



JOURNEY IN... YEAR TWO COMMUNITY BODY

This lesson's Big Ideas:

- An important unit in human community is the family.
- Unitarian Universalism celebrates and affirms many different types of families.
- Love is what bonds a group of people together as a family.

Lesson Materials

- Slips of cardstock with animal labels for "Find Your Family" game
- T-shirts with iron-on words identifying family members
- Bandanas with additional familial descriptors, like 'adoptive', 'biological', 'step'
- Digital Camera
- Backdrop(s) for photography, including the message "Love Makes a Family"

TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time

A child and parent were walking along a road when they came across a large stone. The child said to the parent, "Do you think if I use all my strength, I can move this rock?" The parent answered, "If you use all your strength, I am sure you can do it." The child began to push the rock with every ounce of energy available. The child pushed and pushed, but the rock did not move. Discouraged, the little one said to the parent, "You were wrong. I can't do it." The parent placed an arm around the child's shoulder and said, "No, love. You didn't use all your strength – you didn't ask me to help."

- adapted from D. Wolpe's

Teaching Your Children About God

The family. We were a strange little band of characters trudging through life sharing diseases and toothpaste, coveting one another's desserts, hiding shampoo, borrowing money, locking each other out of our rooms, inflicting pain and kissing to heal it in the same instant, loving, laughing, defending, and trying to figure out the common thread that bound us all together.

-Erma Bombeck

You don't choose your family. They are God's gift to you, as you are to them.

-Desmond Tutu

Family life is full of major and minor crises ~ the ups and downs of health, success and failure in career, marriage, and divorce ~ and all kinds of characters. It is tied to places and events and histories. With all of these felt details, life etches itself into memory and personality. It's difficult to imagine anything more nourishing to the soul.

- Thomas Moore

**YOUR FIELD
EXPERIENCES:
FEEDBACK AND
NOTES**

GATHERING AND FOCUSING

⌚ 2-3 minutes

Show of Hands & Fingers Poll

Use hands and fingers to answer the following poll questions:

- Who has grandparents who are living?
- How many brothers do you have?
- How many sisters?
- How many moms?
- Who has great-grandparents who are living?
- Who is part of an adoptive family?
- Who has cousins who live in the same town?
- How many pets does your family have?

**PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE
FIND YOUR FAMILY –
A SILLY ENERGIZER GAME**

⌚ 10 minutes

This game will help children get to know other class members. Form groups of two to four kids. For each group, we've created a different animal family by listing possible family members on slips of paper (Mama cow + Baby cow or Dad Chicken + Brother Chicken + Sister Chicken).

Part One: MIX IT UP! Give each player one folded slip of paper with an animal and family member on it. On "go," kids walk around trading papers with everyone else in the room, trying to make as many exchanges as possible. They should not look at the papers they're receiving.

Part Two: FIND YOUR FAMILY! After two minutes, call out, "Find your family." Without speaking, the players find their family members by acting out the animals on their papers. Children find their families by making sounds and gestures. When players find their families, they must sit in a line on the floor. Then have family members tell their real names to one another.

Wondering Together:

- How do you recognize your own family when you're out in a crowded place? Do you have any signals or tricks for finding each other?
- Have you ever got separated from your family? What was that experience like?
- Do you know any cool facts about the way animals have families or raise their offspring?

PRIMARY ACTIVITY TWO

FAMILY PORTRAITS!

🕒 25-30 minutes

This activity will have us playing the roles of other classmates' families in a series of family portraits. When it's one child's turn to create a family for a portrait, they get to select the number of participants they need and manipulate them into a position just as if they were clay. The "director" child represents his or her own family (and can play himself or herself in the family portrait), or if this makes the child uncomfortable, he or she can invent a family. Give everyone the option. He or she can choose who to include in the final product—immediate family, extended family, stepfamily, etc.

In summary, the activity will go like this:

1. Pick a child whose turn it is to be director
2. Have the director instruct people to put on appropriate t-shirts to become family members in the portrait.
3. Seat and pose the "family"
4. Take a photo
5. Ask discussion questions about each family
6. Move on to the next child's turn

Here are some details:

Our role in each family portrait will be apparent by the t-shirt that we wear. Each shirt will have an iron-on label like "Mom" "Grandpa" "Brother". Bandanas with descriptors like "Adoptive" "Biological" can add details to our family relationships.

The "director" child for each turn should help groupmates find the right t-shirt that reflect the role of the family member. When they put a t-shirt on, they should try to move and act like the person they're representing. How would a mom look in the photo? How will twin brothers look? In every photo, the group should figure out how to show that this is a bunch of people who love each other — *that's* what makes them a family.

Once everyone is wearing the necessary t-shirts and bandanas, pose them for the photo. Make sure t-shirt labels are visible. Take a picture, ask any discussion questions you'd like to pose about a given family, and then have everyone take their t-shirts off in preparation for the next person's turn.

Wondering Together

- If your family saw your portrait, would they be able to recognize themselves?
- Was it possible to show your family's love just by using everyone's bodies and faces to express it?
- Are there other families that you know who would be wearing the exact t-shirts as us in this photo?
- Is this the smallest family we can make? The biggest family, given the number of kids here this Sunday?
- Is there any family that we can think of that doesn't actually make sense?"

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITY

SCULPT ANOTHER FAMILY

-OUT OF CLAY!

🕒 However many minutes you need to fill...

Families do things together! Families are together for fun times and for hard times. What are some things your family did together this past week?

Using the same topics from the Drama Workshop, we can draw a slip of paper out of a hat and play Sculptorades using clay. Pair kids together and give them a lump of clay. If, for example, they draw out “Pose as a family playing together in the snow”, kids might use the modeling clay to shape some people and a snow man.

See if the children can get a partner or the rest of the class to guess what they’ve made with the clay. Ask if their family has done that activity together before.

CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING

🕒 2 minutes

Gather in a circle, assume a comfortable meditative position or take each other’s hands. Speak these words, or words like them, the children repeating each line after you, the teacher.

May all families grow strong,
May our church be a place that welcomes all families
May all families grow strong.