Family & Friends

Introductory Reading

Families and friendships are important to people. From our birth, our families help us to grow, learn, and feel safe and protected. Most children live with their parents when they are young, and some continue living with them after they become adults. Families come in many sizes. Some are large while others are small. Many people have siblings, while others have none. Parents often teach children how to behave and do chores, help them with schoolwork, and spend time doing fun activities together. The birth order in a family often affects personalities.

Friendship is also special. A good friend is someone you trust and feel comfortable with. Friends listen, help, and enjoy spending time together. Some people make friends easily, while others need more time to feel connected to others. Friendships often change as we grow older. Sometimes friends stay close, but sometimes they move away or grow apart.

Both family and friends can support us during difficult times. They celebrate our successes and help us when we feel sad or stressed. Some children rebel and betray their families and friends. However, in most cultures, children show respect to their parents and often help them when they become older. Family and friendship are gifts that help us feel connected and loved.

Vocabulary

Siblings – brothers or sisters
Caregiver – a person who takes care of another
Chores – small jobs at home
Birth order – the order children are born in a family
Disciplinarian – someone who disciplines others
Betray – to break another's trust
Resemble – to look alike
Respect – show honor and care
Connected – to be close to someone
Rebel – someone who fights against the rules

Discussion Questions

1. How old were your parents when you were born? Did your parents ever live with their parents?
2. Does anyone in your family still live with their parents?
3. How many siblings do you have? Where do you fit in your family's birth order? Do you think that has shaped your personality?
4. What activities do you remember doing with your mother and your father?
5. Are you thankful to your parents? Why? Who was your primary caregiver when you were young?
6. Do you remember helping either of your parents with chores? Which ones?
7. Do you remember playing with your parents? What did you play? Did you play with your siblings?
8. How would you describe friendship? What makes someone a good friend?

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9. Who is your closest friend? Why do you think you connect so well? When and how did you meet?
10. Do you make friends easily? Give some advice for maintaining lasting friendships.
11. Do you have aunts and uncles? Are you close to your cousins? When do you see them?
12. Are any of your friends invited to your family gatherings?
13. Who do you miss most in Canada – your friends or your family?
14. Which of your parents was the main disciplinarian in your family? How were you punished?
15. Did your parents reward you for good behaviour? What did they do?
16. How important is respect for your parents in your culture?
17. Have you ever lost a friend? What happened? Has a friend ever betrayed you? In what way?
18. Were the family expectations and rules different for girls than for boys? Give some examples.
19. Are you close to your siblings? Do you keep in contact with them? Do you have family reunions?
20. What did your parents expect from you as a teenager? Did you rebel?
21. Did you ever get romantically involved with a friend? What happened?
22. What would you like to change about the way your parents treated you as a child? A teenager? Why?
23. How will you or have you raised your children differently?
24. Are you close with your father or mother now? What do you do together?
25. Do you resemble either of your parents? Are you similar in appearance or personality? How?
26. In your culture, do parents expect children to take care of them when they are older? In what way?

Debate – Agree or Disagree with these Statements

1. It is usually best for elderly parents to be taken care of in a senior's residence.
2. You should try to meet with your family at least once a month.
3. Parents should teach their children how to be responsible adults, not the education system.
4. A good friend should always support you – even if you make very poor life choices.

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