

## **An Introduction to Family Systems Theory**

Adult Formation: In Relationship

St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Barrington, IL

Created by The Rev. Lisa M. Erdeljon

### **Activity: Make a Family Tree, the first step of a Family Diagram**

A Family Diagram, also known as a genogram, is a visual representation of the living organism that is our families. It represents more than just genealogy; it also represents the profound emotional connections between generations.

1. Begin with your parents (mom and dad) at the top of the page.
2. Add all of your siblings, from left to right, with the oldest furthest to the left.
3. Make all male members of your family squares and all females circles.
4. Use a triangle for someone with an unknown gender.
5. Include anyone who has died.
6. For each symbol, write the first name, birth date, and death date (if applicable).

#### **In a different color:**

1. Add your spouse and children and grandchildren (as applicable).
2. Make all male members of your family squares and all females circles.
3. Use a triangle for someone with an unknown gender.
4. Remember to include anyone who has died, too.
5. For each symbol, write the first name, birth date, and death date (if applicable).

Hold on to this!  
We'll come back to this a lot,  
and the lines between each family member will change,  
and continue to change,  
based on emotional connectivity and anxiety.

Activity: Make a Family Tree, the first step of a Family Diagram

# Example

