



The Grandma Gap

Power Up Workbook

The Particulars About How To Connect With Your Family By Connecting Them To Their Family History

by Janet Hovorka

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Introduction

Are the youth in your family more attached to their iPod or laptop screen than they are to you? How do you connect to your family members and form the kind of close relationships that will support and strengthen them as they grow into successful and grounded adults? What resources are available to help the youth in your family and set them up for healthy and happy lives?

Meet Super Grandma. Super Grandma wants to help you connect to your family members by connecting them to the super grandmas and super grandpas of your past. Family history connects family members in a way that is personal and unique to your family. It gives youth the power to identify with personal heroes, learn life lessons without having to personally go through them, and gain a wise, broad perspective on life. Teaching your children and grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and even your brothers and sisters about their family history can create strong bonds in your family. The connections to your family's past become a framework to empower your relationships and strengthen their futures.



Super Grandma is here to save the day. She also wants to help you save your family's history. We should involve the next generation in their family history now while older generations are available to help. Records, memories and stories are lost every day when older family members die. We have to bridge the gap together today to preserve our past so that future generations will be able to feel the strength that comes from understanding their history. With a greater awareness of their history, a family can build upon or change generational attitudes and character traits as necessary. Your family will be stronger, healthier and happier when they know where they came from.

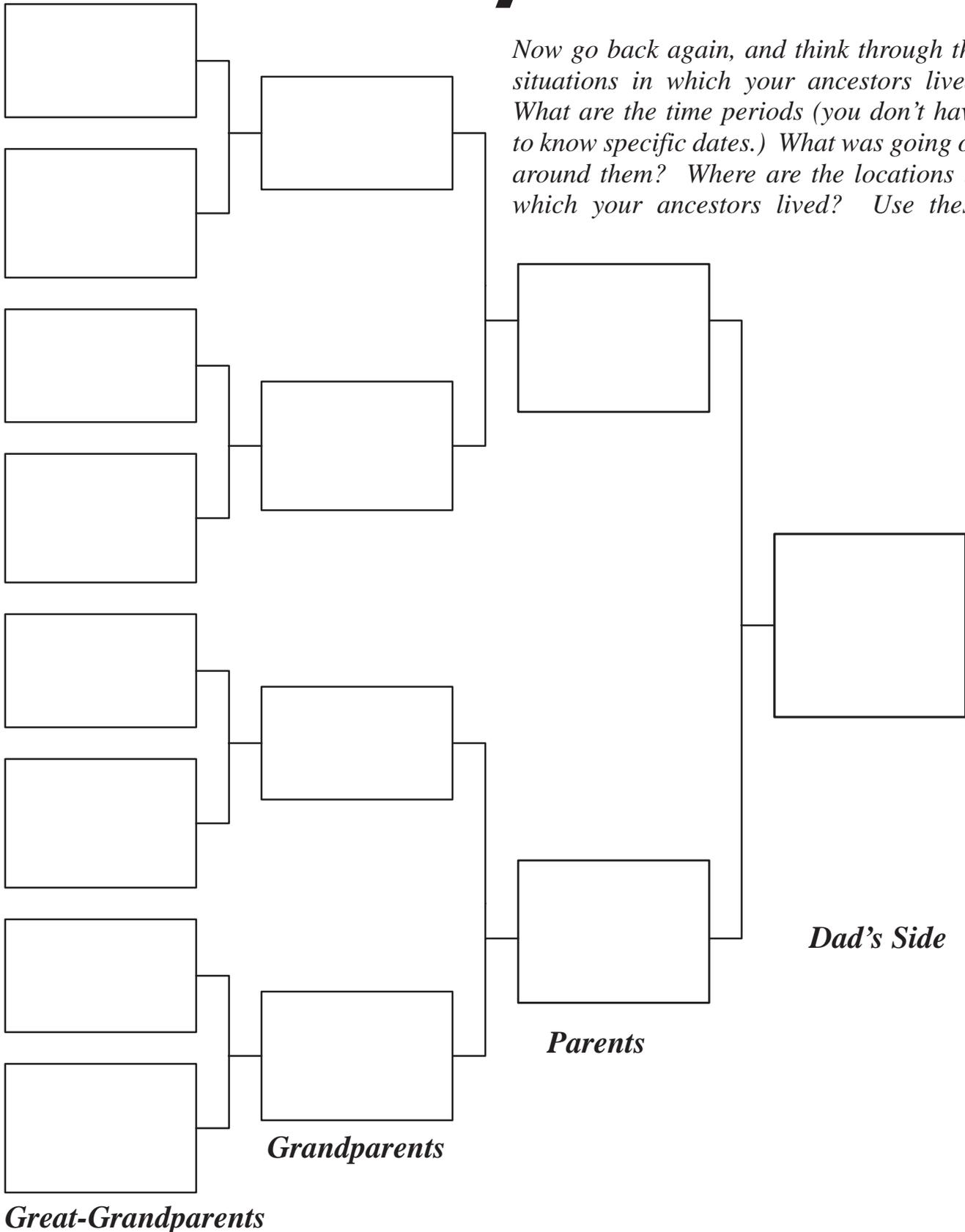
If family history seems boring then you are doing it wrong. Your family's history encompasses all sorts of topics; music, language, culture, food, fashion, etc. etc. Find the part that interests your family members and then find out what your ancestors were doing with that aspect of your history. Throughout this workbook you will find lots of ideas. Some may work with your family members' interests and some may not. Some will correlate with what happened to your ancestors and some will not. This workbook will help you figure out what will work with your family to strengthen your bonds with them and preserve your history for future generations.



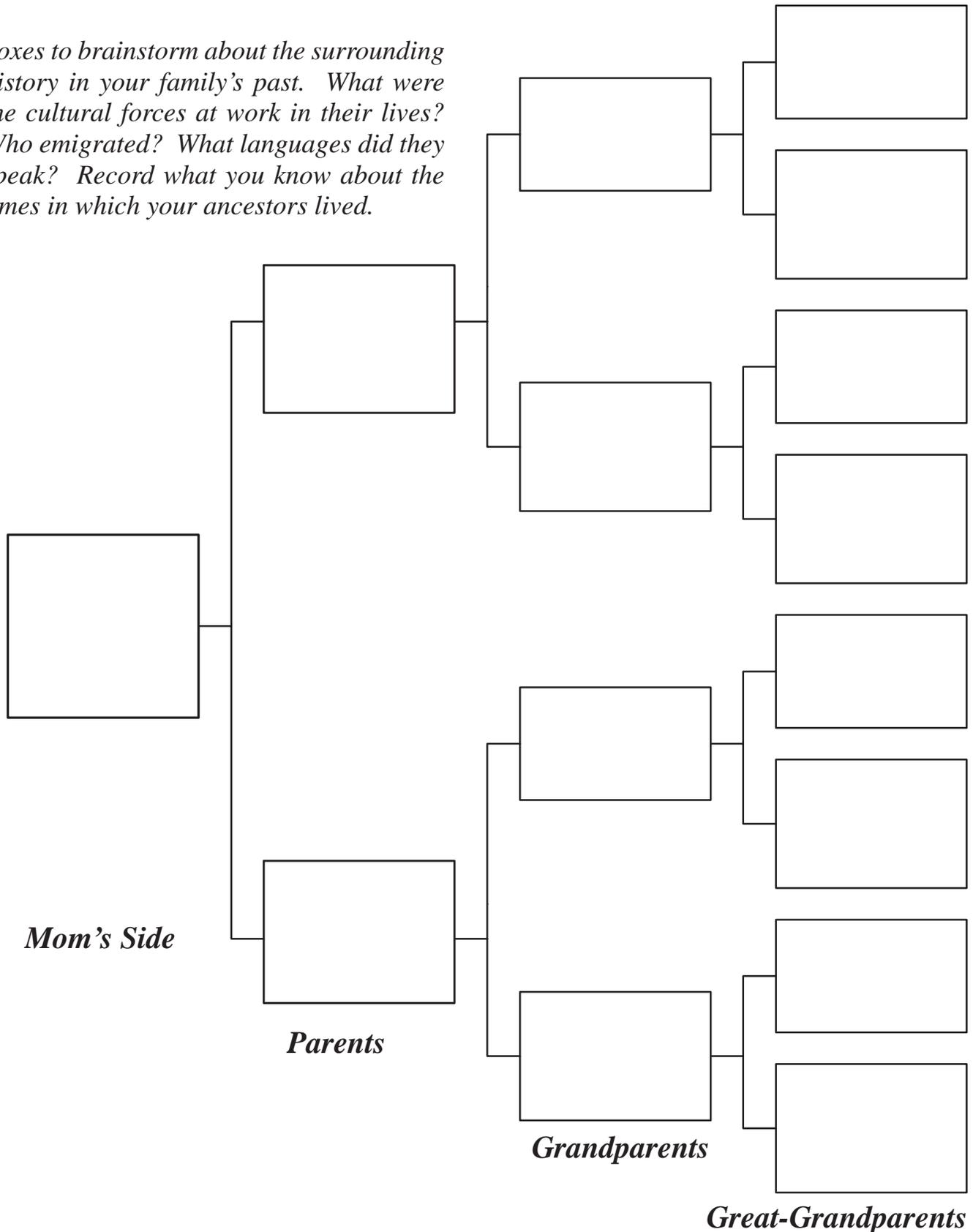
Brainstorm

Your History

Now go back again, and think through the situations in which your ancestors lived. What are the time periods (you don't have to know specific dates.) What was going on around them? Where are the locations in which your ancestors lived? Use these



boxes to brainstorm about the surrounding history in your family's past. What were the cultural forces at work in their lives? Who emigrated? What languages did they speak? Record what you know about the times in which your ancestors lived.



Reflection Questions

From the first chapter in Zap the Grandma Gap: Connect With Your Family By Connecting Them To Their Family History.

What are some of the issues in your family's past that you would like to see changed in future generations?

What have you done to change those issues?

How can you speak to your family about healthy ways to deal with those issues?

What are the particularly inspiring stories of your ancestry?

Were there hard working immigrants or farmers who built wealth, mothers or fathers who sacrificed for their families, upstanding contributors to the community?

What are the stories you can use to inspire your children and grandchildren?



Do you have a family member struggling with extreme challenges right now? Are there any stories in your past of similar trials and uncertainties that may inspire that family member with "I can do this, it is in my DNA?"

Have you ever had any experiences with serendipity while searching out your family history?



How can you use those serendipity stories to create excitement in your family?

Can you tell the story of your miraculous coincidence in a way that your family will become more curious about the people in your history?

What can you do in general to strengthen the relationships you have with your children? Time spent together? Letters, e-mails, or texts?

How can you be more interested in the hobbies that they have?

How can you trade time spent on their hobby for time spent on your family history?

What hobbies and interests do your family members have now that correlate with the hobbies and interests of your ancestors?

Lessons to Learn

In all families there are hard lessons to learn. If you haven't found a scoundrel yet, you haven't done enough family history, Likewise if you haven't found someone truly inspiring then you haven't done enough family history either. All families have both.

What are the lessons you can learn now from the hindsight your family history gives?

Were there decisions that were later regretted

If there is a history of abuse or neglect, who were the survivors? Who is the hero?

“When you teach about your family’s history as lessons to be learned and focus on the resulting triumphs, the problems your family has been through may come to be the most important parts of your family’s drama. Those may be the very stories that help and inspire your descendants through the hardest times in their own lives.” (*Zap The Grandma Gap: Connect To Your Family By Connecting Them To Their Family History* pg. 22)

Who were the groundbreakers who created the life you have now?

Who were the pivotal figures in your family’s past?

Pick a Few Heroes

All heroes have some scoundrel in them, and all scoundrels have some hero in them. Be careful not to glamorize the past beyond what the truth really was. However, one of the best benefits of family history is the perspective it gives over the span of a life and the generosity it teaches when you look at the whole of an individual. With that in mind, pick a few people you really want your family to know well. Figure out who the super heroes are in your family story and make sure the next generation knows them well enough to look up to them and begin to identify with them.

Who are the heroes in your family history?

What are the details that make them inspiring?

Seasons--it may be most effective to choose one person, one family or one branch of your pedigree to focus on for a period of time. If you immerse your family in their history with a laser focus you may hit your target better than if you are trying to cover all your bases at once.

Are there aspects of their stories that are similar to challenges your family face now?

What can you do to introduce your family to these heroes? What resources do you have at your disposal to create interest in their lives now?



Projects

Flowers and Gardens

Most of our ancestors were incredibly connected to the ground they lived on. Whether or not you had farmers who were ancestors, you probably at least have a few who had a kitchen garden or a few pots on a windowsill. Generations of the past used the plants and herbs around them for food and medicine.

Do you have any ancestors who were farmers? Do you know what they planted or what the common crops were around where they lived?

Check the pictures you have of your ancestors. Are there any prominent flowers or plants that you know your ancestors grew?

Be sure to include markers to honor your ancestors. You can purchase markers made from ceramic or metal, or simply label rocks or popsicle sticks.

Gardening Tips and Growing Zones

<http://www.usna.usda.gov/Hardzone>

<http://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov>

<http://www.garden.org>

<http://www.bhg.com/gardening>

<http://www.hgtv.com/gardening>

<http://www.almanac.com/gardening>

<http://gardening.about.com>

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



Were any of your grandmothers named after a flower? Do you know what their favorite perfume was or their favorite color?

What fresh vegetables did your ancestors have? What herbs and spices were used in your family's recipes or for healing properties?

Where can you grow plants in and around your home to honor your family history? Do you have a garden plot, planters on a porch, or inside plants?



Resources for Heirloom Plants:

<http://rareseeds.com>

<http://www.heirloomseeds.com>

<http://www.seedsavers.org>

<http://www.ohioheirloomseeds.com>

<http://www.amishlandseeds.com>

<http://www.grannysheirloomseeds.com>

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

Family History Travel

Traveling with children to a family history site is a natural way to bridge the generation gap. It is an opportunity to teach your family about their family history but also gives you time to be together and strengthen family relationships. It is much more than just a family vacation--it is a chance for you to literally share common ground.

Important Tips for Family History Travel With Children:

(Adapted from <http://zapthegrandmagap.blogspot.com>)

1. *Prepare.* Put together a Google Earth Tour to show them where you are going and who lived there. Google Earth is a valuable tool that keeps their attention.
2. *Focus.* When you try to trace all of the lines in the areas you visit, the kids can get completely overwhelmed. It is good to focus on one line so that they can really come to know those people.
3. *Be flexible.* You can fixate on being disappointed in what doesn't work according to plan, but it is better to concentrate on how much you do get to experience.
4. *Look for aha moments.* There will be lots of moments when some aspect of your research comes alive. Watch for clues about why your ancestors did what they did.
5. *Sample the local culture.* Try the food, see the sites and be thinking of what your ancestors ate and did.
6. *Schedule down time.* Family history trips are go, go, go, learn, learn, learn. Most family members of all ages will get tired at some point and then they can't absorb as much.
7. *Let the kids pick a few activities.* Most youth can pick some local sites they want to see on any family trip. Again, it is good to have some down time and let them process a little.
8. *Watch for serendipity.* Lots of serendipity opportunities come up when you travel to your ancestor's homes. It makes you feel like they are watching over you.
9. *Read in the car.* When you are traveling—especially by car—you have a captive audience. Use that time to read to your family, show pictures, etc. Refresh their

memories to make these ancestors become more real in the places you are visiting.

10. *Take a chart.* It is useful to have the basic names, dates, and places printed so you can refer to them. And a chart with pictures is even better.

11. *Record the history you are making now.* Don't forget the camera. Let your family members record what they think.



What are some of the nearby family history sites that would make a good day trip or weekend trip?

What are some of the distant locations that would make a good family vacation?

Near your family's residences you may want to visit:

- Cemeteries
- Museums
- Archives and Libraries
- Schools and Churches

Look for the addresses of your ancestors in letters, wills, censuses and journals before you go.

Items to take on a family history trip with the family:

- Copies of journals and stories that tell the history of your family.
- Copies of pictures to illustrate what life was like.
- Travel arrangements such as directions, tickets and reservations
- Still and video cameras to capture the history you are creating now.

Learn how to create virtual Google Earth tours with Lisa Louise Cooke's instructional training discs at <http://lialouisecooke.com/lisa-louise-cookes-store/>

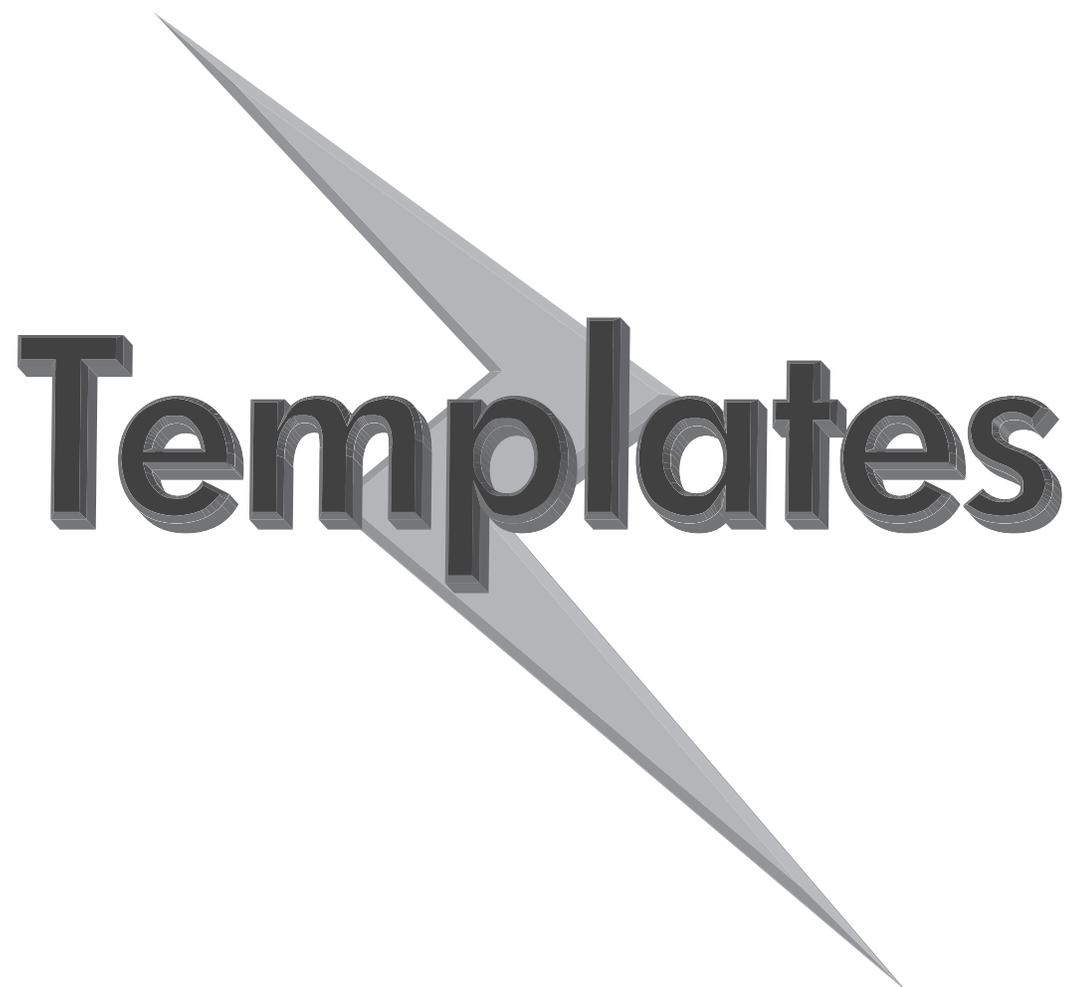
Resources for
Traveling with Children:

<http://bestfamilytraveladvice.com>
<http://travelwithkids.about.com>
<http://www.travelforkids.com>
<http://family.go.com/travel>

Search for articles about children and the destination at regular travel sites such as:

<http://www.fodors.com>
<http://www.tripadvisor.com>
<http://www.lonelyplanet.com>





Templates

Recipe Cards

As your family eats together, make sure they know where your family history recipes originate. Make an event out of cooking your family history recipes--especially if the instructions are tricky or time intensive. Spend some quality time together while you cook. Talk about where your recipes come from and who the people were who made these recipes before you.

What are your favorite recipes from your father's side of the family?

What are your favorite recipes from your mother's side of the family?

Directions for recipe cards:

Copy the facing page on card-stock paper. Cut out the two cards and fold along the dotted line. Fill out the information on the front about your ancestor who used the recipe and add a photo or have a child draw a picture of the ancestor. Record the ingredients and instructions for the recipe continuing on the back of the card if necessary. Add stories about the ancestor on the other side (inside the fold) and laminate for durability.

What were common ingredients that your ancestors used that are still available to us today? What ingredients are hard to find?

Are there any ethnic trends in your family's traditional foods? Where do they come from?

Family Heritage Recipe

Recipe for:

Prepared by:

Birthdate:

Birthplace:

Photo

ZapTheGrandmaGap

Ingredients:

Instructions:

Family Heritage Recipe

Recipe for:

Prepared by:

Birthdate:

Birthplace:

Photo

ZapTheGrandmaGap

Ingredients:

Instructions:

Family History Baking

Sugar can make your family history sweeter. If you like to bake, how about creating some family history that will leave everyone with a good taste in their mouth? You can re-create a family home in gingerbread, or make a pedigree chart with sugar cookies. Get the kids involved and make some new memories. Be sure to tell them about who your sugar creations are about as you are working together.



What family gathering could you create a family history sugar creation for? Who could you enlist to help you?

Creating a family history gingerbread house:

- 1) Secure pictures of the family history home. Get images from every side of the home if possible. <http://maps.google.com> street view may be able to help.
- 2) Create a model of the house using posterboard and tape. Assemble the pieces to make sure each of the walls fit together well. Then disassemble the pieces and use them as patterns to cut out the cookies. (You may be tempted to skip this step if the house is fairly simple but don't. It is much easier to correct any problems before the cookies are cut and baked.)
- 3) Make your favorite gingerbread house dough. Cut out and bake each of the pieces. After baking trim each piece according to the pattern.
- 4) Assemble the house using royal icing. Decorate it with candies and more frosting.
- 5) Take pictures and show off your creation to your family. Serve cookies and milk and tell stories about the home and the people who lived there. Point out different rooms or areas of the home where some things happened. Watch the children in your family devour the stories about their family's past.

Resources and recipes for creating gingerbread houses:

http://www.simplyrecipes.com/recipes/how_to_make_a_gingerbread_house

<http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/gale-gand/gingerbread-use-recipe/index.html>

<http://www.marthastewart.com/258923/gingerbread-for-gingerbread-house-kit>

What family history site or family group could you create out of cookies?



Creating a family history cookie pedigree:

- 1) Make your favorite sugar cookie recipe. Roll out the dough and cut circles for cookies using a large drinking glass. Bake according to directions.
- 2) On a large piece of cardboard, arrange the cookies according to your family's relationships. Create lines between the families with licorice to show how everyone is related.
- 3) Decorate each cookie to look like the person using frosting, licorice, mini M&Ms, colored sugar, chocolate sprinkles and other candies.
- 4) Take pictures. Present at your family get together and enjoy.
- 5) Upload your pictures to the submit an idea page at <http://zapthegrandmagap.com/ideas.html> or e-mail us at janet@zapthegrandmagap.com and let us know how your family liked it.



Resources

