

## Etiquette Scrapbook Albums

Every family has its own way of doing things; its own rules that fall more into the category of etiquette than tradition. So as you commit your family history, recipes, stories, and legends to paper (hopefully acid free), why not also do the same with your family's manners? For instance, at big family dinners are there lots of conversations going on, a clamber of voices, or is there only one conversation with one person speaking at a time? Does your family eat fried chicken with their hands or is that considered rude? If someone uses a knife and fork to eat fried chicken are they considered snobby? How does your family view a refusal of second helpings at dinner? Is it an insult to the cook?

It may take some thought to recognize those family rules, even if there are only a few, because most families simply think of them as "the right way of doing things". When it's finished, a compilation of your family's etiquette will be a wonderful addition to your family heritage.

It needn't be anything involved. It can be as simple as a list of family "rules" for given situations, written or typed on a single sheet of paper - plain or designed paper/stationery. Place them in an archival box for long term preservation.

If you want to be more creative, you can make an entire scrapbook album of your unique family etiquette with photos, stickers and journaling. Embellish the scrapbook paper with stickers, family sayings; you can even frame it for display. Or using just words and decorative papers, you can create an entire scrapbook album with one or two points of family etiquette on each page, for a fast fun family reference.

For lively conversations at family get-togethers ask older family members if they know the reasoning behind some of the more obscure points of your family's etiquette. You might be surprised how many "rules" are rooted in ancestral aggravation or provocation. For example, why is it considered rude to wear red shoes to the family's annual reunion? What's the story there?

With all of the unspoken rules within a family, you can see how easily a newcomer might make a bad first impression, or a young person moving from childhood to adulthood within the family might inadvertently cause some bad feelings. And sometimes, that bad impression or those bad feelings can linger for decades, straining family relations, all because of someone's ignorance of family etiquette.

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No matter how you decide to preserve your family's unique rules of etiquette, you might consider giving it as a gift for newcomers to the family, or to children as they transition to adult members of the clan, or give it to family members on their anniversary or birthday so they can include it in their own collection of family history.

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