

What is a Family?

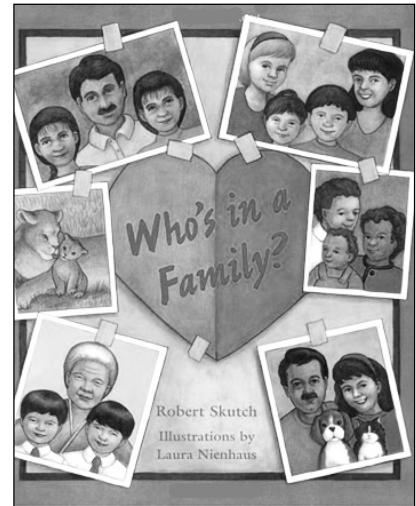
Kindergarten and Grade One

Learning Outcomes:

- To teach students that a variety of family models exist
- To teach students that all families are equally important
- To encourage students to be proud of their families

Preparation & Context:

Work with your Teacher-Librarian to collect a variety of pictures and picture books about all kinds of families. Have these displayed within your room or easily accessible for students to look at during your “book time”. Make sure that you have a variety of resources that you can use to read aloud to students about families. Be well aware of the socio-economic status of families in your classroom. Be careful not to stigmatize families living in poverty or different family models in your comments and actions. Celebrate all forms of family!



Lesson Plan:

Begin by asking students “Who’s in a family?” Record their ideas on chart paper along with key words and picture symbols (i.e. people’s heads) so that non-readers can tell who is who. Be careful not to draw girls and boys in gender stereotypical ways (i.e. stick figures with skirts or pants) or using gendered colours (i.e. pink and blue)

Prior to reading stories about families, ask students to listen and watch for the different kinds of families they see within the books. Read the story “Who’s in A Family?” by Robert Skutch or “All Families are Special” by Norma Simon.

After reading, show students a chart with different kinds of families on it. Write the name of each form of family in a different colour so that non-readers can tell them apart. You will need to design this in advance using the following words and picture symbols of people’s heads:

Adoptive or Foster Parents
Blended Families
Couples without Children
Extended Families

Inter-Racial Families
Opposite Gender Parents
Same Gender Parents
Single Parent

All of these forms of family are shown in the book by Robert Skutch.

Ask students to take turns using a pointer and being “the teacher” to point out their own family. Help those who might be confused to identify their own family. (Make sure you know the families of all students well before you teach this lesson).

Read stories about all kinds of families throughout your unit on families. Make sure students see positive representations of all forms of family. Be explicit in your teaching in that all families are equal and important. Gently debunk the myth that all families must have a Mom and a Dad. For some titles that show same gender families in a positive light go to: <http://www.galebc.org/books.pdf>

Return to your chart throughout the unit to re-teach the names of the different kinds of families.

Assessment:

Use the final page of “Who’s in a Family?” which depicts all the families (without words) and ask students individually to point to different kinds of families as you verbally prompt them with questions.

- i.e. Can you find the single parent family?
- Can you point to the same gender family?
- Where is the opposite gender family?

If students can correctly identify most forms of family then you can mark that they meet the Prescribed Learning Outcome in the Kindergarten/Grade One IRP which pertains to student awareness of a variety of family models.

Extension:

If you would like to teach acceptance of same gender families use the following book: “ABC-A Family Alphabet Book” by Bobbie Combs.

Prior to reading, brainstorm all the activities your students do with their own parents and guardians on a T-chart. Add picture symbols to the words you scribe on the chart.

Read the story and ask students to watch for other activities that families do together.

After reading, add additional ideas to the chart from the story based upon student responses.

Ask students to imagine/pretend they had two moms or two dads. If that were so, what would they get double of? (positive/fun things).

Create a class book modelled after “The Mommy Book” or “The Daddy Book” by Todd Parr. Each student makes one page using the following frame:

“Two Moms means double the _____.”

“Two Dads means double the _____.”

They may pick their ideas from the chart you created together. You may need to scribe words in the blanks for Kindergarten students. Grade Ones can scribe from your ideas on the chart. All students can draw the picture themselves. Ask them to have two moms or dads in their picture. Reinforce that we are using our imaginations to pretend what it would be like to have two Moms or Dads. Keep these books in your classroom library for students to enjoy throughout the year.