

Treasured Possessions

What are your plans for Thanksgiving? You may be hosting or traveling. You might be planning the menu and determining the guest list. If you are planning to be with family, it might be a good opportunity to discuss who gets treasured personal possessions.

Across generations, objects have meaning and carry history. The experiences of each person and every family is different. The decision about who gets what and why are also different.

Today's families are complex and K-State Research and Extension has partnered with University of Minnesota Extension to share helpful resources. "Who Get's Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate" is an educational program that provides a step-by-step guide to passing on personal possessions. Planning ahead allows for more choices, the opportunity for communication, and fewer misunderstandings and conflicts.

Titled property - real estate, savings accounts, vehicles, machinery - have a legal document (such as a title) to indicate who officially owns the item. Personal belongings such as jewelry and stamp collections are referred to as non-titled property. These items may have monetary worth or they may be cherished for their sentimental value. The transfer of non-titled property can create more challenges among family members than the transfer of titled property.

University of Minnesota Extension educators developed educational tools including a workbook and online resources as a result of extensive research, development and teaching. The information reflects real-life experiences of families, attorneys and educators. It is not intended as a substitute for legal advice, but will help you and your family examine your situation.

Six factors should be considered when making decisions:

- 1- Understand the sensitivity of the issue
- 2 - Determine what you want to accomplish
- 3 - Decide what is "fair" in the context of your family
- 4 - Understand that belongings have different meanings for different individuals
- 5 - Consider distribution options and consequences
- 6 - Agree to manage conflicts as they arrive

Over the next few weeks, I'll provide more information about each of these factors so you can discuss with your family who gets Grandma's yellow pie plate. If you prefer an in-person presentation, join me on Tuesday, November 29 at 12 p.m. at the Cowley County Courthouse, Extension Assembly Room. Please call 221-5450 to register in advance for the free program.

Source: Marlene S. Stum, University of Minnesota Extension and Department of Family Social Science