

◇ Unit 1
The Family Foundation

Family & Community Involvement

DREAMS THROUGH THE GENERATIONS

People of all ages have hopes, dreams, and goals. Each generation has some dreams that are probably quite different from the next. Still, dreams can run through generations of families in interesting ways. In one family, three generations of women all wanted to be ranch hands or own a ranch when they were young. One way to experience a link with generations of family members is to learn what their hopes and dreams were at different ages.

Directions: Interview your parents/guardians, grandparents, and great-grandparents, if possible. Ask the following questions of each person you interview. Use a tape recorder and then write out their answers later. For each question, be sure to include the person's age and the approximate year that their dreams or goals were achieved.

1. What dreams or goals did you have as a young child?
2. What dreams or goals did you have as a teen?
3. What dreams or goals did you have as an adult in your 20s? In your 30s? In your 40s? In your 50s? In your 60s?
4. Which of your dreams or goals were realized?
5. Which ones weren't and why?

Be sure to thank each person for taking the time to share their dreams and goals with you.

- Now it's your turn. Write down your dreams or goals today.

- What have you learned about your parents/guardians or grandparents that you did not know before?

- Did you find any dreams or goals that run through the generations? If so, what are they?

You might want to use the material from your interviews to create a book that you can continue to add to over the years. Who knows? Someday in the future, your child may ask you these very same questions.

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A TIME LINE OF YOUR LIFE

There are different ways to record important events in your life. Some people do it by keeping a journal. Other people take photos. Another way is to create a time line of the significant events in your life. A time line is visual. It can be color-coded. It also enables you to see patterns.

Sit down with people close to you and brainstorm significant events that happened each year from your birth to the present. These events might include special friends, pets, injuries, awards, dreams, moves, special moments, vacations, losses, and ideas about life.

Directions: When you are finished brainstorming, begin to map your time line on a large sheet of paper. Most time lines are horizontal, but you can decide how you want yours to be. Divide it by ages, and then write or illustrate your items. You can use colored markers, paint, or stamps to create this map of your life in the way that works best for you. Like a fingerprint, there is no other time line like yours in the entire world. When you finish, examine it and answer the following questions.

1. What strikes you about it at first glance?

2. What are you most proud of?

3. Do you see any patterns? If so, what are they?

4. Would you like the patterns to continue, or would you like to start changing them now?

Family Time Line

Work with your family members to make a family time line. What have been the major events so far? Funniest times? Most challenging times? What signposts would each family member add in the future to represent his or her long-term goals? This activity will probably be a great experience for everyone, and the finished product will be a special family artifact.

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INVENTING THE FUTURE

Where are we headed? It's time to take a look. Talk to family members about their views on the social issues faced in the twenty-first century. Some of these issues are listed below. Feel free to add others to the chart.

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY ISSUES	
population shifts	
hunger	
loss of natural resources	
global currency	
educational choice	
pollution	
unemployment	
health care	
technological developments	
genetic engineering	

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1. Which issue would you most like to be responsible for helping solve in your lifetime? What ideas do you have on the subject now?

2. Were any of these issues of concern to your parents/guardians or grandparents when they were your age? What other issues would have been on their lists?

3. In spite of all these issues, what gives you the most hope about living in the twenty-first century? Why?

Use the library or the Internet to find some current facts and statistics on some of these issues. Then, consider volunteering in an organization that is working on the issue of greatest interest to you now. Remember, everyone can make a difference in the world.