

Have the **Talk**  
of a **Lifetime**®



# Activity **GUIDE**

A **fun, interactive** way to learn  
what matters most to your loved ones!

# Time well spent

As you gather for family events and other occasions, you're encouraged to simply talk more. It is a time to share stories, reminisce, and discover what matters most to the people who matter most to you. Anytime is the perfect time to ask questions and Have the Talk about life.

That's the idea behind "*Have the Talk of a Lifetime*."

Having the Talk now will help you honor your loved ones when the time comes. To make things easier, this Activity Guide offers a few conversation starters and more:

- Tips for Having the Talk
- "Have the Talk" table talk prompts
- Activities
- A family tree worksheet

We're sure you and every generation will find the activities in this guide fun and rewarding. We know that what you discover about each other will lead to healing and a more meaningful memorialization experience.

**Now's the time.**

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While it may not initially be easy to Have the Talk of a Lifetime, we are confident that these ideas will help initiate the conversation.

## ACTIVITIES

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While these activities are perfect for family gatherings, you can do them any time, and just about anywhere.



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# Tips

Use these helpful tips to start and keep those conversations going!

# How to Have the Talk of a Lifetime

Do you want to Have the Talk of a Lifetime but aren't sure where to start? Follow these tips to begin and maintain meaningful conversations with your loved ones.

**Be sure you're comfortable.** If you're able, plan to Have the Talk in a place that is comfortable for both you and your loved ones. Need some background noise? Meet at a coffee shop. Want a quieter, more personal experience? Have the Talk at home.



**Use a visual prompt.** A photo album, souvenir, or memento can be a great conversation starter.

**Share your memories first.** If a family member is hesitant or doesn't want to make a fuss, share your own stories first so they can be comfortable expressing theirs as well.

**Start by sharing mutual stories.**

If you've taken a vacation together or shared a cherished experience, discuss that first to get the conversation going.

**Take notes.** Either during or after your conversation, make note of the important memories shared and any of your loved one's wishes. Or make an audio recording of your discussion and listen again later.

**Start a new tradition.** One of the easiest ways to spark conversations about old traditions is to start a new one! Suggest your family start a new annual tradition: a family cook-off, a trip to the apple orchard to make applesauce, or a themed movie night. When planning this new tradition, ask your loved ones about their favorite traditions from the past.

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# TIPS

**Ask questions.** The easiest way to start and maintain the Talk is by asking questions. If you're not sure what to ask, try some of the questions below:

What is your proudest achievement?

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What is the one piece of advice you received from your parents or grandparents that you have always remembered?

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If you could spend a day doing anything you like, what would it be?

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Who is your greatest inspiration?

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What is your most favorite memory?

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If you've already had the Talk and aren't sure what to do next.



**Continue.** Having the Talk should not be a one-time occurrence. Rather, think of it as beginning a dialogue during which you can openly talk about a number of things – from reflecting on the past to planning for the future.

**Look back.** Re-read the notes you took or listen to the audio recording to better remember the conversation.

**Store the memories.** If you took notes, be sure to keep them in a safe place where you'll be able to easily access them when the time comes.

For even more information, visit [talkofalifetime.org](http://talkofalifetime.org)

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# Discussing Family Traditions & Why They Are Important

Discussing old family traditions is an important aspect of having the Talk. If a loved one is hesitant to share family traditions, try explaining to them why discussing those traditions is so important.

- Family traditions are the foundation of many incredible memories
- Participating in and discussing family traditions creates an unbreakable bond between family members and loved ones
- Discussing traditions can provide insight into not just one, but many, loved ones' lives and spur further conversation and storytelling
- Discussing past family traditions may spark interest in creating new traditions
- Traditions are important in keeping family members close and connecting each new generation to those before it
- Family traditions help pass down a family's culture and values



**We hope you enjoy learning about your family's traditions, both past and present.**

These incredible memories can be cherished forever and will make remembering your loved ones even more remarkable when the time comes.



Tradition

*At family gatherings, we go around the dinner table and say one thing we are grateful for.*

How it started

*A couple years ago my mother started saying what she was thankful for and we all followed. We made it a tradition ever since.*

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# TIPS

Tradition

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How it started

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Tradition

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How it started

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Tradition

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How it started

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Tradition

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How it started

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# How to Start New Family Traditions

Starting new traditions can be just as rewarding as, if not more than, participating in old ones. Developing new family traditions will provide you and your loved ones with memories to last a lifetime and can allow for new conversations about your lives that haven't been discussed yet.

We understand that it may be difficult to start a new tradition when your family already has so many great old traditions. That's why we've provided this list of tips to help you along the way:

**Start with what you know.** Find an activity you know your family will enjoy. If you love the arts, plan an annual trip to the art museum or a play at the local theater. If you enjoy the outdoors, suggest a family camping trip every year. If you're a little competitive, turn any night into game night. If you love cooking, plan an annual cook-off.



**Make it easy.** Too much planning or coordination may take the fun out of your new tradition. Make sure the plan is simple and easily adaptable for every member of your family.

**Be open.** If your entire family has difficulty deciding on a new tradition, be open to others' ideas. Maybe make a tradition to try a new food, play a game no one has played, or let a new person decide what you'll be doing on a certain day each year.

**Don't forget to keep the old.** Starting new traditions is exciting and often a fun change of pace. But don't forget to honor your original family traditions that have lasted generations! Eventually, your new traditions will become the old; you'll certainly want to make sure those stay, too.

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# TIPS

## Tradition

The empty chair

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## How it started

After Grandpa died, we left an empty chair at the table in remembrance of him at our holiday dinners. We realized it helped us remember all those we missed, and brought them near to us as we gathered.

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## Tradition

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## How it started

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## Tradition

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## How it started

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## Tradition

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## How it started

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# “Have the Talk” Table Talk Prompts

Finding the perfect time or way to Have the Talk can be difficult. To make it a bit easier, and more fun, we’ve created some questions to help you have the most meaningful, memorable conversations with your loved ones.

- Keep the questions beside you as you Have the Talk of a Lifetime in case you need some ideas to jump-start the conversation
- Place them around the dinner table to spur discussion
- Make up a game! Use your creativity to develop a game using the questions (*i.e., Who can guess how Grandma would answer each question?*)

How do you want  
to be remembered?


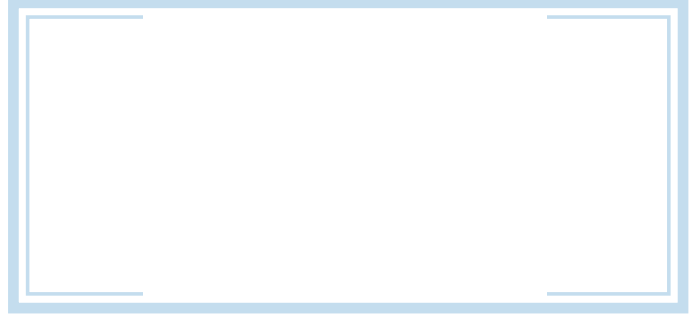
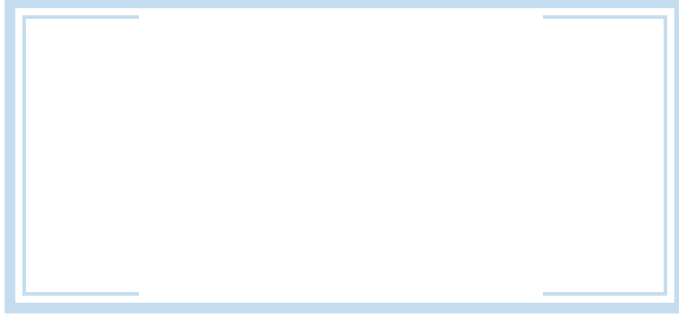
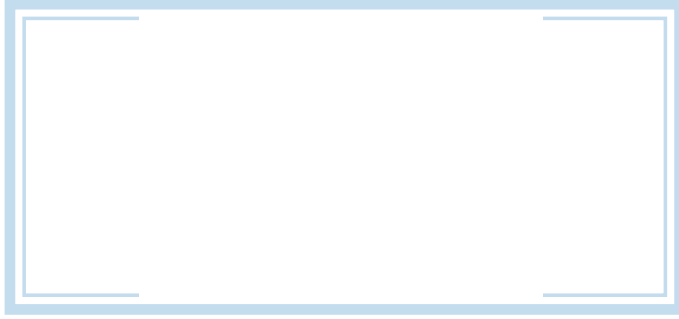
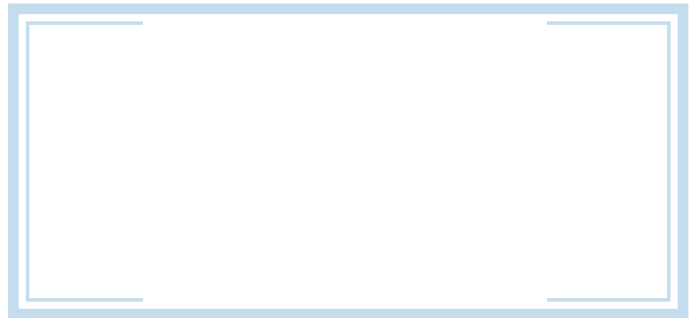
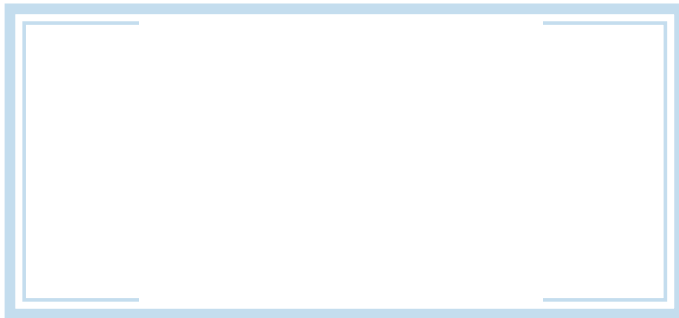
What is one thing  
that brings  
you great joy?

What song best reflects  
you and your life?  
What would  
your theme song be?

What words of wisdom  
would you share with  
your future generations?

If you had to choose  
a signature color,  
what would it be?

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# Activities

Fun, interactive games and  
conversation starters for the whole family!

# ACTIVITIES

## Games

Have the Talk of a Lifetime with your entire family! Talk in the kitchen, have a conversation at the dinner table, or play a game! However you Have the Talk, make sure you also have fun.

Here are some game ideas to help spur conversation at your family's next get-together.

### Find Someone Who



#### PREPARATION:

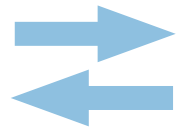
- Prepare a list of 15-20 characteristics (or as many as you need for each person in your family). *Example: Find someone who has the same birth month as you*
- Make one copy for each family member



#### RULES:

- Each person will have a copy of the characteristics checklist
- Walk around the room and ask people if they fit any of the characteristics on your sheet. *NOTE: You must ask, for example, "Is your birthday in June?" rather than "Do you fit any of these characteristics?"*
- If a person fits a characteristic, they must initial next to it. *NOTE: Each person can only initial ONCE on each list*
- Once complete, take turns reading who fits the characteristics on each person's list

### Two Truths and a Lie



#### PREPARATION:

None



#### RULES:

- Each person "introduces" him or herself by stating three facts:  
2 true statements  
1 false statement (the lie)
- The rest of the group must guess which statement is the lie
- Whoever is the first to correctly guess the lie goes next

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# ACTIVITIES

## If You Could...



### PREPARATION:

- Prepare a list of open-ended questions that begin with “If you could...”  
*Example: If you could have 3 wishes granted, what would they be?*
- Make one copy for each family member



## Talk the Talk



### PREPARATION:

- Make a deck of 20 cards out of construction paper, each with a different question related to life stories
- Make 100+ blank cards



### RULES:

- Each person will have a copy of the question list
- Everyone will fill out the sheet on their own
- Once everyone has answered the questions, go around the room and explain your answers
- Alternate rule: Everyone will submit their answers to one person. That person will then read each person’s list one at a time and the rest of the group must guess who answered the questions



### RULES:

- The youngest person starts as the judge and picks one of the “question” cards
- Everyone else writes an answer on a blank card and gives it to the judge
- The judge shuffles and reads each card, then picks one they believe is the best response
- The person who wrote the winning card is the judge for the next round
- At the end, the person who won the most “question” cards is the winner



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# ACTIVITIES

## Recipe Corner

Some of the most treasured moments are made in the kitchen. Have you ever cooked an entire meal only to realize you forgot a key ingredient? Remember that one time you and your siblings ate half the cookie dough before mom saw? What about the time your grandfather first taught you how to bake his famous family-style dish (there's a secret ingredient!)?

Recipe to make: \_\_\_\_\_

Just Like: \_\_\_\_\_

What you need:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_


What you do: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_\_

write why it's a special or fun memory on back >

No matter what your memories are, it's important for you to remember them and the recipes associated with them. Use these blank recipe cards to write down your most special, memorable, funny, or "oops!" stories from the kitchen and the incredible recipes that started it all.

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Recipe to make:

Just Like:

What you need:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What you do: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Write why it's a special or fun memory on back >

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Recipe to make:

Just Like:

What you need:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What you do: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Write why it's a special or fun memory on back >

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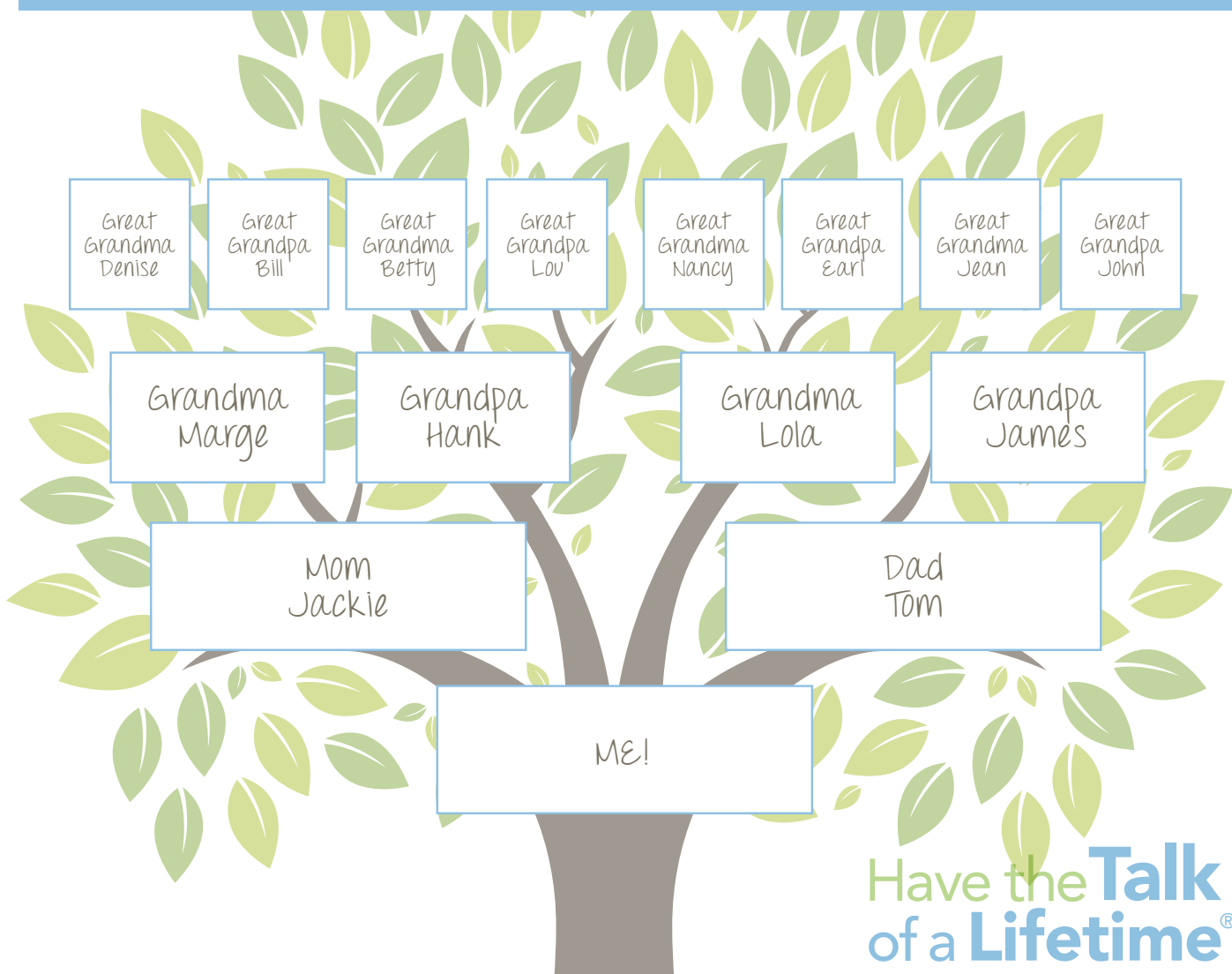
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# ACTIVITIES

## Family Tree

Building a Family Tree is a great way to begin to Have the Talk of a Lifetime. Asking your loved ones about their ancestors will spark incredible conversation and recall treasured memories from the past. Before long, you'll Have the Talk of a Lifetime and not even know it!

Whether you simply talk about your ancestors or use one of these templates to create a family tree, enjoy the quality time you spend with your family. You never know where conversations about life will take you.



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# ACTIVITIES

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# Have the Talk of a Lifetime®

Thank you for your participation.  
We hope you and your loved ones  
enjoyed using this guide as you  
began, or continued, to Have the Talk.

We'd love to hear your stories! Go to  
[talkofalifetime.org/your-story](https://talkofalifetime.org/your-story) to share  
yours today.