything into an archival box and label it with the date of the future family reunion. Entrust the time capsule to a responsible family member and make sure everyone knows to save the date for the grand opening.

Family Magnets. Purchase some quarter-sized glass stones that are flat on one side and print some small photos of your ancestors in the corresponding size. Using tacky glue, attach the photo to the flat side of the stone and then attach a magnet to the back of the photo. You can see instructions at <http://zapthegrandmagap.blogspot.com/2013/07/magnetic-family-tree-puzzle-easy.html>. Upon returning home, each family can create a family tree on the refrigerator.

Scour the Craft Store. Many craft ideas can be tweaked to include a family history theme. Browse the craft store or Pinterest for children's activities that can be used with family photos, documents or a family theme. Look for projects related to your ancestor's nationality, life experiences or time period.

Interview a Generation. Set up a couple of comfortable chairs in a location with good lighting and a video camera on a tripod. Let family members interview each other and tell stories and sing songs together. You could provide sample question prompts or a specific topic to talk about or just let family members come up with their own. Post the videos on the family website or YouTube. Create a YouTube channel of family memories. These videos are great to share online after the reunion or watch together at the next reunion.

Recipes Collection. Ask participants to bring a family recipe they remember from their childhood. The recipe card page from the Zap The Grandma Gap Power Up Workbook could be

used to incorporate a description of the original cook and a photo. Determine how many copies would be needed to distribute to everyone in the family and let each attendee assemble their own family recipe collection.

Family Joke Collection. Any of the collections in this section can be assembled outside the reunion—either before or after the event. You could use social media to create the collection, or send out papers to fill out. Collections can also be assembled at the reunion. Let family members jot down a favorite joke while they are at the reunion to be assembled and distributed by a volunteer afterwards. Or ask family members to bring a number of copies of their favorite joke printed on a predetermined size paper (recipe card, 8.5x11, etc.) for distribution at the family gathering.

Family Wisdom Collection. Ask the older generation of the family to bring one page of advice to future generations. Provide a copy machine and assemble together with page protectors or a three hole punch and binders.

Family Music Collection. If your family is musical, collect video or audio recordings of some of your family's favorite songs. (These could be collected while performing in a family talent show.) Distribute the music throughout the family in a format most likely to be used. Post the music to your family's social media channels.

Family Photo Collection. Take the opportunity to collect and share family photos. Ask everyone to bring the family history photos that they own. Bring a computer and scanner and involve the family in the process by hooking up to a projector so that attendees can watch the photos being scanned. Consider saving in two versions—one a clean digital scan, and one with writing identifying the people, places and dates of the photo. If there is enough time, flash drives could be created for each family to take home.

Family Auction to Benefit a Family Scholarship Fund or Family Reunion Fund. Ask your family members for donations for a family auction. Family history items such as quilts, decorative family tree charts (like those from FamilyChartMasters.com) or family books, scrapbooks, etc., could be important items. Family members could also offer experiences together, such as a special visit with Grandma and Grandpa, or time pursuing a hobby or taking a class together. Have your most animated family member lead an auction, or do a silent auction to collect funds for a family scholarship or for the next family reunion. A family scholarship fund could be an ongoing fund for future family education or a fund that is borrowed against and paid back when the education is complete.

Health Survey. Create a family health survey to find out more about health trends in your family. Family members could answer the survey on paper, or electronically through SurveyMonkey.com or a Google Doc survey. If you have a health worker in the family they

may be able to collect the surveys before the reunion and prepare a presentation about the findings or you might hire a professional outside the family to analyze the information. Discuss what the family can do to be healthier.

Family DNA Collection. Obtain DNA collection kits from Ancestry.com or FamilyTreeDna.com. Collect DNA samples from the oldest generation and any younger members of the family who are interested. Make sure the participants know the tests are public and could connect with any genetic relatives including adoptees or other family members. Send the kits in approximately 2 months before the reunion so that you can discuss the results at the reunion, or collect the samples at the reunion and distribute the information afterward through your family's social media channels. Compare ethnicity estimates and look for new clues about your family's ancestry.

Family Programs and Shows



Family History Skits. Using simple or elaborate costumes and props to reenact some scenes from your family history. Choose a particularly memorable or inspiring moment from your shared past, and have the younger generation put on a show.

Family History Prezi Presentation. Collect family photos, videos and stories into a Prezi.com presentation. (Ask a younger family member to help assemble the presentation if necessary.) Tell about the immigration of an ancestor, or a particularly hard challenge that a family member overcame. Or focus on the timeline of one ancestor and experiences they had in their lifetime. Deliver the presentation to your family with an LCD projector and make the presentation public and share it over your family's social media so they can view it again later.

Google Earth Presentation. Place your family history into a geographical context with a tour of where your family came from. Include photos, videos and map overlays to describe what your family's past was like. Present your production to the family in a special show with an LCD projector.

Talent Show. Ask your family members of all ages to participate in a family talent show. Be sure to record the show for future generations to enjoy. Include acts of all different kinds of talents and display space to share other artistic and creative talents.

Videos of Ancestors. Gather the family for a family history movie night. Designate a member (or a few members) of the older generation to narrate any silent movies and explain who is in

the movie and where and when the film was taken. Decide together on a preservation plan for your family videos.

Funniest Home Videos. Ask your cousins to bring their funniest family video for a movie party. Award prizes for the funniest, most unlikely, most embarrassing/never to be shown outside the family, etc.

Family Lip Sync. Using music from the 40s, 50s, 60s or 70s create a lip sync contest. Let family members or groups act out the lyrics. Or you could have a combined sing along to some of the family's favorite songs. The VideoStar App at VideoStarApp.com makes it easy to collaborate together and create lip sync videos as you are doing other activities. Be sure to post your recordings to YouTube and other social media so that family members can enjoy reminiscing about the event later.

Family Jeopardy Game. Easily create a family Jeopardy game or two at JeopardyLabs.com. Create questions on topics from various time periods, places and people in your family's past. You will need an internet connection and projector to play the game. Let the family play in teams or as individuals.

Heirloom Show and Tell. Ask each member of the older generation to bring one item from their family history to play "Show and Tell." You may need to use an LCD projector for everyone to be able to see small objects or pictures that each participant wants to show off.

Family YouTube Channel. Be sure you are creating new family history for the next generation to enjoy by preserving the audio and video of these family history presentations. Record the talent show, the family lip sync and the family history skits and share them with family members or upload them to your family YouTube channel.

Game Rotation. Many of the activities in the preceding sections could be set up in a rotation. Choose activities that take similar time to complete and break the family up into smaller groups so that each person gets to participate. Ask someone to be in charge of facilitating each activity and let the groups rotate between activities after a designated time at each station.

Learn a family skill. Ask someone to teach your family how to do something your ancestors did. It may be playing a musical instrument, a handicraft, dancing, a sport, cooking or gardening, etc. Your expert could be a family member, or you could hire someone outside the family that knows the skill or talent. Have a class where participants get to do some hands-on practice or take home a project they complete. Be sure to show pictures and tell stories about the people in your family who demonstrated that talent or skill.

Get to Know You Game

Instructions: Copy/Print and cut out the cards for this game, making extra copies as needed. As your family arrives at the reunion or any other time you have a break in the activities, pass out a card to each family member. Challenge them to answer the question on the card by talking with other people at the gathering.

Find the married couple that has been married the longest and ask them their engagement story.

Find a relative who speaks another language. Ask them how they learned it and have them speak to you in this language.

Find a relative with a first cousin once removed.

Find someone who is a grandma, but not your grandma. Ask how many grandchildren she has and where they live.

Find a great-grandparent and their great grandchild. Find out how many years difference there is between them.

Find a relative who was born while one of their great-grandparents was alive and ask them to share an experience involving that great-grandparent.

Find someone who knows one of your uncles and ask them to tell you a story about him.

Find someone who has a birthday in the same month as yours. How are you related to that person?

Find the youngest person at the reunion. How are you related to them?

Find the oldest person at the reunion. How are you related to them?

Find someone who knew your mom or dad as a child. Have them tell you a story about them as a child.

Find a great-uncle and his grandnephew. Ask them where they were each born.

Find someone who has been married more than once. How are you related?

Find a parent and ask how many children they have, what their names are, and how old the children are.

**Find a brother and a sister.
Ask who their parents are.
How are you related to
them?**

**Find a person you know
and tell them the first
memory you have of them.**

**Find a relative whose name
starts with the same letter
as yours. When and where
were they born? How are
you related?**

**Find your grandparents
and ask them when and
where they were married,
and what kind of car they
had as newlyweds.**

**Find 5 people born in the
same month as you. How
are you related to them?**

**Find someone wearing the
same color shirt as you,
find out how you are
related and then
ask them what their
favorite dessert is.**

**Find someone who has
lived outside of the United
States. Ask them what
country they lived in and
why. How are you related
to them?**

**Find two people who are
first cousins. Who is their
common ancestor?**

Find a relative who is married and ask them to share some information about their wedding day including where and when they were married.

Find an aunt. When and where was she born and who are her siblings?

Find a relative who has musical talents. Are there any ancestors in the family who share that same musical talent?

Find a relative who is or has been an athlete and ask them which sport they played.

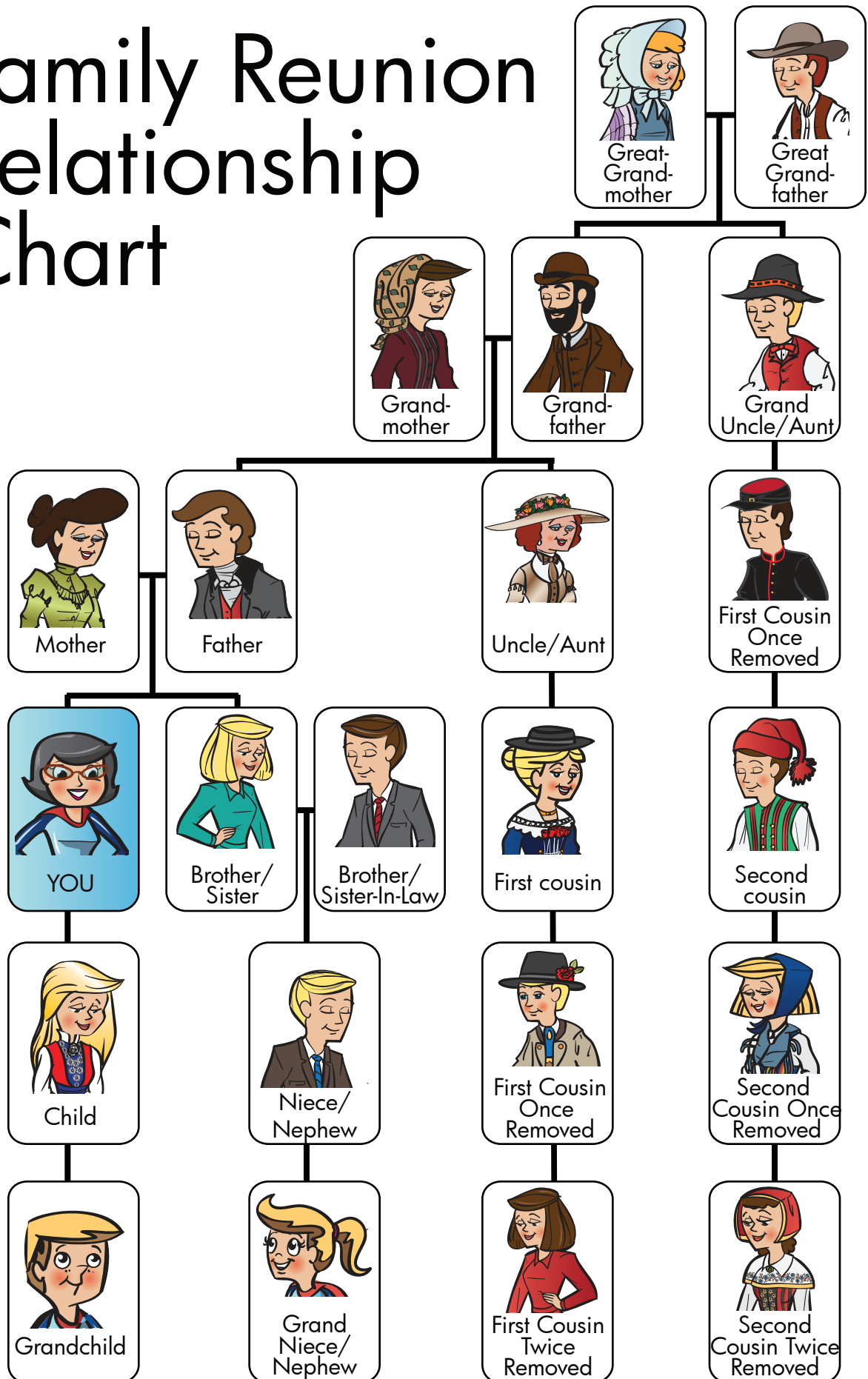
Find someone who can tell you where they were on September 11, 2001. What were they doing?

Find someone who can tell you about their experience serving in the military.

Have someone tell you their favorite song from the 1960's.

Find someone who can tell you a story about your grandfather.

Family Reunion Relationship Chart



Where Can I Learn More?

Best of the best family reunion how-to websites.

family-reunion.com

Wonderful website with all sorts of ideas from the people at RootsMagic. Also check out their family reunion planner software at rootsmagic.com.

gatheredagain.com

Laura Phelps has written a beautiful website to accompany her book. Ideas for activities, food, locations and much more.

reunionsmag.com

Popular magazine website gives resources for exciting places to hold your reunion. Lots of amazing ideas.

family-reunion-success.com

Extensive planning website that includes e-books and e-courses with lots of ideas. She gets the heritage piece.

familytreequotes.com/index.html

Reunion theme ideas with lots of great quotes on family.

genealogy.about.com/od/family_reunions

By Kimberly Powell, also a great starting place for learning about your family's genealogy.

pinterest.com

Search pinterest for great ideas for reunion planning.

Lots of great ideas about reunions from around the web.