1. Each of us is to compile his or her life history.
2. We should place our records into a Book of Remembrance.
3. We are to organize our families and hold meetings and reunions.
4. As individuals and families we are each to seek out our kindred dead, beginning first with the four most recent generations on each line, and then going back as far as we can.
5. If we have access to a temple, each of us should go to the temple as often as possible to do ordinance work — first for ourselves, then for our progenitors, then for all the names that have been gathered by means other than our own.
6. We are each to participate in other programs such as name extraction when asked.

Your Family History: Getting Started  ENSIGN magazine AUGUST 2003  page 17
“And Adam harkened unto the voice of God... And a book of remembrance was kept.” Moses 6:1,5

“And all they who are not found written in the book of remembrance shall find none inheritance in that day, but they shall be cut asunder…” Doctrine & Covenants 85:9

The First Stone in our Family Altar - a Family Record.
When a child reaches maturity and makes another household, one of the first things that the young couple should take along should be the records of their families to be extended by them as life goes on.

A life that is not documented is a life that within a generation or two will largely be lost to memory. Knowledge of our ancestors shapes and instills within us values that give direction and meaning to our lives. That which I do not in some way records will be lost at my death, and that which I do not pass on to my posterity, they will never have.

“The work of gathering and sharing eternal family [records] is a personal responsibility. It cannot be passed off or given to another.” Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander Conference Report, April 1999

Start by writing your full name, birth date and place. Then write the name of your parents and their birth, marriage and death dates and places. Next write what you can about their parents and so on. Write the same information about the children of each family and their spouses and children. This is the outline known as your family tree.
Place the family members into their place in history. Gather faith-promoting, character-building experiences of your ancestors.
Contact living relatives, especially older family members. Compile their stories along with the family tree of names. Look for each person’s unique qualities. Seek details about the time in which they lived, their struggles, courage, and life altering decisions.

Keep the record simple so that even young children and teens will be interested and enjoy reading about their family. Share the stories often of your ancestors in family home evening and during other activities.

The family’s history is told in words. A scrapbook containing photographs and documents can be used to illustrate the text. Once you begin you will find some inspiring things will happen and you will find help in all the facets of your life.

The prophets have been moved upon to exhort us to faithfulness in this subject. It appears to be very important that we do keep a true and faithful record in all things. Every man should write a brief history of his life, his parentage, his birth, his religion, when he was baptized and by whom, give a brief sketch of all his missions and of all his official acts and the dealings of God with him. Get all of your blessings written and preserve them. Make a record of every official act of your life.” Journal of Wilford Woodruff, 1862.

A Guide to Interviewing

Wonderful things will happen as we invite other family members to share their histories. As the children interview their fathers, the hearts of the children will turn to their fathers and the fathers will recognize how their personal words of wisdom instill values that give direction and meaning to the lives of our family.

Skills will be learned as children prepare questions that will probe the details about the dealings of God with their ancestor, about their struggles they have had and their life decisions. When asking a question, listen to the answer and then create another question using information from the first answer. This will help learn how to listen to the answers during the interview and how to elicit the entertaining bits of the family record. Questions are the key to getting good material - interesting stories and personal words of wisdom. Questions probe memories about parts of the person’s life; ask questions that will recall the stories that make your family history enjoyable.

Will you be recording the story of the person? Will you tape it and then write it out and then ask the relative to proof read it, or will you write notes during the interview? What equipment will you need beforehand?

Childhood
- What was it like where you were a child?
- What were your mother & father like? What did you like to do with each parent?
- Were you closer to one than to the other? Any reason why?
- What was the occupation of each of your parents? Did they have financial security?
- Did you live in different homes? What was each home like?
- What objects do you remember in some of the rooms?
- What did you do for fun? Did you have any hobbies?
- How did your family celebrate events?
- Do any family celebrations, rituals, traditions or favorite sayings stand out in your mind?
- What are some of the most memorable experiences from your childhood?
Teen Years
- Did you go to school dances? What was it like?
- What was your school like? What subjects did you like?
- What decisions did you make then that affected your future?
- What do you remember about your grandparents and other relatives?

Adult Life
- What experiences strengthened your faith or has built your character?
- Who was your first girlfriend (boyfriend)? What was she or he like?
- When did you meet your spouse? Tell me about it.
- What was it like to become a parent? What have you learned from parenthood?
- Were there certain things that you insisted your children know?
- What did you do most of your life? How and when did you get your first job? What did the work involve?
- What was the best job you ever had? The worst?
- What are your feelings about your relationship with Heavenly Father?

Additional questions can be found at http://www.tmason1.com/doc2.htm#ps

Organizing your Personal Records

Elder Boyd K. Packer suggested, "Get a cardboard box... Put it some place where it is in the way, perhaps on the counter - anywhere where it cannot go unnoticed. Then, over a period of a few weeks, collect and put into the box every record of your life..."

"Don't try to do this in a day. Take some time on it. Most of us have these things scattered around here and there. Some of them are in a box in the garage; others are stored away in drawers, or in the attic, or one place or another. Perhaps some have been tucked in the leaves of the Bible or elsewhere."

"Gather all these papers together and put them in the box. Keep it there until you have collected everything you think you have. Then make some space on a table, and sort out all that you have collected."
"Divide Your Life Into Three Periods - Child, Youth, and Adult."

"Begin with your birth certificate and put every record in chronological order up to the time you were twelve years of age."

"Next assemble all that pertains to your youth, from twelve to eighteen, or until the time you were married. Line up all those records in chronological order and put them in another box or envelope."

"Do the same with the records of the rest of your life. Once you have so organized the records, simply, take your birth certificate and begin writing, "I was born on... I was the third child in a family of eight..."

"It really won't take you long to write the account of your life, and it will have accuracy because you have collected records." Scan the documents and photos into a computer folder and place the original records in acid free sleeves and store them in a file folder or a three ring notebook.

Using a scrapbook album or computer program, write about each picture or record. Document the photos with who, what, where and when. Keep your pages simple and write stories and feelings in a way that you will pass on your faith and values to your family.

Children need to have a solid foundation of identity. Adopted children needs to feel they don't have to be just like everybody else in the family: “There is room for me to be who I am — because I know that I am different. But at the same time I feel wholly accepted and wholly loved.” Article titled Families of Diversity about adoption written by Chaplain Sue Bergin. [http://magazine.byu.edu/?act=view&a=3270](http://magazine.byu.edu/?act=view&a=3270)


A very long and well done list of questions about "Creating a Personal History" can be found at [https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Creating_A_Personal_History](https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Creating_A_Personal_History) and note there are other references at the end of that web page.