

18 questions for a family story

Choose one, follow the detail and ask what may be kept or shared. Notes can be a summary; do not invent a quote.

A place you knew

- What could you hear from your childhood kitchen?
- Which everyday place did your family keep returning to?
- What small detail of a former home can you still picture?

Words we keep

- Which family saying needs its own explanation?
- Is there a nickname whose beginning you remember?
- Which word or phrase would you like the next generation to hear?

Ordinary rituals

- What made an ordinary weekend feel familiar?
- Was there an object that always appeared at family gatherings?
- How did someone make a visitor feel welcome?

People in a scene

- What small habit helps you remember someone you love?
- Who taught you an everyday skill, and how did they teach it?
- What would a photograph of that person fail to capture?

Things that changed

- Which tradition have you changed to suit your own life?
- What ordinary task used to happen differently?
- Is there a family story you understand differently now?

For this child

- Which small memory would you like this child to have of you?
- What would you like to explain about a keepsake?
- What question would you enjoy being asked another time?

A detail I want to keep:

The story and its context

One conversation is enough. Leave a question blank when someone would rather skip it.

Who told the story, and when we spoke

Use the storyteller's preferred name. Keep the conversation date separate from the remembered event.

The scene they are remembering

A place, an object, an action. Label approximate dates and uncertainty.

Their words, or my labelled summary

Use quotation marks only for accurately recorded words. Ask about names or unfamiliar phrases.

What we agreed to keep or share

Audience, private details, whether they want to check a draft, and where this entry belongs.
