

# Branch Out!

Exploring the family tree together is a great way for young people to learn about their history and understand the world. **BY AMY BOXRUD**

**K**ids love to hear about their own family history. What's more, digging into the family tree is good for them. Maureen Taylor, author of "The Family Photo Detective" (Family Tree Books, 2013), says it gives kids a sense of connection within their families, as well as a sense of general history. It also can provide a context for understanding complex issues, such as war and immigration. Exploring genealogy together offers a practical benefit for adults, too: Getting the next generation curious about family history means there will be someone to take care of family artifacts after you're gone. "You need that intergenerational connection to pass down the story and to keep the family history alive," says Taylor.



## Activities for Young People



### PRESCHOOL

#### Tell A Tale

Bring genealogy to life by sharing family stories. Children can relate especially well to others' childhood tales. Be animated and use a unique voice for each character to increase the entertainment factor.

**EXPAND IT:** Use family photos and other artifacts to enhance your storytelling.

### ELEMENTARY AGES

#### Family Tree Detectives

Tailor a family tree project to your child's age and interests. Kids can draw, paint or cut out a tree using large sheets of paper. Draw pictures or paste photos on the branches. Together, record family members' names.

**EXPAND IT:** Help kids create a *slektstre* by using Norwegian terms for family members. See resources below for terms and pronunciation.

### TEENAGERS

#### Story Savers

Encourage young people to preserve family stories by videotaping a relative's oral history. All that is needed is a quiet space, an audio recorder or video camera, a list of questions and a willing subject. For helpful tips, see "Oral History How-To," Nov. 2012 *Viking*.

**EXPAND IT:** Get creative and preserve a family story using an online tool, such as *Treelines.com*.

### LEARN MORE! Here are some resources to get you started:

- Norwegian-American Links:** → Norwegian American Genealogical Center and Naeseth Library, [nagcnl.org](http://nagcnl.org) → The Norwegian American Genealogical Association (NAGA) → [norwegianamerican.org](http://norwegianamerican.org)
- Norwegian family terms:** → [folk.ntnu.no/ivarse/slektord.html](http://folk.ntnu.no/ivarse/slektord.html)
- Norwegian pronunciation:** → Lexin dictionary online, [decentius.hit.uib.no/lexin.html](http://decentius.hit.uib.no/lexin.html)
- General Genealogical Links:** → Ancestry.com → MyHeritage.com → FamilySearch.com → [Treelines.com](http://Treelines.com) → Family History Kids, [familyhistorykids.com](http://familyhistorykids.com) → Zap the Grandma Gap, [zapthegrandmagap.com](http://zapthegrandmagap.com)

