

Let's Explore... Our Family

Special Days in Fall

Besides the special holidays of Halloween and Thanksgiving, celebrate other fall holidays with your family.

- Columbus Day, October 12. The discovery of our continent deserves some celebration. Try decorating a cake like a ship or making ship decorations.
- United Nations Day, October 24. Try celebrating with an international meal. How about a Mexican meal with tacos, a Chinese meal with egg rolls, an Italian meal with pizza, or a United Nations meal with foods from all three!
- Election Day (second Tuesday in November). Go to the polls together and vote. Then serve a patriotic meal decorated in red, white, and blue.

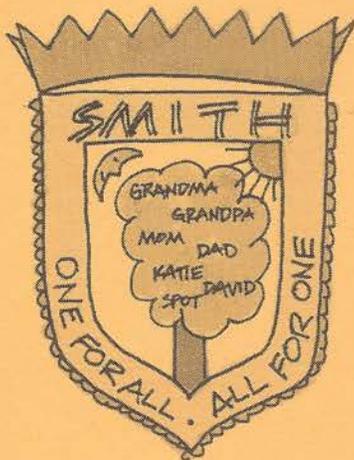


Thanksgiving Collage

Here's a way for your family to focus on the meaning of Thanksgiving.

Collect old magazines, scissors, paste, and paper large enough for the whole collage. (Try a roll of shelf paper.)

While waiting for your special meal or afterwards, give each family member a chance to look for pictures or captions that in some way catch their eye as associated with the meaning of Thanksgiving. Cut out five or ten and paste them on the paper. Then, when everyone is finished, let each person talk a little about what the things they chose meant to them. This will help you focus on the meaning of the holiday and let you get to know each other and yourselves better.



A Family Coat of Arms

A family coat of arms or crest is a symbol of that family's strengths. It is an emblem of family pride in the best sense. If this appeals to you, find a book like *Simple Heraldry* by Moncreiffe and Pottinger, that tells about the ancient practice.

Spend some time talking in your family about what sorts of strengths your family has which it would like to incorporate into a shield. Decide together what to include and how to represent it in symbols.

Exploring Our Heritage

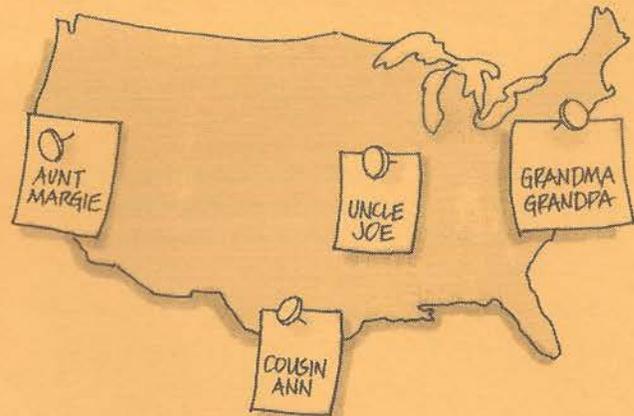
Families come in all sizes and shapes. Some children live with two parents, some with one; or a child may be loved and cared for by people who are not her parents. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins are part of everybody's family.

Each family has a heritage, its own special background, events, people, places, and stories. Find out about your family's heritage by asking older friends and members of your family.

- Most people don't know how they got their last name, but it's fun to guess. Do you have a "son," "uez," or "vitch" on the end of your name, like Davidson? That means the son of David.

- Do you know the names of your grandparents and great-grandparents? Do you know what kind of work each of them did or does? Try to find out from your family.

- Do you know where each person was born? Mark on a map or make a list of the places your parents and grandparents have lived that your family knows about. Are all of the places on a map of the United States or do you need a world map?



Who Decides What?

Who makes the decisions in your family? Should you? Your child? Both together?

Get your family together and give each a piece of paper. For each question, write whether the parent or child makes the decision. Then do it again, this time writing down how you think decisions should be made. Talk about the differences, if any, in your answers. (Add other questions you are interested in.)

Who decides:

- the clothes you buy?
- what is eaten at meals?
- who your friends are?
- what time you go to bed?
- how much TV? what shows?
- what you read?

Face Chart

On a large sheet of construction paper, have family members draw pictures of themselves looking angry. On another sheet of paper, have everyone draw pictures of themselves looking happy. Tape both pictures side by side on a wall and discuss the circumstances in which both sets of feelings occur.

Other Activities for Our Family: