

Family Genogram in Premarital and Marital Mentoring

1. Information to Identify on the Genogram

- 1.1. Family members
- 1.2. Present ages
- 1.3. Dates of birth
- 1.4. Sibling positions
- 1.5. Place of birth and current domicile (indicates migration & disbursal)
- 1.6. Dates of marriage
- 1.7. Dates of divorce/separation
- 1.8. Legacies (names, occupations, behaviours)
- 1.9. Dates of death (indicates longevity & losses)
- 1.10. Causes of death (tragedies & illnesses)
- 1.11. Occupations (indicates values, lifestyles, talents, interests & socio-economic levels)
- 1.12. Christian commitment
- 1.13. Descriptive summary of family
- 1.14. Church involvement
- 1.15. Family activity around what issues
- 1.16. Relationships with extended family members

A Simplified Genogram Format —

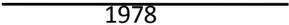
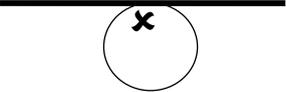
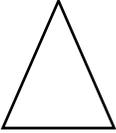
The following format is very simplified but will give the mentors an opportunity to show you the basics and to talk about your relationship and their own. Both couples have been married once. The Browns have three children – an older girl and two younger boys. The Greens have a boy and a girl.

The third generation is produced by the marriage of the Brown daughter (“Grace”) and the Green son (“Bruce”). Both are oldest children and both are older to a sibling of the other sex. In this example, the “Brown-Greens” have been married for 7 years and they have one daughter.

	“The Browns”	“The Greens”
1st Generation		
2nd Generation		

3 rd Generation	
Genogram – Your Combined Family Composition	

With the help of your mentors, you and your partner will draw a “genogram” (a generational chart) that depicts your family lineage and the emotional linkages between the various family members. The purpose of the genogram is to help you understand some of the relationships that exist in your families. Your marriage could be affected by these relationships. Therefore, it is important that you and your partner be aware of the emotional relationships that might impact you as husband and wife.

Biological Symbols	Emotional Symbols	Relational Symbols
Male 	Comfortable, Calm 	Marriage, with Date 
Female 	Tense / Angry / Frustrated 	Separation or Divorce 
Deceased 	Distant / Uninvolved 	Common Law Marriage CL 
Abortion / Miscarriage / Stillborn 	Enmeshed / Over-involved 	Faith 
	Dominance / Power 	Cut-Off 

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The following information will be helpful in completing your family genogram:

- Family members names and ages (begin with grandparents). Do not worry about getting all the information perfectly. Just begin with what you know.
- Vocations or occupations. When family members have more than one job (e.g. homemaker, secretary), note the vocation first that you consider to be most important.
- Dates of marriages, divorces or separations. This is often hard to know for sure. Make your best guess.
- How did your mom and dad get along when you were 5? 10? 15? 20?
- If someone was to have had an affair in your family, who would that be?
- If someone was to have had a nervous breakdown in your family, who would that be?
- If someone was to win the Nobel Prize in your family, who would that be?
- Dates of death and cause.
- History of emotional or physical abuse in the family. This is best seen in relational lines. If you wish, you can colour the line with what you visualise the emotion to look like.
- History of any alcoholism or other chemical dependency.
- History of workaholism.
- Who was the "identified problem" in the family? Who played the "perfect one" in the family? Was there a "lost child" (hardly noticed) in the family?
- How did you handle stress in your growing up years? Did you rebel? Withdraw? Comply overly? Get depressed or angry?
- Boundaries: how the family related to the world. Was the family pretty exclusive and uninvolved in the world? Was the door to your house always open?
- Emotional lines between yourself, your parents and your siblings. Don't just look for the problems. Show the positive lines as well.
- Generational "curses" or problems. The injunctions (e.g. "You were never good enough!") may be words or they may be actions.
- Generational "blessings." Some people grow up with wonderful blessings: "I felt that I could never fail!"
- History of Christian faith (or other faith commitment) or church involvement.
- Cut-offs: those who have been cut-off in the family (say an aunt or a brother) and the family have nothing to do with now.
- Any major traumas or sickness.
- Involvement of extended family in the nuclear family.
- What would it be like if your father was to marry your partner's mother? What would it be like if your mother was to marry your partner's father?