

# A MEMORY HARVEST

*Gathering the Stories That Connect Us*

## GUIDELINES

- Keep your story to 3 minutes or less.
- Your object should help tell your story. When people see it later they will remember your story. It may introduce the person you want to talk about, the event you want to share, or the lesson or value you want to highlight.

Example: "This is a picture of my grandfather, Morris, standing in front of his stationery supply store. I loved visiting there as a little girl because he was always so happy to see us. He would drop everything he was doing and would let us walk through the warehouse with an empty box and pick whatever we wanted for our school supplies. He got such a kick out of letting us do that. Grandpa taught me about hospitality and generosity. When someone comes to your home, you give them your biggest smile, open your doors wide, drop everything you're doing and give with an open hand." The person telling the story could also use a #2 pencil, a stapler or an old-fashioned school notebook for her object if she didn't have the picture.

- Practice telling your story a few times using your object.
- It's a good idea to write down your story.
- Think about your audience. Do all of the people know the person you are talking about? Do you need to explain your relationship to the person so that everyone will understand something important about him or her right away?
- Don't tell a story that will hurt or embarrass anyone who is there. Tell what you know and understand to be true; if you are not sure about something say you are not sure. But don't apologize for your recollection. Simply say, "This is how I remember..."

## TIPS FOR THE STORYTELLER

A Memory Harvest helps us recall loved ones no longer with us at Thanksgiving and expresses gratitude for the gifts they gave us. We celebrate their memory in the stories we tell about them. (You might want to include family members or others unable to attend this year's gathering).

## TELL A STORY ABOUT A LOVED ONE.\*

- \*THAT TAUGHT YOU SOMETHING YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT HIM OR HER THAT SURPRISED YOU
- \*THAT IS THANKSGIVING RELATED
- \*AND A CHALLENGE HE OR SHE OVERCAME
- \*THAT NO ONE HAS EVER HEARD BEFORE
- \*AND THE FUNNIEST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TOGETHER WITH YOU
- \*AND YOUR MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT WITH HIM/HER
- \*THAT REFLECTS HIS OR HER BELIEFS ABOUT AMERICA
- \*AND HIS OR HER CHILDHOOD
- \*THAT HIGHLIGHTS AN IMPORTANT LIFE LESSON OR VALUE THAT YOU LEARNED FROM HIM/HER
- \*AND YOUR LOVED ONE'S FAVORITE (OR LEAST FAVORITE!) FOODS
- \*AND YOUR LOVED ONE'S FAVORITE (OR LEAST FAVORITE!) HOLIDAYS—AND WHY
- \*AND YOUR LOVED ONE'S PASSIONS

## PICTURES OR SYMBOLIC OBJECTS CAN HELP.

Objects aren't required but they can help the storyteller to focus and listeners to remember the story.

