



My Family from India

Grades K–4

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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From Asia to Africa, city to suburb, or rural farm to tropical rain forest, the presence of the family is common to all people and present in every culture throughout the world. Studying families from different places helps us to learn and appreciate both the similarities and differences between ourselves and others. Also, through exposure to cultures that are unfamiliar to them, children can learn to be accepting of people, lifestyles and traditions that may be very different from their own. The family — that special group of adults and children who care for, love, protect, and help each other — is both explored and celebrated in *Families Around the World*.

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Program Summary

In *My Family from India*, students will meet 12-year-old Devie. Devie and her Hindu family greet each day by thanking the Gods for giving them light, and by preparing fresh floral wreaths to decorate the statues in the local temple. Because religion is so important to Devie and her family, students will witness and hear of many Hindu customs including the practice of vegetarianism. Devie lives in Kerala, a region that has high educational standards, and she enjoys going to school. Her grandmother helps her each evening with homework, in addition to giving her lessons in the ancient Indian language of Sanskrit. Devie and her family are preparing for Onam, a Hindu feast day. On this special day, Devie and her cousins make a *rangoli*, a traditional decoration made out of fresh flowers.

Geographical Information

India is a constitutional republic located on the Asian subcontinent. It is composed of 25 states and has an area of approximately 3 million square kilometers. India is home to over 800 million people, which accounts for one-sixth of the world's population. India has fourteen official languages, and its capital is New Delhi. India has the most pronounced monsoon climates (alternating wet and dry seasons) on the planet, and also possesses a wide variety of mammals, including monkeys, tigers and elephants.

The state of Kerala is located on the southwestern coast of India. It is the most densely populated state in the country. This area is educationally advanced and culturally unique. It even has its own language, Malayalam. Kerala is known for its great natural beauty, which includes a chain of lagoons punctuated by coconut palms. This particular area is called the "Venice of India."

Pre-viewing Discussion

Using a web, brainstorm with your students to determine who they consider to be members of their family. Share with your students that families come in all shapes and sizes and that a family is a group of adults and children who care for, love, protect and help each other. Use the following questions to help students access their thoughts and ideas about families.

- Who do you care for, love and help?
- Who cares for, loves and helps you?
- Does a family member have to be a person who lives with you?

After this discussion, ask students to draw a family portrait which includes all the people who they consider to be members of their family.

Follow-up Discussion

After viewing the program with your class, discuss the similarities and differences between their families and Devie's. Refer students back to the original definition of a family: *A group of adults and children who care for, love, protect, and help each other.* Ask them to provide examples from the video that demonstrate how this particular family expresses love, shows care and provides help for each other.

Follow-up Activities

- Using a Venn diagram, ask students to compare and contrast Devie's family and social life with their own.
- Ask your students to think about special responsibilities that only they have at home. Have them draw pictures which illustrate them performing those tasks.
- Pretend that Devie is your pen pal. Write her a letter that describes the differences in the clothes you wear.
- Have your students think of a time when their families were preparing for a special celebration. Have them write paragraphs which tell what each family member did to help prepare for these big events.
- Using squares of sandpaper and water-based paints, have students make a *rangoli*. Examples of *rangoli* designs can be found at: www.onlinebangalore.com/life/women/rangoli/rangoli.html
- Using magazines, the Internet and other resources, have students create an informational poster that shows and tells about some of the mammals that can be found in India.
- Explain to students what it means to be a vegetarian, and some of the reasons why people participate in this practice. Divide them into groups of four and have them create a daily menu that contains only vegetarian foods.

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our Web site at www.LibraryVideo.com

- www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/mammals
This site provides illustrations and lots of information about Bengal tigers and Asian elephants.
- www.chooseindia.com/recipe/
This site provides numerous Indian vegetarian recipes.

Suggested Print Resources

- Parker, Lewis K., Linda Parker and D. King. *India*. Rourke Publishing, Vero Beach, FL, 2002.
- Sun, Ming-ju. *Traditional Fashions from India*. Dover Publications, Mineola, NY, 2001.