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# THROUGH MOON AND STARS AND NIGHT SKIES

Author: Ann Turner

Illustrator: James Graham Hale

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In all activities involving families, it is important to be sensitive to the family situations of all students. Some students may not feel comfortable discussing their personal situations. Such sharing should be voluntary and initiated by the children *themselves*. *Some of the activities suggested here may need to be adapted.*

## THEME:

Families are created in many different ways.

## PROGRAM SUMMARY:

A young boy remembers coming to this country to be adopted. He remembers how unfamiliar and frightening some things were in his new home, before he accepted the love to be found there.

This tender story about a family formed through adoption leads LeVar to explore the variety of ways families are created—the Harris family has 2 children, both adopted; the Peck family is a single mother and 9 adopted children; the Abney family is a set of parents, 2 brother and an adopted sister. Viewers learn that families are really created by love.

## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

Before viewing the program, explore what the students know about adoption. What does adoption mean (a permanent legal bond between a child and a new parent)? Why would parents want to adopt a child?

Pose the question to students: “What is a parent?” Record their ideas on the board, and have students formulate a definition of the nature and responsibilities of parents.

Discuss with students the types of activities their families do together, both for recreation and for maintaining their home and lifestyle.

The boy in the story joined a new family. Discuss ways in which his new family made him feel loved and at home.

Not only did the boy in the story have a new family, he traveled thousands of miles to live in a new country. Discuss with students ways they might make a person new to the United States feel welcome.

Invite students to share some of their sibling rivalry stories. Discuss strategies they use to resolve their differences when they arise.

## CURRICULUM EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Brainstorm with students who makes up a family by creating a semantic web with the word “family” as the hub. Include synonyms on the web (e.g., father, daddy, papa), as well as extended family and stepfamily members. Display the web in the classroom so that students may use the family words in their writing.

Have students begin to collect their family histories by interviewing grandparents and other older family members about their memories. Allow students to brainstorm the set of questions they would like to have answered. Have students use their interview data to write a family story with the person they interviewed as the main character.

Have students survey the members of their families regarding their “favorites” of the following: food, game/toy, TV show, animal, book, and family activity. Make up a grid with the above categories written down the side and space for students to write their family members’ names across the top. Duplicate the grid for students to take home and complete. Have them bring their pages back to school and compare the results. Encourage students to think of ways their families are alike and different by using the survey data.

As a class, make a pictograph of each students’ position in the family—oldest child, youngest child, in the middle, only child. (Photocopies of school pictures are ideal for this type of graph.) Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each of these positions.

Discuss with students the kinds of activities they especially enjoy doing with different relatives (e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, brothers, sisters, mother, father, etc.). Have students think of one special relative (or a couple) and an activity they do with that person and draw a picture. Title the page, “My \_\_\_\_\_ and Me,” and have them write a caption explaining the picture. Assemble all the pages into a book for the class library.

Families often share a special interest, sport, or hobby that they do together in their free time or when they go on vacation. Invite family members to the classroom to talk about or demonstrate their family interest.

Have the students write “contrast” poems about their families (either an individual member or the whole family), using the pattern, “It drives me nuts when.../but I love it when....” (Example: It drives me nuts when my sister hogs

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the bathroom, but I love it when she reads me a story. It drives me nuts when my sister won't get off the phone, but I love it when she goes skating with me....) Involve the class in a prewriting exercise in which they brainstorm lists of things that bother them about their families and things that they love about their families.

**RELATED THEMES:**

immigrants  
traditions  
cultural heritage

**RELATED READING RAINBOW PROGRAMS:**

Program #121 — Always My Dad  
Program #20 — A Chair For My Mother  
Program #22 — The Patchwork Quilt  
Program #106 — The Lotus Seed  
Program #126 — On The Day You Were Born

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Ann Turner cannot remember when she did not want to become a writer. As an adult, she is the author of many picture book, novels, and poetry collections for children, including *Dakota Dugout*, a **Reading Rainbow** review book. Ann Turner lives in Massachusetts with her family.

**ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR:**

James Graham Hale grew up in Ohio and graduated from Denison University. *Through Moon and Stars and Night Skies* is his first published book.

**BOOKS REVIEWED BY CHILDREN:**

HORACE  
by Holly Keller (William Morrow)

FATHERS, MOTHERS, SISTERS, BROTHERS: A COLLECTION OF FAMILY POEMS  
by Mary Ann Hoberman, illus. by Marilyn Hafner (Little, Brown)

FREE TO BE...A FAMILY: A BOOK ABOUT ALL KINDS OF BELONGING  
by Marlo Thomas and Friends (Bantam Doubleday)

**SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:**

A FOREVER FAMILY  
by Roslyn Banish (HarperCollins)

THE PAIN AND THE GREAT ONE  
by Judy Blume, illus. by Irene Trivas (Bradbury)

HOW I WAS ADOPTED

by Joanna Cole, illus. by Maxie Chambliss (Morrow)

TELL ME AGAIN ABOUT THE NIGHT I WAS BORN

by Jamie Lee Curtis, illus. by Laura Cornell (HarperCollins)

THE BIRTH-ORDER BLUES

by Joan Drescher (Viking)

WE ADOPTED YOU, BENJAMIN KOO

by Linda Walvoord Girard, illus. by Linda Shute (Albert Whitman)

WHEN WE MARRIED GARY

by Anna Grossnickle Hines (Greenwillow)

FAMILIES: A CELEBRATION OF DIVERSITY, COMMITMENT, AND LOVE

by Aylette Jenness (Houghton Mifflin)

THE DAY WE MET YOU

by Phoebe Koehler (Bradbury)

FAMILIES ARE DIFFERENT

by Nina Pellegrini (Holiday House)

BONESY AND ISABEL

by Michael J. Rosen, illus. by James Ransome (Harcourt Brace)



