

Many people believe that today's young adults tend to overshare (like Eli in the film *The Samuel Project*), whereas the older generation (like Eli's grandfather Samuel,) have important stories they keep to themselves. This sheet provides ideas for how to break the ice and initiate meaningful conversation with an older person in your life. It also gives you a set of questions you can use to start your interview.

## TIPS FOR INTERVIEWING:

- Ask open-ended questions instead of questions that can be answered Yes or No (Who were your heroes growing up? instead of, Did you have any heroes growing up?)
- Prompt discussion with family photos or heirlooms if you have them.
- Be sure that there aren't any distractions. Turn off the television, put away your cell phone, and allow plenty of time to talk.
- Respect the fact that your subject may have had some experiences that are very difficult to talk about. Be patient.
- If your subject is not forthcoming, try prompting him or her by saying, "I've heard or read the following. Can you tell me what you remember about that?" You can also come prepared with photos or articles about past events to help spark the conversation.

## SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

1. When and where were you born?
2. Tell me about your family:
  - What did your parents do?
  - Talk about your siblings — What are their names? Where did you fit in the line-up? How did you and your siblings get along?
  - Tell me about where you lived growing up.
3. What is your favorite childhood memory?
4. What was your greatest fear when you were growing up?
5. What was a popular pastime for teenagers when you were my age?
6. What do you wish you had done in your life that you haven't?
7. What is your greatest accomplishment?
8. What is the most significant historical event you've lived through? How did it directly affect you?
9. What legacy do you hope to leave for future generations?
10. What do you wish my generation understood about your generation?

Use the back of this sheet for additional questions.



Now it's time for you to tell your subject's story through art. As one character in *The Samuel Project* reminds us, "Art can unearth stories long-buried and bring to light stories so marginalized, they were never even told." Try to visualize your subject's life. Focus on the events and experiences that seem most meaningful to you. Then bring your vision to life using the medium of your choice — drawing, painting, cartooning, collage, animation, photography, video, sculpture, or whatever suits your inspiration.

