

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 you did 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 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 kind of music do you like?

What would you like to be remembered for?

What is your advice to those younger than you?

Do you remember your first date? Tell about it.

Do you have a close relationship with any of your grandparents? Tell about it.

Tell about some of your neighbors when you were a child.

Describe your first crush. What was he/she like?

What memories does Thanksgiving as a child bring back?

Tell about your parents' philosophy on raising children, discipline, rules, etc.

What makes each of your brothers and sisters special? Be specific.

How many brothers and sisters do you have? Tell a story about each of them.

What things do you enjoy doing today that you enjoyed doing as a child?

Where were you and what was a typical day like at age 15?

Tell about getting a haircut as a child. Did you go to a barber or get it cut at home?

Describe your mother's wedding dress. What do you know about her wedding?

What did you want to be when you grew up? How did it turn out?

Tell about special anniversaries that you remember.

Tell about a special date you had with a boy/girl friend.

What is your favorite animal? Tell why.

Did you wish you had more brothers and sisters? Why?

What do you know about how the Great Depression affected your family?

Does your father have any hobbies or special talents?

What is the one invention you could not live without and why?

Where were you and what was a typical day like at age 7?

What did your grandfather do for a living? Did your grandmother work?

Tell about favorite games you played as a child.

What was your favorite Sunday activity as a child?

Was there a special saying that your father always said?

Tell about family reunions.

What was your most embarrassing moment?

What changes in clothes and fashion have you seen during your lifetime?

What kind of music lessons do you wish you could have taken? (Piano, violin, etc.)

Describe your favorite outfit/dress as a child.

Tell about home cures or old wives tales for curing hiccups, warts, colds, etc.

Share a principle you have learned or one you have taught.

Tell about the places/towns that your parents have lived in.

Were there any events (world, local or personal) that changed your life?

What are your most precious and deeply embedded customs or family traditions?

What do you remember about being a teenager? What did you do for fun?

Tell about your teenager social life, friends, dances, movies, dating, etc.

What kind of sports did you play, watch, and like as a youth? How about now?

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?

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 adventuresome 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.

What 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.

What are some of your favorite smells and why?

What was a favorite place to go with your family when you were young?

When you were 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?

Did 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?

Tell about some of your neighbors as an adult. Are there any special stories?

Did you have a favorite subject in school? Was there one you dreaded?

How did you like your place in the family? Were you oldest, youngest, middle etc.?

Think back. Was there a teacher or a class that had a great influence on you?

Tell about your family traditions such as Christmas, birthdays, etc.

What was your first car and how long did you own it? Any special stories?

Did you have a favorite radio or TV show as a child or youth?

What are your favorite colors, foods, flowers, activities, hobbies, etc.?

Tell about religious practices in your home.

What do you think about television?

What do you know about how World War I or II affected your family?

Were you ever in a drama, speech, pep, or glee club?

How did your grandparents live? Tell about their typical day.

Where were you and what was a typical day like at age 31?

What was your greatest sorrow?

Where were you and what was a typical day like at age 23?

How do you feel about winning and losing?

Describe a typical school day during your junior high years.

Describe a typical Sunday at your house while you were growing up.

Tell about retirement – when, where, and what will you do with your time?

What are your food preferences? How did they come about?

Have you met or worked with any famous people? Where and when?

Tell about your civic or political activities.

What are you frightened of and why?

What special talents have been handed down in your family (quilting, cooking, etc.)?

Was there a special saying your mother always said?

Do you have a favorite magazine?

What is the most important lesson, message, or advice you've learned?

Tell about how, when, and where you learned to drive.

Do you like to go to the theater, opera, or symphony? Which do you like best?

What is a favorite family place to go with your husband/wife and kids?

When growing up, did you attend any special dances or parties? Describe.

Tell about the houses you lived in during your childhood.

Tell about any pets you had as a child.

Between the ages of five and ten, what was your favorite activity?

Are there any family heirlooms in your possession? Tell about them.

Did you and your mother (father) share any interests in a special activity?

Describe a typical Saturday while you were growing up.

What games did you play in your house or neighborhood?

Did it snow where you lived as a child? What kind of things did you do in the snow?

Describe the perfect spring day and the activities you would do on the day.

Tell about any interesting or important visitors to your home.