

20 Proven Ways...



...to Get Your Family Involved in Family History

1. Make a habit of telling your family stories about your childhood, parents, grandparents, etc. Get out the photo albums and reminisce. If you tell stories about loved ones, even ones that are gone, your children will feel like they know them.
2. *Google* the places where your ancestors lived or died. Try to visit them if you can. Plan family vacations around places that have significance to your family history. Visit battlefields, farms, homes, parks, schools, etc.
3. Visit cemeteries and find the graves of your ancestors. Look for other graves with family surnames and record the information. Take photos. Do rubbings of the tombstones with chalk or crayon. Visit museums near the cemeteries.
4. Put photos of your ancestors in places where your family will see them and ask about them. You can even use online services to put your ancestor photos on t-shirts, quilts, pillows etc.
5. Attend family reunions whenever you can. Explain how you are related to your family. Keep in touch with cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents and share stories about *your* family with them.
6. Let your children help you research your family history. Younger ones can read microfilmed documents for the relevant surnames. Older ones can help you enter the information online and do research.

Try Something Big...

Deputize Young Family Journalists



Get other members of your family on the family history beat by deputizing them as “family journalists” at your next big family gathering. Buy pocket notebooks and pencils and disposable cameras (and paper fedora’s if you can find ‘em!) and give them out to your children with an assignment to interview a particular older member of your family. If you need help coming up with questions for them to ask, look here: <http://bit.ly/2tp4U2>. Assemble their notes and photographs on an easy blog (see <http://wordpress.com> or <http://blogspot.com>) for all to see or in a print newsletter.

7. Keep a journal yourself and encourage your family members to make journal entries. Read to them from the journals your ancestors kept.
8. Have your children help you make a video of you interviewing your oldest living relative. Ask questions about what things were like when they were little and how things have changed.
9. Make copies of your family history charts and family histories for your family. Invest in colorful charts (fan charts are fun) that make it easier for everyone to see the names and relationships.
10. Look for items related to your family history on *Ebay* or other online auction services. Maybe there is a sign from the orange grove where an ancestor worked or an emblem from a World's Fair they attended.
11. Share your excitement when you make a discovery in your family history research. Your family cares about you and will be excited for you. Be careful not to bore them, though, by talking about nothing else!
12. Keep family mementos and get them out every once in a while to look at them. Pass them around for your family to see and touch while you tell stories about their significance.
13. Doing family history is like a cross between hide-and-seek and a jigsaw puzzle, so play those games with your younger children. Make copies of photos (with birth and death dates and places on them) and hide them for the little ones to find. Or print ancestor photos and have them cut into puzzles. Have them find those ancestors on a chart.
14. Use photo editing software to detect the edges of family photos and ancestor photos and turn them into coloring pages for your littlest family members to color. Tell them stories about the people they are coloring.
15. Find out what your ancestors' occupations were or their physical features were and compare them with living members of your family today. Causes of death can also be interesting topics of conversation.
16. Do a "genogram": Explain why one child has red hair, where their athletic or musical ability came from, which ancestors had blue eyes, etc.
17. Find the ship passenger list of an ancestor and then find a picture of the ship they came over on. Trace the voyage the ship took on a map.
18. Create a family calendar with key events from family history written on the dates. Put ancestor photos on the top part of the calendar. Give copies of the calendar to family members as gifts.
19. Keep track of when your children are the first person in their family to do something (like graduate from university or play a particular sport). Put their achievements in the context of their family history.
20. Keep track of family traditions. At holiday time, remind your family why you do certain things the way that you do. Holidays are great times to feel connected to family history.

The Video Chain Letter



With the ease of making and posting video (most cell phones are now equipped with video cameras

and sites like youtube.com make posting and sharing videos easy) the time has come for the Family History Video Chain Letter. Start by asking family members what they remember about a particular event in your recent family history (like the birth of a child, time with a recently deceased grandparent, or a particularly special family vacation from years ago). Make a dedicated channel on Youtube or Vimeo (see <http://bit.ly/bFkOaP> to learn how) and share the password with your family members so they can all upload their own video reminiscences and watch everyone else's. Distribute the link and password as widely as you can.

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The Family History Cookbook



One of the most unique elements of family culture is what you eat! Family recipes are a great

way to capture and share family traditions between generations. Is there a bread recipe in the family that great grandma used during the great depression? Do you have a traditional dish that is served every Christmas or New Year's Day? Start a Family History Cookbook by collecting family recipes. Include the name of the first person to make the recipe and some basic information about that person. Share any memories that come to mind about events when that dish would have been served. Make photocopies and binders so everyone in the family can have one.