

GSD Lesson Plan
for 3rd grade
Focus: Family diversity

Objective: Students will learn about, communicate about and think critically about diverse family structures present in our community and around the world.

Prior knowledge:

- Prior to teaching this lesson, teaching kids how to communicate ideas and opinions respectfully is important. This should be started at the beginning of the year with much less personal topics (ie: Communicating opinions about likes/dislikes of foods, academic subjects, etc...).
- Also, prior to this lesson the class should have been taught about Safe Zones, learning about the importance of our classroom being a Safe Zone, and what the culture of the classroom looks like in order to create that Safe Zone.

Thematic Connections/Focus: This lesson plan can easily tie into broader themes such as: equity, equality, freedom, kindness, respect, and human rights.

Anticipatory Set:

- Ask students to write down their answer to this question on one side of an index card (with the number: "1"): "What is a family?" Use words and/or pictures to answer this question. Then, put the card in a folder for use later.
- Next, have the students brainstorm ideas about ways that their family is unique, special, and/or possibly different from other families. Students should write their ideas on a separate index card and turn the card in. Teacher reads some of these aloud and helps the students to recognize that none of our families are alike, we are all different in some ways.

Activities:

- Show images of different types of families: (I created a Google slide show)
- Ask students to think about ways these families are the same and ways they are different, then share with a partner, choose some kids to share with the class (think-pair-share).
- Tell the students we are going to continue learning about diversity, respect, equity and equality by looking now at family structures.
- Read aloud the book: All Families Are Different by Sol Gordon
 - Have students think and write about their personal opinions, thoughts, ideas, and feelings about differing family structures: Were there any family structures that were surprising to them? Were there any family structures that they hadn't thought of as being a "family" before? How do these different types of family structures make them feel? (think, write, share)
 - Ask students to identify a family structure that is different than their own. Have them try to identify ways that their family and the family they chose might be similar, even though the structure of the family is different.
 - Have students think and write about how all the families in the story and pictures are different from one another AND how they are the same. Discuss as a class

- Have a class discussion about the differing family structures and why it is important to be inclusive, respectful, equal and equitable to all these different types of families.

Wrap up:

- Have the students take out their “What is a family?” index card. Ask them to read over their previous answer. Ask students to think about whether or not they have anything they would like to add or change about their initial answer to this question.
- On the back of the card write #2, then write their current ideas about “What is a family”.
- Students who would like to share their initial and current ideas/thoughts about “What is a family” may do so. Discuss how their ideas have changed and why.
- Give the students a few minutes to journal about their thoughts on what they have learned today, and how (if at all) their ideas and thoughts have changed today.
- Wrap up by restating the objective of learning about different family structures and connecting it to the themes of diversity, respect, equity and equality.

REFLECTION:

After teaching this lesson, I was surprised by the students’ knowledge of some of the current political events that are happening in our world right now with our new president. I didn’t think that the kids would be as aware as they are about political events/issues at the third grade level. The kids brought up that in some places men weren’t allowed to marry men and women weren’t allowed to marry women, but in some places they were allowed. This brought up the idea that not all families have adults who are married to each other, some just live together, some have gotten a divorce. We had really good discussions about families not always having to live together in order to be a family (ie: divorced students who live with only one parent or who split their time between 2 households). We also discussed that not always are families made up of people who are related by blood (some kids have been adopted). There was really good discussion had, the kids were involved and I could see it really got some of them thinking.

I did see many of the kids change their ideas about “What is a family” to include a more wide-range, diverse group of people, or a broader definition of “family” by the end of the lesson, which was my goal. Some of the students started with a broad definition, such as “People who are related to each other” or “People who live together and are related”, but through our discussions, even these definitions were challenged a little! Not surprisingly, most of the kids definitions of “family” included people with children, since all of their families have one or more children in them! Initially, hardly any of them thought of a family as being a couple with no kids, which caused another good discussion. On their index cards, many of the students drew pictures of their own family, which was good. In the future, I may ask the kids to have words with their picture instead of just a picture to help them to think a bit deeper and more critically. The images on Google Slides and in the book were nice to refer back to and helped move the conversation along. Overall, we had really good discussions about families and noticed that most of our definitions or ideas about families were very narrow to begin

with, but widened to include more of a diversity of relationships by the end of the lesson. I am happy with the way the lesson ended up.

On a separate note, I was surprised at how hard it was to find images of families that were not man/women/kids. It was difficult to find families of mixed race, moms with kids, or dads with kids, or even grandparents with kids. I didn't think that would be one of the hardest parts of this lesson plan, but it was challenging!