



FAMILY DIVERSITY SCAVENGER HUNT

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 4 – 5

LENGTH OF TIME: Two to three sessions of 45 minutes (Discussion and activity time)

GOALS

- To increase student awareness of family diversity and ways the media presents family life.
- To develop sensitivity and awareness of underrepresented or marginalized families.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to identify and describe a variety of families.
- Students will be able to identify common characteristics within all families.
- Students will understand that families have some similarities and some differences.
- Students will be able to identify which families are represented the most and the least in literature and/or the media.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. (Also W.4.9)
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. (Also SL 4.1)
- Social Studies Strand 4: Individual Development and Identity – Exploration, identification, and analysis of how individuals and groups are alike and how they are unique.

EDUCATORS' NOTES

There are many ways to live and form a loving, caring family. Many kinds of families are largely absent from our literature, such as families with lesbian or gay parents. This lesson offers students a chance to look through books to gather their own data on how families are represented.

This project centers the concept that all families are unique and different. This activity is designed to be inclusive for all; be sensitive to the individual needs of the students in your classroom.

Your students may have families with two moms or two dads, stepparents, a transgender parent, adoptive parents or foster parents. It is useful to find out the language they use to refer to their families to help respectfully answer questions that may arise. If, for example, you have only one student in your school with same-gender parents, then be mindful not to put that

student in the position of teaching other children about their family. That is the job of the educator, not the student.

MATERIALS:

- Two worksheets: *Family Diversity Scavenger Hunt* and *Family Structure Graph*
- Pencils, chart paper, and markers

REQUIRED BOOKS: Access to a public or school library.

ACTIVITY 1: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT FAMILIES?

- Label a piece of chart paper “What do we know about families?” You will be building a word/description bank on chart paper to which students can later refer.
- Ask the class the following questions and record their answers on chart paper.
 - What are some things that are true for many families?
 - What are some words or phrases we might use to describe families? (see Family Definitions)
 - What do we know about families?
 - Who is in a family?

Families can be defined in many ways. Each one is unique. Make sure to include all the different kinds of families that are in your classroom. At the same time, it is important to name a wide variety of families (such as single parents or families with two dads), especially ones that are not represented in your classroom. It is also important for children to define for themselves who is in their family. Their description may include a pet, a church member, a neighbor or someone else.

ACTIVITY 2: GATHERING DATA FROM BOOKS

- Give each student the *Family Diversity Scavenger Hunt* worksheet.
- Tell them that they are going to be visiting the library and researching families that are represented in books and magazines at the library. You may also want to have a large collection of family books in your classroom.
 - Ask students to find 10 books that include stories or pictures of a family or families. Model how they might look through a book to discover if that book portrays a family. Before reviewing the books, encourage students to pay attention to the different kinds of families that they see in the books.
 - Remind students not to engage in appearance-based stereotypes. For example, you do not know a person’s gender in a picture book until you read the pronouns used in the texts. We also don’t know what languages someone speaks or what cultures they identify with unless the text tells us. Have the students use photos and text as anchor points for their scavenger hunt.

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- Brainstorm with the students about where in the library those books might be found. Encourage them also to look at picture books for younger children.
 - On the worksheet, have students record the name and author of each book and descriptions of what the family in the book looks like.
 - Take students to the library and give them adequate time to research and write their results on the *Family Diversity Scavenger Hunt* worksheet.
 - Remind students that their task is to find 10 books that include a story or pictures of a family or families. They should then record the name and author of the book on their *Family Diversity Scavenger Hunt* sheet and describe the family.

ACTIVITY 3: SHARING DATA FROM BOOKS

- When students return to class, have them share their results with a partner.
- Pass out the second worksheet: *Family Structure Graph*.
 - Have students graph their results by coloring one square in the appropriate column for each family structure that they found. You could also make a class graph with all the information that the class has compiled.
 - Ask the students what they notice when they look at their graphs. What kinds of families are shown most often? Least often? Are there any family structures that are absent? (Most likely, families headed by gay or lesbian parents will be absent.)
 - Ask students how they think kids whose families are not represented might feel when they never see their families in any of the books they read.

MODIFICATIONS

- As students are researching the structures of families portrayed in the books, also have them look at what the different members of the family are doing and write it down. Discuss roles and expectations within the family, including expectations related to gender, etc.
- Research families using socioeconomic, ethnic, racial and gender categories. Include discussion of multi-racial families in your research.

EXTENSIONS

- Have students watch different television shows. Each group can watch one channel on a given night so as not to encourage too much television. Conduct this research in the same way you conducted the library research project. Put the students in small groups. Pass out the *Family Diversity Scavenger Hunt* and *Family Structure Graphs*. Ask students to brainstorm about the shows they see on television and fill out a new graph for the families represented on those shows.
- As a class have students research and recommend books that would provide more representation of a wide spectrum of families.

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- Use the Welcoming Schools recommended [booklist](#) featuring family diversity and make these books available to your students.
 - Choose some books to read together as a class to learn about lots of different families.
 - Have students look through all the books in your classroom and tally up the different kinds of families represented them.
 - Have students compare biographies of one famous LGBTQ person and one famous non-LGBTQ person. Some questions to ask: Do the two biographies offer equal amounts of information about the subjects' partners or family members? Are there differences in the ways LGBTQ people and non-LGBTQ people are described in terms of their personal lives, love, marriage, family, etc.?

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

- As a class, brainstorm what students have learned about families and the way the media or children's literature portrays families.
- Or they can complete a class K-W-L (What I Know, What I Want To Know, What I Learned) chart before and after this activity.

DIVERSE AND UP-TO-DATE RESOURCES FROM WELCOMING SCHOOLS

[Children's Books to Embrace Family Diversity](#)

[Lesson Plans to Embrace Family Diversity](#)

[Embracing Family Diversity School Resources](#)

[Family Diversity Vocabulary](#)

[Professional Development Training](#)

FAMILY DIVERSITY SCAVENGER HUNT

Name(s): _____

- Find 10 books that include a story or pictures of a family or families.
- Record the name of the book and author.
- Describe what the family (or families) in the book look(s) like.
- Remember not to use appearance-based stereotypes. Use the text to find out about families' pronouns, languages and cultural identities.

Title of Book / Name of Author	Who Is in the Family (or Families)

FAMILY DIVERSITY SCAVENGER HUNT: FAMILY STRUCTURE GRAPH

Name(s): _____

- Graph your results from the book search.
- Color one square in the appropriate column for each family structure that you found. Many books may fit more than one category.

Two Parent Family	Single or Solo Parent Family	Multi-generational Family in a Home	Divorced or Blended Family	Family with LGBTQ Parents	Adoptive Family	Foster Family	Mixed Race Family	Inter-faith Family	? Family (describe)