

Planning Your Family Life Cycle

1. First, fill in the age you will probably be in each of the following “turning points” in your family life cycle. If you've already hit a turning point, put date in the appropriate box.

Turning Points	Probable Age
Get Married	
Have your first child	
First child starts school	
First child starts junior high	
First child leaves home (college, military, etc...)	
Last Child leaves home	
Retire from profession or career	
One member of the couple pass away	
Second member of the couple pass away	

2. Now compute how many years you will probably spend in each of the following stages of your “family life cycle”.
From: Duvall, E & Miller, B. Marriage and Family Development 6th Ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1985.

Stages	Years in Stage
<i>Stage I: Pre-Children</i> Married and no children	
<i>Stage II: Childbearing families</i> Birth of first child to birth of last	
<i>Stage III: Preschool</i> No children in school yet	
<i>Stage IV: School aged children</i> Ages 6 to 13	
<i>Stage V: Teenagers</i> Ages 13-19	
<i>Stage VI: Launching centers</i> Children leave home for college, marriage, etc...	
<i>Stage VII: Empty nest</i> All children left home, not yet retired	
<i>Stage VIII: Aging family</i> Includes retirement and the golden years	

3. Describe the biggest surprise you had in trying to estimate what your family life cycle will probably be.

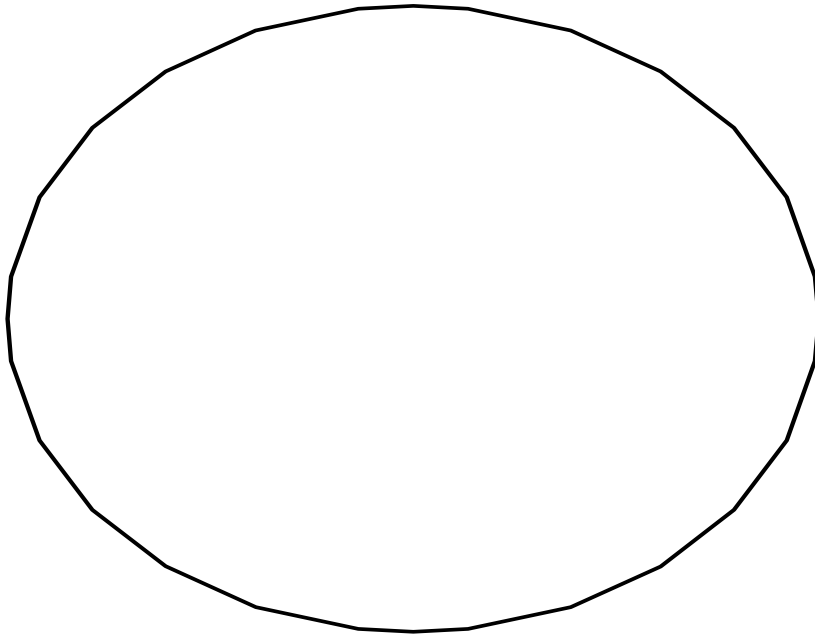
4. Describe what you are going to do differently now to prepare yourself for your entire life cycle.

LIFE CYCLE

Divide the circle into stages of time that might occur in your life

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Married, Prechildren Years | 5. Teen Years |
| 2. Child bearing Years | 6. Launching Years |
| 3. Pre-School Years | 7. Empty Nest Years. |
| 4. School Children Years | 8. Aging Family Years |

Assuming you will live for the next 60 years, plan your life stages in yearly segments and then place them on the pie chart below. For example if you married at age 25 and waited until you were 30 to have your first child then stage 1 above would be 5 years duration. If you had your last child at age 33 then you would have been in stage 2 for 3 years. Use similar reasoning for the remaining stages. Estimate these for each stage above and graph them in the pie chart below (keep in mind that the entire pie equals 60 years). There will probably be some overlap. Shade in those areas lightly. Once the pie chart is completed it will give you a clear visual representation of your family life cycle stages and how many years you plan to spend in each one. *Definitions for each stage are in the previous assignment.*



Nontraditional Life Cycles: Variations on the Theme

One drawback of the family life cycle approach is its tendency to focus on intact nuclear families. Millions of people today experience some form of variation from intact nuclear families. This assignment is designed to facilitate a better understanding of differing life cycles. There are two basic components. First, interview a friend or family member who did not pursue the intact nuclear life course. Plot his or her course by inserting the dates of major life events in the appropriate boxes. Second, plot your own life cycle events using dates. Estimate future life events based on your goals and ambitions.

Event	Date of Event for Friend or Family Member	Date or Estimated Date for You
Teen Pregnancy		
Single Parenting		
Adult Unwed Pregnancy		
Extended Singlehood		
Cohabitation		
First Marriage		
First Divorce		
Single Parenting		
Second Marriage		
Second Divorce		
Single Parenting		
Other?		

Rites of Passage

Rites of passage signal to society that an individual has changed their role in society. The rite of passage is based on what the culture expects of individuals at certain ages. This expectation is affected by family ethnicity and culture. Some of these expectations may include starting grade school, changing from grade school to middle school, the onset of puberty, getting a driver's license, turning eighteen, graduation, weddings, funerals, religious advancement, and others.

Some adolescents may decide their own rites of passage differently than their parents or adults prescribe. They view becoming sexual, smoking, using drugs or alcohol, profanity, and disregarding authority of parents and society as signals they are now adults.

Evaluate yourself based on your culture and ethnic background. What were the rites of passage expected of you? Did you fall into any adolescent rites of passage behaviors during adolescence? Explain:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Your partner:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

How could your experience growing up help your children understand their rites of passage but avoid problematic perceived rites of passage? Explain: