

A MEMORY HARVEST TIPS

Gathering the Stories That Connect Us

GUIDELINES:

KEEP YOUR STORY TO 3 MINUTES OR LESS. Shorter stories are more memorable!

Choose an object to help you tell your story. Later, people will have a visual reminder of your recollection. 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: "I want to tell you about my grandfather, Morris, and his stationery supply store. I loved visiting there as a little girl because he was always so happy to see us. He ran a big wholesale business but would drop everything he was doing and walk with us through his warehouse with an empty box to 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 use a photo, a #2 pencil, a stapler or an old-fashioned school notebook for her object.

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 may also want to include stories about 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 AND SURPRISED YOU.

THAT IS THANKSGIVING RELATED

THAT NO ONE HAS EVER HEARD BEFORE.

AND A CHALLENGE HE OR SHE OVERCAME.

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.

AND YOUR LOVED ONE'S FAVORITE (OR LEAST FAVORITE) FOODS

THAT HIGHLIGHTS AN IMPORTANT LIFE LESSON OR VALUE THAT YOU LEARNED FROM HIM/HER

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 help the storyteller to focus and listeners to remember the story. You may also be amazed at the memory cornucopia guests create with their story objects!

