



Personal Development

Valuing Family



BACKGROUND

This lesson will help children understand that every family is unique and special. The activities will help children develop an appreciation for their own families, as well as other families and will help them to identify family strengths.

LIFE SKILL AREAS

- Social and decision-making skills will be developed through group discussions and activities.
- Fine-motor skills will be enhanced through the use of scissors, markers, crayons, and tape.
- Large-motor skills will be developed through role play and group games.

OBJECTIVES

- Recognize that there are many different types of families and that all are special.
- Become aware of family traditions.
- Recognize ways we can help our families.
- Learn ways to handle conflict between siblings.
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GROUP SIZE

6–8 children per adult volunteer


TIME FRAME

This lesson is designed for a group meeting between 30 and 60 minutes. Each activity will take about 5–15 minutes to complete.

HELP TO THE VOLUNTEER

Try these suggestions:

- Choose one or two of the following activities from each section.
- Encourage participants to be creative in activities to promote personal development.

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GETTING STARTED

ACTIVITY Family Flower Power

Materials: construction paper and markers or crayons

A family is made up of people that we love. They may not be naturally related to us (for example: stepfamilies, foster families) but our lives are made even more special because they are part of us.

Give each child a sheet of construction paper. Tell them they are about to make a family flower. Have them give examples of how to draw the flower. Ask them to begin by drawing a circle on their paper and have them write their name in the middle of the circle. Then ask them to draw a petal around the circle for each member of their family.

Put each person's name on his or her petal. For example, one family might consist of a mother and child.

When everyone is finished, have each child stand up and tell the group who makes up their family flower picture.

Application: Every flower is different, just like every family is different—and that is great. Encourage children to pay attention to other families they see at the grocery store and other public places so that they will become more aware of diversity within families.

Digging Deeper

ACTIVITY Family Composition

Materials: construction paper, magazines, scissors, and glue

Explain to the group that any number of people can belong to a family. Some families have one parent, some have two, and some have many. Family members can be any age.

Ask the members how many people are in their families. Have the children look through the magazines and cut out pictures of several families. They can make a collage of families by gluing the pictures on the construction paper.

Application: Have the children work with a parent to make a list of families they know who have different numbers of members. Have them start with one and see how high they can go.

LOOKING WITHIN

ACTIVITY Family Traditions Charades

Materials: none

A tradition can be defined as a normal or usual way of doing things. Family rituals bring a sense of belonging and/or routine to family members. Strong families usually practice many traditions. Examples of traditions include the things you do when you get ready for bed or get up in the morning, the way you celebrate holidays, eat meals together, go picnicking or cook out together, watch TV shows, play games, go to family reunions, read books, go places, or do chores together.

Ask the children to think of a family tradition. Have each member act out a family tradition in front of the group while the others try to guess what the tradition is.

Application: Encourage the children to talk with their families about some of the traditions other families practice. They may want to start with a new tradition.

ACTIVITY Helper Harriet Sez

Materials: none

Chores are things that we can do to help our family at home. Ask the children to raise their hands if they do chores. What are some ways that they help?

Now ask everyone to stand up and form a straight line. Explain that they are about to play a game called "*Helper Harriet Sez*" (like Simon Says).

"*Helper Harriet*" loves to help at home. They can help Harriet today with her chores. Each time you say: "*Helper Harriet says*" -- the children are to imitate a chore you are demonstrating (example: sweeping, picking up toys, putting away clothes). However, if you do not say "*Helper Harriet says*," then the children



are to do nothing. If a child does a chore that is not preceded by “*Helper Harriet says,*” that child may continue playing, but must take one step back.

Application: Have the children think about why they help at home. Encourage them to think of three new things that they can do this week to help their parent(s) around the house.

ACTIVITY *Family Potpourri Picture*

Materials: 2 (5 oz.) bags of potpourri, paper plates, glue, newspaper, hole puncher, family photographs, drinking cups (9 oz.), markers or crayons (optional), and 1 1/2 ft. yarn pieces

Preparation: Ask each member to bring a wallet size or 3 1/2 inch by 5 inch family photo. (If most of the children do not have photos, they may draw and color a family picture in the center of their plates instead.) Cut yarn into 1 1/2 ft. pieces, one per child.

There are about as many kinds of families as there are different types of people living in them. A nuclear family is made up of children and the mother and father to whom they were born or adopted. Different relatives like mom, dad, children, grandma, and an uncle, living together form an extended family. One parent lives with the children in a single-parent family. In a blended family or stepfamily, people live together who used to live in other families. No matter what kind of family you have, all families are special.

Spread newspaper over tables. Tell the group they are about to make a lovely picture frame for their family photo. Pass out a paper plate to each child and a half cup of potpourri. Have them punch two holes along the top edge of the plate (younger members may need assistance). Carefully glue the family picture in center of plate. Place glue around edges of plate. Lightly sprinkle potpourri on glue. Allow to set for a while, then gently shake off excess.

Use yarn to make hanger for frame. Place ends of yarn through holes in plate. Secure by tying ends into a knot. Trim extra yarn.

Application: Think about other things that are special about your family. Ask the group if during the discussion they recognized their

family. Can they think of other types of families (foster, adoptive)?

Reaching Conclusions

ACTIVITY *Family Album*

Materials: cardboard or poster board, contact paper remnants or wallpaper remnants and glue, brad fasteners, and 8 1/2 x 11 inch white paper
Help children create a family album. Cover 6 x 9 inch pieces of cardstock or construction paper with contact or wallpaper remnants. Fold the white paper in half lengthwise to create two 8 1/2 x 5 1/2 in. pieces of paper. Center the sheets of white paper inside the covered cardboard. Punch the holes through papers in two or three spots along the folded edge to create a book. On the first page help the children write: (Family Name) Family Album- By: (Child’s Name). Decide in advance on headings for the other pages. Titles that could be used, include My family has (#) members; This is where we live; We like to do this together; This is a picture of our pet; Here is how I help my family; This is our address and phone number. Have the children draw pictures under each caption.

Application: Each family is unique, just like each album is unique.

ACTIVITY *Mary and Marvin Make Up*

Materials: construction paper, glue or glue stick, sewing fabric, yarn, scissors, buttons, ribbon, and markers or crayons

Preparation: Ask each child to bring a toilet tissue tube.
There are many reasons why brothers and sisters get into arguments or disagreements. Sometimes you may feel that your parents love your brother or sister more than you. Other times you may feel that your brother or sister is better than you—that they are smarter or more talented. Sometimes you may think your brother or sister does not respect your privacy. They are always getting into your things. You



may even feel that your brother or sister enjoys picking on you. It is natural to have conflict within a family. But conflict can make you feel sad or sometimes very angry. Letting anger get out of control makes it harder for everyone to work out problems.

Pass out construction paper, scissors, glue or glue stick, markers or crayons. Tell the group they are about to make puppets. Ask them to lay their construction paper horizon-tally and cut it in half. (Please demonstrate with your paper.) Then using the toilet paper tube as a guide (holding it vertically), trim off the extra paper along the top. Next ask the group to glue the construction paper onto the tube. They can draw on a face and decorate with other material (yarn, buttons, fabric, etc.).

Application: When they finish, have the group role play ways to work out conflict between brothers or sisters. For example, how would they handle this situation?

Mary and Marvin are twins. One day Marvin borrowed Mary’s baseball bat and broke it at practice. He went home, hid it in Mary’s closet, and did not tell anyone. The next day when Mary was getting ready to go to practice, she found the broken bat in her closet. She knew that Marvin always liked her bat best. How do you think she felt? How can we help Marvin and Mary? Let the group take turns using their puppets to talk about conflicts with their brothers or sisters. Have them share how they worked things out. (For children that do not have brothers or sisters, have them talk about conflicts with their friends.) Encourage children to discuss with their families other ways they can solve conflict with their siblings.

Going Beyond

ACTIVITY *Family Tree*

Materials: none

1. Encourage the children to learn more about their families by talking to older family members. They might want to find out about the day they were born, what kind of clothes their

parents wore when they were their age, what kind of school their grandparents went to.
2. Suggest that the children offer to plan a special family event.
3. Explain what a family tree is. Encourage the children to ask their parent(s) to help them draw their family tree.

Application: Encourage children to ask questions and learn more about their relatives.

ACTIVITY *Weeeeeee, We Are Family*

Materials: strong voices

This song is to be performed as a round to the tune of *In the Jungle* (“In the jungle, the mighty jungle ...”). Divide the children into two groups. The first group will sing: *Family, family, family, family, family, family, family, family, family...* Then while the first group is singing, the second will come in with:

*Big or small, one and all, we are family.
Young or old, we are special you know,
cause we are family.
Weeeeeee, we are family.
Weeeeeee, we are family.*

Reading Adventures

This listing of reading materials can be used as background information, for sharing before the group activity to set the stage for learning, or for sharing afterwards to reinforce the activity.

- Adoption Is for Always*, by Linda Walvoord Girard
- Daddy Doesn’t Live Here Anymore*, by Betty Boegehold
- Every Kid’s Guide to Family Rules and Responsibilities*, by Joy Berry
- Every Kid’s Guide to Handling Fights With Brothers and Sisters*, by Joy Berry
- Every Kid’s Guide to Understanding Parents*, by Joy Berry
- How Does It Feel When Your Parents Get Divorced?*, by Terry Berger
- Willie’s Not the Hugging Kind*, by Joyce Durham Barrett
- Who’s Who in Your Family?*, by Loreen Leady

Adapted from materials developed by Ohio State University Extension and Penn State University Cooperative Extension.