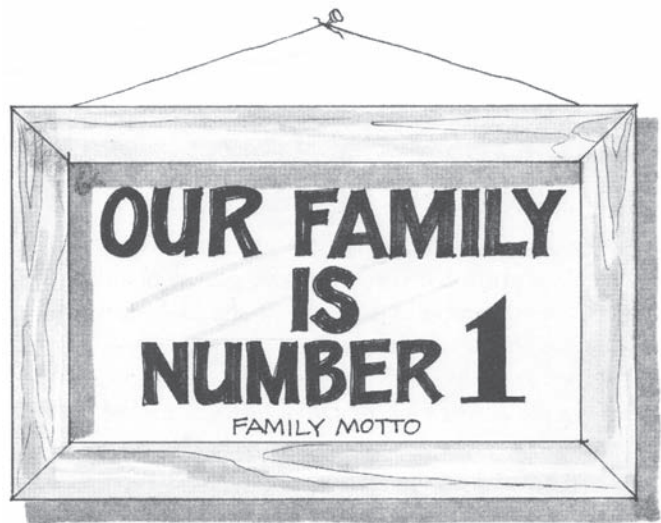

CELEBRATE YOUR FAMILY

“Celebrate Your Family” is intended to help your family develop its strengths. The only two requirements for celebrating your family are a desire to do something that will strengthen the family further, and a family commitment to set aside some time for strength-building activities.

A strong family is made up of persons who appreciate each other. They value what they have. Members prize or cherish one another and they show it. They do not take each other for granted. Family members daily show their appreciation for the little things that are said and done. When one person prepares a meal, the others express their thanks. The child expresses his appreciation when a parent plays a game with him or drives him to a friend's house. Every person in the family works at making the house into a home. Members of a strong family feel good about themselves, feel treasured or appreciated, and want to be with others in the family. They cherish their home and the members of the family.



FAMILY ACTIVITY 1.

Let's make our family motto.

Plan a time when the entire family can be together. The parent says, "We are going to decide on our family motto." A family motto is a short phrase or sentence that describes an important characteristic or aspect of the family. It expresses a main belief the members have about their family. A motto might read "We are kind to each other" or "Our family is number one."

Have each member make suggestions about what the family motto might say. Talk about the ideas. Decide on the motto. The family motto can be printed on a piece of cardboard or paper and hung in a prominent place in the home.

FAMILY ACTIVITY 2.

Let's play "Imagine if."

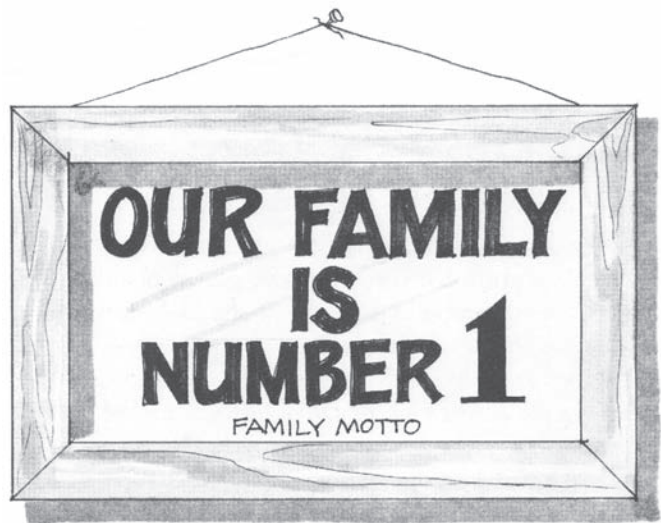
After dinner, the parent says, "There are many good things about our family. We are going to play *Imagine if*. I'll begin by saying 'Imagine if we didn't have a home. What would this mean to each of you?'" Have each member say how not having a home would affect him or her. Talk about what each member says. When the discussion is over, instruct another member to say "Imagine if" and repeat the activity.

Other words in place of home may be used: food, love, clothes, parent, brother, sister, and so forth. This family activity should be repeated several times over a period of two or three weeks.

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FAMILY ACTIVITY 3.

Let's have a family appreciation night.

Each family member must develop a pattern of telling the others in the family how much he appreciates them.

Assemble the entire family. The parent says, "Each person will say out loud to each individual family member one thing about each person that you especially appreciate. I'll begin."

"Sue, I appreciate you because you share your toys."

"Joe, I appreciate your smile."

"Mom, I appreciate your work," etc.

Then, choose another member. Say to that person "I appreciate you..." etc. Repeat the activity until each person has been told why the family appreciates him or her.

The family appreciation activity should be repeated weekly for a number of weeks.

FAMILY ACTIVITY 4.

Let's look at our home.

Family members make the home a safe, comforting, and secure place. In the home, members get unconditional love. When a member is gone, he or she looks forward to returning home. Everyone can be themselves. The home does for individuals what no other place does.

After a meal, when all the family is together, the parent says, "Our home is a special place. When we're gone, we look forward to coming home. Each of us will mention as many reasons as we can think of for why our home is a good place to return to. Think of how you can feel or act in our home that you can't somewhere else." Talk about the reasons the family members give.

Someone once said, "Too often we are more courteous, understanding, and appreciative to casual acquaintances than we are to those we love – to our family members."

It is so easy to take a loved one for granted. Seldom does this consciously occur. It happens when little or no effort is put forth to strengthen a family. Family members will feel good about themselves and their family when they are appreciated. The more family members can show appreciation to each other, the stronger the family will be.

By James E. Van Horn, Extension Specialist, Family Sociology, The Pennsylvania State University.

Reprinted for use in Kansas by Charles A. Smith, Extension Specialist, Human Development.

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Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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