

# Family Quilt

In this activity students create a classroom quilt with squares that represent each of their individual families.

## What to Know

Children cannot help but notice certain differences (gender, race, and other physical differences) and form attitudes about those differences. When students see adults express appreciation and curiosity about people's differences they learn to respond positively as well. For this lesson on families, the main ideas for students to understand are:

- family structures are not all the same—some have a mom and dad, some have two moms, some have one child, some have several generations of their family that live together, some children live with an adult to whom they are not related, etc.;
- people define the idea of family differently (some include extended family, some include very close friends, etc.);
- no one kind of family is better than another; and,
- diversity is something to celebrate!

Children are often sensitive about their families and may be embarrassed by a characteristic they think is different even though they really love the people in their family (living with a grandparent, living with a single parent, living in a foster family, etc.) Your use of the term “family” rather than more specific terms like “mom and dad” or “parents” (plural) can help communicate your own value of all kinds of families.

## Objectives:

Students/participants will:

1. explore the idea of family and what it means to different people;
2. become aware of and articulate characteristics of their own family;
3. share their ideas and expression of their families with each other; and,
4. create a class quilt celebrating their families.

## Common Core State Standards:

- Anchor Standards for Literacy: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7 - Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- Anchor Standards for Writing: Range of Writing
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.10 - Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
- Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1 - Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
  - CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 - Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- Anchor Standards for Language: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.5 - Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

### **Materials:**

- Don't Laugh at Me [song](#)
- Hula hoops (large enough to fit two of your students) or rope circles (one for every three children)
- Sheets of paper, art supplies
- 1 nine-patch quilt block (handout) for each child in your room (have extras on hand for children who wish to start over on their projects)

### **Gather Together/Warm Up/Bell Ringer: Musical Hula Hoops (10 minutes)**

Distribute hula-hoops in the classroom randomly.

Explain the game: *"This game is a variation on musical chairs. Our goal is the opposite of the usual game of musical chairs—instead of leaving someone out, we'll need to make sure that EVERYONE is included by the time the music stops."*

When the music begins, children who have been given hula hoops (or jump rope if you're using rope big enough) find someone with whom they have a difference (someone who comes from a family with a different number of children, someone whose hair is another color, etc.). When they find someone with whom they have a difference, they'll invite him or her to join them inside their hula-hoop or rope circle. When the music stops, children in hula-hoops will need to invite in anyone who's not yet in a hula-hoop or rope circle by finding a difference between them.

Play *Don't Laugh at Me* song. Be sure to give children plenty of time before turning off the music. Do a second round if you have time.

Process as a group what this activity can teach about diversity. *How did it feel when the music stopped and you were not in a circle? How did it feel when classmates helped you find a circle?*

### **Main Activity: Exploring Family/Quilt Blocks (20 Minutes)**

Write the word "family" on the board and ask students what the word means to them. Write student ideas on the chart in web form, drawing lines between related ideas.

Say: *"There is great variety in the kinds of families people live in today. In this activity we're going to celebrate many of the differences in the families in our classroom."* Explain that families are not only comprised of people who are blood related. Discuss what makes someone part of your "family." To start children thinking about the different family arrangements and cultures represented in the class, ask some of the following questions (write them on the board):

- With whom do you live? Who else do you consider part of your family?

- What are some of the things you like to do with members of your family?
- What are special foods in your family? What holidays do you celebrate?

Distribute art supplies and a copy of the nine-square patch to each child. Ask students to decorate the middle square of the patch with the names of their family members. The remaining eight squares could describe, with words or images, things that are important to their families. Students can include anything they want—special foods, special pets, holidays they celebrate, special memories, etc. When students are finished, have them pair with a partner to share the stories of their families depicted on the patch.

(Optional) In another class period, students can glue their patches onto construction paper backings and then work together to join their individual blocks on a large piece of butcher paper to form a class Family Ties and Fabric Quilt. Alternatively, they might connect the patches horizontally along the wall in a banner form.

### **Closing Activity: Square Share (5 minutes)**

In a go-round ask each person to talk about something that is depicted on his or her patch. Guide students to notice that their patches reflect the diversity of their families.

## **Grade Level Modifications**

### **K-1**

Begin the Main Activity by reading [Who's in My Family? All About Our Families](#) by Robie H. Harris. Then proceed with the family web on chart paper. Follow instructions for grades 2-5 for the rest of the activity.

### **Grades 6-12**

Do the activity as described, but instead of web charting the word “family,” chart the word “culture.” Ask students to then pair/share the rituals, food traditions, favorite activities or “culture” of their families with a friend as preparation for the art project. Consider doing the squares on fabric to make a real quilt. Follow instructions for grades 2-5 for the rest of the activity.

## **Curricular Connections**

K-1 Literacy: Have students make their own family books. Give students pages for each member of their family with the sentence frame “I like to \_\_\_\_\_ with my \_\_\_\_\_.” Students illustrate each page. Invite families in to celebrate students’ work.

K-5 Math: Have students make various graphs to reflect diverse family demographics within their classroom. Students can look at a number of variables: number of children; adults; boys; girls; and, pets.

K-5 Literacy, Social Studies and Science: Read [All the Colors We Are/Todos los colores de nuestra piel: The Story of How We Get Our Skin Color/La historia de por qué tenemos diferentes colores de pie](#) by Katie Kissinger. See the back section of the book for ideas on acting out the science behind our skin color.

2-5 Literacy and Social Studies: Read [The Case for Loving: The Fight for Interracial Marriage](#) by Selina Alko. Have students imagine they were around when this case was before the Supreme Court. Have students write a “letter to the editor” expressing their opinion about the case.

K-5 Literacy and Art: Read [The Great Big Book of Families](#) by Mary Hoffman. Teach students to make connecting papers dolls and have students trace and cut out enough to represent their family. If possible, provide [people color](#) construction paper or markers for students to accurately represent members of their family (Lakeshore’s version has 12 different skin tones). Connect all the paper doll families to “hold hands” as a border around the classroom.

Grades 6-12 Literacy and Art: Read [American Born Chinese](#) by Gene Luan Yang, a graphic novel of a teenager’s experience of being the only Chinese-American student in his school. Create comic strips to represent your family’s story in America and make a class graphic novel.

Grades 6-12 History: Study immigration by looking at the countries your students' families are from. What was happening in their countries of origin when their families came? Who were the other immigrants at the time they immigrated? What traditions did they bring that influenced how America evolved?

Grades 6-12 Literature. Read [Tuck Everlasting](#) by Natalie Babbitt with students. In this book, the Tuck family is very different from Winnie's family. How do you think they feel about being different? Have you ever felt different? How has that impacted how you act with your peers?

Handout 1: Family Ties and Fabric Tales
