

**Teaching Guide**  
**Settle in at Reunion Springs**

Goals

1. Learn the key elements of helping your children have solid values.
2. Identify specific ways to apply those elements to my relationships.
3. Make a plan to foster the development of values in my children's lives.

Preparation:

Provide a Reunion Springs Travel Guide for each participant.  
Study the Teaching Guide and Travel Guide. Consider stories you might share.  
Make copies of the evaluation at the end of this Teaching Guide.

Introduction:

Each unit in the Parenting Journey can form a 30–90 minute lesson. This guide will provide you specific ideas for teaching Loveland and general ideas for creating a lesson from any of the other Travel Guides in the Parenting Journey. You can easily use the Travel Guides and your own experiences to create lessons on any of the Parenting Journey units.

Welcome

Welcome to Reunion Springs along the Parenting Journey

[Give any necessary instructions for housekeeping tasks. You might add a get-acquainted activity, if you have the time and you want to build the relationships among your participants. Look for icebreaker activity ideas at [www.cyfernet.org](http://www.cyfernet.org).]

Start by stating the main idea:

Developing strong values, serving the community, connecting with present and past family members... You can build a sense of safety and connection that will guide your family's journey when you...Settle in at Reunion Springs

Discussion:

What did your parents do to instill good values in your life?  
How were you involved in community service growing up?  
Do you feel a close connection to your ancestors? Do you have any interesting stories to share?

**Points of interest**

1. Show your values

Parents show their values in many ways—the way they act, the way they talk and the way they choose to invest their time.

Families are improved and strengthened by celebrating good people. We can tell stories to our children about people who are kind, generous, trustworthy and honest. Some

families make this a regular tradition by taking time every day before breakfast or before bed to read or tell a story of good people. We can also introduce our children to noteworthy people. Invite good people (including relatives) into your home to tell your family about their experiences and their dreams.

What traditions have you built in to your family to help your children learn about noble and good people?

We as a family can take on projects to serve others. There are great opportunities in times of crisis to offer comfort or service. Even in the ordinary flow of life, there are opportunities to help those in need. We can visit those who are lonely and help those with disabilities. Children learn valuable lessons in compassion when they serve people in need.

Is service is a regular part of your family traditions? If so, what do you do?

In addition to connecting our children with their communities, we can also connect them with their own heritage. We can gather up stories, pictures and histories of their ancestors. We can put pictures on the wall and stories in their minds that will help them to feel proud of their family traditions. We can build traditions that tie us to the experiences of our ancestors. We can arrange gatherings with extended family. All of this helps weave a network of love and hope for our children.

## 2. Make your community child-friendly

Many communities don't make an effort to help children feel welcome. We can help children develop into good citizens not only by making the community more child-friendly, but also by letting them contribute. For example, we can work with officials to get playgrounds built. Then, we can work with our children to keep the playgrounds clean.

What opportunities exist for you to make your community more welcoming for children? What are the challenges?

One of the most important areas for children to have good experiences is at school. They spend a lot of hours there and have experiences that can make them more sensible, happy and productive or more contrary, bitter and destructive.

There are many things we can do to make our children's school experience better. We can get to know our children's teachers, and we can work with them to strengthen the schools. We may be tempted to think of teachers as our enemies, but it's important to remember we're all working for a common cause: helping children. We can also volunteer our time to help at school.

## 3. Enjoy time together

Parenting is hard work. However, it is also the most satisfying way of doing something meaningful with our lives. Most of the work we do will disappear. The legacy of love and goodness that we give our children will live for generations.

We can think of parenting as work that interrupts our lives, makes us tired and uses up all our money. Or, we can think of parenting as the most important investment we will ever make.

When we think of parenting as an investment, we bring our best thinking, warmest affection and most faithful service to the journey. We take time to learn about children and how to help them. We learn to listen to them. We spend time both learning and having fun together. We patiently teach them about good character. We invest hours building traditions and memories.

What kind of fun things does your family do together?

Conclusion:

There are many things to do in Reunion Springs:

- Build traditions that teach your children what you value most.
- Strengthen the family and neighborhood through service.
- Work with schools and other organizations to build support for children.
- Make our communities safer for our children by helping neighbors, churches, businesses and schools be more mindful of and grateful for children.
- Connect our children to extended family through gatherings and to ancestors through stories.
- Cherish the gift of life.

It can seem overwhelming, but remember, we build up our children's values one step and one example at a time.

**Plan your stay.**

[These questions could be answered by each participant directly on their Reunion Springs Guide.]

Look over the things you have learned from the Points of Interest. Pick something to work on this week with one of your children. Maybe you want to tell stories of a favorite ancestor, serve a neighbor, visit your child's teacher or just have fun together.

Map out the details of your plan. What exactly do you plan to do? When will be the best time? Do you need to do anything to prepare your child to take part in your new plan? Do you need to do anything to prepare yourself? For example, do you need to ask other families about their traditions so you have more ideas?

Decide some small thing you can do this week and write out your plan:

What you plan to do:

The best time to do this:

Ideas to prepare my child:

How I can prepare myself:

People who can help me:

Reunion Springs is an important part of the parenting journey. We hope you will gain strength from your experiences there. You may want more ideas to make the most of Reunion Springs. If so, you might:

-Gather ideas about advocating for children in your community, celebrating as families, enjoying family history, building assets in youth, getting involved in your children's education and connecting them to the world of work at [www.arfamilies.org](http://www.arfamilies.org).

-Look for a class in your area on service, family history or teaching values to children.

-Read a book about understanding children such as Haim Ginott's *Between Parent and Child* or William Doherty's *Take Back Your Kids*.

-Get ideas from another person who has effectively taught values or been an example in some other way.

-Get more ideas by going to the national extension family website, [www.cyfernet.org](http://www.cyfernet.org) and searching on love, fun, values, family history, routines or traditions.

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