

Father's Day

The United States is one of the few countries in the world that has an official day on which fathers are honored by their children. On the third Sunday in June, fathers, and all men who act as father figures, all across the United States are given presents, treated to dinner, or otherwise made to feel special.

The origin of Father's Day is not clear. Some say that it began with a church service in West Virginia in 1908. Others say the first Father's Day was held in Vancouver, Washington. Another story claims that the president of the Chicago Lions' Club, Harry Meek, celebrated the first Father's Day with his organization in 1915, choosing the third Sunday in June, the date closest to his birthday!

Regardless of when the first Father's Day occurred, the strongest promoter of the holiday was Sonora Smart Dodd of Spokane, Washington. She thought of the idea of a Father's Day while she was listening to a Mother's Day sermon. Mrs. Dodd felt that she had an outstanding father. He was a veteran of the Civil War. His wife had died young, and he had raised six children alone, without their mother. When Mrs. Dodd became an adult she recognized with great appreciation the sacrifices her father had made, and the remarkable job he had done as a single parent.

In 1909, Mrs. Dodd approached her minister and others in Spokane about having a church service dedicated to fathers on June 5, her father's birthday. That date was too soon for her minister to prepare the service, so he presented it a few weeks later on June 19th. From then on, the state of Washington celebrated the third Sunday in June as Father's Day. Children made special desserts, or visited their fathers if they lived apart.

States and organizations began lobbying Congress to declare an annual Father's Day. In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson approved of this idea, but it was not until 1924 that President Calvin Coolidge made it a national event. He declared that the official recognition of Father's Day was to "establish more intimate relations between fathers and their children and to impress upon fathers the full measure of their obligations." Since then, fathers have been honored and recognized by their families throughout the country on the third Sunday in June. In 1966, President Lyndon Johnson signed a presidential proclamation making Father's Day a national commemorative day.

When children can't visit their fathers, they usually contact them by telephone or email, or they may send a greeting card. The cards might be traditional and sentimental, or whimsical so fathers laugh when they open them. Father's Day gifts may be store-bought or hand-made, and traditional gifts might include a tie, shirt, sports item, or a child's own drawing. Some children give their fathers heartfelt thanks for always being there when they needed "Dad."

Questions:

1. When was Father's day held in the U.S?
2. Is the origin of Father's Day clear? Why?
3. When and Why did Mrs. Dodd think of the idea of a Father's Day?
4. What did the children do for their father in Father's in Washington?
5. When did Father's day become a national commemorative day in the U.S?
6. What do children usually do when they cannot visit their father on Father's day?

