



International Childbirth Education Association

*Reunion Classes – ICEA Teaching Idea Sheet #10*

Reunion classes, postnatal class, the “last” class – all are names for a traditional parent and baby get-together at the end of a childbirth education series. It is a chance to see parents and babies for perhaps the last time and to share birth stories. It is a chance to show off babies, see friends again and perhaps to forge links with new parents who can become part of a support system.

You, the educator, have the opportunity to make this more than a reunion. Make this class an educational as well as a social experience. Create a curriculum that will help parents begin thinking about planning their journey into parenthood.

The options for designing a reunion class curriculum are unlimited, but planning needs to begin early in the class series so parents know what to expect. Be sure to define your goals based on the class participants and their needs and develop your objectives accordingly.

### **THE TIMING**

The timing of your reunion will depend entirely on the objectives you define. Many classes are scheduled according to the last due date and are held before the babies are three months of age, but

can be held whenever it is most convenient for you and the parents. Following the initial reunion, you might suggest a second class meeting facilitated by one of the couples to be held when the babies are one year old.

Decide the time of day and day of the week that works best for the majority of the class. Weekends, especially Sunday evenings, tend to work well for most new parents since many mothers may be back to work by then. Don’t expect parents to be on time and allow for a late start.

### **THE SETTING**

Where should you hold your classes? Don’t confine yourself to the classroom. Ask your parents where they might like to meet. If you get no response, you might suggest one of the following and let them decide:

- A parent’s home
- Your home
- Local park
- Church meeting room
- Library meeting room
- Private room in a restaurant
- Children’s museum
- Playground
- Hospital

### **THE CONTENT**

What you teach will change with each class, because every group is different. Be sure to meet your objectives, but also have fun! Here are a few ideas for your reunion class curriculum:

- At the conclusion of your prenatal series, ask class members to predict the weight and birth date of baby. (This can be placed on the back of nametags.) Bring information back to reunion class and compare to statistics of the REAL baby.
- Make a large chart and as couples arrive, have them fill in the following information:
  - PARENT’S NAME(S)
  - DUE DATE
  - DELIVERY DATE
  - WEIGHT
  - LENGTH
  - COMMENTS
- Plan a birthday party. Have parents bring cake, ice cream, milk and party goods. Sing “Happy Birthday” at the end of the class. Spend the first half hour socializing and hugging babies, then get into a circle and share birth stories (set a five-minute limit.) Encourage both parents to participate in telling their story. The perspective is often very



- different. Create a photo opportunity and then serve refreshments.
- Use cartoons about parenthood to stimulate discussion.
  - Have parents bring in their favorite (or most ridiculous) toy or baby gift to share.
  - Do a “What would you do if...?” activity. What if. . .
    - ...both sets of relatives invite you for the holidays?
    - ...you plan a romantic evening out and your sitter cancels last minute?
    - ...you are trying on new clothes in a department store, the baby begins to cry, and the salesperson reaches in the stroller to pick up the baby?
    - ...It is 2am and your three-month-old refuses to go to sleep? She/he does not appear to be ill and you and your partner must be to work by 8am.
  - Show a film dealing with postpartum and/or parenting.
  - Ask questions (for both partners):
    - How was your labor different than expected?
    - What surprised you in labor?
    - Which family members have been most helpful? Least helpful?
  - Have you been out on a “date” without the baby?
  - How has your sex life changed since the baby’s arrival?
  - What one thing you learned in class was most helpful?
  - What one piece of advice would you share with first-time parents?
- Have parents bring in birth photos to share.