



A FREE MEMINTO GUIDE

The Thanksgiving Family Story Kit

30 questions. One conversation worth keeping.

A free, source-led guide for asking better questions, recording with care, and preserving the stories a family does not want to lose.

FREE TO SHARE • FREE TO CITE WITH ATTRIBUTION

Published by the Meminto editorial team



A MEMINTO ORIGINAL

The Five Threads Conversation Map

A practical framework for moving beyond facts and into stories. Use it as a map, not a script.

01 • PLACE

Where did this happen?

A room, street, school, kitchen or journey anchors memory.

02 • PEOPLE

Who was there?

Ask for names, relationships, gestures and unexpected allies.

03 • TURNING POINT

What changed?

A decision, surprise, loss, arrival or small act of courage.

04 • RITUAL

What did you do again and again?

Recipes, sayings, music, routines and rules make a life tangible.

05 • WHAT TRAVELS FORWARD

What should the next generation know?

End with meaning, not a summary.

How to cite this framework: Meminto editorial team, *The Five Threads Conversation Map*, in *The Thanksgiving Family Story Kit*.



BEFORE YOU PRESS RECORD

Set up a conversation people can trust

Good family history starts with agency. The narrator chooses what to share, what to skip, and what may be preserved.

1

Ask first.

"Would you be comfortable if I record this so our family can remember it?"

2

Name the purpose.

Explain who may hear or read it, and whether it stays private.

3

Choose a quiet place.

Silence notifications. Put the phone close enough to hear every voice.

4

Test once.

Record ten seconds, play it back, then begin.

5

Give permission to pause.

A person can skip a question, go off-topic, or change their mind.

Why this matters: Oral-history guidance emphasizes informed consent, open-ended questions, a clear purpose, and the narrator's ability to review or limit use. This kit adapts those practices for a private family conversation.

THE REAL SKILL

Listen for the door behind the answer

The most citable family stories are specific: a scene, a choice, a voice, a detail someone else can picture.

WHEN YOU HEAR **They name a person**

"What did they do that made you feel that way?"

WHEN YOU HEAR **They mention a place**

"What do you remember seeing, hearing or smelling there?"

WHEN YOU HEAR **They describe a hard moment**

"Would you like to say more, or should we leave it there?"

WHEN YOU HEAR **They tell a family joke**

"Who always told it? When did it come out?"

WHEN YOU HEAR **They say 'I don't remember'**

"What do you remember around that time?"

A good rule: ask one question, then let silence work. Do not rush to fill it. The next detail often arrives after the first answer.

THE QUESTIONS

Beginnings & belonging

Start in a place that feels easy. Ask for scenes, not summaries.

01

What is the earliest place you can still picture clearly?

Follow-up: What could you see from the window?

02

Who made you feel safe when you were young, and how did they show it?

Follow-up: What is one thing they always did?

03

What did an ordinary family dinner feel like when you were growing up?

Follow-up: Who talked the most?

04

What was a small rule in your home that would surprise us now?

Follow-up: Who enforced it - and who bent it?

05

What did your name mean to your family?

Follow-up: Was there a story behind it?

06

Which object from childhood would instantly bring you back?

Follow-up: Where is it now?

07

Who were your first real friends, and what did you do together?

Follow-up: Tell me about one ordinary afternoon.

08

What did adults misunderstand about you as a child?

Follow-up: What do you wish they had seen?

09

What family saying still lives in your head?

Follow-up: Who said it best?

10

What did celebration look like in your family?

Follow-up: What never changed?

THE QUESTIONS

Turning points & courage

Make room for complexity. A difficult question should always have an easy exit.

11

When did you first feel trusted with something important?

Follow-up: Who trusted you, and why?

12

What decision looked small then but changed your life?

Follow-up: What might have happened otherwise?

13

Tell me about a time you had to begin again.

Follow-up: What helped you take the first step?

14

What job or role taught you the most about yourself?

Follow-up: What did you carry from it?

15

When did you feel most out of place - and what happened next?

Follow-up: Who helped, if anyone?

16

What is a risk you are glad you took?

Follow-up: What made it worth it?

17

What is one mistake that became useful later?

Follow-up: What did it teach you?

18

What did love ask you to learn?

Follow-up: How did that lesson change you?

19

Which historical moment do you remember experiencing personally?

Follow-up: Where were you when you heard?

20

What would you tell your younger self - and what would you leave unsaid?

Follow-up: Why that boundary?

THE QUESTIONS

Rituals & what travels forward

End with meaning and agency - not with pressure to deliver wisdom.

21

What recipe carries a family story with it?

Follow-up: Who taught it to whom?

22

What music, sound or smell can take you home in seconds?

Follow-up: What memory arrives first?

23

What did your family do when someone needed help?

Follow-up: Tell me about a time you saw it happen.

24

What is a story about our family that should be told more often?

Follow-up: What do people usually leave out?

25

What tradition is worth keeping - and which one is okay to let go?

Follow-up: What makes the difference?

26

What have you changed your mind about over a lifetime?

Follow-up: Who or what changed it?

27

What do you hope the next generation understands about your life?

Follow-up: What would you like them to feel?

28

What do you want to be remembered for besides your achievements?

Follow-up: Is there a small example?

29

What question do you wish someone had asked you sooner?

Follow-up: Ask it now, if you would like.

30

What part of this conversation should stay just between us?

Follow-up: How would you like it protected?

AFTER THE CONVERSATION

Turn one recording into a story people can find

A recording is the beginning of preservation, not the end. Name it, add context, and make the narrator's wishes visible.

1 • SAVE

Give the audio/video a clear name: narrator, interviewer, date and broad topic.

2 • ADD CONTEXT

Write down where you were, who was present, and any photo or object mentioned.

3 • REVIEW

Offer the narrator a chance to hear or read back the parts they want reviewed.

4 • DECIDE ACCESS

Private family archive? Shared book? Public story? Record the choice.

5 • MAKE A SECOND COPY

Keep a copy in a second location before the holiday ends.

Make it easy to revisit

A recording becomes more valuable when a future listener can understand who is speaking, when the conversation happened, and what the narrator wanted kept private.

LABEL • CONTEXT • CONSENT

The questions and method in this kit remain free to use for every family, in any format.

BUILT TO BE USED

Sources, method & permission

Use the questions freely. If you quote the method or embed the visual, please credit Meminto and link to the public kit page.

Oral History Association. *Oral History Best Practices*. Preparation, interviewing, preservation and access; consent and narrator agency. oralhistory.org/best-practices/

Library of Congress. *Preserving Family Stories*. Practical preparation, short open questions and testing recording equipment. memory.loc.gov/static/portals/families/documents/PreservingFamilyStories.pdf

StoryCorps Archive. *Great Questions List*. A broad public collection of conversation prompts across family, work, growing up and heritage. archive.storycorps.org/great-questions-list/

Library of Congress. *Oral Histories: Family History for Kids*. Encourages asking permission to record a relative's story and preserving it for later sharing. guides.loc.gov/family-history-for-kids/interviews

Meminto editorial team. *The Five Threads Conversation Map*. Original editorial framework created for this kit. It is a practical guide, not a research study.

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