

FAMILIES



S U S A N K U K L I N

Teacher's Guide



■ About the Book

In frank, funny, and touching interviews, children from fifteen different families talk about the ups and downs of their home lives. These families reflect the kaleidoscopic diversity of America: mixed-race and immigrant families; families of gay and lesbian couples; large and small families; religious families; families with adopted children or children with special needs. This book —told in the children’s own words, and created in collaboration with them —is a celebration of all families.

■ Pre-Reading Activity

Ask your students based on their own experiences “What makes a family?” Invite students to give responses. “Who is in your family? Who is in your friend’s family?” Tell the students you are going to read a book about many different kinds of families. Ask the students, “How do you feel when you meet a family that is similar to yours or very different from yours?” Chart the children’s responses and post the paper in the classroom.



■ Discussion Questions

1. Which family do you find most interesting? Why?
2. What do all of these families have in common?
3. Which family is most like yours? Why?
4. Many of the children talked about their relationships with their siblings. Do you have siblings? How do you get along with them? What are your favorite things to do together? How do you resolve your problems?
5. Why did each family choose the particular photographs they selected? What photographs would you choose to include from your family?
6. Some of the children chose to include their pets in the family photo. Do you have pets? What kind? Do you consider your pets part of the family?
7. Why do you think the author chose to write this book? Did she leave out any kinds of families? What other kinds of families would you put in the book?





■ Activities

1. Create a book about the families of your students. Have the students pair up and interview each other about their families. The interviews should cover topics such as hobbies, foods, songs, clothes, special family events, etc. Each student should draw a picture of his/her family and bring in a photo if possible. Allow the students to be creative with their pages.

The pages will include the interviews (completed by their partner), a photo, and the drawn picture. The students can use construction paper to create frames or special designs on their pages. Bind the pages together and use a class photo for the cover. Discuss with the students their choices of photographs for the album.

2. Have a family potluck lunch. Invite families to bring in foods that are significant to them. Ask the families to bring in a copy of the recipe. Make copies of all of the recipes for students to take home later that week. Allow time for the families to see the book your students created.
3. Ask each child to choose a family from *Families* and write a letter to them. The letter could be addressed to the entire family or a specific member. Have the students write about his/her family and the things they do together. The students should include differences and similarities between the family in the book and their own family. Give the students time to share their letters with the class.

■ About the Author

Susan Kuklin is an author-photographer of many books for children and young adults, including *Dance!*, *Hoops with Swoopes*, and *The Harlem Nutcracker*. Her photographs have appeared in *Time*, *Newsweek* and *The New York Times*. She lives in New York City.

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