

## **TELL ME YOUR STORIES**

### **Sample Interview Questions**

The following are some of the questions one 8<sup>th</sup> grade class came up with in their *Tell Me Your Stories* project. However, we suggest having your students make up their own questions, rather than handing them a list of questions.

#### **Ancestors/Grandparents**

- What do you know about your ancestors on your father's side? (where they lived, work they did)
- Can you describe your grandparents?
- What were their names, and what did they do for a living?
- What do you know about their life and lifestyle?
- Describe your relationship with your grandparents.
- What do you know about the origin of your family's last name?
- What do you know about your ancestors on your mother's side? (where they lived, work they did)
- Can you describe your grandparents on your mother's side?
- What were their names, and what did they do for a living?
- What do you know about their life and lifestyle?
- Describe your relationship with your grandparents.
- In what ways are you proud of your ancestry?
- If you could talk to one of your ancestors, who would it be and what would you say?

#### **Parents' Lives**

- What was your father's name? What do you know about his childhood?
- What can you tell me about his siblings and parents, and his relationship with them?
- What kind of education did your father have? Did he finish school?
- What kind of work did he do? Hobbies?
- What was your mother's name? What do you know about her childhood?
- What can you tell me about her siblings and parents and her relationship with them?
- What kind of education did your mother have? Did she finish school?
- What kind of work did she do? Hobbies?
- Can you tell me how your parents met?
- What do you know about their courtship or early relationship?

#### **The Early Years**

- When and where were you born?
- Who were you named after?
- Have you heard any stories about the circumstances of your birth? (in hospital or at home with midwife)
- Describe your parents' personalities.
- What was your relationship like with your parents?
- What are your earliest memories as a child?
- Describe your siblings and your relationship with them.
- As a child, what responsibilities or chores did you have around the house?
- Can you describe where you grew up as a child, as far as the environments, the city, the neighborhood?
- What religion were you and how involved were you and your family with your religion?
- Describe any traditions the family had.
- Describe the family's economic status.
- What kinds of recreational activities did you participate in as a child?
- Describe your social life, in terms of friends and activities.
- What did you want to be when you grew up?
- How were you disciplined as a child? Were you spanked, grounded, etc?

## Sample Interview Questions – *Tell Me Your Stories*

- Tell me about your schooling.
- What did you like most about school? What did you like least? Why?
- Who were your role models? What did you learn from them?
- What are the valuable and useful morals your parents taught you as a child, which somehow affected you in the future?

### Teen Years

- How would you describe your family and relationships during your teen years?
- What kind of person were you as a teenager?
- What did kids do for fun then?
- Were there things you did as a teenager that you now regard as pretty horrible?
- How were you disciplined at home? At school?
- As a teen what were the biggest problems that you were faced with?
- How would you compare the problems for teens then with the problems today?
- What did you like best about school during your adolescence? What did you like least?
- Describe the fashions and fads of your time.
- What was the popular music?
- Who did you look up to?
- What did your parents worry about in relation to their children in those days?
- What was the most valuable thing you owned during your teen years? Why?
- If you graduated high school, when was it, and what did you do after that?
- Would you describe your first romance?

### Adulthood

- How did you meet your spouse and what attracted you to them?
- If you went to college, what sort of experiences did you have? (events, sororities, etc.)
- How did society influence you then?
- As a young adult, how did you feel about where your life was going?
- Describe your first job and any career changes during your life.
- Please tell me about each of your children.
- What kinds of things did you do for recreation?
- Were there major changes when you turned any particular age, such as 30 or 40? How did you feel?
- Did you serve in any war?
- Describe the members of your family now and your relationships with them.

### Historical Events

- What historical event affected your life the most? How has your life changed from having to go through that experience?
- What is the most disturbing event in your time?
- What natural disasters happened during your lifetime? How did that affect your life and where you lived?
- How was your family affected by the Great Depression?
- Were you involved in World War II?
- How did World War II affect the way you lived?
- How did you feel when John Kennedy was assassinated? Robert Kennedy? Martin Luther King?

### Technology

- What inventions or changes had the most impact on you and your life?
- How did you feel about man going to space the first time?
- What have you been the most excited about in terms of changes?
- Are there things that you've felt afraid of, in terms of inventions or technology?

## Reflections

- What is most important in your life now?
- Looking back at your life, would you change anything?
- Looking back at your life, what is your greatest achievement and what are you most proud of?
- What advice or words of wisdom could you offer your descendants about life?
- How do you think your past experiences have molded you into the person you are today?
- Describe your greatest joy during your lifetime.
- What's your opinion about the state of the world?
- Is anything else you want to say about your life or the years you've lived that we haven't talked about?