The Journal Jar
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The journal jar is an activity where students/members are given the opportunity to write their “life story” and in the process learn more about themselves and their family.

Instructions:

1. Read topics and choose those that fit your student dynamics and project needs. Cut topic ideas into strips, fold and place into a large jar and close lid.

2. Each day or meeting, a slip or slips are drawn from the jar. Students write the question, then write or type their answer to the question. (They could also ask these questions to family members)

3. Students will need a place to keep their record of thoughts and memories. (It is also helpful if they are in a format that will allow them to arrange and rearrange them after the jar has been emptied of all the slips of paper) Some ideas are:
   a. On the computer.
   b. On index cards, then stored in a sack or box (I like to have them decorate these with items describing them. This can be another activity of its own.)
   c. In a journal or notebook, be sure to write on one side of the page only so that you can cut them apart later.

4. Once the Journal Jar has been emptied the students arrange their entries and find they have written their life story. These can be typed and bound for a very nice autobiography.

This is an activity for the classroom and FCCLA chapter. It can be incorporated into national programs like Power of One and Families First and with some creativity many more.

**JOURNAL JAR TOPICS**

Describe a trip downtown as a young person. Describe walking down the main street.
Tell about your life as the children left home. What did you do with the extra time?
Where is the farthest place from home you have traveled? Tell about it.
Tell where you went to grade school. Do you have any special memories?
What is the most wonderful thing that ever happened to you? What is the worst?
Where do you like to go out to eat?
Did your parents or grandparents raise any animals, chickens, etc? Tell about them.
Describe the perfect summer day. What would you do on that day?

Do you plan to go to college or take special training? If so, what, when, and where?
Describe a childhood Christmas.
What lessons did you learn as a child that has carried over into your life?
What happened on the day you took your test for a driver’s license?
Where were you and what was a typical day like at age 19?
Describe a sound from your childhood. What was it and what does it bring to mind?
List each of your uncles and aunts and tell one thing about them.
Where did you live as a child? Describe the city, suburb or rural area.
What is your favorite flower?
What were your dreams growing up
What was your first job? Tell about any special stories.

Did your mother work? Did she have any hobbies?

What did your father do for a living? Describe his typical work day.

What convinced you most to choose your spouse?

Tell about a fascinating experience you’ve had while doing laundry.

Tell a family story that has been handed down to you.

Describe your yard as a child and what you did there.

Tell about a favorite vacation from your childhood.

Do you remember your grandparents? Great Grandparents? Any stories?

What makes you feel good? (Occasions, people, food, etc.)

When shopping with your mother, where did you like most and least to go?

Where were you and what was a typical day like at age 11?

One word on how to live successfully would be what?

Did you have roommates or companions in college? Tell about them.

Tell about all of the places you have worked.

Tell about some of the most notable people in your hometown.

Do you have a special school memory? High school or college?

Write about some place you went with just your father and what you did there.

Do you prefer to correspond by email or would you rather send a regular letter?

Tell which radio or TV programs you liked best while growing up.

Tell about the births of your children.

What did your family do for entertainment when you were a child?

Tell about any exciting experiences in scouting, 4-H, or other such activities.

Tell about the changes you have seen in your lifetime – technology, fads, etc.

Tell about dreams, expectations, and hopes you have for each of your children.

What personality traits do you admire most in others?

What was your greatest joy?

Were you in a band and/or choir? What memories do you have of that?

Did you have a childhood hideout? Describe where, when, and what it looked like.

Where would you like to live most of all and why?

Did you have a bicycle? What was it like?

Describe a typical day in elementary school.

Tell about your mother – personality, characteristics, stature, talents, etc.

What do you like to do in your spare time? What hobbies do you have?

Did you have a favorite toy as a child? Did it have a name?

What is your personal secret for happiness?

How do you feel about death? Tell about your philosophy of life.

What is your favorite piece of furniture?

Describe each of your children and tell something about them.

Where were you and what was a typical day like at age 27?

What do (did you do for a living? How did you choose this occupation?

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How do you feel about dentists? Why?
What kind of extracurricular activities did you participate in as a child?
What is the biggest lesson in life you have found to be true?
Tell about your first experience flying in an airplane.
Tell about your early romances.
Do you remember a special birthday party you had, gave, or went to?
Were you responsible for any household chores? What were they?
What special events took place in your neighborhood while you were growing up?
Describe a childhood birthday.
Tell about your father – personality, characteristics, stature, etc.
Describe a favorite childhood friend and some things you did with him/her.
Where would you like to vacation most and why?
What is the most adventurous thing you have ever done?
Have you ever seen the ocean? Which ones and under what circumstances?
Write the words of a song from your childhood. What memories does it bring back?
Describe the perfect winter day. Tell about the activities you would do on that day.
Tell about a frustrating experience you’ve had with a car.
What do you think brings good or bad luck?
Where is the most exciting place you have ever been? What made it exciting?
Describe a typical day during your high school years.
Do you recall any outstanding family trips you experienced as a child? Describe.
Write about a place you went with just your mother and what you did there.
How do you feel about doctors and why?
Do you like rainstorms? Why or why not?
What is your secret for good health?
What do you fantasize about being or doing?
Did you go camping as a child? Tell about any experiences you had.
What is the most frustrating experience that ever happened to you?
Did your family go to movies together while growing up? Tell about it.
Did you do as a child that got you into the most trouble with your parents?
Tell about your marriage plan i.e. when, where, by whom, reception, colors, etc.
Describe the most serious illness you have had.
Tell about any conditions surrounding your birth.
Hat is one of your favorite smells and why?
Hat was a favorite place to go with your family when you were young?
Hen were you a child, where did your family go for picnics? Tell about them.
Do you have a favorite author? What kind of stories do you like to read?
Do you serve in the military? If so, where and when?
Describe the perfect autumn day. What would you do on that day?
Do you like grade school? How about junior high and high school?
About some of your neighbors as an adult. Are there any special stories?