

College Guild
PO Box 6448 Brunswick, Maine 04011

Families

Unit 2 of 5: Theater Families

Remember: Some of the questions may ask you to put yourself in the place of another gender (for example, asking you how a mother or father would feel in a certain situation). Please answer these questions regardless of your gender - just try to put yourself in their shoes!

* If there are any questions about family, friends, or anything else that you feel uncomfortable answering - just make up fictional characters for these questions. *

As we saw in the last Unit, families can be incredibly unique, varying in size and gender, and bringing different characteristics to the family dynamic. Below are three pictures of families.

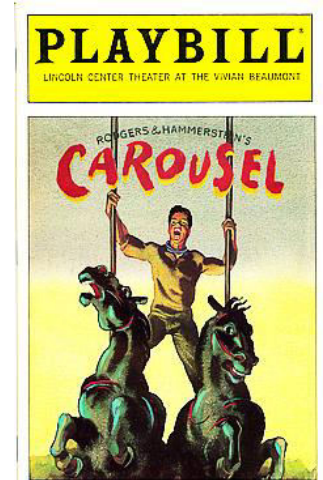
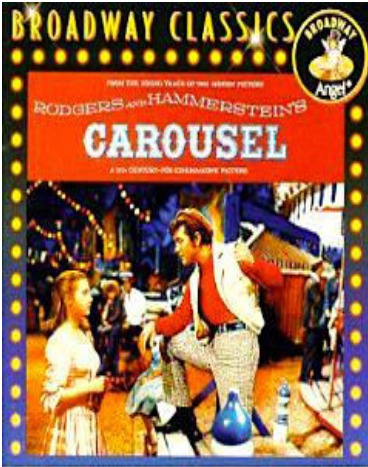


The people in these pictures all appear to be fairly happy - although we know they most likely have struggles and problems within their family as most everyone does.

1. Describe what you think are the three most important factors in keeping a family happy.
2. How many siblings would you want in your ideal family? Explain why.
3. Explain where you and your ideal family would want to live.
4. Sketch a picture of the house you would want to live in. (Even if you think you can't draw - give this a shot!)

Musical

In Unit 1, we met a bunch of TV mothers and fathers and children. One of the most popular Broadway musicals that dealt with families was *Carousel*. The lead character, Billy, was kind of a louse when it came to women and a bum when it came to work. To his shock, his lady love becomes pregnant (a shameful situation in the 1950s). After Billy recovers from his initial shock, he finds himself thinking about the boy he'll be a proud father of. Below are pictures of the 1950s musical *Carousel*, along with quotations from Billy.



"...I guess he'll think I can lick every other fella's father - well, I can!...His mother can teach him the way to behave, but she won't make a sissy out of him. Not him! Not my boy! Not Bill!..."

5. What does Billy think a father should teach a son?

6. Do you think this is still the belief of fathers today? Explain.

7. If you were the father of Billy's son, what are the three most important things you would teach him and why? Would your answer be different if you were his mother?

"...My boy, Bill, he'll be tall and as tough as a tree, will Bill!...And you won't see nobody dare to try to boss him or toss him around..."

8. How do you think the son would feel about his father's expectations of him?

"...I can see him when he's seventeen or so, and startin' in to go with a girl. I can give him lots of pointers very sound on the way to get round any girl..."

9. Write a letter to your imaginary (or real) teenage son when he starts going to parties and dating.

Billy finally gets it that his kid might be a GIRL! - a completely foreign concept to him: *"...What would I do with her? What could I do for her? You can have fun with a son, but you gotta' be a father to a girl."*

10. Some would see this quote as sexist. What do you think?

11. Do you think there would be differences in how you raise a son or daughter? Explain why or why not.

12. Think of three great ways to have fun with the whole family.

Now that you've read about a famous musical in the 1950s, let's have you try to write a modern day story! Imagine you are in control of producing a musical or drama for the stage.

13. Create your main character! You can take inspiration from descriptions of characters in this musical and the past TV shows we've talked about. What would your character look like? How old is s/he? What is her/his personality like?

14. Now place this character in a family. Explain at least two issues this main character has with her/his family members or friends.

15. Write a blurb about your show/movie/musical/etc. that would be put in a newspaper as an advertisement. It should have the general plot, characters, and message.

Story

In Unit 1 we heard from Russell from *Frontiers of Justice, Volume 3: The Crime Zone*. In this Unit, we will have excerpts from Diane's story.

"In the year after I graduated from high school, I met the man who would become my husband. He was older, the father figure I'd been searching for, and intelligent, someone I could look up to. He was experienced and told me everything I wanted to hear. He said I was beautiful, something I'd never heard from a male in my life, and he told me he loved me. He was a dream come true. I would have done anything for him, anything to make sure he never left my life. I never saw that my husband's age, experience and intelligence allowed him to manipulate me in every way possible. I endured deceit and emotional abuse that I rationalized as necessary evils that every woman endures to keep her man. I knew, as a woman who would never be thought of as beautiful in a world where physical beauty is everything, I had to hold onto what I had, no matter how much pain went along with it."

"It was at that point in my life that the unspeakable happened. On a summer night in 1974, while I and our six-month-old son were outside waiting in the car, my husband killed his ex-wife during a fight over child custody. The decisions that I made from that point on forever changed my life and the lives of the people I loved. I helped my husband in the attempted cover-up of what he had done. My infant son and I were fugitives with him for nearly a year afterward, and when we were finally arrested, I made it very clear to the authorities that I would be telling them nothing. And they made it very clear to me that, as an uncooperative accomplice to my husband, under Pennsylvania's law of accomplice liability, I would be given a sentence identical to his, though I had done violence to no one. And that's exactly what happened. On the fateful day of my arrest, I was 25 years old. I am 50 years old now as I write this from prison where I have been for almost 25 years, serving a life sentence."

"When I was arrested, my son was 17 months old. The night of our arrest by FBI agents in Boise, Idaho, my baby son was literally ripped, screaming from my arms by a brusque child-welfare worker. I didn't see my son again for six months when my parents were finally able to wrest custody of him from a system eager to see him kept from me forever. Thus began years of seeing my son for only a few hours a month in prison visiting rooms, talking to him in cost-limiting 15-minute collect phone calls, and exchanging with him hundreds of letters that were opened and read by prison mail censors first. My son grew from a toddler to a schoolboy to a teenager to the adult man he is now, and I missed all of it."

16. How do you think the son felt about his mom when growing up? Do you think he understood her actions or resented them? Explain.

Diane talks about only being able to see her son once in a while, and the negative effect this had on their relationship.

**17. Write an essay about:
a six year old child visiting his or her parent in prison, or
a sixteen year old visiting his/her parent in prison.**

18. What plans would the prisoner make for his visit with the younger child compared to his visit with the teenager to make the visit go smoothly?

Diane talks a bit about the emotional abuse she went through and how she felt that she had to endure it.

19. Design a plan to help a couple when one is abusing the other.

20. How can an abused partner decide whether or not to stay in a relationship? What's the first step in finding the courage to leave?

Remember: First names only & please let us know if your address changes