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insights and encouragement from the “home front”

# MEMOIRS OF A MOM

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## Telling the Family Story

The holidays often bring many opportunities for family gatherings. These times can be stressful, but they can also be a great chance for your children to hear their family’s history. Some of the most important benefits of hearing family stories are:

- Tells children who they are. Truths are most effectively taught in the context of a story. Understanding how they fit into their extended family helps children understand the human race as a whole and who they are in it.
- Passes on their importance. Knowing that you have your Grandmother’s nose or can bake like their Aunt Clara impresses on a child’s heart their unique place in the universe.
- Increases children’s respect and understanding for their parents. Recently I heard a story of how my mom as a young person stood up for what was right. I immediately gained an increased understanding and respect for her. Personal stories from extended family members can help children navigate the sometimes murky waters of understanding our parents.

Some ways to get the stories rolling, especially from quieter relatives are:

- Ask them questions. Ask about the war he fought in or how she felt going through the Depression.
- Use an object. Ask Grandma to tell the story of a special picture, quilt or knick knack.
- Look at photographs together. There probably isn’t a better way to get the storytelling to start.
- Learn a craft or skill. Have Grandpa teach your child how to whittle or ask Grandma to show them how to crochet.

So the next family gathering you attend—don’t just tune out when Uncle Bill starts to tell that story you’ve heard so many times. Just remember, not only will it benefit you to hear it, but your kids as well.

Lisa Potts