

## TRADITIONS

### LESSON EIGHT

**Follow-up** *(As a family discuss the assignment for the lesson Service.)*

1. How are we doing in our efforts to be like the Sea of Galilee--giving of ourselves to others? Has anyone done a service (helped another person) they'd like to tell us about?
2. How did we do with our family service project this month?

#### Concept

A family tradition is an activity that a family does regularly. Often traditions are so simple that families don't even consciously recognize them as traditions. For example, if a family always has special birthday celebrations, that's a tradition. If they like to eat certain kinds of food on Sundays, that's a tradition. Any activity repeated over and over becomes a tradition, and families share those happy memories. The personalities of families are expressed through the little things they do that add fun to life.

Healthy relationships are built on time spent together. Family traditions create opportunities for us to be with one another. As we join together and participate in a tradition, we share our lives in special ways that are unique to our family. Usually, the more we share our lives, the more we care for one another.

A family is like a chain and family members are like the links in the chain. Experiences shared together strengthen and bind the links together. The stronger the links, the more powerfully family members are bound to one another. Traditions strengthen family links by giving family members a sense of belonging, something to depend on as they enjoy common activities. Our time together as a family is priceless. The memories we make will last throughout our lifetimes.

#### Family Survey Review

Statement #8. **We have family traditions.**

- Why is it important for a family to have traditions?
- What are some of our family traditions?



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## Story

One winter a mother took a group of high school students on a night snowshoeing trip to a friend's cabin. The moon was beautiful and full as it shone on the new-fallen snow. For nearly five miles they puffed and plodded along. The first mile or two still held the excitement and mystery of an adventure. But as time wore on, tired legs could scarcely drag nearly frozen toes from drift to drift up the mountainside. The backpacks were no help either. And every few minutes someone's snowshoe straps would come loose or break, sending that person flying into a snowbank head first. No one complained much, though, because they all knew a warm cabin was waiting at the top.

When the group finally reached the cabin and worked the old door open, they gasped as they looked around. Windows were broken, the kitchen table had three legs and a stump, three rusty springs showed through the upholstery on the couch, and the cabin itself seemed very small. Months before, someone had left the chimney flue open and frozen snow was jammed in the fireplace all the way to the roof. One teenager picked away at the solid block with a pocketknife, while another went to the kitchen to start the wood-burning stove. Disaster again! The stovepipe had separated and was also packed with snow. It was frighteningly cold, and the cabin was quickly filling with the choking smoke. Everyone was complaining and feeling sorry for himself.

"Hey!" the mother who led the group shouted, "There's a new rule. For every complaint you make, you've got to say something good as well." More grumbles. She added, "Well, what have we got to lose? We can at least die with positive attitudes!" Everyone chuckled softly.

"But I'm freezing," one young man complained. The woman smiled and waited patiently. "Uh," he choked, "but at least the smoke is warming the place up."

"Three of the four windows are broken," a girl grumbled. But then she brightened. "At least they draw out the smoke. Should we break the other one?" That brought a real laugh.

As the woman poked in the fire, billows of smoke seeped from every crack in the old stove. She hoped it would melt some of the ice above. After unloading each armload of wood, one pair of students rushed to open the door and draw a few fresh breaths of cold mountain air. Two others alternately fanned the fire and dashed for the door to breathe, while one boy struggled with the broken stovepipe.

Gradually the smoke began to clear. As the snow in the stovepipe melted, the cabin warmed up, and so did their spirits. Before long the campers had a big pot of hot soup on the stove, and the young people were sitting on their rolled-out sleeping bags, happily sipping hot drinks.

Without exception, the memories of that trip are good ones. No one seems to remember the grumbles or the complaints. And the mother who led the group started a new tradition in her family. Whenever someone has a complaint, he always has to add something positive afterward. She believes this tradition will help her family through any challenge.

## Discussion

1. How can this family's new tradition help them through their challenges?
2. If we said something positive after complaining, could it help us?

3. Has our family ever started a tradition without planning it?

### Activity

Our activity for this lesson is to decide on a new tradition for our family. Ten ideas are listed here. We can use one of these, or think of our own.

- Each week or month, declare a “Be-Kind-To-(name)-Week.” Everyone in the family tries to do something nice for the person every day that week, or month.
- On birthdays, go around the table and take turns telling the birthday person one reason why you love or appreciate them. Or share a happy memory you have with the birthday person.
- Designate a place in your home as the “Solve-It-Yourself-Place.” When problems arise, send the quarreling people to the room to talk. The only rule is that no physical “solving” is allowed, only verbal.
- Assign two of the chairs in your home to be the “I’m sorry” chairs. When there are hurt feelings, those involved must take turns sitting in the chairs until they can say “I’m sorry” from the heart.
- Create a “Memory Wall” in your home. This could consist of important events in the family, from school plays to family trips, represented with pictures, programs and souvenirs.
- Start the day giving each family member a kiss. Wake children with a kiss. Always kiss good-bye.
- When the family all gathers together, play games and enjoy treats.
- Display children’s artwork for a few days, then place it in a special box, decorated by the child.
- If both parents work, make sure children don’t come home to an empty house. Leave a little treat and an envelope for each child containing instructions on what to do during the afternoon.
- Send family members love notes in lunch sacks, desks, on mirrors, etc.

### Assignment

Choose one or more of the following assignments:

1. Plan the details of a new family tradition. Everyone in your family can help with some part of this tradition.
2. Do the activity: Family Scavenger Hunt.

3. Read the Additional Solution for Success: Family Hobby.

## ACTIVITY

### FAMILY SCAVENGER HUNT

Many things in our homes have a story behind them, or they are related to a tradition. This activity is intended to help families strengthen their feelings of family pride and history by learning about special family possessions.

#### Activity

1. Make a list of things you're going to hunt for. You can use the Scavenger Hunt List [here](#) or make your own.
2. Have family members work individually or in teams. Set a time limit. Send family members on the Scavenger Hunt.
3. After the time has expired, gather everyone together to see what they've found. Have each person show the things they found.
4. Talk about each item and explain why it is special to your family.

#### Scavenger Hunt List

5. Find something in your house that used to belong to somebody else.
6. Write the name of a food that everyone enjoys having for dinner in your family.
7. Count the total number of books you have in your house.
8. Write the color of paint, bedspreads, or curtains that you used to have in your house before the current decor.
9. Find an object that represents something everyone in your family likes to do together for fun.
10. Find something in your house that is older than the oldest person living there.
11. Find something in your house that is broken or doesn't work anymore.
12. Find something that represents one of your family's special traditions.
13. Find something in your house that was bought in another state or foreign country. Who bought it?
14. Find a tape, CD, or movie everyone in your family likes.
15. Find something in your kitchen cupboard that doesn't get used very often.
16. Find something you have in your house that most families probably don't have.
17. Find the oldest photograph you have.
18. Write the name of the person who is usually the first person to get up each morning at your house.
19. Write the name of something that people usually can't find when they need it.
20. Find something that reminds you of one of the happiest moments that has occurred in your family.

21. If you were moving away and could only take a small 4 x 5 trailer with you, what family possessions would you pack?
22. If a flood was coming and you could only save one thing from your house (besides your family) what would you take?

## ACTIVITY

### FAMILY HOBBY

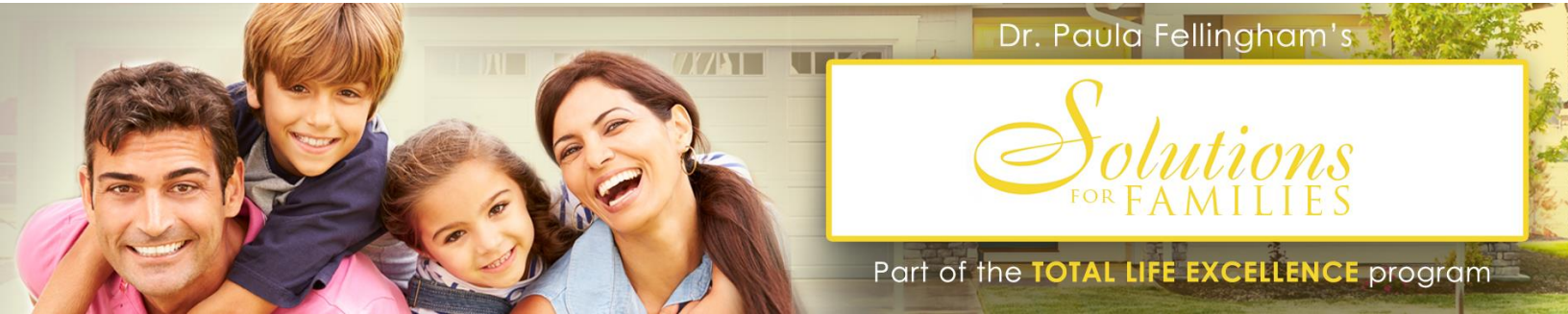
A hobby is an activity that is done for pleasure. One of the things that helps put fun in life, and helps make families work well, is participating in a hobby as a family. This requires effort on the part of family members, but the more you share your lives, the more you'll enjoy one another.

Have each family member write on a paper what they would like to do for a family hobby. Collect the papers and read them, making only positive remarks about the ideas. Suggestions for possible hobbies:

1. Gardening
23. Bicycling
24. Camping
25. Cooking
26. Self-defense; taking lessons, competing
27. Music; playing musical instruments, attending concerts, etc.
28. Hiking
29. Collecting things; stamps, antiques, etc.
30. Traveling
31. Art; drawing, painting, etc.
32. Sewing
33. Fishing
34. Boating
35. Woodwork

After all the ideas for a family hobby have been read, discuss what would be the best hobby for your family. You may decide on two or three hobbies!

Choose a family hobby and schedule a day to begin. Discuss what you'll need for your hobby and assign family members to get what is needed. Perhaps you'll want some instruction. If so, contact someone to teach your family about the hobby you've chosen. During your weekly family meeting, schedule dates regularly to participate in your hobby.



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