

Creative Adventures with Literature

#14: *Families Are Different* by Nina Pellegrini

Introduction

The *Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards: Birth through 60 months* focuses on three components of the **Domain: Creativity and Aesthetics**. The components are: **Music and Movement, Visual Arts, and Drama**. In the book, *Families Are Different*, there is a focus on **Visual Arts**. Children are also involved in activities that support the **Domain: Social Studies**.

Families are Different is written and illustrated by Nina Pellegrini who has an adopted Korean daughter. The book features a multicultural mix of both traditional and nontraditional family groupings.

Connection to Curriculum

Consider using this curriculum guide as a supplement to the **Adventures in Learning Focus Area #3 - Families**, for additional activities.

Story Preparation

- Be familiar with the family composition of each child in your group.
- Be sensitive to each child's family situation as you are reading and discussing the book with the children.
- Become familiar with the book.

Story Presentation

Learning Goals:

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language) (*vocabulary and language comprehension*)

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences (*engagement in literacy experiences, variety of interests*)

EL1.2 Engages in read-alouds and conversations about books and stories (*story comprehension*)

EL3.1 Responds to the features of books and print (*book knowledge*)

SS1.1 Demonstrates positive connection to family and community (*family and cultural identity*)

Book: *Families Are Different* by Nina Pellegrini.

First Reading of *Families Are Different*

- Show the cover and give the title. State that Nina Pellegrini is both the author and illustrator of the book. This means that she wrote the words and drew the pictures.
- Say to the children, "This is a family that we will be reading about in the story." Pause and allow children to make comments.
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Pause at the end of the reading and allow time for children's authentic reaction to the story.
- Follow up by inviting children to recall some of the different kinds of families in the story. State that all of us also come from different kinds of families.

Second Reading of *Families are Different*

- Show the cover and invite children to recall the title.
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Allow children to make comments about the story as you are reading it.
- Follow up by reviewing some of the pages and involving children in discussion of them. For example: Invite them to recall the name of the little girl on the first page, then the name of her older sister on the next page.

Show page where girls are dressed in their special Korean outfits. Ask children if they recall the country where the girls were adopted from. Explain that Korea is far, far away from where we live. Invite their comments about the dresses.

Show page where Nico is holding her dog and ask children to recall the dog's name and how Nico and the dog are alike.

Show the pictures of the different families and invite children to describe them.

- Conclude by again stating that all of the children in our classroom also come from different kinds of families.

Third Reading of *Families are Different*

- Form small groups of no more than six children for the third reading. This will allow children time to share family bricks. (Refer to Creative Art Extensions for information on Family Bricks.)
- Invite children to bring their completed family bricks (See directions in Creative Art Extensions) to the story reading area and to place the bricks on the floor in front of them. Explain that they will have an opportunity to share their brick with the other children after hearing the story.
- Show the cover and ask children to recall the title of the book.
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Follow up by showing pages and inviting discussion as follows:
 - Show page where Nico is sitting with her arms folded and is looking sad. Invite children to recall why Nico sometimes feels angry or sad. (Because she looks different; she does not look like her mom or dad)
 - Show page where Nico is sitting in her mother's lap. Read the three sentences, pausing before the last word. Invite children to recall the special kind of glue that glues families together (love) and to discuss what they think this means.
 - Show the next to last page and invite children to discuss how Nico is feeling.
 - Read that page and the last page.
- Say to children that they will now have an opportunity to show how their families are different.
- Invite children to share their family brick, showing pictures on their brick, giving names of family members and saying one thing they like to do with their family.

Additional Learning Goal:

SE2.2 Interprets and responds to the feelings of others (*emotion understanding*)

Teacher Notes:

- *Plan for other opportunities for children to share information on their family bricks with the whole group. For example, have 2 or 3 children share on one day.*
- *Be sensitive to children who may not want to share their family brick or who may not have one.*
- *Allow each child to share only one thing he or she likes to do with family. This gives each child who wants to share an opportunity to do so. Also this avoids sharing that is too lengthy and may result in children becoming restless.*

Creative Art Extensions

Learning Goals:

PH2.2 Adjusts grasp and coordinates movements to use tools (*writing and drawing tools, variety of tools*)

SS1.1 Demonstrates positive connection to family and community (*family and cultural identity*)

CA2.1 Explores, manipulates, creates, and responds to a variety of art media (*exploration of art*)

Activity: Family Portrait

Materials: paper plates, yarn, markers, crayons and colored pencils in skin tones, hand-held hole punch

Directions:

- Discuss with children that portraits are paintings or drawings of people. If you have the book, *Museum ABC*, show children the page that features the letter H and call attention to the picture of George Washington and of the woman in the bottom right. These two pictures are portraits.
- Invite children to create a picture, or portrait of their family inside the plate.
- Allow children to help you use a hand-held hole punch to make holes in the sides of the plate and thread the yarn through the holes.
- Hang the family portraits on the wall in a place designated for family portraits.
- Suggest that children share their family portraits with other children in the group.

Alternative Activity: Family Album

- Invite children to draw a picture of their family, a family portrait.
- Involve children in writing the names of family members on the portraits if they wish you to do this.
- Put the pages together and create a family album. Staple the pages together or punch holes in the pictures and tie together with a colorful ribbon.
- Share the book with individual or small groups of children.

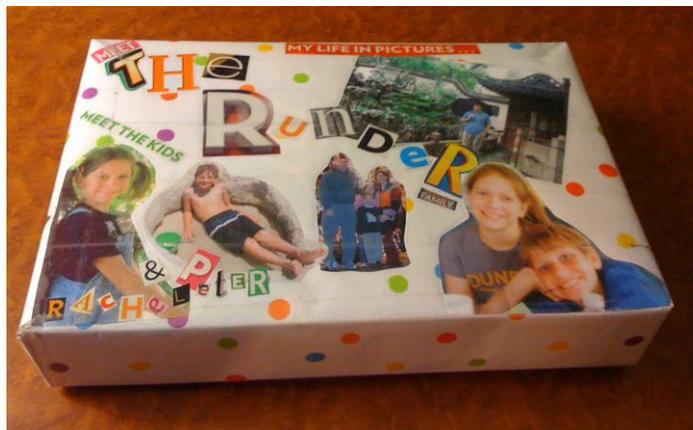
Teacher Note: *Be sensitive to a child who does not want to create a family portrait. This is a choice activity, just as all activities in the art center should be a choice.*

Activity: Create a Family Brick

Materials: cereal box or snack cracker box, old newspapers, wrapping paper or brown paper sack, clear tape, clear self-adhesive paper, family pictures

Directions:

- Send home to each family information/instructions on how to create a family brick.
 1. Stuff a cereal or snack cracker box with old newspaper.
 2. Tape the box closed with clear tape.
 3. Cover the box with wrapping paper or a brown paper sack.
 4. Add to the outside of the box pictures of the family and activities the family does together. This now becomes your family brick.
 5. Involve your child in choosing the pictures to include on the family brick.
 6. Allow your child to add their drawings to the brick.
 7. Bring your family brick to your child's teacher. She will cover it with clear self-adhesive paper.
- Cover each brick with clear self-adhesive paper.
- Invite children to share with you and the other children the pictures that are on their individual brick.
- Consider placing the family bricks in the block center if children agree to this.



*This idea came from Kate Runder, a pre-k teacher in the Little Rock School District.

Teacher Notes:

- *Know your families and their resources. You may want to have families send the box and the pictures and you and the children create their individual family brick.*
- *If family pictures are not available, have children draw pictures of their family members.*
- *Have available extra boxes for children who may not bring a box from home.*
- *You might also want to refer to the Activity: Family Box from **Adventures in Learning** - #3 Families: I Am Part of a Family, p. 16.*

Creative Drama And Dramatic Play Extensions

Learning Goal:

SS1.1 Demonstrates positive connection to family and community (*awareness of roles in society*)

CA3.1 Explores feelings, relationships, and concepts through imitation, pretend play, and sociodramatic play (*exploration of drama*)

Activity: Family Prop Box

Contents: purse, man's wallet, rattle or other baby toy, small car, small doll, children's book, old cell phone, plastic glass frames without lenses, keys, labeled container

Directions:

- Place the props in the labeled container.
- Share the contents of the prop box with children during group time. Invite them to name the items and discuss who in their family would use them.
- Place the prop box in the Dramatic Play Center.
- Allow children to play with the props as they choose.
- Observe children and listen to their comments as they play with the props. Do they pretend to be different family members? Do they use other props in the center as part of their pretending?

Teacher Notes:

- *Post pictures of families on the wall in the center at child's eye level; pictures that reflect family activities at home.*
- *Include dolls of different races and cultures and of both genders in the Dramatic Play Center at all times.*

Creative Music Experiences

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences (*engagement in literacy experiences*)

SS1.1 Demonstrates positive connection to family and community (*family and cultural identity*)

CA1.1 Explores through listening, singing, creating, and moving to music (*exploration of music and movement*)

Activity: Singing about the Family

Materials: CD Thomas Moore Sings The Family can be located on the website: Dr. Thomas Moore: Songs for Teaching, CD player

Directions:

- Involve children in singing and moving to the different songs on the cassette; songs that focus on the child and relationships and experiences in a family.
- Repeat those songs that children seem to enjoy the most.

Activity: My Family Song (to the tune of “The Muffin Man”)

Materials: none

Directions:

- Explain to children that they will join you in singing a song about what families like to do and that you will begin with a verse about what you and your family like to do.
- Begin to sing your verse:

I am in a family
A family, a family.
I am in a family
And we have lots of fun.

My family likes to go to the beach (or another activity of your choice)
Go to the beach, go to the beach.
My family likes to go to the beach
And we have lots of fun.

- Invite children to state a favorite family activity and involve children in singing about that activity.

Teacher Notes:

- *Be sensitive to children who may not want to share a family activity and do not insist that they do so.*
- *Make the words of the activity fit the tune.*

Additional Books

All Kinds of Families by Norma Simon

The Family Book by Todd Parr

Quiet Time with Cassatt, (Mini Masters) by Julie Melberg and Suzanne Bober (In this book a number of the pictures by Mary Cassatt are of families)

Additional “Families Are Different” Ideas

- Place multicultural family set figures in the Block Center.
- Collect pictures that depict a variety of family groupings. Laminate the pictures or cover them with clear self-adhesive paper. Post the pictures at child’s eye level in the classroom. Place a collection of the pictures in a container and add to the Library Center.
- Add puzzles that reflect different family structures.