



Adventures in modern technology by Marlo E. Schuldt

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Sharing, Recording, and Preserving Family Stories



People naturally share stories and experiences whenever they get together. Christmas, Thanksgiving, and special occasions make it possible for us to “catch up’ on the current events in the lives of our children, relatives and friends.

Thanksgiving and Christmas are two of the best times of the year when everyone travels from far and wide trying to get together.

Listening to stories stimulates curiosity and provides a rare opportunity for the younger generation to get some interesting and revealing glimpses into their family history.



This newsletter provides ideas to help you stimulate, record, and preserve stories that are spontaneously shared at special occasions.

Kitchen Table Stories

Over the years I’ve discovered there is sort of a magic spell that opens the minds of everyone seated around the kitchen table. Each person in the group becomes actively engaged as they listen, identify and ask questions about the event and those involved in the experience. One story leads to another as everyone adds their favorite experience. This is a time when rambling down memory lane is accepted, encouraged and generally a lot of fun.



The Family Initiation

The kitchen table is a place where newbie family members are inducted into the family story hall of infamy. Everyone glories in the retelling of some deliciously embarrassing events about those seated around the table. This is when the new son or daughter-in-law wonder what they've done and gotten themselves into!

Two Kitchen Table Games

The purpose of the following games is to stimulate and involve everyone in storytelling.

1. Get an old mason jar or antique looking container. If you are artsy, decorate the jar with old family history photos or a special grandma and grandpa or your parents.
2. Print out and cut up the question list. One question per strip. Add some of your own questions.
3. Place the questions in the bottle or jar.
4. Select an interesting old soda bottle. An old brown root beer bottle with a long neck would be my choice.



shake during recording. You may be recording for a long time and may get tired holding the camera steady. This is where the tripod will be very helpful and you will get video that is not moving around. Most camera stores carry inexpensive smart phone and Ipad tripods for around \$20. Get one.



One last comment. Don't take video of the back of your guests head. It not interesting or flattering to the one sharing the story. Don't be afraid to move around to reposition yourself in front to get the best lighting and vantage point. Some may not like this.

Just remember, when it's all over you will have the goodies and they will ALL will want to see and hear what you captured. What priceless treasures you will be capturing! So don't be afraid to take a little heat from the embarrassed or camera shy members of the family. They will forgive you later.

Recording and Preserving the Stories

This will be the easiest part. A smart phone or tablet is the perfect recording device since it can shoot video and record audio. Chances are good that many people in the family will have a smart phone or a recording device. This will solve the problem of the best camera angle since more than one phone or device can be used to record the questions and answers.

Avoid Shooting "Get Sick" Video.

Get a smart phone tripod. This makes it possible to position the phone in a good location so the video will not be moving around as your hands

Take some test videos and then watch them on your computer to improve your skills and get more acquainted with your camera and its settings and how you can improve.

Get the Best Sound Quality

Make some test recordings with your device. Listen to them with headphones or on a computer to get a better idea of how it's going to really sound. Remember, sliding your recording device around on a table or touching it or texting on it will be recorded and will be very distracting later.



Be close the person speaking so that your recorder will not pick up background noise or others talking which will effectively ruin or make the recording hard to listen to later.



Sample Questions

Getting the Audio and Video Off the Device and Editing it

The next newsletter will cover these topics.

PLEASE BE SURE TO GET YOUR VIDEO AND AUDIO RECORDING DURING THE HOLIDAYS.

FOR SOME OF YOUR RELATIVES, THIS MAY BE THE LAST TIME YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO RECORD AND SEE THEM!!

Question and Answer

The purpose is to select questions from the jar to get the storytelling started.

Grandma and grandpa take turns answering questions from the jar. Each person around the table gets a turn to draw out and ask a question. Answers do not need to be limited to grandma and grandpa. Everyone in the group could take a turn sharing a similar question.

Spin the Bottle. Each person takes a turn spinning the bottle. When the bottle stops it will be pointing at someone. They can draw out the question and answer the question or ask someone else in the group to answer the question. The person then spins the bottle for the next person to have a turn.

MAKE SURE YOUR PHONE, TABLET OR DEVICE IS CHARGED UP

Nothing could be worse than to have to stop recording or shooting video because your device runs out of battery. Charge it up just before the event. Have extra batteries and/or a charger and an outlet close by you can plug into. Plug your device in when you are not using it so it will be charged when you need it or when some great spontaneous even occurs you will be ready to record it.

What was your scariest experience?

How did you meet your spouse?

What one thing stood out most about your spouse?

What would you do different or change in your life?

What was your dad or mom like?

What was your or your parents favorite thing?

Things you or your parents felt strongly about?

Where did you, your parents live?

School experiences, good and bad.

Life changing or turning points in your life.

Favorite book or movie and why.

Advice to your posterity.

Most important things in raising a family.

Faith promoting experience.

How to stay healthy?

Favorite places visited and why.

Why are good manners important?

Important family history events.