

- Huynh, Quang Nhuong. *Water Buffalo Days: Growing Up in Vietnam*. HarperTrophy, New York, NY; 1999.
- Palazzo-Craig, Janet and Makiko Nagano. *Tam's Slipper: A Story from Vietnam*. Troll Communications, Mahwah, NJ; 1997.



My Family from Vietnam

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*.



Program Summary

In *My Family from Vietnam*, students will meet 12-year-old Giang, her older brother and sister, and her parents, who live in northern Vietnam. It is harvest season in Giang's small village, and as her family's only income comes through growing rice, it is an especially busy time. Everyone pitches in to help harvest the rice, which is done completely by hand. Because schools are very crowded where Giang is from, she and her brother and sister only attend for half a day. This gives them plenty of time to help with the harvest. Giang is also responsible for taking care of the family's pigs, and she and her brother collect seaweed from the swamps, which the pigs love to eat! Twice a month Giang and her family visit the village pagoda to pray and pay their respects to Buddha. Everyone in Giang's village is quite proud of their pagoda because it's over one thousand years old! Honoring ancestors is an old custom, and one that is especially important to Giang's family. Giang's father is responsible for carrying on this tradition because he is the oldest man in his family. Giang's life, as she explains, follows the same pattern as the sun. When it rises it is time for school and work in the rice paddies, and when it sets it is time for her to complete homework. Giang is thankful that she has an older brother and sister who can help her.

Geographical Information

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, or Vietnam, as it is more commonly called, was established in 1976. It is located on the eastern part of the Indochinese Peninsula. It has a land area of approximately 330 thousand square kilometers, and is bordered by China, Cambodia and Laos. Vietnam has a tropical climate in the south, with occasional typhoons which cause substantial flooding. In the north, the climate is monsoonal, with two seasons that alternate between hot and rainy, to warm and dry. The country's capital city is Hanoi, and the population of Vietnam is about 81 million. Vietnamese is the country's official language. Vietnam has a wide variety of animals including elephants, tapirs, tigers, leopards, two types of bears and flying squirrels. There are also nearly 600 different species of birds. Vietnam has many cultural institutions and historical sites. Hanoi is home to the 11th-century Temple of Literature and the One Pillar Pagoda. In addition to art galleries and museums, many Vietnamese people enjoy football (soccer), badminton, chess and dominos. In urban locations, walking in the parks and along the rivers on evenings and weekends is popular.

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 Giang's family. 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

- Giang's father uses a buffalo to help him in the rice paddies. Divide your class into groups of four to find out about other kinds of animals people use to help them perform work. Share with students what is meant by domestication. Students can research horses, oxen, buffalo, donkeys, mules, camels and llamas to find out how these animals are used, what people have used them for, and why these animals are suited to a particular type of work. Students can present their findings by creating posters and preparing oral presentations.
- Giang takes special interest in washing, brushing and perfuming her hair. Talk to students about the importance of cleanliness and personal hygiene. Have students make a list of all of the things they do to take care of themselves.
- Rice is not only grown by Giang's family, but is also an important part of their diet. Create a Favorite Rice Recipe Book. Have students contribute their favorite recipe along with an illustration. Many rice recipes can be found at: health.yahoo.com/search/recipe?s=name&p=rice
- Teach a thematic unit on Vietnam. See www2.lhric.org/pocantico/Vietnam/Vietnam.htm for an example of a thematic unit created by a second grade teacher. It includes many ideas, activities and examples of student work.
- Pretend that Giang is your pen pal. Write her a letter to find out what is like to harvest rice, take care of pigs, and only have to go to school for a half a day. Make sure you share with her some of the chores or things you do to help around the house, and information about your school.

Suggested Internet Resources

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

- mcel.pacificu.edu/as/students/vietchildstory/TopLevel.html
This Web site has many illustrated Vietnamese folktales for children.
- www.timeforkids.com/TFK/specials/goplaces/0,12405,187312,00.html
This site has wonderful information about Vietnam that is specifically for children.

Suggested Print Resources

- De Capua, Sarah E. *Vietnam*. Compass Point Books, Mankato, MN; 2003.
- Dyer Vuong, Lynette and Vo-Dinh Mai. *The Brocaded Slipper and Other Vietnamese Tales*. HarperCollins Children's Books, New York, NY; 1992.

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