

FAMILY REUNION INSTITUTE'S

STICKY REUNION SITUATION

GETTING VOLUNTEERS FOR FIRST TIME REUNION

May 2020

The Situation:

We have a big family and plenty of scattered holiday events. I'd like to plan a family reunion so that we can all be at the same place at the same time, but I'm not sure how to get family members to help. Do I select family members or ask for volunteers? What do I do if someone volunteers but has no skills?

The Fix:



Doug Harris

There are several ways to approach this challenge. Some suggestions:

1. Research and make a list of all the scattered holiday events. Inquire how many family members usually attend and whether plans have begun for the event. You will wind up with a perspective on what is happening throughout the entire family.
2. Decide how you want to form a representative committee to plan the reunion. The most workable way is ask people to represent/coordinate a geographic area or family branch.
3. Develop a list of what you would expect each family representative to do.
4. Select your first contacts in each area or family branch, keeping in mind that you want that person to be likeable, a good communicator and reliable. Your first selection may be the one, but if not, ask for recommendations.
5. Keep the following caveats and tips in mind:
 - a. Whether you reach out via text, mail or email, you will need to follow-up with phone calls.
 - b. Remember the old saying that: "If you want something done, ask a busy person."
 - c. Keep an open mind. Your impressions of people may be misleading. You may be surprised at who is willing to help. E.g., The person who was too busy 5 years ago may now be looking for something to do.
 - d. Be ready to adjust quickly and politely when the people you thought you could count on do not come through.
 - e. If someone volunteers but does not have the needed skills, try to find other ways for them to help. E.g.,
 - If they are unfamiliar with email or social media, ask them to do follow-up calls.
 - Ask them to pray for the family at the beginning or end of each meeting.
 - Ask them to be greeters.
 - Ask them to plan a specific event, game, or activity.

The Fix:



Suzanne

Vargus Holloman

Congratulations on your decision to strengthen family bonds through a reunion! During this pandemic family members have grown more appreciative of the value of family and will relish the idea of a gathering together once it is safe to do so.

The good news with planning a family reunion is that there's no specific requirements on who can assist with the planning. The size of the planning committee can be as few as two people up to as many as appropriate given the scope and length of your reunion.

Notify the extended family of your intent to have a reunion. As part of the notification, request volunteers for the planning committee. This positive news of a reunion will be welcomed by them during these troubled times.

If family members are concerned about a reunion given the pandemic, let them know that the Family Reunion Institute recommends planning begin 24 months before the date of the reunion.

In addition to those that volunteer as a result of the notification, reach out to a few family members that you know well and are dependable and industrious, to be a part of the planning committee.

Also, make sure that the members of the planning committee represent each branch of the family as this will help to ensure greater attendance at the reunion. If you don't personally know who to ask from a family branch, ask members of the planning committee if they know family from that branch that they can recommend.

Take the time to find out what knowledge and experience the committee members have that would benefit the reunion. For example, a family member might have experience with planning children's events, through planning activities for their children and/or having served on the parent teacher association at their children's school. She/he could be asked to be the point-person on the committee for planning children's activities for the reunion.

For more information on planning your family reunion, go to the Family Reunion Planning tab at the Family Reunion Institute's website www.familyreunioninstitute.net.
