

PWRDF 2008 Family Calendar
February: Family Ancestry and First Nations
<http://www.pwrdf.org/give/families-for-pwrdf/>



Family Activity: Bring it home: Storytelling with Family Elders

How does your family story intersect with the history of Aboriginal peoples and early settlers in Canada? What are the stories about how your family came to live in Canada? One way to deepen your understanding of your family's history is to interview a family elder.

Host a family gathering and settle in for a time of storytelling. Use the following questions as a guide. See which ones might interest you and/or add others.

Build in participation: You could cut the questions up and let the little ones hand them out. Some questions can also be answered by more than one person. Consider making a video of this time, or having teen age children write down some of the best parts. If the time goes longer than you like, just keep track of the questions that you want to explore further another time.

At the end of the time, invite everybody to say something that they learned that they didn't know before. In many aboriginal communities it is traditional to honour the elder with a small symbolic gift.

Possible Questions for Elder Interview

What is your full name? What do you know about it? Do you have a nickname?

Is there a naming tradition in your family?

Are there any physical characteristics that run in your family?

When were you born? What world events had the most impact on you while you were growing up? Did any of them personally affect your family?

Where were you born? How did your family come to live there? Was it a place that was new to your family or not?

Did you have a favourite place to go outside of your home? Was it a secret?

What was your childhood home like? What did the kitchen smell like?

What is your earliest childhood memory?

What language did your parents speak? Do you speak it? Why or why not?

How did your family earn a living?

What was your favourite thing to do for fun?

Was there any illness in your family?

Did you lose any members of your family when you were growing up?

Did you have family chores? Which was your least favourite?

Who was the oldest relative you remember as a child? What do you remember about them?

Do you have a favourite story about one of your parents?

What was school like for you as a child? How did you get there? Did you leave home to attend?

Did you have a favourite teacher? Why?

What was the hardest thing about school?

Who were your childhood heroes?

What were your favourite songs and music?

Who were your friends when you were growing up?

What was your religion growing up?

Did you attend church? What was that like? What was the music like? Did your friends go?

Who have been the most important people in your life related to your faith journey?

Describe a typical family dinner. What was your favourite food?

Have any recipes been passed down to you from family members?

How were holidays celebrated in your family? What was your favourite holiday?

How is the world today different from what it was like when you were a child?

Are there any special heirlooms, photos, bibles or other memorabilia that have been passed down in your family?

Did you get married? What do you remember about your wedding day?

If you didn't get married, what was that like?

How did you find out you were going to be a parent for the first time?

What was your proudest moment as a parent?

What was your profession and how did you choose it? If you could have had any other profession what would it have been?

Of all the things you learned from your parents, which do you feel was the most valuable?

How has your faith changed over the years?

What accomplishments were you the most proud of?

What is the one thing you most want people to remember about you?