

Relationships: What Is An Intentional Family?

OBJECTIVES:

1. Identify ways to intentionally strengthen one's family
2. Apply intentional techniques to make one's family stronger

HANDOUTS:

1. *Family Fun Cards*
2. *Take Home Message for This Session*

ITEMS NEEDED FOR THIS EDUCATIONAL SESSION:

- Handout materials for participant workbooks—make copies of the **Family Fun Cards** on cardstock-weight paper and make extra copies for participants to take home and have other family members complete.
- Shoe boxes or some other kind of box. One for each participant.
- Art and scrapbook materials
- 3 X 5 Cards
- Pencils and pens
- Flipchart and markers

GETTING STARTED

Have students review homework from last class. The co-facilitators need to think of a funny or unusual experience from their own family life to share with the group.

We're going to start today's sessions with stories about the funniest or most unusual memories we can think of from our own families.

Think about the family in which you grew up. What was the funniest or most unusual thing you can think of that happened in your family?

(Allow participants to pass if they need to. An example: On our birthday every year, we got to choose our favorite dinner and mine was macaroni and cheese for years and years! Or: Every summer we would go swimming at a lake close to our home. My dad would play like he was an alligator coming after us. We would scream and splash him with delight.)

What made these times so memorable for you? Why did you think of this memory instead of another one?

ACTIVITY: Introduction to this Session

Families do not become strong unintentionally. They are made and it takes each member doing his or her part to make it happen. A strong family is an **intentional family**. That means we do things on purpose to make our family stronger and healthier. In many cases, your mother or father intentionally planned the memories you shared in order to build a strong family.

It takes hard work and effort on every family member's part to create an intentional family. This may mean having to compromise busy individual schedules in order to strengthen family bonds and lessen the incidents of family members feeling taken for granted.

Each of us has grown up in a family. While we all have families, it is important to remember that each family is different. This means that your experience is different from the person sitting next to you or that you co-parent with. We can learn a great deal from each other about how to create an intentional family.

ACTIVITY: An Intentional Family

Post three signs on the wall—**EVERYDAY, LESS FREQUENT, SPECIAL OCCASION**. Distribute 3" X 5" cards to each member of the group. Make sure to have plenty available.

As the opening activity indicated, each of us can recall specific things or practices that our family did. Think back again to when you were younger. Think of other things that you did with your family that bring back pleasant memories. It can be something you looked forward to, or makes you smile when you think of it today. It doesn't have to be anything big—just something that makes you feel good and that you are willing to share with the group. Write the memory down on one of the cards. You can share more than one memory but write only one memory per card.

As each of you share your memory or memories, place your cards under the sign that matches how often: Did you do this everyday? Less frequently? For special occasions?

Now think of the family you have today, with your child or children. Write down on the cards specific things you do to build a strong family. Again, tape each card under the appropriate category.

Let's look at the memories and practices you posted. Remember that no two memories are alike. However, there are some things that your memories and practices have in common. What are the common themes that we see?

- Families spend time together.
- Families celebrate special occasions.
- Families are silly together and have fun.
- Family practices often involve food or meal times.
- Any others?

When 1,500 children were asked, “What do you think makes a happy family?” the children didn’t say money, cars, big houses or televisions. Instead, the answer they gave most was doing things together. Giving time to our children shows we care and appreciate them. Strong families find it is important and fun to spend time together. And the more you do it, the more you will want to do it.

ACTIVITY: **Workbook Scrapbook Activity**

Have each participant create a workbook page that lists some of the things that he/she could do on purpose to make his/her family stronger. Couples can create one page together.

ACTIVITY: **Family Fun Box**

Distribute an empty shoebox to everyone in the group. If partners or family members came together, have them work together to make one box.

Decorate the outside of your box, and label it “Family Fun Box.”

Let’s begin thinking of new things you might like to do with your children. What are the kinds of things you want to do or share with your child or children? Using the same handout, make a list on the bottom half of the ways you want to spend time with your family as your child gets older.

Think of something to do together as a family, and write it on a “Family Fun Card.” Remember that the activity you choose has to be fun and “do-able.” Some examples of fun activities are go for a walk together, rent a movie for the family to watch, read a book together, go for a bike ride, or choose a special meal. Place the cards in the box. Everyone should pick one night, at least once a month, as a Family Fun Night. You will need to plan your Family Fun Night activities in advance. When the Family Fun Night arrives, have a family member pull a card from the box, and do whatever it says. Be sure to take turns each month and allow each family member to take a turn picking a card. Family members can continue to come up with fun ideas and add them to the box over time.

HOMEWORK:

Enhance the workbook page created in class by adding family photos of your family doing new and old intentional family exercises together. Commit to do one Family Fun Activity and write it on the insert for the refrigerator magnet. Have participants ask other family members to contribute to the Fun Box.

CLOSING:

Today we identified what makes a family strong and discussed some ways to intentionally make a family stronger. Remember creating a strong family requires each member to do his or her part in order to strengthen the family bonds. These small sacrifices help to create the family that you want.



Family Fun Cards

<p>Family Fun Box</p> <p>What will we do for fun? We will ...</p>	<p>Family Fun Box</p> <p>What will we do for fun? We will ...</p>
<p>Family Fun Box</p> <p>What will we do for fun? We will ...</p>	<p>Family Fun Box</p> <p>What will we do for fun? We will ...</p>
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Take Home Message for This Session

Directions: Think of one step you will take before the next session and write it down in the space provided. In addition, write down the time, date, and location of the next session.

**Strong families
are built one memory
at a time.**

My Action Steps:

.....
.....

The Next Session:

.....
DATE

.....
TIME

.....
LOCATION

