Family Traditions

A family is a group of people that are related by birth, by marriage, or another reason, like foster care or adoption. There are other ways people can be included in a family. A person may be included if he or she is a lifelong friend to a member of the family. A person could be considered ‘family’ if he or she served together in the military with someone in the family.

Families have mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, sons, daughters, aunts, uncles, cousins, and more.

Families often have traditions that help members of the family feel a stronger connection to the past, and to each other. Traditions include events, activities, a love of music, dancing, participating in sports and games, preparing meals or cultural foods, or celebrations in a religion that people in a family do together.

Traditions can be things like eating a Thanksgiving dinner, opening presents on Christmas morning, or fifteen year-old girls wearing white dresses for their Quinceañeras. A family tradition can be snuggling up in lawn chairs watching fireworks on a Fourth of July evening, grinning children gathered around a picnic table singing, “Happy Birthday”, or grandchildren
helping their abuelita make tamales. Other special occasions families might consider traditions are traveling to their home country during school holidays, young and old family members playing soccer or softball at the park, or eating pozole and buñuelos at an aunt and uncle’s house.

Traditions can be wonderful when families participate in them, but they can be sad when members of a family can’t be there because they are not able to attend, are sick, or have passed away.

Traditions like taking a family photo, or walking on the beach holding hands at sunset, are times we cherish and remember, and look forward to doing again and again. Honoring traditions, by keeping them going, is the responsibility of the older members of the family. Having fun, singing, dancing, playing, joking around, shaking hands, and giving kisses and hugs are everyone’s job.