

Lesson 3:

AND TANGO MAKES THREE

Grades 1-3

*In the film, a third-grade student named Emily reads aloud an essay she wrote about her two moms for a Mother's Day writing contest. She shares her experience of another child not being able to come to her house because her moms are lesbian. She talks about having many kids in her class supporting her and how proud she is of her moms. Also in the film, after listening to the book *Asha's Mums*, a little girl asks her teacher, "Do you believe I have two moms?" When the teacher responds that she does believe her, you can visibly see how happy that makes the little girl.*

*Many teachers in the primary grades regularly read out loud to the class to introduce new concepts and build vocabulary. Classroom discussions of gay- and lesbian-headed households help students explore the attributes of healthy families as they learn more about different family structures. One book that lends itself to this dual discussion is the award-winning *And Tango Makes Three*. The book is based on a true story about two male Chinstrap penguins, Roy and Silo, who fall in love and with the help of their keeper, Mr. Gramzay, become fathers to Tango. This is a wonderful story that illustrates the beauty of diverse families.*

Goals

- Students will be able to discuss different family structures inclusive of gay and lesbian parents.
- Students will identify the shared attributes of healthy families.

Objectives

- Discuss different family structures inclusive of gay and lesbian parents.
- Identify and discuss basic human needs.
- Understand key vocabulary words that pertain to human needs.
- Utilize key vocabulary in writing and verbal expression.

Time Required

Three 30-minute sessions.

Materials

Construction paper, pencils, lined handwriting paper, stapler and crayons.

Required Book

And Tango Makes Three by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell, illustrations by Henry Cole (Simon & Schuster Books For Young Readers, 2005). At New

York City's Central Park Zoo, two male penguins fall in love and start a family by taking turns sitting on an abandoned egg until it hatches.



Teaching Tip

Before you begin this lesson prepare a poster or bulletin board display that includes the vocabulary lists that will be introduced throughout the lesson (see below). It might be helpful to print the vocabulary words on index cards that are laminated for durability. Attach a small piece of velcro on the back of each card and on the poster/bulletin board to allow for ease in displaying and sharing with students. Create packets of writing paper that includes ten sheets each. These packets will become the content pages of the student family journals you will create during Activity 3.



ACTIVITY 1: Taking Care of Self and Others

Open up a conversation with students about what all parents or caregivers need to do in order to take care of a baby. You might begin by using some of the prompts below. Structure your brainstorm by creating a list of different animals and ask students what they think each requires (needs) in order to survive. Record student responses on a piece of chart paper. Circle or underline items that are the same for different animals.

Suggested Prompts

Human: baby food, milk, water, air, warm shelter, a home, and clothes...

Puppy: puppy food, puppy milk, water, air, a warm and dry place to live...

Fish: fish food, worms or other fish to eat, water (salt or fresh), a certain temperature, sometimes coral or rocks to hide from predators...

Turtle: turtle food, water, sometimes sunlight or a heating rock to keep them at the right temperature, air...

Bird: air, a warm nest, bird food...

Let students know that even if a baby has all the necessary basic needs to live, they will need care and love to thrive.

Basic Needs Vocabulary

care	grow
live	water
warmth	shelter
air/oxygen	temperature
food/milk	caretakers

In closing the lesson ask students if there are other things that people and animals need to survive and grow. Explore the following questions with them:

- How do you feel when someone takes care of you?
- Does it make you happy when someone takes care of you?
- Have you ever helped to take care of a pet?
- Have you ever helped to take care of a baby?

ACTIVITY 2: *And Tango Makes Three*

Before you begin the story ask students some exploratory questions and review the vocabulary from Activity 1. Some suggested questions:

- Has anyone here been to a zoo?
- What did you see there?
- How did the zoo care for the animals?
- Where any of the animals in families?
- What is a family?
- What do all families have in common?

Read *And Tango Makes Three*. After the story is over ask the students what they liked best about the story. After a brief discussion, tell the students that they are going to talk about the kind of family that Tango was part of in this story. Explore student responses to the following questions:

- How were Roy and Silo like other penguin couples?
- Why do you think Roy and Silo built a nest?
- How were Roy and Silo like other penguin parents?
- Roy and Silo are male penguins. What do you think about them being parents?
- Why did the zookeeper think Roy and Silo were in love?
- Were Roy and Silo a "couple?"
- Were Roy and Silo good parents? Why do you think they were good parents?
- What do we call parents who are of the same sex? (suggested language: gay, lesbian)
- What kind of needs did Tango have?

In closing your discussion explain that what is most important in a family is not who makes up the family but how the family cares for and loves each other just like Roy and Silo's family.



Teaching Tip

Provide some photos of baby animals for students to look at or bring some

stuffed animals or figures to class and pass them around for those learners who need a more hands-on experience.

Sense of Love Vocabulary

love	"in love"
thrive	couple
partner	gay
lesbian	belong
caretaker	family

Suggested Definitions of Love

- A deep, tender feeling of care toward a person.
- An intense emotional attachment, as for a pet or treasured object.
- When a person wants to care for another person with all their heart.

Activity 3: Writing and Using New Vocabulary

Distribute the packets of paper prepared in advance. Allow students to choose two pieces of construction paper. Using their crayons, have students create a cover for their journal that includes a picture of Roy and Silo's family. Circulate around the room attaching the covers to the packets with a stapler. Ask students to write a paragraph (or sentences) about Roy and Silo on the first page of their family journals.



Teaching Tip

You may create a checklist for your students, which will differ according to grade level.

- Did you use complete sentences? (subject/predicate)
- Did you use the correct punctuation? (periods, question marks, commas...)
- Did you use capital letters in the right places?
- Did you use at least three new vocabulary words?

After students have finished their first entry on Roy and Silo have them write a story about their family on the second page. The journal can be revisited over the course of two weeks, allowing students to write a new entry each day about how they are cared for by their family, how they care for others in their family, or how they see other animals care for their offspring.

Credit: This lesson was reprinted with permission from the San Francisco Unified School District, School Health Programs Department.

