

TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION FAMILY DYNAMICS

The family unit is the most important group to which people belong. To belong to a group is a human need. Through this belonging one should be able to give and receive affection and grow as an individual. Family attachment may begin even before birth and goes on after death. (*Child Development, Roles, Responsibilities, Resources*, Prentice Hall, 1990)

During a child's years of growth and development, a family needs to be a dependable, durable, support system. This family unit should provide protection, guidance, stimulation, nurturance, and teach a child how to handle disappointment and adversity. The family is the unit that should teach the basic skills of human relationships through example. Teenagers need a family that can help them make the transition from adolescence to adulthood. At times, this requires all the sensitivity and understanding a family has to offer.

Realistically, all families do not meet the needs of all family members all of the time. Students should realize that there is no one perfect family, but that most families are trying the best they can to meet the needs of all family members. This unit should help students see the strengths of their families.

The family needs to be a group where members enjoy each other's company, have fun together, work together towards common goals, and solve problems together. It is normal for families to go through good times and not so good times. It is also the function of the family to help children become responsible, and learn to work, even if the child sees that as repressive or unfair.

Remember, families come in all different configurations--no family type should be considered perfect for everybody and all other family types inferior. Even if the family type changes, the functions still stay the same.

A homing device is defined as something that helps us "proceed to a source of radiated energy used as a guide". That is the ultimate of what the home and family should be--a source of radiated energy used as a guide.

Notes: For the purposes of this unit, the family referred to implies a family unit living together in a home.

It is important to stress that while teenagers can't change their parents and some of the conditions at home, they can take charge and make changes in their own homes when they establish them.

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY: FAMILY FUNCTIONS TEACHER GUIDE

Ask students the following questions and have them write their answers on a piece of paper:

1. When you were a baby, what did you need to survive?
2. What could have happened if you were left unattended?
3. What could you do for yourself?
4. If you could have designed the best possible setting for yourself, what would it have been?
5. When you were a baby, who fed you? Who provides you with food now?
6. When you were a baby, with whom did you live?
7. When you were young, who taught you to walk, talk and eat?
8. Who paid for your expenses when you were a child?
9. When you are sick, whom do you tell? Why?
10. When you go on vacation, whom do you go with?
11. With whom do you spend Christmas?
12. Who remembers you on your birthday?
13. Who taught you how to ride your first bike?
14. Whom do you like to tease?
15. Who took you to soccer or T-ball practice and games?
16. Who do you ultimately go to when you're in trouble?
17. With whom do you share your successes first?

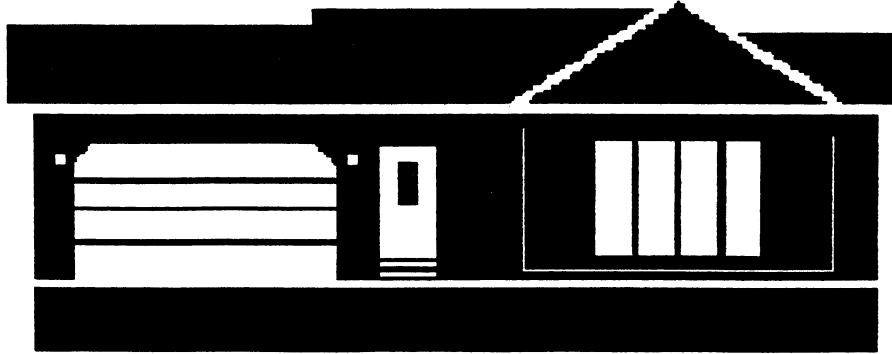
Upon completion, discuss the following concepts:

- Most questions could be answered with mom, dad, siblings, or extended family members.
- Family functions to be focused on are:
 - Care giving- changing diapers, nursing, feeding etc.
 - Providing shelter, clothing, and food
 - Learning traditions
 - Guidance
 - Teaching language and social skills, how to handle situations
 - Providing stimulation,
 - Learning how to have fun, enjoy life.
 - Model positive parenting skills.



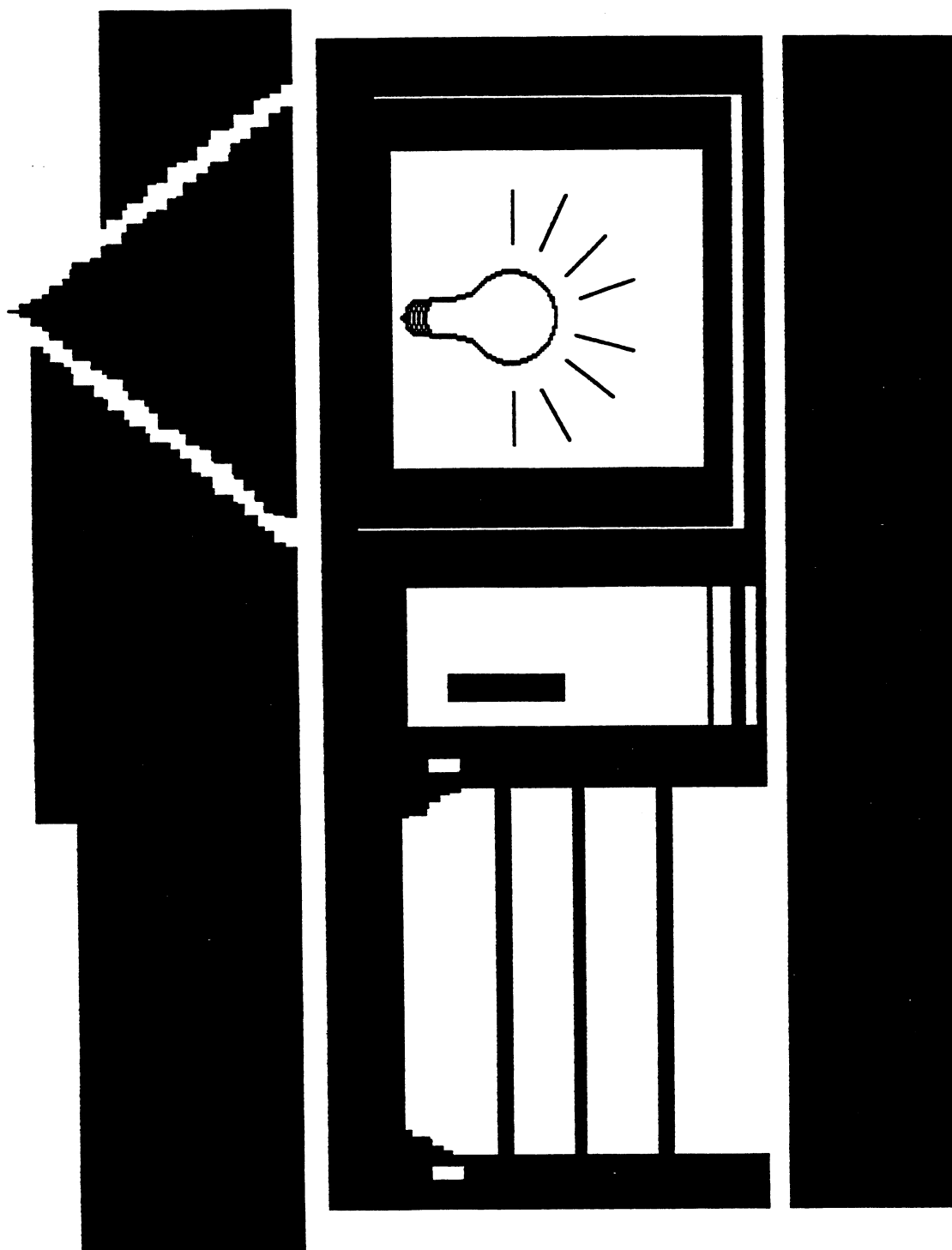
FAMILY

**An individual
or a group of people
bonded by marriage,
blood, or other means
who have established
a household.**



HOME

One's physical residence that serves as a source of shared energy for family members.





**The FAMILY
is the SOUL
of the HOME**

Name _____ Period _____ Date _____

FAMILY FUN

1. What was the "Family Fun Activity" you planned? (Describe briefly.)

2. What day was your activity? What time of day? _____

3. How many family members participated in the activity(ies)? _____

Were there any members who did not participate? _____ How many? _____

Why not? _____

4. Did the family members enjoy the activity? _____

How do you know? _____

5. Did the activity fit into the family budget? _____

Approximately how much money did it cost? _____

6. Do you feel that this activity promoted unity within your family? _____

Why? or Why not? _____

7. Would you consider planning another activity for your family soon? _____

Why? or Why not? _____

8. How do you personally feel about the activity now? _____

F U N ! F U N ! F U N !

FAMILY SETTINGS

Picture this family setting:

Father is working in the cornfield with two sons. The boys are clearing rocks and stumps from the field while the father is breaking up dirt clods and plowing in preparation for planting. Mother is in the house beginning preparations for the evening meal of stew and cornbread cooked over the hearth of the fireplace. The daughters are sweeping the dirt floor, and preparing the lunch basket to take out to those working in the corn field. They will all have lunch together in the field.

In the evening, they sit by the fire and Father may read to the family (if he is literate) from the Bible while Mother and daughters work on hand sewing projects, mending clothes, or darning socks.

The nearest neighbor is several miles away. The family leaves their small farm to go to town for supplies on Saturday, and to attend church services on Sunday. They travel in a horse and buggy.

WHAT YEAR DO YOU THINK IT IS? (1900)

Picture this family setting:

Father is an industrial worker and puts in long hours to secure his job and earn a little extra money. Mother is home taking care of the house, preparing for the evening meal, catching up on the laundry, mending and sewing. The children are in school. When they get home, Mother is there to greet them and ask about their day at school.

The eat the evening meal together and the family members talk about the events of the day. After dinner, the family gathers around the radio to listen to the popular "Fibber McGee and Molly," and "George Burns and Gracey Allen" programs. They also listen to "Radio Free Europe" to hear the news of the day concerning World War II.

They live in a small house not far from Father's work. Most of the neighbors are families similar to theirs in economic, ethnic, and religious background.

WHAT YEAR DO YOU THINK IT IS? (1942)

FAMILY SETTINGS - CONT'D**Picture this family setting:**

Father works all day, stops on his way home to pick up the son from tennis lessons, and they use the car phone to order a pizza-to-go. They arrive home the same time Mother does. Mother has just flown home from a business meeting in another city and is very tired. The older daughter has been home tending the youngest child, and as she goes out the door on her way to her job, she grabs a piece of pizza.

The family eats pizza out of the box while sitting around the T.V. Father takes the youngest child to piano lessons; Mother has a PTA meeting and stops for groceries on the way home.

OR

Picture this family setting:

The children get home from school before Mom is home from work. They warm up a snack in the microwave oven. Mother is working a full-time job and attending school at night to improve her education and therefore increase her earning capacity.

Father is remarried and sees the children only one weekend a month.

Mother comes home after a long day of work and school and is frustrated over the condition of the house, laundry, etc. She never has enough time to take care of it as she would like, and no one else seems to care about all of the clutter.

The children and Mother do their homework together after a quick, simple meal.

WHAT YEAR DO YOU THINK IT IS? (1990's)

**TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND GUIDE
CHANGES IN THE PAST 30 YEARS AFFECTING FAMILIES**

- 1. Women have joined the paid labor force in great numbers.**
 - Women believe both the husband and wife should be able to work.
 - Women choose to pursue career opportunities.
 - Women work because of economic need. A family income of \$18,000 in 1970 would be the equivalent of a family income of \$76,000 in 1990. This is roughly four times the amount of income needed to maintain the same standard of living.
 - Mothers of children under the age of three are the fastest growing segment of the labor market.
 - Two-thirds of single mothers with preschool children are employed, most of them full-time. Preschool child care arrangements are very difficult.
 - Child care is moving increasingly outside the home.
 - Children are often cared for by strangers or near strangers.
 - The transformation of care from home to day care centers was unforeseen, and gave society little time to adjust.
 - Many child care centers are good, but parents need to be very cautious as they choose care providers for their children 8-10 hours every day.

- 2. Couples postpone marriages until they are older and more established in careers, etc.**
 - Parents are older as they start their families.
 - Some couples choose not to have children.

- 3. Single-parent families have become common.**
 - These families usually consist of a mother and child/children.
 - Most children spend part of their childhood in a single-parent family.

- 4. The divorce rate has been as high as 50%.**
 - At least half of all marriages end in divorce.
 - Couples no longer feel a need to stay married for the sake of the children if the relationship is not good..
 - At 16 years of age, almost half of American children will have seen their parents divorce. For nearly half of these, it will be five years or more before their mothers remarry.
 - Close to half of all children whose parents remarry will see the second marriage dissolve during their adolescence.

**TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND GUIDE
CHANGES IN THE PAST 30 YEARS AFFECTING FAMILIES - CONT'D**

- The United States exhibits a pattern of attachments and disruptions in marriage that is certainly stressful for developing children and adolescents.
 - Divorce and remarriage create a complex set of new relationships within families with multiple sets of grandparents, step-parents, step-siblings, step-grandparents, etc.
- 5. Women are not as likely to desire large families.**
- The average family size of the 90's is much smaller than that of the 60's.
 - Women are more career-oriented than their mothers and grandmothers.
- 6. Stereotypical roles for men and women have changed.**
- Women have more career and family options than ever before, and are more assertive about getting what they want.
 - Men assume more responsibility with home and children.
- 7. Teenage girls are having more babies.**
- The rate of pregnancy among young women, especially girls under the age of fifteen is one of the highest among technically advanced nations.
 - Teenage pregnancies account for 2/3 of out of wedlock births.
 - One in ten teenage girls will become pregnant.
 - There are 1.3 million children now living with teenage mothers; 85% of them are not with the baby's father.
 - Eighty percent of all juvenile offenders come from fatherless homes.
- 8. One-fifth (1 in 5) of young American children are raised in poverty.**
- Minority children and children born to teenage parents are at the greatest risk of living in poverty.
- 9. The rate of child abuse and neglect has risen.**
- Teenage parents do not have adequate parenting skills.
 - Teenage parents do not have the emotional maturity to handle the demands of parenting.

Adapted from information written by David A Hamburg, President, Carnegie Corporation of New York; author of *The American Family Transformed*, January/February 1993.

TEACHER GUIDE

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Name _____ Period _____ Date _____

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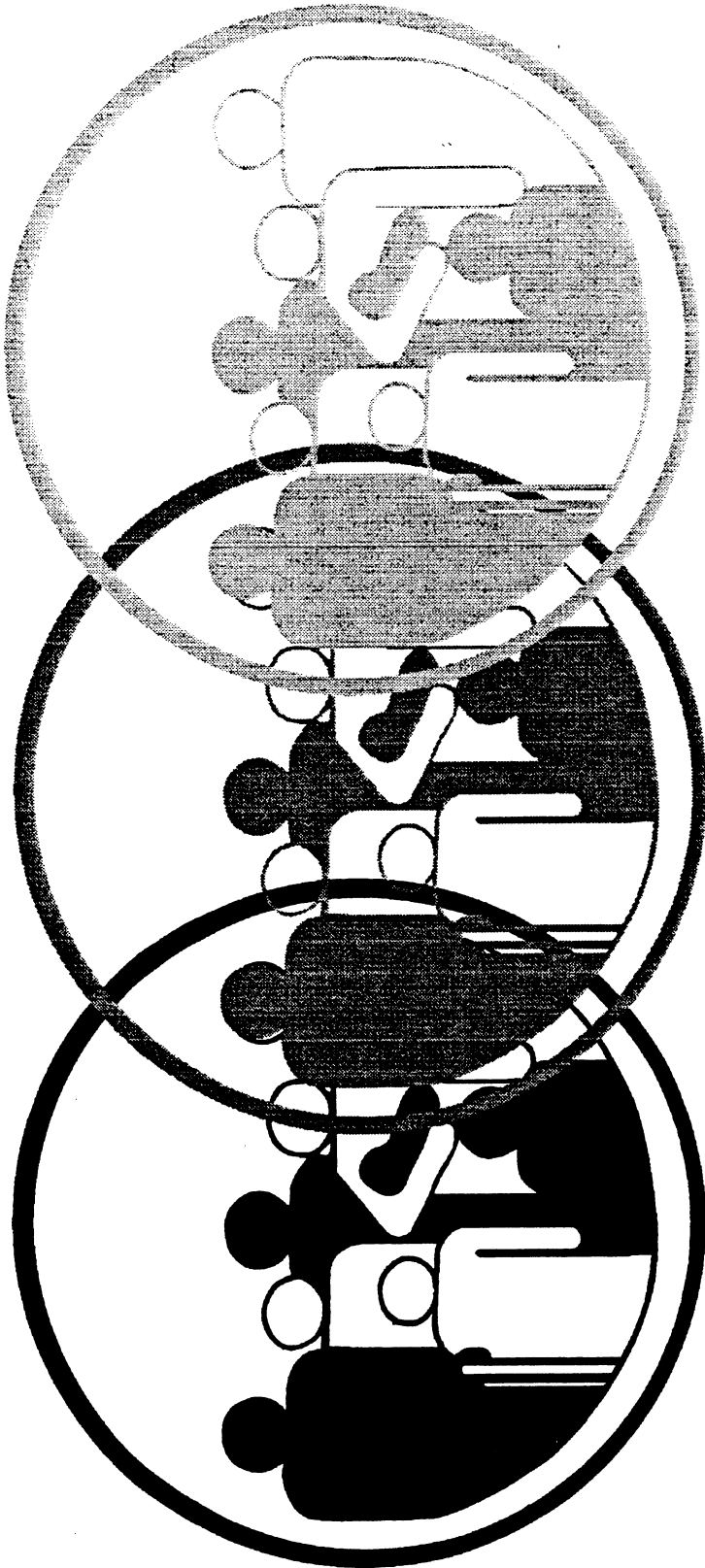
Name _____ Period _____ Date _____

WHAT WAS IT LIKE...?

Directions: Interview a senior citizen (if possible, a family member would be best) and ask him/her the following questions. You may write on the back of the paper, if needed.

1. What was your family like when you were a child?
2. What roles did your father assume in the home?
3. What roles did your mother assume in the home?
4. How do you see husband/wife roles to be different today?
5. What roles did the children assume? What were your chores?
6. What did your family do for entertainment? How much did a movie cost?
7. How many hours a day did your father spend on the job?
8. Did your family take vacations? Why not? (if the answer is no)
9. At what age did you begin earning your own money?
What did you do to earn it?
How much did you earn?
10. What was the biggest challenge families of your day faced?
11. What do you see as the biggest challenge for today's families?
12. What are some changes you see that you like?
What are some changes you see that you don't like?





II-A-28

A NATION IS ONLY AS STRONG AS ITS FAMILIES

MAKING MEMORIES

It was a hectic Saturday in spring, back in the days when the old saying, "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work," was taken very seriously. Outside, Frances' father and the next-door neighbor, Mr. Patrick, were doing chores. Inside the houses her mother and Mrs. Patrick were engaged in spring housecleaning. Such a windy March day was ideal for turning out clothes closets. Already woolens flapped on backyard clothes lines.

Frances was hard at work, but somehow her brothers and the Patrick boys had slipped away with their kites to the back lot. Apparently, there was no limit to the heights to which kites would soar that day. Her mother looked out the window. The sky was piercingly blue, the breeze fresh and exciting. Up in all the blueness sailed great, puffy pillows of clouds. It had been a long, hard winter, but today--today was spring.

Then her mother turned to look at the sitting room, its furniture disordered for a vacuum sweeping. The mother hesitated for a minute as her eyes wavered between her work and the window. Finally, she said, "Come on, girls! Let's take string to the boys and watch them fly the kites a minute." On the way they met Mrs. Patrick and her daughter heading for the back lot and laughing guiltily.

"There never was such a day for flying kites," Frances said. They tied all their string onto the boys' kites, and still they soared. They could hardly distinguish the tiny orange-colored specks. Now and then they slowly reeled one in, finally bringing it dapping and tugging to the earth for the sheer joy of sending it up again. What a thrill for Frances, just a little girl, to run with those kites to the right, to the left, and see their poor earthbound movements reflected minutes later in the majestic sky dance of the kites. She and the other children wrote wishes on slips of paper and slipped them over the string. Slowly, irresistibly, those wishes would climb up until they reached the kites. Surely, all such wishes would be granted!

Frances remembers that even their fathers dropped hoe and hammer and joined them. Her mother's hair, she said, blew out of its pompadour and curled loose about her cheeks. Mingling with the children's fun was something very unusual. The grown-ups were really playing with them. Frances looked at her mother and thought she actually looked pretty. And she was over forty.

They never knew where the hours went on the hilltop. There were no hours, just a golden windy day. Parents forgot duty and their dignity; children forgot their competitiveness and small fights. It was growing dark before they all stumbled sleepily back to their houses. They must have at least done a surface job of tidying up, for Frances said the house looked tidy as always on Sunday.

MAKING MEMORIES - Page 2

The strange thing was, none of them mentioned that day afterward. Perhaps they were embarrassed that any day could mean so much. Frances locked the memory up in the deepest part of her that we all have--that part where we keep the things that cannot be and yet are.

The years went on; Frances grew up and moved far away from her kite-flying hill. Then one day she was scurrying about her own city apartment, trying to get some work out while her three-year-old daughter insistently cried the desire to "go to the park and see the ducks."

"I can't go," she said. "I have this to do and when I'm through I'll be too tired to walk that far." Frances' mother, who was visiting, looked up from the peas she was boiling. "It's a wonderful day," she offered. "Really warm, yet there's a fine, fresh breeze. It reminds me of that day we flew the kites."

Frances stopped in her dash between stove and sink. The locked door flew open and with it a rush of memories. She pulled off her apron. "Come on," she told her little girl. "It's too good a day to miss."

Another decade passed in Frances' life. The world was in the aftermath of World War I. All evening her family had been with one of the Patrick boys, hearing about his experience as a prisoner of war. He had talked freely, but then for a long time had been silent. What was he thinking of? What dark and dreadful things?

"Say," a smile twitched his lips, "do you remember...? No, of course you wouldn't. It probably didn't make the impression on you that it did on me."

"Remember what?" Frances asked.

He answered, "I used to think of that day a lot in prisoner-of-war camp, when things weren't too good. Do you remember that day we flew the kites?"

Winter came, and Frances had the sad duty of paying a condolence call to Mrs. Patrick, recently widowed. She dreaded the call. She couldn't imagine how Mrs. Patrick could face life alone. At the visit they talked a little of their families and changes in the town. Then Mrs. Patrick was silent, looking down at her lap.

Frances cleared her throat. Now she must say something about the loss, and Mrs. Patrick would surely cry. But when Mrs. Patrick looked up, she was smiling. "I was just

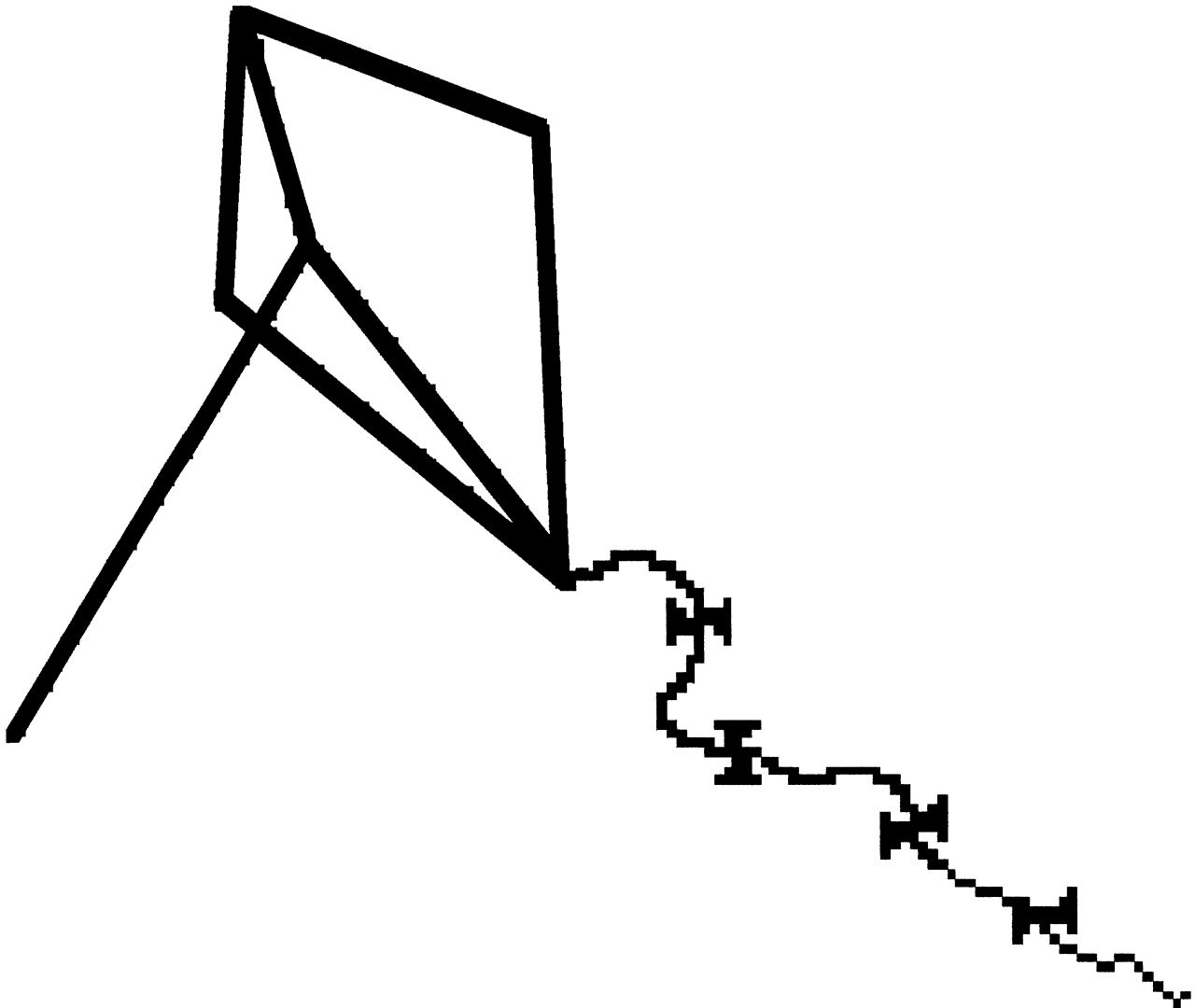
MAKING MEMORIES - Page 3

sitting here thinking," she said. "Henry had such fun that day. Frances, do you remember the day we flew the kites?"

A kite-flying day. What was so special about the one day when work was left behind and memories were made? Why did one day sustain so many people through many decades of time?"

What can you do to help your families make a memory?

This story is printed in "Look At Your World" by Paul H. Dunn/ Mariene Ward - Publishers Press, Salt Lake City, Utah 1978



TIED UP IN KNOTS TEACHER DIRECTIONS

1. Divide the class into small groups of at least five (5) or more family members.
2. Have them designate their roles. (i.e., father, mother, teenager, grandparent, child)
3. Have each family stand roughly in a circle.
4. Father begins with a ball of string or yarn (one ball per group). He ties the end to his hand, and passes the string to a family member who wraps the string around his/her hand, and passes it back to father.
5. Father continues to pass string to each family member until he is tied to each one.
6. The string is then passed to the other members until everyone is tied to each other. Everyone remains tied until the entire activity is finished.
7. A family situation or problem is given to the class. Each group discusses the problem for a few minutes. As the discussion progresses, groups should observe what happens to their strings. When there is tension or stress, the strings tighten.
8. After several minutes of discussion, each group can share with the class their reactions to the problems.
9. Upon completion, discuss how a family is "tied together" and how tension can result when the "strings tighten".

Some examples of possible problems could be:

- A teenager wants to use Dad's new car.
- Father has been laid off work due to a company strike.
- Mother has had surgery and still doesn't feel well.
- A teenager and grandmother disagree on the next TV program to watch.
- Several family members want to go different places for vacation.

Assist students in identifying the tension spots presented by these situations.

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YOUR ADVICE FOR GETTING ALONG

"Sometimes my mom and I spend a day together without my sister. We go to lunch or go shopping. She'll do the same with my sister, too. When I go out with my mom, I can talk to her."

Barbara from California

"Go out--that settles a lot of stuff. Once when we were all fighting, my mom decided we'd go to a park. We had a picnic, and when we came home everyone was calmer."

Jennifer from Kentucky

"I always let my parents know where I am so they don't ask questions."

Gerzon from Florida

"If your parents say be home at 12, be home 10 minutes before 12, then they'll trust you. Try to look at your parents as human beings--not just mom, she cooks, she cleans, she puts rules on you. Just try to be considerate."

Delishia from New Mexico

"We eat supper together most times. That's when we can talk and tell about what happened during the day."

Jason from Iowa

"If you want to talk, catch them when they're not in a bad mood--it's easier. A good sense of humor is important too. If we argue, my stepfather will say something to make me laugh and I can't stay mad."

Angie from Kansas

"Nobody in my family puts me down. We don't put each other down."

Nick from South Dakota

"I put myself in their place. I think before I get an attitude. I try to understand how my parents are feeling. I know it's hard raising a kid these days."

Lily from Florida

Name _____ Period _____ Date _____

MY ADVICE TO MYSELF FOR GETTING ALONG

Directions: Write at least five ideas for getting along better with your family members. They must be reasonable and realistic! And they need to be things that you personally can do--not some other member of the family! Underneath each idea, explain why that would help.

1. _____

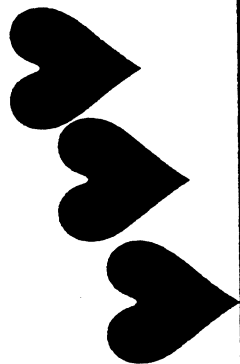
2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Try to put your ideas into practice and see if it makes a difference! If it does, you have been successful! Congratulations!



Family Pledge

I pledge allegiance to my name and to the family to which I belong. I promise to strengthen and support all family members so that each may feel loved, competent, and worthwhile. I will do my best to help each family member reach his or her potential. I will strive to bring honor to our family name in all I say or do and to enjoy the successes of other family members. I pledge to view each member of the family as an individual and to respect personal rights, privileges, and properties.

May we live together in love and harmony. - Source unknown

Name _____ Period _____ Date _____

HOME SWEETER HOME

Do you look forward to going home? ...Or do you dread opening the front door because of family explosions? Most family upsets are the result of someone's behavior which runs counter to the interest and desires of other members of the family. Might your actions be causing some family friction? Test yourself with the checklist below.

SHARING

- _____ Do you do your share of the housework without griping?
- _____ Do you cheerfully take someone else's turn at the dishes when he/she is overloaded with homework?
- _____ Do you willingly lend your belongings to other members of the family?
- _____ Do you ever help your parents with household chores when you would rather do something else?
- _____ Do you keep your own room neat and avoid making others pick up after you?

SHOWING CONSIDERATION

- _____ Do you limit the length and number of your phone calls?
- _____ Do you keep the stereo and TV turned down when someone else is resting, reading, studying, or has company?
- _____ Do you clean up the bathroom or kitchen before you leave it?
- _____ Do you ask before borrowing another family member's belongings?
- _____ Do you try to help out more when you sense one of your parents is stressed?
- _____ Do you check before bringing friends home?
- _____ Do you consider your family finances before asking for new things?
- _____ Do you keep your promises?

RESPECTING PRIVACY

- _____ Do you avoid listening to private conversations between family members?
- _____ Do you open only your own mail?
- _____ Do you knock before entering a closed door?
- _____ Do you excuse yourself politely after meeting another family member's friend(s)?
- _____ Do you avoid "borrowing things" without prior permission?
- _____ Do you stay off the phone when someone else is on it and avoid listening in?

BEING INTERESTED

- _____ Do you take a genuine interest in other family member's activities and projects?
- _____ Do you attend events in which a family member is appearing?
- _____ Do you go to visit relatives?
- _____ Do you remember birthdays and anniversaries with at least a card?
- _____ Do you try to be tolerant of other family member's friends?
- _____ Do you suggest holding a family council or discussing problems that arise rather than letting your emotions get the best of you? (and everybody else!)
- _____ Do you share your thoughts and feelings with your family as well as your friends?

The more "yes" answers you have the better. There is a possible score of 26. My score is _____.

- If you have 20 or more "yes" answers, you are doing great! Keep up the good work!
- If you have 15 to 19 "yes" answers, you're doing pretty good, but you could try a little harder!
- If you have fewer than 15 "yes" answers, you are having a negative impact on your family. Begin working to improve things immediately!

