



Anti-Defamation League®

# Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Division

**About the Book of the Month:** This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For educators, adult family members and other caregivers of early childhood and elementary aged children, reading the books listed on this site with your children and incorporating them into instruction are excellent ways to talk about these important concepts at home and in the classroom.

## Stella Brings the Family

Miriam B. Schiffer (Author), Holly Clifton-Brown (Illustrator)

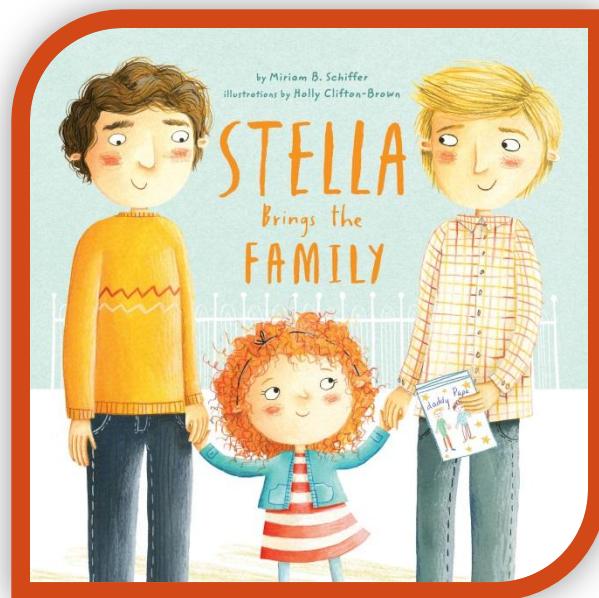
Stella's class is having a Mother's Day celebration, but what's a girl with two daddies to do? It's not that she doesn't have someone who helps her with her homework or tucks her in at night. Stella has her Papa and Daddy who take care of her and a whole group of other loved ones who support her every day. She just doesn't have a mom to invite to the party. Fortunately, Stella finds a unique solution to her party problem.

ISBN: 978-1452111902

Publisher: Chronicle Books

Year Published: 2015

Age Range: 4–8



## Book Themes

Family, LGBT, Acceptance, Same sex parent families

## Key Words

Discuss and define these words with children prior to reading the book. Do not focus on students' retention of all the words; instead make sure they understand the words enough to follow the story and remind children of their meanings as they come up in the book. You can also post the words and point out to students when they appear in the story. See also ADL's [Glossary of Education Terms](#).

- appetite
- celebration
- cubby
- dashed

- decorating
- guests
- lesbian
- surprise
- gay
- invitations
- stared
- worry

## Discussion Questions

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**NOTE:** This book is about a girl who has two dads. As you prepare to read the story, consider the composition of your classroom and the different kinds of families represented in it. The book provides a wonderful opportunity to explore the concept that there are many kinds of family structures and is a chance to affirm all kinds of families.

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Before reading the book aloud, ask pre-reading questions:

- What is the title of the book?
- What do you see and notice on the cover of the book?
- What do you think the book might be about?

As you read the book aloud, ask a few discussion questions periodically throughout the reading to check comprehension and keep the students engaged:

- What did Stella realize about the Mother's Day celebration? (page 6)
- Why did Jonathan tell Stella she should invite her other family members? (page 13)
- Why do you think Mrs. Abbott was so tired at the end of the day? (page 23)

After reading the book aloud, ask some or all of these discussion questions:

- What happened in the story?
- How did Stella feel when her teacher, Mrs. Abbott, announced that they were going to have a special celebration for Mother's Day?
- Why did Stella feel that way? If you were Stella, how would you feel?
- Why did Stella's friends ask her who packs her lunch, reads her bedtime stories and kisses her when she is hurt?
- What advice would you give Stella about who to bring for the Mother's Day celebration?
- Who did Stella bring and why?
- What other kinds of families were in Stella's class?
- What do you think will happen on Father's Day?
- What do you think Howie, who has two moms, will do on Father's Day?
- Is there anything you think Mrs. Abbott could have done differently to make everyone feel included?
- Who was your favorite character in the story and why?
- What is the message of the story?

## Extension Activities

Below are activities that you can do with children in order to extend the learning from the book.

### 1. Write and Illustrate Additional Pages of the Book

In the last scene of the book, Stella leaves school with her two dads after telling her teacher not to worry about Father's Day because she wouldn't bring as many people. Read aloud the last few pages of the book and ask students: *What do you think might happen next in the story if it were to continue? What do you think Stella, Papa and Daddy do when they get home? What do they talk about? How do you think Mrs. Abbott will prepare the class for Father's Day? How does Howie, who has two moms, feel and what does he do?* Have students imagine what would happen in the book if it continued for a few more pages. Instruct them to take their ideas and write and/or draw the next scene or two as they imagine it. If students want to write but cannot do so, you can transcribe for them. When completed, students can share their drawings and pages of the book with the rest of the class and you can invite family members in for a whole class reading.

### 2. Kinds of Families

Ask students: *Who are the people that are part of Stella's family? Can you remember some of the other children's families in the book?* Show students pages 19-20 again and point out the different structures of families represented. Ask students: *What are things most families have in common?* Create a list of those things which may include the following words/phrases: love, live together (in house or apartment), eat dinner together, share money, watch TV together, they may have children and pets. Ask: *What are all the different kinds of families you know, have heard or read about?* As a culmination of the discussion, have some students (on a voluntary basis) come up to the front of the class and be "interviewed" about their families. To ensure that nothing inappropriate is asked, the interview questions should be generated in advance (as a brainstorm activity with the students) and may include: *Who are the members of your family? What is your home like? Do you have any pets? What activities do you do together? What is a special meal you like to have? Does your family have a favorite holiday celebration?* Consider recording the interviews and making them available to the families. Another option is to use the questions as prompts for the students to create family posters with pictures of their families and what they like to do together.

### 3. Describe and Draw a Character

With students, make a list of the different characters in the book by naming all of the characters they can remember (Stella, Daddy, Papa, Mrs. Abbott the teacher, Jonathan, Leon, Howie). Write the names on the board/smartboard. Explain to students that they are going to work in pairs or groups of three to create a drawing and description of one character of their choosing. After they have gotten into their pairs or triads, instruct them to choose one of the characters and (1) draw a picture of the person, (2) write 3–6 words around the picture which describe the person (adjectives) that may include their physical characteristics, their personality and their feelings and (3) write at least one quote (what the person said) or one thing they did. After their drawings and descriptions are completed, hang all of the pictures around the room and have students do a "gallery walk" to look at all of their classmates' work.

## ADL Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on anti-bias teaching strategies, identity and LGBT people.

### Curriculum Resources

"Who Am I? Identity Poems," *Current Events Classroom*, [www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/who-am-i-identity-poems.pdf](http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/who-am-i-identity-poems.pdf).

"What is Marriage Equality?," *Current Events Classroom*, [www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/What-Is-Marriage-Equality.pdf](http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/What-Is-Marriage-Equality.pdf).

### Websites

Anti-Bias Education

[www.adl.org/education-outreach/anti-bias-education](http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/anti-bias-education)

Provides training program offerings for pre-K through 12th grade school communities—educators, administrators, youth and families—which focus on the development of an inclusive culture and respectful school climate by addressing issues of bias and bullying.

Anti-Bias Resources

[www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/additional-anti-bias-resources.html](http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/additional-anti-bias-resources.html)

These resources provide a wide range of tips, tools and strategies for K-12 educators, administrators, students and family members to promote diversity and anti-bias behavior in learning environments and society.

Creating an Anti-Bias Learning Environment

[www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/creating-an-anti-bias-learning-environment.html](http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/creating-an-anti-bias-learning-environment.html)

Tips for the classroom educator to create an anti-bias learning environment.

### Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

Kinds of Families, [www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/people-books.html?subpeople=kinds-of-families](http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/people-books.html?subpeople=kinds-of-families)

LGBT People and Homophobia/Heterosexism, [www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/lgbtq-people.html](http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/lgbtq-people.html)

Marriage Equality, [www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/LGBTQ-books.html?sublgbtq=marriage-equality](http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/LGBTQ-books.html?sublgbtq=marriage-equality)