

TEACHERS ACTIVITIES



Theme:

Families have many different configurations, but it's the people who make up a family that makes it unique.

Topics For Discussion:

Pose the question, "What is a family?" Make a list of the children's ideas and formulate a definition.



Have students relate favorite activities they do with their fathers, other older male family members, or an older male family friend.

The little girl in the story had certain things that reminded her of her father whenever she saw them. Discuss with students what reminds them of their parents.



The children in the story participated in lots of summertime fun. Discuss the students' favorite summer activities.



Have students share affectionate or "pet" names their parents or grandparents call them that no one else uses.

Curriculum Extension Activities:

Make a Venn diagram of the roles and responsibilities of mothers and fathers. Since the ideas will come from the students' own experiences and perceptions, there will likely be lively discussion about the unique nature of families.



Brainstorm a list of words that name family members (e.g., great-grandmother, cousin, stepfather, uncle, sister, etc.). Include synonyms on the list (e.g., father, dad, daddy, papa, etc.). Discuss the relationships of these family members.

Have students interview a dad (their own, an uncle, grandfather, family friend, etc.) regarding the great joys or moments and the difficult things about being a dad. Share the interview information in class.



Have students write a biography of their father (or stepfather, uncle, grandfather, family friend, a “famous” dad). Discuss the types of information usually found in a biography and ways they might find out what they need to know. Illustrate the biographies with drawings or photographs.



Involve the students in a survey of individual family members to determine their “favorites” in categories such as the following: food, game/toy, TV show, animal, book, and family activity. Prepare a survey sheet, with the categories written down the left side, for students to take home and complete by writing the names of family members across the top and each person’s “favorite” in the intersecting boxes. Invite students to share their surveys in class and discuss ways that their families are alike and different.



Go to the playground or a nearby park (a grassy area is preferable) and participate in some activities such as those in the ‘Family Day’ picnic from the video. These activities might include: three-legged race; sack race; water balloon toss (students form two lines a few feet apart and toss a water balloon to their partner directly across from them; after each toss, they take a step back); spoon relay (team members balance an egg on a spoon and walk quickly across a designated distance to pass the spoon to the next team member); and others.



Obtain a copy of the book and have students examine the artistic technique used by the illustrator. Discuss how he might have achieved the “scratchy” effect. (According to a note in the book, he used watercolor, charcoal, colored pencils, and lithograph pencils, and etched the surface with tools including an empty ballpoint pen and a scratcher.) Have students draw a scene with crayons or colored pencils and experiment with the scratch technique, using a variety of tools to etch away some of the color.

Supplemental Books:

DADDY, DADDY, BE THERE
by Candy Dawson Boyd, illus. by Floyd Cooper (Philomel)

THE PAINTER
by Peter Catalanotto (Orchard)

HOLDING ONTO SUNDAY
by Kathryn Galbraith (McElderry)

WHEN WE MARRIED GARY
by Anna Grossnickle Hines (Greenwillow)

FAMILIES: A CELEBRATION OF DIVERSITY, COMMITMENT, AND LOVE
by Aylette Jenness (Houghton Mifflin)

LIKE JAKE AND ME
by Mavis Jukes, illus. by Lloyd Bloom (Knopf)

IF I'D KNOWN THEN WHAT I KNOW NOW
by Reeve Lindbergh, illus. by Kimberly Bulcken Root (Viking)

THE DADDY BOOK
by Ann Morris, photos by Ken Heyman (Silver Press)

FAMILIES ARE DIFFERENT
by Nina Pellegrini (Holiday House)

MY OL' MAN
by Patricia Polacco (Philomel)

MY FATHER'S HANDS
by Joanne Ryder, illus. by Mark Graham (Morrow)

TODAY I'M GOING FISHING WITH MY DAD
by N. Sharp, illus. by Chris Demarest (Boyd's Mills)

DADDY PLAYED MUSIC FOR THE COWS
by Maryann Weidt, illus. by Henri Sorensen (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard)

Program Description:



The feature book explores a young girl's special relationship with her father despite the fact that she does not see him frequently since her parent's divorce. LeVar joins a Family Day picnic and shares how he grew up in a single parent family. We meet a one-parent family and see how these four children and father manage schedules, responsibilities and share lots of love. A boy who rarely hears from his father tells how the "Big Brother, Big Sister" program paired him with a special friend. This episode explores a delicate family issue in a positive way.

Social Studies Concepts:

- ◆ families
- ◆ relationships
- ◆ seasons



Families

Families can be made up of a variety of people. Use this opportunity to discuss the types of families – traditional families where children live with both a father and mother, parent families, families with a variety of step-parents and step-siblings, foster families with adopted members, extended families assisting in raising children relationships as well as others that describe students' situations. Ask students to draw a picture of their family and display these in the classroom.

Relationships

Just as students realize that each family has unique characteristics, it is important to discuss how each person is different and special in his/her own way. Have students help or make full-body cutouts with arms stretched out to the side. To emphasize uniqueness that they make these look as much like themselves as possible by adding clothing and symbols that represent them and their talents, favorite skills or hobbies. Have them display the cutouts in the classroom or school hallway with hands touching to symbolize relationships in a class. Talk with students about the unique relationships that develop between classmates as well as between teachers and students.

Relationships

Have students brainstorm a list of characteristics that make relationships with others meaningful. List all the possibilities on the board. Then have each student choose one person in their family and either list the characteristics that best describe this person or write several paragraphs about why this family member is special to them.

Seasons

Discuss what indicates seasons changing in your area. Do plants change, leaves fall, temperatures vary, activities change because of the weather? Each area of the country may be quite different when discussing this aspect of our world. Ask each student to choose one season of the year, describe a favorite family activity without naming it, and then read this description for classmates who try to guess what the activity is. Extend this activity by sending home the Favorite Family Activities Survey (see Do-At-Home Activities).

Seasons

Have the class discuss and plan some activities that take advantage of the season you are currently experiencing. For instance, if the weather is moderate, they could organize an outdoor three-legged race, sack race, or water balloon race. If it's snowy, discuss why the previous activities would not be possible, but that building snowmen or forts, creating snow angels, or playing a game of "Fox and Geese" would be.

Do-At-Home Activities:

Family Activities Survey

Encourage families to discuss some of the activities they do together. Send home a copy of the "Favorite Family Activities Survey" (see following page) with each student to help their family assimilate the information. [This survey information lends itself to a class graphing activity if you choose to have it returned.]

Time Together

Encourage parents to spend quality time with their child by doing a simple activity such as lying on a blanket or taking a walk to look at the clouds changing shapes. Send home a copy of the "Time Together Activity" (on following page) so they can record what they see.

Distributed by:



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