

◇ Unit 8  
Forming Your Own Family

**Family & Community Involvement**

**BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**

A band of California Native Americans called the Cahuilla had a special custom as their early villages developed. Each time a Cahuilla married a person from another tribe, his or her people became like family to the villagers. In this way, the Cahuilla people avoided war and developed harmonious social relationships, trading partnerships, and cultural exchanges with all the surrounding tribes.

When you marry, you will marry not only an individual but also a family. Since no two families are exactly alike, you may be the one who can bridge the gap between two classes, cultures, religions, races, political persuasions, or general perspectives. Read the following examples, and put yourself in the married person's place.

1. Cassie and Carlyle came from two different worlds. She was born into an upper-class urban family. He came from a small-town farm family. The families did not share the same religious or cultural views. The parents reluctantly supported Cassie and Carlyle's marriage, but every holiday was a battle of wills because each family wanted the couple to celebrate with them. When Cassie and Carlyle were expecting their first baby, they asked both families to a picnic to celebrate. At the picnic, the tensions between the two families hurt Cassie. Finally, she tapped a fork on a glass to get everyone's attention. They all looked at her, curious about what she would say. What she said resulted in a new family tradition that strengthened her child's extended family. What do you think she said?

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2. Akin's father, a Nigerian diplomat, wanted Akin to marry someone of high status in the international community. Instead, he planned to marry Denise, an American student whose family had never left the Midwest. Akin wrote his father several letters inviting him to the wedding, but his father did not respond. Finally, Denise wrote to her future father-in-law so he could see that she was a good match for Akin and that she intended to respect him as a father-in-law. What should Denise's letter say?

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You may be a person who has a talent for bringing people of differing viewpoints together. If so, you might consider a profession that requires skills in helping individuals or groups find common ground. Make a list of professions that help people build bridges between opposing viewpoints. Choose one that interests you, and find out more about it.

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CREATIVE COMPROMISES

When people marry, they become part of a team. Each partner must balance his or her needs and wants against those of the spouse. Job-related responsibilities can pose special challenges to relationships.

**Directions:** Read about each of these married couples. On the lines provided, tell what each person might do to support a successful marriage, and come up with a creative compromise to resolve the problem.

1. Sally, a school teacher, brings stacks of papers home to correct. She also spends many hours writing lesson plans. Her husband, Roger, complains about being neglected. This is Sally's second year of teaching.

Sally: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Roger: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Creative compromise: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Paul is trying to make a go of his own small restaurant. He works sixteen-hour days, except for Mondays when the restaurant is closed. When he is at home, he falls asleep on the sofa. His wife, Tia, is tired of being home alone with their two small children.

Paul: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tia: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Creative compromise: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Find the names of at least two organizations in your area that could help married couples reach solutions to problems through compromise when needed. What kinds of work-related issues do they encounter most often? What kinds of compromises do they see as the most effective?

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LEARNING ABOUT PARENTING

There are so many things to learn and think about when you are expecting a baby. Most communities offer a variety of parenting-related services to help prospective parents plan for a birth and become successful parents. Some may offer experiences that increase comfort levels and help provide confidence in dealing with older children's expectations. Some may offer support groups for new parents.

**Directions:** Talk to your grandparents or other older adults. Ask them what help was available to them. Then compare their answers with the resources that are now available in your community.

1. Where could someone in your community go to learn about becoming a parent? List those places or organizations.

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2. Some communities have groups where parents and their babies come together. The couples in these groups, as well as the children, often remain friends for life. What kinds of support do you think such a group might offer new parents?

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3. Where in your community could a person get help with substance abuse before or during a pregnancy? What services do these groups offer?

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4. What community resources are available to people who have problems taking care of their children? What types of volunteers are needed by these groups?

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Choose a place in your community where you could volunteer to gain experience in working with children. Consider putting in some volunteer time to better understand children.

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**POSITIVE PARENTING**

Many teens learn positive parenting skills by observing the examples set by their own parents. You can also find other good role models.

1. List ten nurturing environments in your community where parents and children can interact.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. Create a visual tribute to good parenting. Compile scenes of young children as they are being loved, supported, and encouraged by parents and other adults. You could include such settings as schools, parks, play areas, malls, and child care environments. You could even include quotations that emphasize the importance of nurturing children.

3. What activities and emotions do you want to portray in your visual tribute to parenting?

_____
_____
_____
_____

**Create a Calendar**  
Find a community group in your area that brings together parents and children. Work with the group to take photos showing parents and children together in different settings to help publicize the group's mission. Be sure to acquire permission from each person photographed. Use the photos and positive quotations about children and child rearing to create a calendar for the community group to sell as a fund-raiser.