Organize a Family Reunion With These Planning Ideas



Everyone loves a good family reunion, but no one really enjoys planning one. Not all on their own, anyway. There is a lot of work that goes into organizing a reunion, and as the family gets bigger every year, it becomes an even greater logistical challenge.

If you've drawn the short stick or even volunteered to organize the next family reunion, you're going to need all the support you can get. All of your success starts in the planning stage. If you set out with a good plan, it won't be a full-time job to organize and execute a high-quality family reunion.

If you have no idea where to start, you wouldn't be the first. This article aims to point you in the right direction, so that family reunion planning doesn't drive you mad:

Consider All Ages

A family reunion will gather people of all ages, from the littlest tykes to the oldest of grandparents. There are a number of activities that everyone can participate in, but interests will vary greatly from age group to age group. You need to keep this in mind when you start planning your next family reunion.

Let’s say your next family vacation will be in California, next to a renowned vineyard. The adults in your party would love to go wine tasting as part of the festivities. However, this excludes anyone under the age of 21 from participating. This is fine as long as you’re also compensating with an equally exciting activity for the younger group. Perhaps during the wine tasting, the younger squad can be sent to a local theme park to pass the time.

As a general rule, if you’re struggling to come up with ideas of things to do, just ask! Send out a quick poll to the family and ask for suggestions on things to do. You’ll hear straight from the kids and the adults what they’re interested in, and you can use those ideas to create a plan that works for everyone.

Delegate Responsibilities

One person shouldn’t be put in charge of every aspect of a family reunion, especially if you have a large extended family. All of that pressure and stress can be too much for one person to bear if they also hope to enjoy the reunion to the fullest.

There are plenty of people who would like to be involved in planning and organizing if you simply ask them. An uncle might have a really fun game that he’s been itching to teach everyone. Grandma might be ecstatic to hear that the family

wants her to be in charge of weekend desserts. They will feel happy that they could contribute something, and the designated organizer won’t have to do everything by themselves.

Even some of the little ones can be given some responsibilities. Smaller children can help set the table for any meals that you prepare and eat together. They can also be encharged with picking up a certain number of toys and garbage before bed each night, so the need to clean doesn’t get out of control.

Leave Some Time Unscheduled

Sometimes the best plan is no plan at all. Some family members haven’t seen each other in a long time and just want some time to catch up. Kids can come up with all sorts of games and activities without instruction. These periods of unstructured time can create some of the most enjoyable family reunion memories.

The best part about this unscheduled time is that it requires little to no work. You can concentrate your planning and organizing on other activities without being spread too thin. You may even consider planning one major activity per day and letting the family use the rest of the time the way they want.

Don’t go overboard on the unstructured playtime. Organized activities and events are what bring the whole reunion together. When making your final plans, try to strike the perfect balance between the two.

Have a Back-up Plan Ready

No matter how well you plan and organize an event, something is bound to go wrong. It will never be a bad idea to have a backup plan in place for the various events and activities you have planned for a family reunion. This way, a plan falling

through will never end up in complete chaos and can be quickly replaced with an appropriate fallback plan.

For example, some of your planned activities may occur outdoors. If that’s the case, what will happen to your itinerary if it happens to rain? A rainy-day backup plan will ensure that some unfortunate weather doesn’t completely derail the reunion as a whole. Think about having some board games stocked up or all the fixings for a game of charades while you wait for the rain to pass.

Pretty much everything can use a backup plan. Have preparations ready for when meal plans fall through, shows get canceled, or flights get delayed. When it comes to a large-scale trip like this, it’s always better to be safe than to be sorry.

Plan Out a Budget

Family reunions can get expensive. Not all families at the reunion have the same income to work with. You can’t reasonably plan a family reunion in Hawaii, knowing full well that you’re excluding certain people from being able to attend. As you go about your planning, you should keep a general budget in mind that can accommodate everyone as best as possible.

Any time you talk about food, travel, or an activity, attach a dollar sign to it. Make sure you are aware of what everything costs before you make any purchases or bookings. You may even consider running certain things by family members before making bookings, like for hotel stays or excursions. Stress over finances can quickly sour what would otherwise be an enjoyable reunion.

Budgets can be flexible. You don’t have to stick to a hard cap if you don’t want to. However, it’s sound financial practice to at least keep a running total of what costs should be and

what to expect. Perhaps make certain activities that may cost a lot of money optional and provide sufficient substitutions for anyone who opts out.

Latch Onto Traditions

Every family comes with its own unique traditions. Some are simple, like hosting an annual barbeque for the Fourth of July. Others are a bit more strange, like hiding a pickle in the family Christmas tree. When all of the extended family comes together, there are more opportunities to create long-lasting traditions.

Think of any family traditions that are already in place. Incorporate these into your family reunion schedule. These traditions are an easy way to take up some time when you're trying to fill up several days' worth of excitement. It doesn't matter if the tradition is a chili cook-off or going to see a movie together; each tradition counts.

If you're feeling up for it, try dabbling in some new tradition-type ideas. These can turn into permanent additions to future family reunions. It also gets you to try some new things that you may not have considered before, like having an old-timey photo shoot or going mini golfing together.

When prepared properly, a family reunion can easily become the highlight of everyone's year. Even if there's no set a date for your next reunion, it's never too early to start making plans. The earlier you start, the less stressed you feel when the scheduled dates come up on the calendar.

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