

Date night

FOR MARRIED COUPLES

Topic: Your family history

Any time you talk about what it means to be a part of your family, you strengthen the connection to family and what the family stands for. Knowing where each other comes from can help each of you learn from and appreciate each other's family stories. Talk to each other about your families and the legacies.



Why this is a great topic:

In the telling of a family story, both the teller and the listener are gaining a deeper sense of purpose and connection to the people in the story and to themselves.

When listening to a story, we transport ourselves in the story and imagine what we might have done in that circumstance.

When relating the stories, we make sense of our experiences in new ways, we understand those experiences, the people in the story and ourselves in deeper, more reflective ways.

Note: The objective is to share where you come from. Definitely not to compare whose ancestry is better or more important. Focus more on the people in the stories than the lineage.

Prepare for the date:

Think about your family tree. As applicable, reach out to your relatives to get a better sense of who is who. If stories have been recorded (family blog, legacy books, etc.), read, or at least skim through, those. Get copies of old photos and other memorabilia.

Conversation starters:

Think of each of your parents and grandparents. Where do they come from? When did they come to America? What were their lives like before coming to America? What was their immigrant story? What life challenges did they endure? How did they overcome?

What are **interesting or poignant events** that your ancestors participated in or lived through? What was their role in that event? Did it change them?

What are some **achievements and failures** that your ancestors experienced. How have those changed the course of the family?

How did your grandparents meet? What was their marriage like – in the beginning, throughout, at the end?

What are **values** that have been passed through the generations? What are **traits** that have been passed through the generations? Where do you see those in the younger generations?

What are some **proud moments** in the family history? What are some **regrettable moments**? What are some **blessings** that have happened in the family? What are some **twists or turns** that have changed their lives?

In what way(s) are you similar to one of your ancestors? Who do you emulate? Who inspires you? What about them inspires you?

Tell about an **object or family heirloom**. Tell how it was used, by whom, on what occasions. Show a piece of jewelry and tell its backstory - who wore it, why was it given, when was it worn.

Look through **old photos**. In addition to the people in the photos, talk about where the photo was taken, what was the occasion, who else might have been there.