

Journalling styles

There are four main choices when assembling life story pages:

- Who, what, when and where.
- Comments.
- Bullet points.
- Journalling.

Each of these will give you different amounts of information and different ways to set it out. Some individuals may prefer wordy explanations, others short sharp points. The style you agree on must suit both the storyteller and the story.

Essentially you will want to know whom the photograph refers to, on what occasion it was taken, where and when. You may like to add further comments to support this information.

Bullet points give you a way of providing more pertinent information in one liners, short sentences or phrases. Journalling of courses gives you free reign to add whatever you feel, as you feel it.

Whatever form you agree on, consider if you need to allow for later comments. Journalling is never a finished event. Are you sharing stories, and committing them to paper as a 'one off' or do you perhaps want to allow space and time to come back to the stories? When you choose a format for visualising the stories, you will also need to think about the form the book will take.

Using the photograph here as an example we'll see how this might work.



Geraldine's First Holy Communion, taken by her Father Donald Travers.

Who, what, where, when

Aunty Bunty, Uncle Gerry, Ged, Louise and Little Granny at Geraldine's First Holy Communion, in the grounds of St. Anne's Catholic Church, Banstead, Surrey, June 1963.

Comments

It was a wonderful day getting dressed up and being made to feel special. We all had our picture taken and afterwards I remember eating too many sticky buns. All the family were there and it was considered a really important day in my life.

Bullet Points

- Ged wore a beautiful dress bought by Aunty Bunty.
- The nuns put on a big breakfast.
- Lou got a new gold cross.
- Everyone got a Holy picture for their prayer book.

Journalling

Aunty Bunty, my godmother, decided I should have a very special dress, no expense spared. I don't remember going to try on the dress and it seemed to appear miraculously – a vision in silk, from an expensive shop in London – Fortnum and Mason. I felt marvellous in it – a bride of Christ!

I remember everyone in the family being excited by the fact that Dad had travelled to Rome for a business conference on the same plane as the soon to be elected Pope John Paul. All the Catholics in the family felt it was a special sign. And just before my First Holy Communion too! I really didn't feel very Holy – just a normal eight year-old who'd learnt how to 'say' a confession. I've still got the mother-of-pearl missal bought for me by my father. All the details were recorded in the most ornate and beautiful calligraphy.

Dad used to get on with the Parish priests. They always made me feel guilty, but Dad who'd served in the Desert Rats just called them *Padré* and they used to chat together. Because Mum had died earlier, Auntie B and Uncle Gerry wanted this to be very special. Fond memories. I loved them all very much. I was only eight. I saw one of the parish priests later when he was eighty. Funny. He didn't scare me any more. Who had changed?