

Getting Started

Birds of a Feather explores the notion of family in all its varieties and communicates to our youth audiences that their family is made up of the people who love them. In this Study Guide we want your students to celebrate family in all its diverse forms. These lessons will allow students to understand the different structures and diversity within a family.

It is very important to set some guidelines when working on sensitive topics with your students:

1. Everyone has the right to pass or sit out from an activity
2. Create a safe learning environment, where beliefs are freely expressed
3. What happens in this class, stays in this class
4. Respect for privacy and opinions expressed
5. Openness and willing to discuss

Glossary

Laysan Albatross: A large sea bird with a wingspan that can reach as far as 3.7 meters. They mostly live in a sanctuary in the Hawaiian Islands. Their mating pairings are varied, including female female mates, which bond for life. These are the same kind of bird that Violet and Sarah tell the story of in the play.

Makani: The Hawaiian word for the "Wild and Blustery Wind".

Kainoa: The Hawaiian word for "Endless Sea".

Aliki: The Hawaiian word for "The Most Beautiful One".

Family: No family looks the same; some people come from one parents homes, are raised by grandparents and by parents of the same gender. The important thing to remember is that family is the group of people who surround you and offer their support, guidance, love and protection.

Relationships: The way in which two or more concepts, objects, or people are connected, or the state of being connected.

Diversity: Diversity means that things are different from one another; the state of being diverse. People are diverse because of their culture, religion, gender as well as the families they come from.

Identity: A quality or characteristic which helps define a person; the qualities, beliefs, ideas etc., that make us different and unique. Family is large part of identity.

Love: Love means to be deeply connected to someone or something; to care for someone or something other than oneself.

Compromise: To compromise is to agree or settle a dispute that is reached by each side making sacrifices. To compromise is to work together with others to reach an agreement that makes everyone happy.

Commitment: Commitment means to be dedicated, faithful and loyal to something or someone. Example: Makani and Kainoa were committed to their egg and their new family.

A list of suggested books

These books deal with non-nuclear family structures and contribute to celebrating their diversity and differences:

King & King by Linda de Haan and Stern Nijland

Spacegirl Pukes by Katy Watson

The Great Big Book of Families by Mary Hoffman

Families by Susan Kuklin

All Families Are Special by Norma Simon

Amber Was Brave by Essie Was Smart and Vera B. Williams

And Tango Makes Three by Justin Richardson & Peter Parnell

Buster's Sugartime by Marc Brown.

I Love Saturdays y Domingos by Alma Flor Ada.

Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match/ Marisol McDonald No Combina by Monica Brown

Muskrat Will be Swimming by Cheryl Savageau

One Family by George Shannon

Heather Has Two Mommies by Lesléa Newman

Who's in my Family? by Robbie H Harris

In our Mother's House by Patricia Polacco