



The Sabbath can be one of the sweetest, most rewarding times to do family history.

Sweeten —THE— Sabbath

WITH FAMILY HISTORY

By Margot Hovley

Some people feel family history is not for them. Some think Great-Aunt Edna has already done all the family history, or others think poring over old records would be boring and hard. If you think that, consider looking for a different approach to adding family history to your Sabbath. Here are some ideas.

1. GATHER FAMILY STORIES

Take time on a Sunday to interview family members. Parents, grandparents, and other relatives have precious memories that can be captured. It's easy to record audio on a cell phone or other devices. Look online for lists of questions that can spur your thoughts and help flesh out the interview. Once the interview is complete, you can upload the text or audio file to [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org). Not only does this keep it safe (FamilySearch has one of the most protected databases in the world), but it makes it simple to share with others—family members can access the information simply by logging in to the website. Older children and teens can help with this project, creating lasting connections.

Rosalia Badger Ford was famous for her storytelling and knew dozens of poems by memory, often delighting the family with her charming recitations. Before she passed away, family members made a recording of her reciting poems and stories to preserve them for coming generations. This recording has become a precious keepsake for her family.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JEREMY HALL

HAND LETTERING IN TITLE BY JILL DEHAAN



2. SHARE FAMILY PHOTOS

Add items to the Memories section of FamilySearch. Photos and documents can be scanned and added to your ancestors' records, making them more complete and interesting. Many people have the technology necessary right in their pockets, with many free scanning apps available for cell phones. As with interviews, uploading photos and documents to FamilySearch safeguards them and makes them readily accessible to the whole family, who can view them simply by logging in to the site. Paper scrapbooks are wonderful, but many people have concerns about repeated handling of delicate documents, or they simply live too far away to easily share a paper scrapbook. Collecting these items online in the Memories section of FamilySearch resolves these concerns.

3. ADD LIVING RELATIVES

Maybe your four generations are complete. Have you added your living relatives to FamilySearch? Because records of the living are private, living persons must be added to FamilySearch manually. For example, if your sister has added her living children to her family tree, they won't show up on your tree automatically. A great Sabbath project would be to add these living relatives to your own tree. There is something beautiful about seeing both the branches and roots of your tree, giving your family a sense of the eternal. And now that FamilySearch can show profile pictures on various charts and pages, another Sabbath project could include uploading and attaching photos to the living records you create. This fills the pedigree with faces, increasing our sense of connection. Choose from traditional pedigrees, vertical tree charts, or fan charts, which can be printed out and framed.

4. WRITE DOWN YOUR STORIES

Write your personal history or a history of your parents or grandparents. FamilySearch provides a place for both stories and life sketches—use them in whatever way suits your family.

One way to tackle this project is to visit FamilySearch and learn about the #52Stories project (see familysearch.org/blog/en/52stories). You'll find 52 questions designed to spark memories about the people, places, and

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY KARIN HILDEBRAND LAUSHUTTERSTOCK.COM

RIGHT: PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JEREMY HALL





FRUITFUL USE OF THE SABBATH DAY

“Family commitments and expectations should be at the top of our priorities to protect our divine destiny. For those who are looking for more fruitful use of the Sabbath day for the family as a whole, the hastening of this work is fertile ground.”

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Roots and Branches,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 47.



events that have mattered most in your life. Start anywhere. You're more likely to stick with the process to completion if you allow yourself to tell the stories that feel the most compelling in the moment. You can always rearrange the order later. Encourage other members of the family to participate. Choose or modify some of the questions so they appeal to younger children.

5. MOVE OFF THE MAIN BRANCH

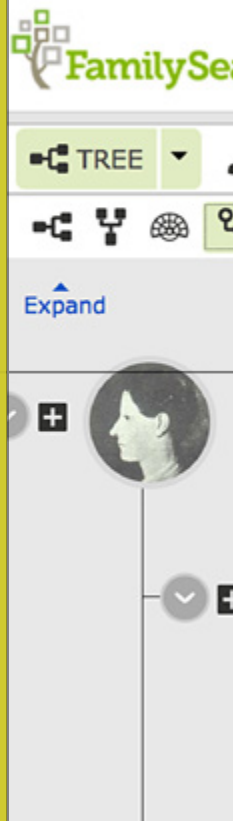
Some people with family trees that are quite complete have discovered opportunities for temple work by looking at collateral lines, or in other words, the families of siblings of your ancestors. FamilySearch makes this easier through the use of its descendant view. To give this a try, go to an ancestor who is four or five generations back in your pedigree. Make this person the root person of the tree by clicking the name and then clicking “Tree.” In the upper left area of the pedigree screen, click the designated button to change the view to “Descendancy.” Once there, you can set the screen to display one to four generations at a time. In this view you'll be able to easily see the extended families of your ancestors that aren't readily visible when looking at a traditional pedigree chart. Color-coded symbols help you determine quickly if any of them need temple ordinances. This process can be repeated farther back on your line for even more possibilities.

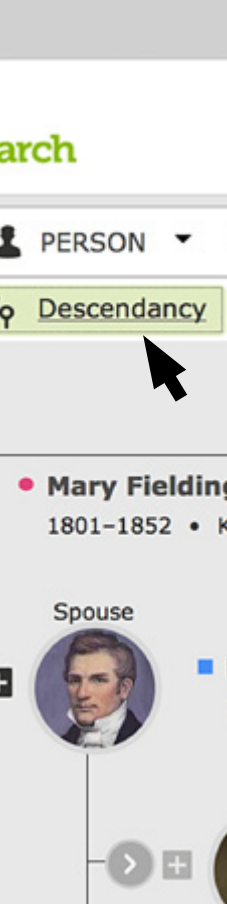
6. DO THE TEMPLE WORK

Once a need for ordinances is determined, you can add the name to your temple list on FamilySearch. From there, you can print temple ordinance cards for your own use using plain white paper, send the ordinance to a relative for them to complete, or even turn the name in to the temple file to be completed by other patrons.

7. LINK DOCUMENTS

Billions of ancestor records are on FamilySearch, but many of them contain information that's unverified. It's important to do as much as we can to validate and correct the data whenever possible. FamilySearch has new tools that make this easier. Source records can be located and attached to the corresponding ancestor profiles, helping to show that information is accurate. The website automatically checks names and dates in FamilySearch for possible matches in its enormous, constantly growing database of vital records and documents. If a high probability match is found, a notification,





or “hint,” appears on the ancestor’s page, and it’s then a simple matter to attach these verifying records to your ancestor’s information.

If you have private records that back up information on FamilySearch, such as copies of birth, death, or marriage certificates that FamilySearch doesn’t yet have, it’s possible to scan those documents and upload them to the site. Then they can be attached as a source to your ancestor’s personal page. This process may not only help you complete information for your own ancestors but also help others doing research connected to your lines.

8. EXPAND YOUR FAMILYSEARCH SKILLS

FamilySearch has an extensive learning and help center, and you could make it a Sabbath day project to study and learn genealogy skills. Set up your own family history course for your family. Pick a topic and dive into the tutorials, and watch training videos together. Free accounts to several premium online genealogy websites are available to members of the Church, such as Ancestry.com, Findmypast.com, MyHeritage.com, Geneanet.org, and AmericanAncestors.org. Each site has its own help and guidance for any level of genealogist, not to mention access to billions more records.

9. DO SOME INDEXING

There is always a need for help with FamilySearch indexing, which has become part of many people’s Sabbath day. If you’ve tried indexing in the past and felt like you could have used some personal assistance, be aware that trained missionaries are ready online and by phone to help you with special tools that allow them to look at the same batch you are working on. For support options, visit familysearch.org/ask/help.

10. EXPLORE RELATIVE FINDER AND MORE

Fun Sabbath activities could include visiting RelativeFinder.org. You can see how you and your family are related to U.S. presidents, Church leaders, historical figures, and even royalty. Many people have discovered unknown cousins through the site.

Family history is often a work of data: names, dates, places, and bits of textual information. Sometimes it’s easy to forget that those names represent your ancestors—people who really lived and had families, cares and concerns, sorrows and joys. By using the Sabbath for family history activities, we can add an extra helping of spirituality to our day and form connections with the people to whom we owe our lives. The Sabbath can become a blessed time to increase our feeling of family love across the generations. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



Relative Finder

Explore the App Gallery (familysearch.org/apps) for charts, games, and other useful apps related to family history.