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The purpose of this presentation is to describe common family patterns and ways of living together. Information will be provided about milestone ceremonies. Christian celebrations, public holidays and other red-letter days will also be discussed.
There are many ways of life and living together
FAMILY STRUCTURES AND FORMS OF COHABITATION, CELEBRATIONS, RED LETTER DAYS AND MILESTONE CEREMONIES

Source: ssb.no/befolkning/statistikker/familie, updated 17 February 2017

2 350 000 households

2.19 people in each household

17 % of the population live in one-person households.
Types of relationship

3 out of 4 couples who share a household are married.

The average age of marriage in Norway is just over 30.

Couples aged under 30 living together as cohabitees

Source: ssb.no/befolkning/statistikker/samboere, updatet March 3, 2017
Marriage

- Marriage is a legally-binding contract between two people.
- The pre-conditions for contracting a marriage include:
  - The marriage must be voluntary.
  - The parties must be aged over 18.
  - Neither of the parties must be married to other people.
- People of the same sex may also marry.
- Women and men have the same right to petition for divorce.
Cohabitation

- Cohabitation is where two unmarried adults live together and combine their finances.
- Cohabitation is not regulated by law, but cohabitees who have children together have some of the same rights and obligations as married couples.
- Many cohabiting couples have cohabitation agreements regulating matters of finance and inheritance.
When parents move apart

- Many married couples divorce and many cohabiting couples move apart.
- The Children Act contains rules on providing for shared children after the breakdown of a relationship.
Case
Patrick and Maria have been married for 10 years and have two children, aged 6 and 9. In recent years, Patrick and Maria have argued more and more. They have now agreed that it would be best if they divorced. They have applied for separation, and Patrick has moved into a flat not far from Maria. Having attended counselling sessions and spoken to the children, they have decided that they will have shared custody for the children. The children will live with Maria for two weeks and with Patrick for two weeks.

Discussion:
- What will Maria and Patrick need to think about in order to safeguard the welfare of the children after the divorce?
- What do you think about shared custody after the breakdown of a relationship?
Ceremonies marking major events in life

- Norway is a society underpinned by the values of Christianity and humanism. This is provided for in the Norwegian Constitution.
- Freedom of religion and belief are key values.
- There are both religious and non-religious alternatives to the ceremonies of baptism, confirmation, marriage and funerals.
Baptism and the naming ceremony

- Baptism and the Humanist naming ceremony are solemn celebrations marking the birth of a child.
- Both ceremonies are often accompanied by a celebration attended by family and friends.

Discussion:
- Which rituals are customary when a child is born in your home country?
Confirmation in church or in a civil ceremony

- Confirmation is a rite of passage that in the past was an exclusively Christian ceremony.
- A Humanist confirmation is a non-religious alternative to a church confirmation.

Discussion:
- Which ceremonies marking the transition from childhood/youth/to adulthood are you familiar with?
Kirkelig eller borgerlig vielse

• The marriage ceremony may be either religious or non-religious.
• The marriage ceremony is usually followed by a wedding reception.

Discussion:
• How are weddings celebrated in your culture?
Religious or secular funerals

- A death may be commemorated in a solemn religious or non-religious funeral.
- A funeral with a religious content will be conducted in the faith community to which the deceased belonged.
- For some, the preferred choice is a non-religious ceremony. This is known as a secular funeral.

Discussion:

- Which rituals are commonly practised when a person dies where you come from?
Holidays

• Holidays in Norway generally coincide with Christian festivals.
• Freedom of religion is an important value in Norway.
• Employees who follow other religions are entitled to take up to two days off to celebrate their own religious festivals.
Christmas and New Year

- Most people in Norway celebrate Christmas.
- Christmas Eve is on the 24th of December and is celebrated with good food and the exchanging of gifts.
- It is customary to celebrate Christmas together with the family.
- New Year’s Eve is celebrated on the 31st of December.

Discussion:

- Are you already familiar with the Christmas and New Year’s Eve celebrations?
Easter

- Easter is a Christian festival commemorating the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- In today’s secular society, Easter has lost much of its significance as a religious festival.
**Ascension Day and Pentecost**

- Ascension Day and Pentecost or Whitsun are Christian festivals.
- Ascension Day is the 40th day after Easter Sunday.
- Whit Sunday falls on the 50th day after Easter Sunday.

**Discussion:**
- Christmas, Easter and Pentecost are religious festivals in Norway. Which religious festivals are important in your culture?
The 17th of May is Norway’s National Day

- The 17th of May is Norway’s national day and is a day of great celebration.
- The day is celebrated to commemorate the signing of the Norwegian Constitution on the 17th of May 1814.
- The 17th of May is celebrated with children’s parades throughout Norway, in town and country alike.
Other red-letter days

- The 1st of May, or May Day, is a red-letter day for workers all over the world.
  - The day is celebrated with marches and speeches.
  - May Day is a public holiday.
- The 8th of March is International Women’s Day.
  - International Women’s Day is celebrated with marches and speeches.
  - The 8th of March is not a public holiday.

Discussion:
- Does May Day mean anything to you?
- Is International Women’s Day celebrated in your country?
Midsummer’s Eve or St. John’s Eve

- St. John’s Eve is on 23 June. The day marks the summer solstice or Midsummer.
- Midsummer’s Eve is not a public holiday.