

Title: All Families Are Special

Grade: K-2nd Grade

BACKGROUND

Students often express genuine curiosity and interest in one another's family composition. At other times, they may make fun of actual or perceived differences. This lesson attempts to illustrate similarities and differences of families within the class, as well as within the larger community. The lesson also reminds students to respect these differences.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

- Identify similarities and differences among the students;
- Discuss different family structures, inclusive of families with gay and lesbian persons and of different cultures;
- Understand that personal and family differences should be respected.

TIME

- **Part one, 20 minutes:** Introduction and family brainstorm
20 minutes: Reading / Discussing All Families are Special
- **Part two, 30 – 40 minutes:** Creating a quilt

STANDARDS

- **National Health Education Standard 4** Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health
- **Reading** 1.0, 2.0, 3.0
- **Written and Oral English Conventions** 1.0, 2.0
 - ❖ See **extensions** at the end of the lesson for additional subject activities.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- All Families are Special by author Norma Simon and illustrated by Teresa Flavin
- Chalkboard and chalk or butcher paper and markers; crayons for writing sheets
- Attached writing sheets: "A family might have ____" and "My family has ____."

VOCABULARY

- **Diversity:** Many differences
- **Cultures:** Shared values and beliefs that shapes behavior
- **Ethnicity:** Common ancestry
- **Family:** A unit of two or more persons, related either by birth or by choice, who may or may not live together, who try to meet each other's needs and share common goals and interests.
- **Gay:** A term to describe people of the same sex who have feelings for one another in a romantic way. The term is usually used to describe men.
- **Lesbian:** Women who have feelings for one another in a romantic way.
- **Respect:** To be considerate of another.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

Introduction: Explain to students that we will be discussing the many different types of families. The students will have an opportunity to talk and draw pictures about their own families. Let the students know they will be reading a book called, All Families are Special about many different types of families. Finally, the class will have an opportunity to create a quilt.

Ground rules: Introduce or review classroom rules in order to create a safe place for students to discuss their families. Consider ground rules listed below.

Respect other people in the class:

- No put downs
- One person speaks at a time
- Everyone has the "right to pass" if s/he doesn't want to talk
- Everyone will have a chance to speak

Part One: Brainstorm Different Families

- Assemble a class brainstorm list of people in students' families or families they know. For example, "step-mom, dad, sister," "foster mom," "daddy and poppa," and "grandma and mom." This list will be referred to throughout the lesson. Students should be allowed to share who is in their family or families they know or have read about. Write their answers on butcher paper or on the board.
- Model several answers, "I know a family with two moms, a step-dad and three children." or "My family has two sisters and an uncle."
- At this point, a student may describe his or her family as having two moms, two dads, or a gay or lesbian family member. Some students may not be familiar with the terms, gay or lesbian. Refer to the vocabulary list to clarify definitions.

- A student may also talk about parents and other family members being from different cultures or ethnicities. Refer to the vocabulary list to clarify the terms.

Part Two: Reading “All Families are Special”

- Introduce the book, All Families are Special. Show the students the cover of the book, read the title, and ask what they predict the story may be about.
- Briefly review the family brainstorm list before reading All Families are Special to the class. Inform the students that as the book is read, they will look for families that were not represented in the class brainstorming session. As the children discover “new” families, add it to the brainstorm list.
- In the final list of families compiled from the book and discussion include:
 - Two Dads or Moms (gay and lesbian families)
 - Step-moms or step-dads
 - Foster child(ren)
 - Children in group homes
 - Adopted child(ren)
 - Uncles, aunts or grandparents as the primary caregiver
 - Families with members from different cultures

Part Three: Creating a Class Quilt

NOTE: It may be appropriate for younger classes only to complete the page, “My family has ____.”

- Inform students that they will complete each of the following pages that will be shared with the class and perhaps parents/caregivers. As needed, a teacher or another adult may assist with the writing.
- To assist students, review the class list of family members completed earlier. Keep the list visible for the students so they may copy key words for the sentence completion.
- Review the book and model several family structures as shown in the book, “Some families might have, a son and a dad” or “Some families have one daughter and two moms”.

Handouts

“Some families might have ____.” Encourage students to think about the many different types of families the class has discussed and read about.

“My family has ____.” Model possible answers.

Suggestions on how to use pages:

- Tape together to form a quilt that can be displayed in the classroom or school bulletin board/hallway
- Have students share out one thing about their family that is the same and one thing that is different about another student’s family

- Create a class book called “*Our Families are Special*”

EVALUATION

The objectives have been met if the student is able to:

- Identify similarities and differences about families through class discussion.
- Express respect for personal and family differences verbally, through drawings, discussion and/or writings.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

Health: “Actions for Health”, ETR Associates

- Kindergarten: Unit IV: My Family
- First Grade: Unit II: I Am Part of A Family
- Second Grade: Unit II: Family Life and Communication

“**That’s A Family**” video and curriculum by Women’s Education Media

“**And Tango Makes Three**” book and lesson plan

Community Based Organizations (CBO): A list of CBOs which may be used as a resource to supplement health lessons is available with the Health Advocate or on the SHPD website, www.healthiersf.org, under the Programs and Services link.