

Family Reunion Ideas

With summer fast approaching, so is the time for family reunions. If you're scrambling for ideas for this year's event or have fallen into the same humdrum planning, consider bringing your family heritage to this year's gathering.

Although a common heritage is what should bring families together, family reunions tend to be all about the present. Of course, reunions are indeed a great time to catch up on the lives of cousins you haven't seen for a while, but it is this focus on the present that keeps family members who have nearly or completely lost touch with the main family branch from attending family reunions. Who wants to spend an afternoon with people they don't know at an event that makes them feel like an outsider? And yet these are exactly the people family reunions should attract! After all, a family reunion comprised entirely of people who see each other every weekend or even every holiday makes the reunion a redundant event.

So how do you bring family heritage to your family reunion and make it a welcoming event for your everyone? Here are a few ideas.

Right from the beginning you can make everyone feel like an insider at your upcoming family reunion with a photo of the family's common ancestor or ancestor couple on the front of the invitation. Not only is the photo a reminder of what everyone has in common but it also strikes the person being invited to the reunion as personal. It says to him or her that this gathering is about them. You can accomplish this easily by making your own invitations on your computer and scanning the photo right onto the front of the invitation. If you use ready made invitations, include a copy of the photo inside the invitation. Be sure to identify the ancestor since the photo may not be familiar to everyone. And although we tend to include formal or at least impersonal verbiage on invitations, the invitations for family reunions should be informal, warm and inviting. For example, rather than announcing above or below the photo of your ancestor, "The Smith family reunion," or "A reunion of all the descendants of Charles and Mary Smith" consider instead something a little friendlier such as, "Charles and Mary Smith: the couple who started it all" or if these ancestors were immigrants your invitation might read, "Charles and Mary Smith: the couple with a dream". Inside is where you'll want to announce that it's a family reunion along with date and time.

Although everyone thinks about bringing their heritage scrapbook or loose family photos to a reunion, people tend to reconsider and leave these things at home. Don't! By all means bring them to your family reunion. Not only will your family enjoy seeing these items but they will serve as a

Family Reunion Ideas

great ice breaker and bring the personal touch needed to make your reunion a success.

Another great way to make everyone feel a part of your gathering, as well as provide a bit of information on the family, is to have a timeline of basic family ancestry at your reunion. If it isn't practicable to provide everyone at the reunion with a copy of the timeline, tape it up on a wall, attach it to a post or have it available on a table for everyone to see. Include facts about the family that apply to everyone at the reunion. In other words, don't include just facts about your individual family; include all branches. Provide not only dates of basic family information, such as the date Charles and Mary Smith married, but also historic events that impacted the family, such as when Charles entered the military during WW1. This timeline will not only remind everyone of their common heritage but will also spark conversation about the family, and that in itself will make everyone feel like a family insider. These facts and the stories behind them belong to and are in fact the birthright of everyone at the reunion.

Although you'll want to include whatever games or activities your family always enjoys at reunions – baseball, swimming, etc., consider including a family heritage contest. For example, have photos of an ancestor or a senior matriarchal/patriarchal family member of each branch of the family, or ask guests to bring such a photo, and have a contest to see who, among the many family branches, looks most like their ancestor or senior matriarchal/patriarchal family member.

Hopefully, these few ideas for your reunion will inspire you to include that spark of family history that everyone at your gathering will recognize as their own.

If you enjoyed this article, please forward it to a friend. Thanks.

Your Family Legacy

"Discover the past, capture the present, preserve for the future."

<http://www.webYFL.com/>