

Lesson 4:

TALKING ABOUT FAMILIES

Grades 2-4

This lesson provides teachers with an opportunity to use media as way of introducing age-appropriate instruction on family and community. Like the teachers in *It's Elementary*, this lesson allows teachers to build upon student generated discussion that helps them connect their own experiences with those of others in their classroom and larger community. Through the film, *That's a Family!* from GroundSpark, The Respect For All Project educational series, students have the opportunity to hear their peers talk about their families. The companion curriculum guide provides further lessons and activities on diverse family structures.

Goals

- To discuss one's own family in creative ways.
- To identify similarities and differences between one's own and other families.
- To expand the students' concept of what makes a family.
- To understand and develop sensitivity to gay and lesbian family structures.

Objectives

- Students will develop vocabulary related to family diversity.
- Students will create mobiles that represent their families.
- Students will use the mobiles as ways to talk about their families and to learn about other families.
- Students will describe different family structures in a respectful way.

Time Required

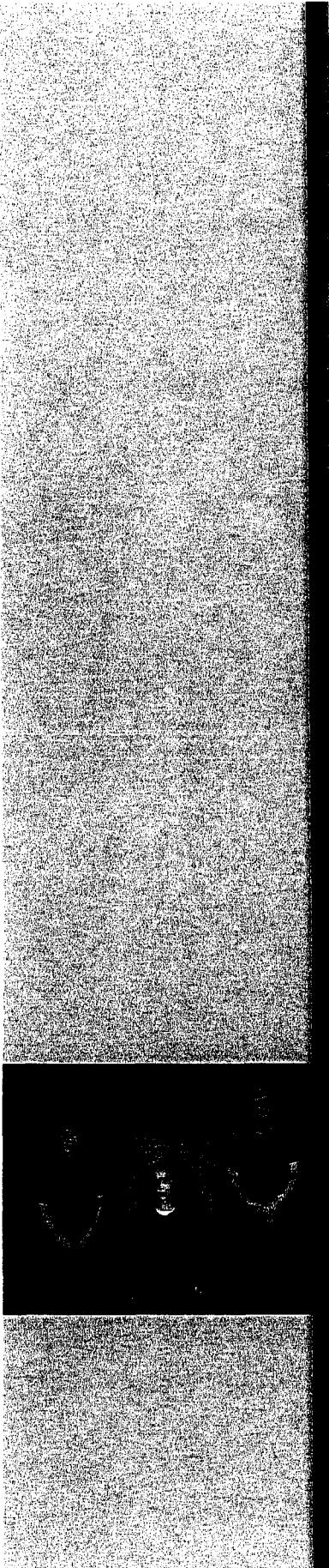
This lesson can be condensed or expanded, depending on the time constraints or time opportunities you have. It will take at least four 30-minute segments, or more if you include pre-teaching. It is recommended that this lesson be implemented over the period of one entire week.

Materials

Art supplies: wire coat hangers, crayons, paints, markers and/or colored pencils, string or ribbon, and any bits of colorful wrapping paper, ribbons, and/or fabric students may bring in from home; 5 x 7 cards and a hole-punch; the film *That's a Family!* and its curriculum guide.



Photos in this lesson are from *That's a Family!* another Respect For All Project film.



After viewing the film, ask students to generate responses to each prompt for all the families you included on your chart. Try to include a picture or example of each family to remind students of what they saw in the film. Ask students to use the vocabulary included in the film and discuss during pre-teaching while responding to the prompts. For example, when responding to the "People" category for Josh's family, a student may refer to his two moms as "friends." You could then refer back to the vocabulary introduced in pre-teaching to reframe the description of Josh's family as headed by "two moms who are lesbians."

Utilize the discussion that follows this activity as a transition into the next activity where students will have the chance to make a mobile that talks about the People, Places, Things and Ideas related to their families.

Activity 2: Creating Family Mobiles

Time: 30 Minutes

Pre-Teaching

Talk about the sample mobile, if appropriate. Remember that since this is a hanging art form, students can decorate both sides of each card with drawings, photographs, words or symbols. Encourage students to create borders, use a variety of colors and materials, and to mix words and images to make their art celebratory and unique. Students are to choose three categories and then make several cards for each category, stringing them together using the ribbon and hole-punch.

Creating the Cards and Assembling the Mobiles

Students will decorate a card for each member of their family to string together for the family line. They can make as many cards as they like for the places, things and ideas categories. The number of cards students design will vary. Once the cards are completed, use the hole-punch to make holes and thread the cards together in categories and tie to the coat hanger.

Category Prompts

These are optional and may work best with students in Grades 3 and 4.

- **People** in my family.
Ideas of things to include on these cards: name, relationship to artist (sister, grandmother), three words to describe this person, a photograph or drawing, three things this person loves to do, if this person were an animal, he/she would be a...because, this person would NEVER..., this person's favorite (song, food, holiday, color), etc.
- **Places** that are important to my family.
Ideas of things to include on this card: home spaces, favorite restaurants, places of worship, vacation spots, places my family visits on weekends, places my family came from or where we still have family members, places we would like to visit.

- **Things** my family does together.

Ideas for this card include: cooking, cleaning house, going to church or temple, playing games, watching television or movies, traveling to new or familiar places, visiting friends and relatives, gardening, playing sports, going to parks or museums, celebrating holidays.

- **Ideas** that represent my family.

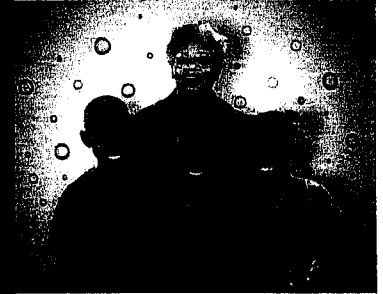
This category could include words, a family motto, flag, or coat of arms, family beliefs, funny things that happened in my family, three things my family is proud of, symbols of my family, and/or a defining family story.

Activity 3: Sharing and Discussing the Mobiles





Time: 30 Minutes

Sit in a circle. Ask students to share their mobiles and tell three things about their family, using the cards as prompts. Provide opportunities for students to comment and ask questions about each other's mobiles. Ask questions to stretch students' assumptions and preconceptions, such as:

- What if a family has no place to live, are they still a family?
- What if family members live in different places?
- What can we learn about families from these mobiles?
- What family structures are included in these mobiles?
- Are there any family structures that are missing? If so, what are they?
- What is sometimes hard for the children in the film? (Examples: Fernando from a single parent family: "Other kids assume I have a dad." Or Josh with lesbian parents: "Kids use mean words for gays and lesbians.")



Family Chart Handout

	 <p style="text-align: center;">Emily's Family</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Josh's Family</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Fernando's Family</p>
<p>People</p>			
<p>Places</p>			
<p>Things</p>			
<p>Ideas</p>			