

Lesson 1: Celebrating Your Family!

"I sustain myself with the love of family." —Maya Angelou

Social Justice Standard: Identity 5

Summary

Families are some of our favorite people in our lives. Just as we look different as individuals, families are uniquely diverse as well. Whether it be a group of people you were born into or a chosen group of friends, our families create stability, a safe space, and unconditional love. The possibilities of what a family can look like are endless, so the importance of this work is understanding that different circumstances can still create the same experiences for families. No matter what a family may look like, they face many similar challenges and experience great joy. The books in this lesson can help us see the many faces of families and reflect on what family means to us.

Booklist

- *A World for Me and You: Where Everyone is Welcome* by Uju Asika, illustrated by Jennie Poh
- *Families* by Shelley Rotner and Sheila M. Kelly
- *ABC: A Family Alphabet Book* by Bobbie Combs, illustrated by Brian and Desiree Rappa
- *The Different Dragon* by Jennifer Bryan, illustrated by Danamarie Hosler
- *Love Makes a Family* by Sophie Beer
- *Who's in a Family* by Robert Skutch, illustrated by Laura Nienhaus
- *When Aidan Became a Brother* by Kyle Lukoff, illustrated by Kaylani Juanita
- *Mommy, Mama, and Me* by Lesléa Newman, illustrated by Carol Thompson
- *Daddy, Papa and Me* by Lesléa Newman, illustrated by Carol Thompson

Consider This

- Who is in your family? Has it changed over time?
- Did you have an understanding of a "traditional family" growing up? How did that influence your own family structure as a child and now as an adult?
- What messaging around family were you given as a child that you feel differently about now as an adult?
- Were you aware of the diversity of families as a kid?

Talk Together

- Who is in your family?
- What is the difference between family and friends?
- Who do you know that has a family that looks different than your own?
- What is your role in your family?
- What do you want your family to look like when you are an adult?

Engage

Let's play!

- You can use dolls, toys, or yourselves to play "family." Encourage children to take on different roles, and switch up what the family dynamic looks like. For example, the kids play adults and the adults play kids.
- Have a family game night. Find a board game, card game, or imaginary game where the whole family can be involved.

Explore More

- Pew Research Center's "The American family today"
- The University of Texas's "Family Diversity is the New Normal for America's Children"
- PBS Kids' "Celebrate Family Diversity"