

# We Are Family A Musical Message For All Teacher's Guide

"What fun! In just a short time this program helped the kids understand the concept of family, diversity, and respect. It fit naturally into our curriculum and unified the school community."

The kindergarten teachers at the Foote School, New Haven, CT

"In today's world, schools need to showcase the values of respect, understanding, and appreciation of diversity. What better messenger than the beloved characters who entertain children every day!"

Sari Latto, Principal, P.S. 41, Queens, NY



LESSONS IN THIS GUIDE DEVELOPED  
BY THE ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE'S  
A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® INSTITUTE  
MILLER EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVE

# Welcome to *We Are Family!*

We live in a global age where children must learn the essential values of understanding, respect, and acceptance of other cultures. This DVD and teaching guide introduce these values to children through a unique mix of motivational music and educational tools. Through the voices of over 100 beloved television characters, children will learn about different families and explore the importance of cultural diversity.

The guide, developed by the Anti-Defamation League's A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute and its Miller Early Childhood Initiative, includes easy-to-do lessons and activities that will help reinforce the idea of our global community and make diversity a positive, unifying force in our world.

*We Are Family: A Musical Message for All* will be an enduring resource for your library.

On the following pages:

## ***We Are Family*** **A Musical Message for All**

**Themes/Outcomes:** Through viewing the *We Are Family* music video and participating in the activities, young children will build their anti-bias and diversity skills in the following areas:

- Respecting self
- Respecting others
- Developing skills to play, live, work, and learn together

### **Activities /Age Groups:**

|                             |                     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>What Makes A Family?</b> | (Pre-K – 1st grade) |
| <b>My Family</b>            | (Pre-K – 1st grade) |
| <b>Our Different Colors</b> | (Pre-K – 1st grade) |
| <b>Our Classroom Family</b> | (Pre-K – 1st grade) |
| <b>Our School as Family</b> | (2nd – 6th grade)   |

**Methodology:** The first four activities contained in this booklet are best done in the sequence in which they are listed, with each lesson serving as a building block for the next. Repeated viewing of the video reinforces the concepts contained in the song and the images seen on the screen. If time does not permit participation in all four activities, they can also stand alone, but teachers are encouraged to consider the elements that should be introduced to set the proper context for the students. The first four activities were designed for Pre-K through 1st grades, and Section 5 was created for children in 2nd through 6th grades.

# 1

**What Makes A Family?:** This first activity encourages students to understand and respect the value of all families. The activity promotes the idea that families are created because of the special bond and common goals that they share. This activity sets the stage for children from all kinds of families to feel comfortable sharing and to be proud of their family.

# 2

**My Family:** Building upon the first activity, children will have the opportunity to create an art project that depicts their family. The activity builds a sense of individual pride in one's own family composition, as well as reinforcing an understanding and acceptance that families are created in many different ways.

# 3

**Our Different Colors:** This activity explores the physical similarities and differences of the individual children in the class. By exploring their own skin, hair, and eye colors, students will gain respect for themselves and others. This activity sets the stage for the next activity by introducing the notion that a family or group of people is made up of individuals, who each maintain their individual "differences" while also sharing a common bond with others.

# 4

**Our Classroom Family:** This final activity brings the focus back to the classroom community and the ways in which it can represent a special kind of family. Building upon the learning about the diverse ways families come together and their own physical uniqueness, this activity encourages the children to explore their differences and similarities with one another and the ways in which each contribute to making their classroom a family.

# 5

**Our School as Family:** The activities contained in this section were created for use by upper elementary school educators and school administrators to help children further explore the DVD's themes of our interconnectedness with one another. Specifically, the activities reinforce the theme of "school as family" and help children see that a school functions a lot like a family where individuals work together in respectful and cooperative ways to promote a good environment for everyone. The upper elementary section immediately follows the standards grid located on page 8.

# 1

## What Makes A Family?

### Outcomes:

Respecting others

### What you need:

■ *We Are Family DVD*

■ Books about the diversity of families. Suggestion:

*Free To Be You And Me...Free To Be A Family* by M. Thomas  
(Running Press, 1997)

### What you do:

■ Show the *We Are Family* music video to the class.

■ Prepare the children for storytelling by beginning with a discussion about family. Ask the children to think about the different characters they saw in the video who sang about being a family. Who was in that family? Highlight the many varied members of the family in the video—animals, people, etc. Ask the children why they think the characters are a family. What makes them a family? (Reinforce ideas such as caring about one another, spending time together, sharing experiences, etc.)

■ Then, ask the class to share ideas on whom they think can be found in a family. The common responses will be “a mommy,” “a daddy,” “a sister,” or “a brother.” Ask further questions of the class if they only give these traditional answers. You may say, “Just like we saw in the video, there can be a lot of different members of a family, and I think we might be forgetting some other people like an aunt, an uncle, a grandparent or a favorite pet.” Tell the children that you are going to read a story about how families can be different from one another but are still a family.

■ After the story, ask the children again who they might find in a family. See if they can now give broader definitions. Tell them tomorrow they will have the chance to talk about their own families and to draw pictures of everyone in their family.

■ In preparation for lesson two, ask children to bring in photos or drawings of family members.

### Tips:

■ Remember to affirm all kinds of families with the class. Reinforce for the class that many types of people come together as a family and what binds them together is love, sharing, and caring. Help the class to see that all families are special in their own way.

## Extensions:

### Early math

Children can create charts indicating the various features of the people and characters they saw in the video. For example, ask "how many red monsters or characters did we see?" "How many people with brown hair/skin?"

### Early science

In your classroom discussion, introduce the idea of "resemblance" by encouraging the children to talk about "looking alike and looking different." Talk about how people in families sometimes look alike or "resemble" one another but sometimes they do not. Ask children to talk about the ways in which they look similar and different from members of their family.

# 2

## My Family

### Outcomes:

Respecting self  
Respecting others

### What you need:

- *We Are Family DVD*
- Chart paper (for class discussion part of activity)
- Photos or drawings of the children and their family members that can be used in an art project (not to be returned). (This will take preparation to collect the photos and/or create drawings needed for the activity.)
- Crayons, markers, glue
- Construction paper (any shape, but at least 8.5" X 11") in a range of colors
- Safety scissors (for decorating and cutting photos/drawings down to size)

### What you do:

- Show the *We Are Family* music video to the class. Ask the students to name the characters they saw and, on chart paper, list the characters they name. Help the children count the number of characters on the list and discuss the size of the family. Have children think about the number of members in their own families. Have a discussion about the various sizes of families.
- Explain to the students that they will create an art project, a collage that shows their family members.
- Let children select construction paper and explain that the children will be gluing the pictures of themselves and their family members onto this paper. Instruct the children to glue drawings/photos of themselves and their family members onto the paper they selected. Allow the children time to decorate

the collage with crayons or markers; encourage them to use their scissors to change the shape of the background paper.

■ When finished, give each child a chance to explain who is in their family and what they like about their family. Help the children count the number of family members depicted in their collage.

■ Encourage children to discuss the various languages spoken in their families. Talk about how the people in a family may all speak the same language or several languages. With older students, discuss the different countries the family members may be from. Talk about how the members of each family may come from several different countries or just one country.

### **Tips:**

■ Remind the children at the beginning of the project about the discussion the class had the day before regarding different kinds of families. This will help all children feel comfortable with, and included in, the activity. Expand on the previous discussion by helping children understand that the number of members in each family (family size) will also vary and help them develop comfort with the various sizes.

■ Provide lots of different color choices of construction paper and encourage creativity in the various ways they decorate their collages to reinforce the fact that everyone's family is different and special in its own way.

■ Remember to affirm all types of families with the class. Reinforce for the class that many types of people can make up a family and what binds them together is love, sharing, and caring.

### **Extensions:**

#### **Early reading**

Encourage each child to tell something about their family during story time. Ask family members to record a family story into a cassette player that can be played in the listening center or to write down stories to be read during story time.

#### **Early math**

Make a chart showing the family size (number of family members) of the families depicted in the collages. Make a chart showing the languages spoken by the family members depicted in the collages and/or their countries of origin.

# 3

## Our Different Colors

### **Outcomes:**

Respecting self

Respecting others

### **What you need:**

- *We Are Family DVD*
- Books about differences in how we look. Suggestion: *All the Colors We Are/Todos los Colores de Nuestra Piel* by K. Kissinger (Redleaf Press, 1994)
- Crayons and/or paints that reflect a variety of skin, eye, and hair colors
- Paintbrushes
- Construction paper
- Mirrors (optional)

### **What you do:**

- Show the *We Are Family* music video to the class. Ask the students if they know the meaning of the word “unique.” Define the word with the students, such as “one of a kind.” Ask the students to share some of the things that make the different characters in the video “unique” or special.
- Share that every person, animal or critter, just as seen in the video, is unique, both in terms of how they look and also what they like to do, what they are good at and how they feel. Explain that today the students will have the chance to look at the uniqueness of how they look by making portraits of themselves.
- Place all the materials on the table. Write your name on the top of a piece of paper and draw a simple self-portrait. Model how you choose the colors that most closely match your skin, eyes, and hair. Talk aloud to describe what you are doing as you work. “I have two eyes. They are dark brown. I will use this light brown crayon to show the color of my skin.”
- Help each child write his or her name across the top of a piece of construction paper. Invite them to use the art materials to create their own self-portraits. If possible, provide mirrors so the children can look at themselves as they work.
- Let the children hang their papers at eye level so they can compare portraits.

### **Tips:**

- Be sure to say something positive about the beauty of each child’s skin color and the differences between them. Children may make negative comments about their own or another’s skin color. Remind them that it is not okay to make fun of how people look, and reassure all children that everyone’s skin is a beautiful color. Remember that people of different ethnic groups can have a variety of skin tones; in fact, young children may see this in their own families.
- Show the children how to mix paints to create colors that match their skin tones. Let them use these created skin colors for their portraits; they can also use them to create handprints to cut out (once dry) and assemble into a class collage.

### **Extensions:**

#### **Early science**

Arrange the children in small groups and allow them to spend time combining individual colors to create different shades and new colors. Talk about

pigments in paint and how they are responsible for the color of paints as well as the color of skin.

Adapted from *The Miller Early Childhood Initiative of A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute Bias-Free Foundations: Early Childhood Activities for Educators*, New York: Anti-Defamation League, © 2001

# 4

## Our Classroom Family

### Outcomes:

Respecting self

Respecting others

Developing skills to play, live, work, and learn together

### What you need:

■ *We Are Family* DVD

■ Poster board (decorated), labeled Our Classroom Family

■ Thick magic markers of many colors

■ Books about differences and similarities. Suggestion: *We Are All Alike/We Are All Different* by the Cheltenham Elementary School Kindergartners (Scholastic, Inc., 1991)

### What you do:

■ Show the *We Are Family* music video to the class.

■ Prepare the children for storytelling by beginning with a discussion on similarities and differences. Explain that today they will be looking at not just our physical differences and similarities, but also in the things we like to do, are good at, and the way we feel about things. Ask the children to remember the different characters in the video and to identify ways in which some of the characters are different from and/or similar to one another. (Expand their thinking to not just physical attributes, but also talents, interests, etc. For example, some children are musically inclined, some children are good at physical activities such as sports, and other children can draw well, etc.)

■ Tell the children that you are going to read a story about how people are different and at the same time alike.

■ After the story, remind the children of the things that they agreed made a family, such as caring about one another, taking care of each other, spending time together, etc. Explain that in this way, their classroom is like a family and that in all families, just like the one in the video, members of the family have differences and similarities. Ask the students to identify some of the differences they see or have with their classmates as well as the similarities. (Encourage the students to look at both physical differences and similarities, as well in their likes, dislikes, interests, experiences, etc.)

■ Bring out the poster board. Explain that now that the class has discussed many of the things that they share with one another or that may be different

from one another, that they will now create a poster that shows one important thing that each of them brings to the classroom family, which is what makes it such a strong family. Ask each child to share one thing that they can do or like to do or that they feel proud of about who they are. (Help prompt students to think of different ideas from one another). Write out each child's item on the poster board.

■ When finished, post the completed "Our Classroom Family" board in a prominent area in the classroom. Explain to the students that now they can see all the strengths that they each bring to their classroom family.

**Tips:**

- Prepare the poster board beforehand by decorating in simple, bright patterns. Leave lots of space to list the children's suggestions. Make sure to use different color markers for listing the suggestions so that the board is colorful and reflects diversity.
- After the conclusion of the four activities, consider inviting family members to the class for a special program to highlight the children's artwork and class projects on families. Consider having the children prepare a dance or sing a portion of the *We Are Family* song for their families.

**Extensions:**

**Early math**

Encourage children to create a chart/bar graph showing how many of their classmates share specific things they like, for example, how many children like ice cream or how many like to play sports, etc. Ask them which activities are most popular or received the most votes.

**Academic Standards:**

The four preceding lessons contained in this activity guide can be used to meet certain academic standards for the kindergarten classroom. The grid below shows the relationship between each lesson and each standard. Use this simple grid to help you quickly determine which lesson meets which standard. The standards used are the 3rd edition of the *Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning* website. For details on these standards, please visit the website at [www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp](http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp)

|                                | 1<br>What Makes A Family? | 2<br>My Family | 3<br>Our Different Colors | 4<br>Our Classroom Family |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Language Arts 3rd Ed.</b>   |                           |                |                           |                           |
| Writing                        | ■                         | ■              | ■                         | ■                         |
| Reading                        | ■                         |                | ■                         | ■                         |
| Listening                      | ■                         | ■              |                           | ■                         |
| Viewing                        | ■                         | ■              |                           | ■                         |
| Media                          | ■                         | ■              |                           | ■                         |
| <b>Self-Regulation 3rd Ed.</b> | ■                         | ■              |                           | ■                         |
| <b>Mathematics 3rd Ed.</b>     | ■                         | ■              | ■                         | ■                         |
| <b>Science 3rd Ed.</b>         |                           |                |                           |                           |
| Life Sciences                  | ■                         |                | ■                         |                           |
| Physical Sciences              |                           |                | ■                         |                           |
| Nature of Sciences             |                           |                | ■                         |                           |

# 5

## Our School as Family

### Activities for Elementary Aged Children

■ *We Are Family: A Musical Message for All* is designed to be used with Pre-K to 1st grade children; however the program's themes of our interconnectedness with one another can be extended to all age groups.

■ The following activities complement the ideas presented in the *We Are Family* DVD and provide wonderful learning opportunities for elementary aged children to explore the concept of "school as family." The activities make it easy for children to see that a school functions much like a family—emphasizing the importance of respect, cooperation, and an understanding of shared rules to create a positive environment for everyone.

■ As an overarching approach, at the beginning of the school year, school leaders may want to consider creating "We Are Family" Class and School Clubs, creating the "umbrella" under which many of the following activities can be initiated.

#### 1. Adopt a Name

■ Adopt a "school family" name and create a banner to hang at the entrance of the building throughout the year.

#### 2. Family Photo Collages

■ Ask school members to submit a family photo that will be used to create a "\_\_\_\_\_ (name of school) We Are Family" collage to hang in a visible area in the school.

#### 3. Food Bazaar

■ Ask parents and caregivers to make a favorite family recipe to be shared at a school food bazaar.

#### 4. "We Are Family" All School Performance

■ Create a dance to go along with the *We Are Family* song.

■ Have a group of students sing the *We Are Family* song; consider grade-mixing in the group to ensure school-wide presentation. Have classrooms research and prepare to sing songs that highlight similar themes to the *We Are Family* song.

■ Students can also prepare poetry or essay readings for the assembly along the same theme.

#### 5. Big Brother/Big Sister

■ Pair older students with students in younger grades; this can be done for entire classes as in an exchange program.

■ Design activities that encourage older students to mentor and care for their younger peers like a “big brother” or “big sister.”

## **6. Extended Families**

■ Students can research ways various cultures have created extended family structures.

■ They can use writing, artwork, or drama to report what they learned.

■ They can use what they learned to form ideas on how to live/work together as class and school families.

## **7. Our Global Family**

■ Review your school’s library collection for books that explore how our world is a “global family.” Use ADL’s online bibliography at [www.adl.org/bibliography](http://www.adl.org/bibliography) for help on what to include.

■ Join iEARN at [www.earn.org](http://www.earn.org), a non-profit global network that enables young people to use technology to engage in collaborative educational and service projects.

■ Set up pen pal exchanges with students from other communities, cities, states, or countries.

■ Create a bulletin board entitled “One World, One Family” or “Our Global Family” and have students fill it with photos, writing, artwork, and other information about their global projects.

■ Take a survey of school members’ ethnic/cultural backgrounds. Make a display poster listing the various responses in bright colors and in a circular fashion.

## **8. Media and Family**

■ Look at the media for examples of diverse portrayals of family units.

■ Make a list of the TV shows and distribute throughout the school.

■ Host class discussions or a general assembly dialogue to process what was learned.

■ Organize screenings of different films that present a variety of family structures in a positive and affirming way.

## **9. Lunchroom Family**

■ Arrange the cafeteria to encourage a family style meal experience using round tables in “family groups” and rotate groups periodically so that different students mingle.

## **10. End-of-the-Year Celebration**

■ Invite family members to a showcase of all the “school as family” activities done during the year.

© 2005 Anti-Defamation League.

Some of the activity suggestions contained in this booklet are adapted from the pamphlet *101 Ways To Combat Prejudice*, © 2001 Anti-Defamation League.

No part of this booklet may be reproduced in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

## WE ARE FAMILY

We are family  
Brothers and my sisters with me  
We are family  
Get up everybody and sing

We are family  
Brothers and my sisters with me  
We are family  
Get up everybody and sing

Everyone can see we're together  
As we walk on by  
AND  
And we flock just like birds of a feather  
I won't tell no lie

ALL  
All of the people around us they say  
Can they be that close  
Just let me state for the record  
We're givin' love in a family dose

We are family  
Brothers and my sisters with me  
We are family  
Get up everybody and sing

We are family  
Brothers and my sisters with me  
We are family  
Get up everybody and sing

Livin' life is fun and we've just begun  
To get our share of this world's delights  
HIGH

High hopes we have for the future  
And our goal's in sight  
WE

No we don't get depressed  
Here's what we call our golden rule  
Have faith in you and the things you do  
You won't go wrong, oh no  
This is our family jewel

We are family  
Brothers and my sisters with me  
We are family  
Get up everybody and sing

  
  
we are family