



OUR FAMILY: A VIDEO ABOUT FAMILY DIVERSITY

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 3 – 5

LENGTH OF TIME: 35 – 45 minutes

GOALS

- To provide an opportunity for children to see the rich diversity of families.
- To allow students to experience diversity through a topic that they can relate to — family.
- To help children from diverse families feel welcome in the classroom.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will view the video *Our Family* and explore themes of love, caring and connection in many kinds of families.
- Students will be able to describe and define a wide variety of family structures.
- Students will develop important vocabulary around describing and accepting that there are many different kinds of families and family structures.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.2: Determine two or more main ideas of a text (film) and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text (film).
- 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 3.1 and 4.1)
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.2: Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively and orally. (Also 3.2 and 4.2)

EDUCATORS' NOTES

The short video *Our Family* showcases students in grades K-5 and their families sharing about what family means to them. The video features many kinds of families: large and small, multigenerational, families with a mom and a dad, a single dad or solo mom, two moms or two dads. The video also shows adopted children, families who are multilingual and families with parents/caregivers of different racial and ethnic identities. Family members share what is special about each other, moments of struggle and above all express love for one another.

You will have students in your school with many different family configurations, such as families with two moms or two dads, adoptive parents or foster parents. It is respectful for educators to kindly ask families what terms and descriptions they use to refer to their families. Pay attention to any students who might have unique circumstances that make them vulnerable, such as foster children or a child with personal family issues. You may want to talk to that child privately to check in on feelings.

Also, be mindful not to put students in the position of teaching other children about their family. For example, if you have only one student in your school with same-gender parents, do not expect them to be the only one answering all the questions about having same-gender parents. Educating other students is the job of the educator, not the student.

MATERIALS:

- [Our Family](#) by Not in Our Town and Our Family Coalition (7.5 minutes)
- Computer, screen, projector and internet connection
- Chart paper or whiteboard and markers
- *Different? / Similar? / I Wonder?* handout (optional)

INTRODUCE THE FILM

“We will be seeing a video about families. You will see parents/caregivers and children talking about their families. Some will be with their grandparents, some will be speaking two languages, some will have two moms who are married to each other. Afterward, we will talk about the video and share what we notice. As we discuss the video, remember to be respectful of the many families and students that you see, especially families that are different from yours.”

BEFORE SHOWING THE VIDEO

Give the students the following prompts:

- As you watch the video, choose two families that have something in common with you and your family—that in some way mirrors your family.
- As you watch the video, please notice two families that are different from you and your family—that in some way provides a window into a different experience.

SHOW THE VIDEO

DISCUSSION

- In groups of 2-4, have your students discuss these questions followed by a full class discussion.
 - Which families did you choose that have something in common with you and your family? Why? What are the things that are the same in this family and yours? (Mirror)
 - Which families did you choose that are different from your family? How is their family different from yours? (Window)

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- To clarify students' understanding ask:
 - What are some of the words that the students in the video used to talk about their families? What kinds of family structures did we see in the video?
 - Write these words and family types on a whiteboard or on chart paper if you would like to keep it up in your classroom.
 - Discussion as a class:
 - Did you see any families like your family?
 - Did you see any families that are like families of your friends?
 - What differences did you notice between your family and some of the families in the video?
 - What are the similarities among families in the video? Are there things they seem to have in common?

WRAP-UP

- At the end of the video, Nathan says, "It is important to have diverse children, to have diverse families in a school so you know how to include everyone... you don't just go to the people who are like you, you reach out and embrace everyone."
 - What do you think he means?
 - *Why do you think it is important to get to know everyone, not just people who are like you?* (Teach and remind children frequently throughout the year that all families are different and that we have much to learn from each other.)

EXTENSIONS

- Use the *Different? / Similar? / I Wonder?* handout below to help students think more about the different kinds of families depicted in the video. This can be used before the class discussion or at the end to see students' understanding.
- Choose some books to read together as a class to learn about lots of different families.
- Have students write on a sticky note one thing that they feel makes their family special or different. Post the notes on a chart in the front of the class and decorate the chart.
- Have students interview members of their family and share the interviews with the class.
- Have students interview each other or students from another class about their family background.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

- During the class discussion, listen in on the vocabulary that students are using to talk about different families.
- Notice if the vocabulary mirrors the family structures you generated together as a class.

CHAPTER BOOKS WITH DIVERSE FAMILIES

Amina's Voice. Hena Khan.

Ashes to Asheville. Sarah Dooley.

The Best Man. Richard Peck.

Brown Girl Dreaming. Jacqueline Woodson.

Dear Mr. Henshaw. Beverly Cleary.

Ghost. Jason Reynolds.

Gone Crazy in Alabama. Rita Williams-Garcia.

The Great Wall of Lucy Wu. Wendy Wan Long Shang.

A Handful of Stars. Cynthia Lord.

How Tia Lola Came to Visit Stay. Julia Alvarez.

The Louisiana Sky. Kimberly Willis.

The Misadventures of the Family Fletcher. Dana Alison Levy.

The Stars Beneath Our Feet. David Barclay Moore.

Year of the Dog. Grace Lin.

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](#)

Credit: Adapted from a Welcoming Schools lesson developed by Emmy Howe, nationalseedproject.org and [Our Family! Film Lesson Guide](#) by Becky Cohn-Vargas, Ed.D.

DIFFERENT? / SIMILAR? / I WONDER?

1. What family is different from yours?

List the differences:

2. What family is similar to yours?

List the similarities:

3. What family makes you wonder something?

What do you wonder about them?
