MEMORY BOOK

FOR

AFRICA



The original Memory Book was written in London in 1993. This version was put together in 1999 to make it more useful for families living in different parts of Africa. It was produced with the help of a group of mothers in Uganda who had already made Memory Books for their children. Special thanks to Kayondo Farida, Kyabita Janet, Nabwire Jacqueline, Nakabazzi Rebecca, Nakku-Namagembe Irene, Nankabirwa Eleonor, Nazziwa Yudaya, Oundo Jane, and Were Beatrice.

Carol Lindsay Smith, Rory O'Brine © 2006

Preface

MEMORY BOOK

The Memory Book includes guidelines for parents and helpers as well as suggestions for page headings or chapters to cover all the important information that children need to know about from their parents.

It is respectfully suggested that anyone who plans to get involved, either as trainer, supporter or writer, should read all these notes before making a start.

- Section 1 provides information to help trainers or community leaders explain the Memory Book ideas to families.
- Section 2 gives ideas for parents or other people looking after children to think about before starting to make a Memory Book.
- Section 3 gives ideas about how to get started on writing a Memory Book.
- Section 4 suggests page or chapter headings to cover the family history and important information about each child. This section includes ideas about the sort of things that could be included under each heading.
- Section 5 covers other IMPORTANT FACTS which children need to know in addition to their family and personal history.
- Section 6 includes copies of page headings, maps and family trees.

1. Information for Trainers & Group Leaders

MEMORY BOOK

1.1 WHAT IS THE MEMORY BOOK?

If parents die, or family members get separated while children are young, important memories fade away. Children risk growing up without understanding who they are. These days we can't rely on children learning the family background from their elders in the traditional way. So making a written record is very important.

> *The Memory Book provides a framework to help parents, relatives or friends to save vital information about the family's background.*

The Memory Book cannot protect children from the pain of death or separation from their parents. But it will tell them about their origins, their clan, the family's traditions and beliefs, as well as their own early years. They will understand the past and be stronger to face the future.

1.2 WHERE DID THE IDEA COME FROM?

The original idea to make Memory Books was developed in England in 1993 by an organisation (Barnardo's) which supported African parents who were living in London. These parents had HIV/AIDS and were afraid they would pass away while their children were very young. Because the children were growing up in a foreign country, they risked losing contact with their relatives and country of origin. So the parents were encouraged to write down the historical facts, important family information and the location of extended family. The parents also wanted to explain their beliefs and traditions and their hopes for their children's future.

> *They left their children a legacy of wise words, precious memories and standards to live by.*

In 1995/6 the Memory Book ideas were brought to Uganda and were immediately recognised by Beatrice Were who, at that time, was co-ordinator of National Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (NACWOLA) as an ideal way to help parents talk openly about HIV to their children. Their experiences showed that the ideas were easily understood by people of different cultures and different levels of education. The present day Memory Book for Africa is based on the ideas and open-ness of these pioneer mothers.

Since 1993 the Memory Book ideas have travelled round the world. Many of the big international organisations working with people living with HIV/AIDS have taken up the Memory Book ideas, adapting, translating and adding to the original version to suit their local situation. By now thousands, maybe millions, of parents and carers have made wonderful Memory Books, Memory Boxes, Memory Baskets and even Memory Suitcases, containing all the information and momentoes that children need to have a strong sense of their own identity.

> *It should never be forgotten that all this work began with the African families in London and the courageous mothers in Uganda who were amongst the first to speak openly about their HIV/AIDS status*

1.3 WHO IS IT FOR?

The Memory Book was first written for children whose parents had HIV/AIDS, to make it as easy as possible for parents to give their children all the important family information they will need as they grow up.

But the Memory Book ideas are just as useful for vulnerable children who are orphaned or separated from their parents for whatever reason. (When parents or close family are not available to write the Memory Book, information can often be collected by talking to neighbours, members of the community, school teachers – anyone who knew the family.)

1.4 FINDING OUT WHAT CHILDREN KNOW ALREADY.

Whoever is making the Memory Book needs to know or find out what individual children know about themselves and their family of origin. It is particularly important in the case of children who are already orphaned or separated from their family, to find out what they remember about their family and background. This needs to be done without delay because the trauma of separation, loss and moving around can leave children very confused about the facts.

1.5 WHO CAN MAKE A MEMORY BOOK? WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME?

ANYONE can make a Memory Book. Most people who hear about the idea think that it is something that we should all do.

- There is no need to wait for illness or separation before making a start.
- Parents can make personal books for each of their children or one great family book to be kept in a central place.
- Older brothers and sisters can help make books for younger children in the family.
- Relatives or guardians can make Memory Books for orphans or separated children in their care.
- Making Memory Books can even become a project for the extended family or community.
- The books can be added to as years go by.
- Once children understand about the Memory Book they will also want to get involved, asking questions, searching for photos and adding their own information as they grow up and their circumstances change.

1. Information for Trainers & Group Leaders ...continued

1.6 DISCLOSURE.

Most parents living with HIV/AIDS carry an extra burden of secrecy. They are afraid about how and when to be open with their children. The experience of the pioneer mothers in Uganda was that when they started making the Memory Book it helped them to start talking in a natural way about illness and other problems in the family. Next they found courage to start making plans and it became easier to prepare their children for loss and changes in the future. Finally they discovered that this new openness and trust lifted a burden from their hearts. They had more energy and optimism to face difficult times ahead.

1.7 WHERE CAN PARENTS GET HELP TO MAKE A MEMORY BOOK?

In 1996/7 NACWOLA, supported by Save the Children Uganda (UK), developed The Memory Project, a training scheme for parents living with HIV/AIDS. The 5-day course explained how to use the Memory Book and covered other parenting issues including:

- information for parents about child development;
- ideas on how and when to start talking openly about illness & other problems in the family;
- encouragement to parents to plan for the future and practical advice on making written wills, guardianship arrangements and protecting property;
- suggestions of ways to pass on knowledge and skills which will help children to face the future with strength and confidence.

Information about availability of this and other training courses is included in the Memory Book Website (www.memorybook-training.info) . The main components of the training programme are also posted on the website. Organisations or individual parents who want a paper copy of the Memory Book for Africa can obtain it direct from Teaching Aids at Low Cost - TALC, P.O. Box 49, St.Albans, Herts AL1 5TX UK. Tel: +44 (0)1727 853869.
E-mail: talc@talcuk.org or go online to www.talcuk.org

1.8 CAN PARENTS MANAGE TO DO THIS WORK ON THEIR OWN?

There is no doubt its best for parents to get support when making a Memory Book because of all the emotional work involved and the importance of talking openly with children. But when there is no local group, many parents have shown they can do really well just by following these guidelines. If possible they need support from a reliable friend, someone who will talk over the painful memories and help them think about answers to children's awkward questions. And when the work is done they need company to help them celebrate their great achievement.

1.9 CAN PARENTS DO THIS WORK IF THEY ARE ALREADY ILL OR SEPARATED FROM THEIR CHILDREN?

Experience shows that even when parents are very sick or distressed they can be helped to provide information for their children. One way is for a friend or helper to go through the Memory Book headings, asking questions and writing down the answers. Close friends and relatives can often remember bits of the history and stories about the children growing up. Every bit of information is valuable for the children. And parents themselves will be comforted because they have done their best to give the children the true facts about their identity.

2. Information for Parents & Other People looking after Children

MEMORY BOOK

2.1 WHY MAKE A MEMORY BOOK?

All children want to know about their family background and personal information about themselves. The Memory Book will help you to write down the facts as well as your hopes for their future. It is something solid which you can provide for your children. Then, whatever the future holds, they will have the truth in your words. They will always know WHO THEY ARE. They will be able to hold on to the details of their early life, even if they have to move at a time of family crisis.

2.2 WHAT TO INCLUDE?

The most important pages in the Memory Book are information about both parents and the early life of each child. You can also write about your beliefs, the ideals that you live by and your hopes for your children's future. You can explain traditions and describe events that are special for your family and clan. You can remember happy times and family jokes. You can include the words of favourite poems and hymns. You can pass on knowledge about cooking or cultivation or caring for animals. You can give contacts for close relatives and friends, make a family tree and mark maps to show the birthplace, travels and burial grounds for different family members. Ideas and advice on how to cover all these topics is included in Sections 5.

2.3 COVERING DIFFICULT SUBJECTS.

The focus does not have to be just on death and disaster but on helping children understand who they are and giving them the right information to make the best of the future. The painful information about illness and loss will be easier to handle when you balance it with good memories, practical information and plans for the future. Every Memory Book will be different and further on you will find practical ideas on how to make your Memory Book.

2.4 HOW WILL I FEEL?

When you fill in the different pages of the Memory Book you will be reminded of the past - good times and bad times. You will have to find the words to explain your present situation and write down your hopes and fears for your children's future. Digging up the past and writing these important facts can be sad and difficult work, especially if life has not turned out as you hoped. But many parents say that thinking and talking and finally writing the Memory Book has given them peace of mind. At last they feel free to get on with the rest of their lives.

2.5 WHO CAN HELP ME SORT OUT THE INFORMATION?

When you start on the Memory Book your head will be crowded with ideas. It is difficult to know where to begin and what to include. It will help if you can talk it over with a trusted friend – someone who can remind you about events in the past and help you explain the true facts in words your child can understand.

2.6 WHEN SHOULD I START TO WRITE THE MEMORY BOOK?

This work can't be done in a day. So don't wait until you are facing a crisis - start as soon as you can. And remember, when you have finished, it is one less load to carry.

2.7 HOW CAN I MAKE A MEMORY BOOK IF I AM NO GOOD AT WRITING?

Some people find the writing work very hard, especially when they are struggling with illness and painful emotions. One idea is to ask a friend or one of your older children to help you. This person asks questions which cover the different pages or chapters. You say the answers aloud and your helper writes down your words.

2.8 IS IT RIGHT TO LET CHILDREN HELP MAKE THE MEMORY BOOK?

Many parents say it helps if you tell your children what you are doing and let them join in. They can look for information, hunt for photos, draw pictures or write something about the family to go in the Memory Book. This gives them an opportunity to talk to you about their worries and what will happen in the future. Family life is likely to be more relaxed when you can talk openly to each other. When children understand the family problems they often begin to take more responsibility. Even very small children can join in, remembering happy times and favourite people, drawing pictures to go in the book.

Sometimes children become so interested they want to make a book of their own. This is very helpful because the children can add information at each big change in their life. It is a good way for them to link the past with their future life.

2.9 WHEN SHOULD CHILDREN SEE THEIR MEMORY BOOK?

If children help their parents make the book, there are no secrets. But some parents decide the Memory Book should be saved until after their death or until children are fully grown. If you fear you may die or become separated from your children before they see the Memory Book, you need to leave it with someone you trust to look after it until the right time. This needs to be a sensitive person who knows you well enough to answer questions that come up when your children read the family story. Some more ideas on this are given in Section 5.

2. Information for Parents & Other People looking after Children ..continued

2.10 WHAT CAN I DO WITH VERY DIFFICULT INFORMATION?

You may think some of the facts are too painful or private to put in a Memory Book which will be read by young children. Or there may be confidential information which you do not want to be known by other people who read the Memory Book. For example, details about the cause of death of a parent or the break up of a marriage. One idea is to put a very short note in the Memory Book about unhappy events in the family history. Then write a separate letter with more details. This letter can be left with a trusted friend or community elder until the children are old enough to read it for themselves. (Be sure you leave a note in the Memory Book to say who has the letter.) Of course, if your children are old enough, the best thing is to explain to them in person.

The important thing is to find a way to give the children the truth in your own words, at the same time trying not to be too critical or blaming of others.

2.11 WHAT CAN I DO IF I DON'T HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS?

If some of the information is missing it's better to leave a gap or say you are not sure about the facts. Otherwise, if the children find out later that parts of the story are wrong, they won't know what else to believe. And you may not be there to explain.

3. Practical Ideas for Making your Memory Book

MEMORY BOOK

3.1 WHICH PAGES TO USE?

This booklet includes ideas for pages or chapters which cover most events in the life of a family. You can leave out sections if they don't fit your family experiences. And you can add other sections to suit your own family story. Your children may want to add pages of their own.

One way to start is to print out the Heading Sheets given in Section 6 and cut along the dotted lines You can then stick the ones you want to use onto sheets of paper or directly into a notebook. Or you can handwrite the headings of your choice on to loose paper or into a book. Whichever way you do it, remember it is your book, to make exactly as you wish.

3.2 WHERE TO START.

There is no fixed order to write a Memory Book. Like a jigsaw puzzle, you can start with the easy pieces. That means choosing a topic which you feel comfortable to write about. It might be the page about the village or town where you grew up. Once you get going you will feel confident to work on the more emotional subjects. Bit by bit the Memory Book will take shape.

3.3 OTHER CONTENTS FOR THE MEMORY BOOK.

Start looking out for photos, recipes, words of hymns or poems, pictures that your children have brought back from school, special cards and letters. You can put these words or pictures into the Memory Book along with your own writing. They will help children to remember their normal everyday life.

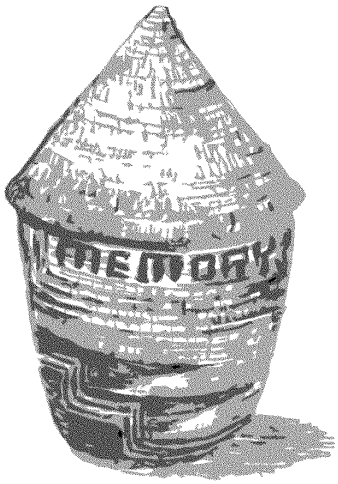
If you don't have many photos of the children, you could use pictures of babies, toddlers or school children from newspapers and magazines. You can then say quite openly "this picture from the paper reminds me of you as a baby" or "when you first went to school you looked like the child in this picture...."

3.4 USING TAPE AND VIDEO RECORDINGS.

If you can borrow a tape recorder you can give your children a special gift - the sound of the mother or father telling stories or singing songs. Or a snatch of conversation between parents and children. This will be a great treasure in the future. If you can borrow a video camera, ask a friend to take a few minutes of everyday family activities around the home or compound.

3.5 THE MEMORY BOX OR MEMORY BASKET.

When you start to make the Memory Book, you may begin to think of small objects from home which have special meaning. These "treasures" might include father's spotted handkerchief, mother's bead necklace, baby clothes, a favourite book, a mug or plate which children have used every day. Even stones, seeds or dry leaves from the garden could bring back memories. These small items could be kept safe in a strong metal box or a traditional hand made basket. If you explain to your children they will want to add their own favourites to the collection. Every little thing will help to tell the family story.



3.6 LEGAL AND MEDICAL DOCUMENTS AND VALUABLES.

The Memory Book and Memory Basket are NOT the right place to store valuables or important documents. Birth certificates, marriage certificates, health records, property deeds, bank books & wills should be kept in a safe place (for example with a bank, lawyer, minister, community elder, next of kin or a reliable friend.). Put a note in the Memory Book to say who has the original documents.

3.7 WHO ELSE CAN HELP MAKE THE MEMORY BOOK?

If possible both mother and father will write their side of the story. But if one or both have already passed away, or if the children have become separated, the family story can still be put together. Grandparents, older brothers and sisters, close friends, teachers, ministers and community leaders can all be asked for information. The children themselves should be helped to write down as much as they can remember.

If the Memory Book is made in this way one reliable person must collect information from different sources. Even if some of the facts are missing, the children will have something to help them hold on to their background.

3. Practical Ideas for Making your Memory Book ...continued

3.8 A BOOK FOR EACH CHILD?

Every child wants his or her own personal memories. But of course it takes more time and money to make individual books. If you have a big family you may have to take short cuts. Parents who have already made books for several children give this advice:

- First write the GENERAL pages, about the family history, the clan, your own growing up experiences, the maps and family trees. These can be copied by hand or photocopied. Make a set for each child.
- Next write the pages for each child - about the child's birth and early development, likes and dislikes, schooling, growing up experiences.
- Now make a summary of information about all the brothers and sisters.
- If the children have different fathers it is important to be very clear about their parentage and their relationship to each other and their extended families. This will help the children to understand the shape of the full family even if they do not always live together. Make a copy of this summary for each child.
- Sometimes there is a problem about photos - not enough to go round. It is expensive to get photos re-printed but in some towns you can find a photocopier which will copy photos. (To save money stick several photos onto one piece of paper, photocopy the whole sheet then cut up and share out the new pictures.)

3.9 A BOOK FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY TO SHARE?

If you cant make a book for each child you can make one book for them to share. Decide who will look after the Memory Book and give each child a letter telling him or her where it is stored.

3.10 KEEPING THE MEMORY BOOK SAFE.

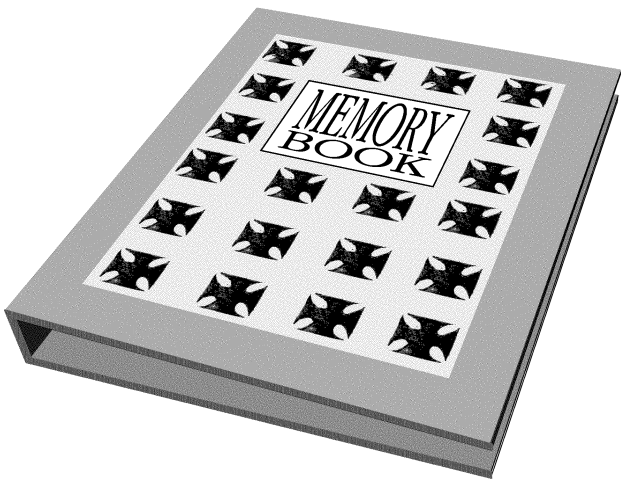
It will be read many times over the years ahead. So the pages of writing and photos need to be protected. Here are some ideas:

- use a good pen or biro so the writing won't fade;
- write on thin card or strong paper which can be "punched" and put directly into a ring binder;
- even better is to put each page into a plastic wallet with holes punched down one edge. The wallets can then be put into a ring binder;
- another way is to write directly into a good solid notebook with a hard cover. If you write in a note book, remember to leave spaces or extra pages between each section in case you find more information or pictures to fit in;
- whether you use a ring binder or a note book you can make the cover different and personal for each child by using wrapping paper or cut out designs. Or get the children to make their own covers;
- protect the finished book from rain and termites by wrapping it in strong plastic or storing in a tin box;
- Make sure the children, next of kin or guardians know where the Memory Book is stored.

3.11 STARTING TO WRITE.

Before you pick up your pen ask yourself:

- **WHO IS THE BOOK FOR?** Will there be one book for the family to share or a personal book for each child?
- **WHO IS WRITING THE BOOK?** Will you do this work alone? Can other family members or friends help you ?
- **ARE YOUR CHILDREN OLD ENOUGH TO GET INVOLVED?** If you let them help it will give you a wonderful oppor-tunity to talk things over as you go along.
- **IF YOUR CHILDREN ARE STILL VERY YOUNG …** what words can you use that they will understand? Or will you write it for them to read in a few years time?
- **IF YOU ARE NOT THE PARENT** but are writing a book for children who are already orphans or separated from their parents, WHO can help you find the important family information and facts about each child?
- **IS THE INFORMATION CORRECT?** If the book is being writ-ten by more than one person (e.g. both parents or mother and other relatives) it is important to agree about names, dates and events.



4. Memory Book pages

MEMORY BOOK

This section gives ideas to help you make up the different sections or chapters of your Memory Book. You can leave out any of the page headings or add extra pages to suit yourself.

If you are making a book for each child you can save time by writing one copy of the pages which give general information about the family (described below in paragraphs 4.2 - 4.6) . Then make photocopies of what you have written, or copy out by hand, for each child.

4.1 DEDICATION PAGE (TITLE PAGE)

On the first page write down or use the printed heading to explain:

- This book is for.....
- The book has been written by..... (mother? father? guardian?)
- Date and place of writing the Memory Book.

4.2 THE STORY OF OUR FAMILY.

It will help your children to understand the contents of the Memory Book if you start with a description of the family and a summary of the most important events. Give dates and explain reasons for big changes in your way of life - for instance has the family moved from village to city or to another country. Describe how and where the family lives at the present time.

4.3 FACTS ABOUT THE MEMBERS OF OUR FAMILY.

Make a list of all the members of the close family. Give full names, dates of birth, present address. This will help children to remember the most important people, even if they have passed away or no longer live under one roof. Here are some ideas to Include:

- yourselves (the parents or guardians),
- the brothers and sisters; (If brothers and sisters have different fathers it is important to make this clear so the children will understand their relationship to each other and to the extended family.)
- close relatives and any other members of the household;
- If any children or close family have passed away, you can include their names with date of death and burial place so that they will not be forgotten.

4.4 OUR FAMILY HOME.

Describe your home and the surroundings. Put in a photo or draw a picture to remind your children what it looks like. Do you live in the village, close to relatives and friends you have known all your life? Or have you moved far away? Is there a compound? What is growing there? Do you live near a market? or a church? How far to the local school? If you have moved to the city or to another country, it is very important to give your children information about the place you think of as your "real" home.

4.5 OUR FAITH - THE THINGS WE BELIEVE IN.

If your children are still young, it is important to explain your beliefs. Say if you belong to a particular faith or church and give the name of the minister or religious leader. If your children have been baptised or taken part in any other religious ceremony, it is important to include the details and put the records in a safe place with other important papers. (See Documents section at the end of these guidelines.)

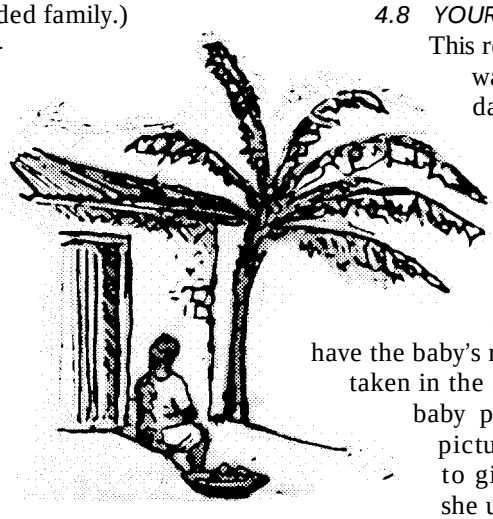
4.6 FAMILY TRADITIONS AND SPECIAL EVENTS.

If children are likely to be separated from parents or close relatives (because of illness or other serious problems) it is very important that they grow up knowing the rules and traditions of their family and clan. This section gives you a place to write about customs and beliefs which are important to the extended family or father's and mother's clans.
You could include information about:

- celebrations for the arrival of new babies in the family;
- how children's names are chosen;
- traditions to do with puberty, betrothal and marriage;
- respecting and caring for older people in your community;
- burial rites and ways of remembering and honouring those who have passed away.

4.7 INFORMATION ABOUT EACH CHILD.

Paragraphs 4.8 - 4. 17 need to be written for each individual child.



4.8 YOUR BIRTH.

This refers to the child's birth. All children want to know the place, time and date when they were born and what they were like in the first hours after birth. Write down everything you can remember - who was there at the time? Did the baby give a good cry when he or she arrived in this world? How much did the baby weigh? Maybe you have the baby's name tag from the hospital or photos taken in the early weeks? If you don't have any baby photos, you could look out for pictures of a newborn baby in a magazine to give your child an idea of how he or she used to look.

4. Memory Book pages ...continued

4.9 HOW YOU GOT YOUR NAME.

Children like to know how their names were chosen and whether they are called after relatives or friends. They also need to know the significance of names used by clan members. Has there been a baptism or naming ceremony for your child? Who are the godparents or sponsors?

4.10 WHEN YOU WERE A BABY.

Describe your child's early years. Was this a hungry baby and good at falling asleep? Did the baby move around with mother or did older brothers and sisters or grandmother take care of him/her while mother worked? Were there any illnesses in the early years. Who did the baby look like? As the baby grew into a toddler, what were the favourite foods and toys? Add any early photos - or pictures from magazines - which will help your child to know how he or she developed.

4.11 THE FIRST TIME YOU.

Do you remember: when your child took the first steps, spoke the first words - and what were those early words? What was the first experience of being separated from mother: the first day at school, going to hospital, or going to visit grandmother? How did you try to reassure your child?

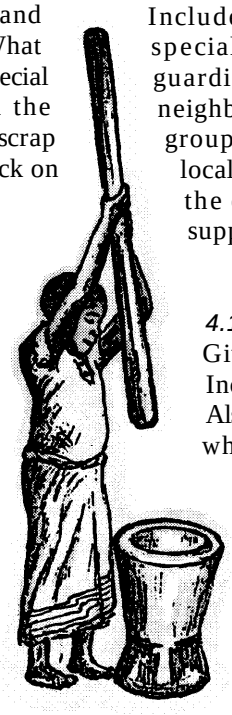
4.12 YOUR SCHOOL DAYS & GROWING UP.

Moving up the age scale, tell the story of your child from being a toddler to the present time. If your children have attended school include information about these schools, names of favourite (or feared) teachers and close friends. What was the school uniform like? What were the best (and worst) subjects? Were there any special events - drama, dance, sports - at school or in the community? Have you got school photos or even a scrap of material from the school uniform that you can stick on the page?

4.13 YOUR INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES.

Describe the things your child enjoys: sports, cycling, keeping rabbits, collecting bottle tops, church choir, youth group? Be sure to mention ways he or she helps the family or the neighbours: by looking after younger children, carrying water or helping in the compound?

Include some of your child's favourites: best kind of food, top football team, most popular singing group? And what about hates: getting up early, homework, minding the animals?

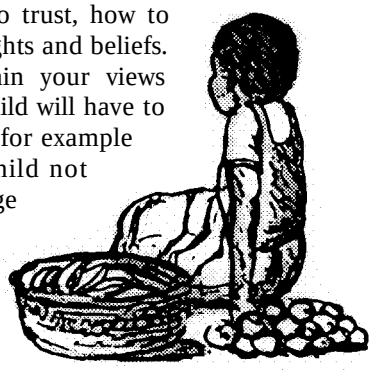


4.14 MY FAVOURITE MEMORIES OF YOU.

What do you remember best about this particular child - funny words when he or she was learning to talk? Trying hard to help you carry heavy water containers? Always being the one to find the way in strange places? The cheeky, lively one - or the quiet thoughtful one of the family? Your memories might be sad or happy. Whatever they are, writing down some of these small family events will mean a lot to your child.

4.15 MY HOPES FOR YOUR FUTURE.

This is the place to write down your wishes for your child as he or she grows up. You could give practical advice on life, the importance of school, looking after one another, finding honest ways to earn a living and becoming a responsible parent. You can give your experience about who to trust, how to stand up for individual rights and beliefs. You may want to explain your views about the choices your child will have to make in the years ahead, for example the importance of a girlchild not being pressed into marriage before she feels ready. Or of a boychild not fathering children until he can support them. Your child will welcome your encouragement. But remember there are many problems in life and it won't help if you set impossible goals.



4.16 IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE.

Include brief information about people who are special for this child. As well as relatives or guardian, you can include godparents, friendly neighbours, a schoolteacher, leader of the youth group, someone at the health centre, members of a local support group. These are people that know the child personally, who could give good advice or support in future.

4.17 INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR HEALTH.

Give brief details about the child's health. Include previous illnesses, injuries and allergies. Also mention any medical conditions in blood relatives which might be inherited, for example sickle cell. Give the name of doctors or clinics where your child has been treated so he or she can get more information if needed. Medical papers including immunisation records should NOT be put in the Memory Book but kept in a safe place. (See section on DOCUMENTS at the end of these guidelines.)

4. Memory Book pages ...continued

4.18 INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARENTS.
All children need to have clear information about both parents. In cases where the father or mother has passed away, or is not around to write these pages, it will be necessary to get information from relatives or the local community. Most relatives will be helpful so long as they understand the reasons for the questions. Even if there is little information and no photographs, it is still important to put down a few words about how the parents looked and any other facts that the writer of the Memory Book can find out. Remember that every small detail helps children to understand a bit more about their family background.

4.19 INFORMATION ABOUT THE MOTHER.
If children have the same mother, the information in paragraphs 4.20 – 4.28 can be written down once and copies made for each child. If children have different mothers, or have been brought up in the extended family, the information will need to be individually written to explain the situation for each child.

4.20 INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR MOTHER.
Start with the facts:

- your full name,
- date and place of birth,
- if you have been married, the date and place of marriage,
- where you live now.

Then take time to write your story. You could include how you met your child's father. What were your first impressions? How did things work out? Where did you live when the children were born?

4.21 MOTHER'S CHILDHOOD.
Your children will want to know about your family background. If you grew up in a different area or community it is important to explain the culture and the way of life. Did you live in a village or a town? What was your home like? Was there a compound - what was growing there? Did your family keep animals? Who was in the household - brothers and sisters? Grandparents? What were your jobs around the home - looking after younger children? Carrying water? Maybe you helped your grandmother prepare food for the family?

4.22 MOTHER'S GROWING UP AND ADULT LIFE.
Did you go to school? What subjects did you like - or hate? Describe your special interests - did you sing in the school choir or dance with a group? Did you play any sport or belong to a youth group? Don't be too shy to mention the things you were good at.

Did you do any studying or training after school days. Do you have an outside job - or is your time taken up with caring for the children and the home? Looking back, what were your ambitions and how do you feel things have worked out?

4.23 MOTHER'S SPECIAL INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES.
Here is the place to say what you like to do at home and in your "free time"! (Do mothers ever have free time?) Do you help in the community or school? Are you involved with your church? Or do you belong to a self-help organisation or support group. What do people say you are good at - cooking traditional foods? growing unusual flowers? pottery or weaving? singing or dancing in a group?

4.24 MOTHER'S LIKES AND DISLIKES.
You may want to write about Christmas or other times when the family gets together; songs or poems that you learnt at school; recipes for food your grandmother taught you to cook. And what about the things that make you angry or miserable? People (including politicians) who don't keep their promises? Disobedient children? Stray animals that spoil your garden? Neighbours who gossip or interfere in your family business?

4.25 MOTHER'S SPECIAL MEMORIES.
Think about some of the good times in your life. Remember that little things can be just as important as the big family occasions - your small child's surprise when the eggs hatched into baby chicks could be just as important as graduation day. Some parents also decide to mention the hard times and how they have coped with serious problems.

4.26 MOTHER'S BELIEFS AND THOUGHTS ON LIFE.
It will help your children to understand you and to respect your standards, if you explain the ideas which have guided your life. This is not only about religion but also the influence of elders, teachers, grandparents and all the others who have helped you to face up to life. Some parents explain their views on traditional practices and culture and their wishes about how their children should be brought up. Others write down words of wisdom from a favourite prayer or song, or press some flowers from the garden as a reminder of the power of nature. Your thoughts and words will comfort and guide your children in future years.

4. Memory Book pages ...continued

4.27 MOTHER'S HEALTH.

This is the place to write about your own health so that your children know the facts in your own words. Include information about any medical conditions which may be hereditary. You may want to put more details in a separate letter and include the name of doctors or clinics you have attended so your children can ask for more information if needed in the future.

4.28 MOTHER'S LIFE TODAY.

It is important to explain your present circumstances if the family has been hit by death or separation. If you are alone you could explain how you cope from day to day. If you have found a new partner, perhaps you can give some information which will help your children understand how your life has changed and how they fit in.

4.29 INFORMATION ABOUT THE FATHER.

If possible the following pages (explained in paragraphs 4.30 – 4.38) should be written by the childrens' father. If he is not around to write himself, or has passed away, it is important for the mother or other family members to give as much information as possible. If children have the same father, this information can be written out once, then copied for each child. But if the children have different fathers, it will be important to give as much information as possible for each individual child.



4.30 INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR FATHER.

Start with the facts:

- your full name,
- date and place of birth,
- if you have been married to the mother of the children, give date and place of marriage,
- where you live now.

Then take time to write your story. You could tell how you met your child's mother. What were your first impressions? How did things work out? Where did you live when the children were born?

4.31 FATHER'S CHILDHOOD.

Your children will want to know about your family background. If you grew up in a different area or community, explain the culture and the way of life. Did you live in a village or a town? What was your home like? What was growing in the compound? Did your family keep animals? Who lived with you - brothers and sisters? Grandparents? What did you learn from your family? What were your jobs around the home - looking after younger children? Carrying water? Maybe helping to grow or prepare food for the family?

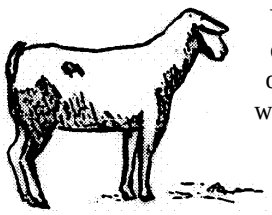
4.32 FATHER'S GROWING UP AND ADULT LIFE.

Did you go to school? What subjects did you like - or hate? Describe your special interests - did you sing in the school choir or dance with a group? Were you in a youth group (Scouts?) Did you play sport? Your children would like to know of your achievements - whether it was passing exams or being the fastest runner. Describe any studying or training you did after school days. Give information about your skills and occupation - did you work on the land or from home or in an outside job? Looking back, what were your ambitions and how have things worked out for you?

4.33 FATHER'S SPECIAL INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES.

This is the place to say how you spend your "free" time. What skills did you learn from your parents and what knowledge can you pass on to your children?

Do people think of you as a good family man? Are you active in the community or church? Do you have hobbies or follow sport?



4.34 FATHER'S LIKES AND DISLIKES.

You could describe Christmas or other family celebrations; memories of food your grandmother cooked; watching football, singing and dancing. And what about the things that make you angry or miserable? People (including politicians) who don't keep their promises? Disobedient children? Stray animals that spoil your garden? Neighbours who gossip or interfere in your family business?

4.35 FATHER'S SPECIAL MEMORIES.

Think about the "high spots" in your life, particularly any happy events you have shared with your children. Remember that little things can mean just as much as big occasions - your small child's excitement when the seeds he planted grow into flowers could be just as important as memories of a family wedding.

4.36 FATHER'S BELIEFS AND THOUGHTS ON LIFE.

It will help your children to understand your point of view and respect your standards if you explain the ideas which have guided your life. This is not only about religion but remembering the advice of elders, teachers, grandparents and all the others who have influenced you over the years. This is an opportunity to explain your views on society and politics, on traditional practices and culture and on any aspect of the upbringing of your children. Your ideas and experiences, your thoughts and words, will help to guide your children in future years.

4. Memory Book pages ...continued

4.37 FATHER'S HEALTH.

This is the place to write about your own health so that your children know the facts in your own words. You may want to write a separate letter with more details, including the name of doctors or clinics you have attended so your children can ask for more information if needed in the future. It is important to mention any hereditary illnesses such as sickle cell anaemia.

4.38 FATHER'S LIFE TODAY.

It is important to explain your present circumstances. This will help your children understand why things are as they are and how it affects their relationship with you.

5. Other Important Information

This section provides a place for information which has not been included earlier in the Memory Book to help children understand the shape of the whole family and to know where family members have come from or moved to. Copies of maps, family trees etc. are included in Section 6.

5.1 NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PEOPLE WHO ARE IMPORTANT TO OUR FAMILY.

This is particularly necessary if the children have been separated or moved around. Include here a full list of names and addresses of the most important contacts including:

- brothers and sisters
- other close relatives
- senior clan members
- community members, teachers, church leaders
- supportive organisations or groups
- reliable friends and neighbours.

5.2 INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER IMPORTANT EVENTS AND PEOPLE.

This could include:

- details about the death of close relatives and friends and their burial places
- information about marriages or divorces
- details of relatives or friends who have moved away or live abroad
- any other important information or contacts which have not been included earlier in the book.

5.3 NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MAPS.

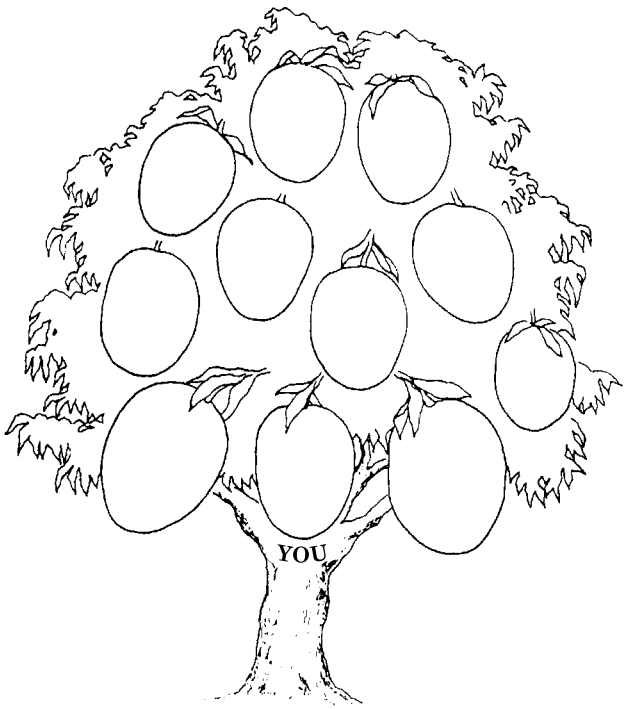
You can use the maps to show the movements of close family members, where they were born, where they have travelled, where they live today or where they are buried.

5.4 FAMILY TREE.

If children have to move around or go to live with other people they get confused about family relationships. The Family Tree provides boxes to write in the names of the close relatives. It will help children to know exactly who are their parents and grandparents and to understand their connection with full and half brothers and sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles. Some families decide to make the Family Tree on a much larger sheet of paper because they have information going back several generations. Or they have too many relatives to fit in the small boxes! However much or however little information you provide, it will all help your children to know who they really are.

5.5 THE MANGO TREE.

This gives space for parents to fill in the names of people who are the closest and most important to the child. They



could be relatives, friends or community members. Some parents have stuck photos of these people on the fruits. In other families children have chosen who they want to include and even draw their pictures in the fruits.

5.6 WHERE TO FIND DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS.

The Memory Book is NOT the right place to store original copies of documents or valuables of any kind. You need to find a safe place or trusted person to look after family papers and special possessions until children are old enough to take care of them.

Possible safe places include a senior relative, bank, lawyer, community or church leader, committee member of support group or a trusted friend.

It is important to make a list of all the papers and possessions and get a receipt. Put a note in the Memory Book to say exactly what has been stored and where it is.

Important documents might include:

- birth certificates and baptism records
- marriage certificate (and if appropriate divorce papers)
- health records including immunisation records
- legal will and documents about ownership of property
- written instructions or formal agreement about guardianship or future care of children.
- passports and other papers about nationality or legal
- death certificates.

5. Other Important Information ...continued

5.7 WHO WILL LOOK AFTER THE MEMORY BOOK UNTIL CHILDREN ARE READY TO HAVE THE INFORMATION

If children are very young or, for example, living in another country, you (parents or whoever has written the Memory Book) may decide it is better for it to be put in a safe place until the right time comes to hand it over. You need to think carefully about who to trust to do this. For example it could be a senior relative, an older brother or sister, or a representative from your church or community.

Before deciding who it will be ask yourself these questions:

- are you willing for this person or organisation to know all about your personal family business (which is all written down in the Memory Book.)
- is this person or organisation likely to be around when the child needs the information.
- does this person/organisation know enough about the family to be able to answer extra questions and help the child cope with the information when the time comes.

When you have decided who it will be, make sure that:

- the Memory Book (and any other documents or small possessions which go with it) are well wrapped up and clearly labelled with the name, date of birth and present whereabouts of the child or children.
- you give written information to the person who is looking after the child or children about where the Memory Book is stored.

6. Special pages for helping you make a Memory Book.

MEMORY BOOK

IF you have the use of a photocopy machine, you can make copies of the following pages.

6.1. DEDICATION PAGE.
You can photocopy this page to go on the front of your memory Book or make your own cover with your child's name (and picture?)

6.2. PAGE HEADINGS.
These are put on 3 sheets to save paper. When you have printed them out you can cut them up and stick the ones you want to use on to pages in your Memory Book. Or stick them on to loose sheets of paper, or stuck on to loose sheets of paper.

OR
To make it more personal you can copy out the headings in your own writing.

OR
Better still, make up page headings to suit your family story.

6.3. MAPS.
The idea is to show where the close family members came from and where they are now. If family members have travelled far and wide you may need to write more information to explain the names and movements shown on the maps.

Please note: The original Memory Book was produced for families in Uganda, so the usual version has maps of Uganda and East Africa. If there is no map of your country, or your area of the world, please contact Rory, either by email rory@memorybooks.org.uk or via the website: www.memorybooks.org.uk/contact-memory-books
and he will try to produce what you want.

6.4. FAMILY TREES.
There are two versions – choose the one you like or draw your own family tree to show the important connections between your children, their parents and grandparents. If the family is complicated or very big you may have to write down information to explain how the family tree works. Whatever you do will help your children to know WHO they are and how the fit in to the wider family.

6.5. The MANGO TREE or APPLE TREE.
This provides a way of showing the close family members, friends and community people who are important for your children. If possible make a separate Mango Tree or Apple Tree for each child. Children often enjoy drawing pictures of their favourite people to stick on each "mango." Or if you have photos you can cut out and stick on the fruits.

Now you have completed the Memory Book. But the story continues... and perhaps you or your children will decide to keep the records up to date by adding new information and ideas as the years go by.