



Family Kaleidoscope

Background Information for Teachers

Family is the primary place where culture is learned and absorbed. Although there are many similarities among families, every family has its own unique culture. Aspects of family culture include work (going to school, home chores), play (at home, on special occasions), everyday routines, special rituals and traditions, beliefs and biases, gender roles, and ethnic and racial identity.

Teaching note: Program 2, “Family Kaleidoscope,” and its corresponding classroom activities are intended to help students think more about their own family culture. It is important to celebrate all families and to allow students to identify whom *they* consider to be members of their families. Also, some students may not be comfortable sharing family information or engaging their own families in certain activities. Be sure to provide creative options for students.

Synopsis

While engaged in drawing family portraits, the children in the learning center realize that families come in all shapes and sizes. To learn more about the relationship between families and culture, they visit a family operating a small cheese factory, a family celebrating their Jewish faith, and members of a New Mexico family who make traditional Acoma pottery. The children come to understand that family culture is always evolving and that conflict and cooperation are part of every family.



Program Goals

Correlations with National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) curriculum standards appear in italics following each goal.

After viewing Program 2 and engaging in supportive classroom activities, students will

- understand that family is the primary place where culture is learned and absorbed.
Early Grades: 1a, 4c, 4e, 5b
Middle Grades: 1a, 4c, 4e, 5b
- understand that family culture is not static.
Early Grades: 4c
Middle Grades: 4c
- understand that conflict and cooperation are part of all families.
Early Grades: 4h, 5d
Middle Grades: 4h, 5d
- begin to explore their own family culture.
Early Grades: 4c, 4e, 5a
Middle Grades: 4c, 4e

Vocabulary

Words preceded by an asterisk () were introduced earlier in the series and are included here for review.*

bat mitzvah (baht **mits**-vah) — A celebration marking a Jewish girl's entrance into the age of responsibility for keeping the commandments, usually at age 12. The girl reads from the Torah in Hebrew in front of the congregation, signifying that she is ready to accept her responsibilities as an adult. *Bar mitzvah* is a similar event in a boy's life, usually at age 13. [Hebrew]

bimah (**bee**-mah) — A raised platform or table in a synagogue from which the Torah is read. [Hebrew]

clan — A large group of related American Indian/First Nation families that share a common ancestor.

conflict — A disagreement.

***culture** — A way of life; something everyone has. It includes the behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought. Culture is complex and ever-evolving.

elder — A person respected for his or her knowledge, wisdom, and experience.

faith — Trust or confidence in someone or something.

Haftarah (hahf-tah-rah) — Literally, “final passage.” A selection, usually from the prophets, that is read after the Torah reading. In Program 2, Rachel reads the Haftarah during her bat mitzvah in the synagogue. [Hebrew]

hallah (hahl-lah) — A loaf of yeast-leavened egg bread, usually braided, traditionally eaten by Jews on the Sabbath, holidays, and other ceremonial occasions. Also *challah* or *chala*. [Hebrew]

Hebrew — The holy language of Judaism. Most Jewish holy books were originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic, a closely related language. It is the language of the people living in Israel.

mitzvah (mits-vah) — Commandments found in the Torah; there are 613 mitzvot (pl.). Commonly used to describe good deeds. [Hebrew]

prophecy — A prediction.

Shabbat (shah-baht) — A time of spiritual renewal and rest; it starts at sunset on Friday and ends at nightfall on Saturday. During Shabbat one does not drive, shop, cook, use electricity, or do any type of work. Also *Shabbos* or *Shabbath*. [Hebrew]

synagogue — A Jewish house of worship.

tallis (tah-lis) — A four-cornered shawl with *tzizit* (see below) worn by Jews during prayer. Also *tallit* or *tallith*. [Hebrew]

Torah (tore-ah) — Literally, “a teaching.” The Torah contains the written law of the Jewish faith. This sacred scroll, kept in a synagogue, contains the Five Books of Moses, which also are the first five books of the Bible (Genesis through Deuteronomy). [Hebrew]

tradition — The ideas, customs, and beliefs handed down from one generation to the next.

tzizit (tsee-seet) — The ritually knotted fringe found on each of the four corners of a *tallis* (see above). This term also commonly refers to the fringed undervest worn by some Jewish males. Also *tzitzis* or *tzittzit* or *tzitzith*. [Hebrew]

unique — One of a kind.

values — People’s beliefs and ideas about what is most important in their lives.

yad (yahd) — An ornamental hand-held pointer used to keep one’s place while reading from the Torah scroll.

Before-Viewing Activities

To meet the needs of diverse learning styles, be flexible in using these activities. In addition to writing, offer other options for expression.



Focus Questions for Class Discussion

- What is a family?
- What role does the family play in establishing and sharing culture?

Focus Activity

Have each student create a family portrait, using any medium they wish. Post the portraits. What do the portraits have in common? What differences are evident? Help students to understand that families come in all shapes and sizes.

Focus Questions for Students' Culture Journals

- Whom do I consider to be members of my family?
- What would I like to learn about my own family culture?

Teaching note: This activity is referenced in the student assessment activity; see page 10 of the [Teacher Summary](#).

Viewing Activities

Cheese Factory Family Segment

Bo and Emma live with their parents, a younger brother, and a pet guinea pig. Their mom grew up in the same house and their dad operates a small century-old cheese factory that his in-laws once managed. The family shares traditions, fun times, and chores, and has developed strategies for working through differences.

Viewing/Observation Points

Pause the video before this segment begins and ask students to keep the following questions in mind as they watch. At the conclusion of the segment, pause the video and ask the questions again to assess students' observations.

- What examples of family culture are seen in this segment? (Responses could include the children's responsibilities at home and at the cheese factory, sharing activities such as music and reading and homework, sharing family stories, learning from parents and grandparents, beliefs.)
- How does this family cooperate and work through conflicts? (Responses might include Dad helping the children learn to play the piano, children helping with chores at home and at the cheese factory, talking through their differences, recalling the family motto.)

Jewish Family Segment

Rachel, the young woman featured in this segment, discusses one of the most significant elements of her family culture: religious faith. Rachel was raised Jewish and shares many traditions passed down in her family. Faith, values, and beliefs are important examples of family culture.

Teaching note: This segment shows some of the Sabbath observances Rachel's family practices in giving thanks to God. These include candles for lighting their path, wine for fruit, and hallah for bread. You may wish to discuss the cultural significance of this family sharing a small amount of wine as part of their religious tradition.

Viewing/Observation Points

Pause the video before this segment begins and ask students to keep the following questions in mind as they watch. At the conclusion of the segment, pause the video and ask the questions again to assess students' observations.

- What examples of family culture are seen in this segment? (Responses might include talking together, telling stories, sharing meals, attending synagogue.)
- What examples of faith, attitudes, and beliefs are seen in this segment? (Responses might include various aspects of Judaism, the parents raising Rachel much like they were raised, believing it's important to honor traditions.)

Acoma Family Segment

The [Pueblo of Acoma](#) in New Mexico is considered to be the oldest continuously inhabited village in the United States. Acoma people have been making thin-walled, intricately decorated pottery from the native clay for thousand of years. In this segment, students meet the Cerno family, who live near the Pueblo. The family's youngest members are the sixth generation of potters. The potters honor what they have learned from their elders and sometimes incorporate designs of their own.

Viewing/Observation Points

Pause the video before this segment begins and ask students to keep the following questions in mind as they watch. At the conclusion of the segment, pause the video and ask the questions again to assess students' observations.

- What examples of family culture are seen in this segment? (Responses might include making traditional pottery, respecting elders, passing traditions from one generation to another, sharing games and food.)

- What examples of traditions and beliefs passed down through the generations are seen in this segment? (Responses could include honoring elders, making pottery, the designs painted on the pots, respect and affection for the place they live, the importance of being together)

After-Viewing Activities



Questions for Class Discussion

- What strategies for learning about culture did students observe in Program 2, “Family Kaleidoscope”?
- How does family culture affect gender roles?
- How does family culture show itself in games, hobbies, and family recreation?
- What other common, informal cultural elements, such as food traditions, emerge within families’ everyday lives?

Students’ Culture Journals

Ask students to open their journals and re-read their responses to the **Before-Viewing focus questions** on page 4. Ask them to update their journals by answering the following questions:

- What everyday activities are important to my family?
- What special traditions does my family share?
- What beliefs and values are important to my family?

Teaching note: This activity is referenced in the student assessment activity; see page 10 of the **Teacher Summary**.

Technology Link

Ask students to use Inspiration (or other similar educational software) to create a word web that groups activities they share with their families. What headings would they choose? (Examples include work, play, holiday traditions, beliefs; *or* activities shared with siblings, activities shared with parents, activities shared with grandparents.) Have the class form cooperative groups in which students compare and contrast their word webs.

Student Activity for Assessment

In this activity, students examine their own family’s culture and the influences that affect it. They then consider the ways in which their family culture has influenced their individual cultural identity. Details about the activity are provided in the **Teacher Summary** on pages 9 through 11.

Extension Activities

These activities correlate to the video segments cited in [Viewing Activities](#) (pp. 4-5) and allow for follow-up on particular themes.

Cheese Factory Family Segment

Lead a discussion about conflict, cooperation, and compromise in families. This family had a motto to help guide them through difficult times: “Communication and cooperation make us a happy nation.” Ask students to create a motto for their own family (it need not rhyme) and record it in their Culture Journal.

Jewish Family Segment

Ask students to brainstorm examples of family culture that have to do with beliefs and attitudes. Record their responses on the chalkboard. Examples might include observing the family’s religious faith, doing volunteer work, supporting charities, helping neighbors, and having different family roles for girls and boys.

Acoma Family Segment

Ask students to share with the class an activity, object, or story that relates to an intergenerational family custom or tradition. The item being shared might relate to family celebrations (birthdays, weddings, reunions, anniversaries), the calendar (daily, weekly, seasonal, or annual events), holidays, or religious beliefs.

References and Resources

Web Sites

How to Collect Your Own Family Folklore is a Web site that includes stories, photographs, and accounts of traditions designed to inspire students to collect folklore about their own families. The guide was produced to accompany “The Grand Generation: Memory, Mastery, Legacy,” an exhibition organized by the Smithsonian Institution Office of Folklife Programs and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, and provides how-to steps about the folklore collecting process. Web site: <http://educate.si.edu/migrations/seek2/family.html>.

American Memory Learning Page, from the Library of Congress, is a gateway to rich primary source materials relating to the history and culture of the United States. The Web site includes lesson plans and guidelines about conducting oral history interviews. Web site: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/index.html>.

Pueblo of Acoma is the Web site about the area where the Cerno family of potters lives. Includes brief information about the history and culture of Acoma people. Web site: <http://puebloofacoma.org>.

For Students

The American Family Farm, by Joan Anderson, photographs by George Ancona. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989, ISBN 0152030255 (hardcover); 1997, ISBN 0152014810 (paperback). The daily lives of three farm families in Massachusetts, Georgia, and Iowa are documented in text and photos. Although the families are different, they share a commitment to their farming traditions.

Families: A Celebration of Diversity, Commitment, and Love, by Ayllette Jenness. Houghton Mifflin (Juv.), 1993, ISBN 0395669529 (paperback). This photo essay explores the concept of family and the similarities and differences between families. It includes comments from 17 young people about their families, including mixed racial, blended, adoptive, two-parent, one-parent, gay or lesbian, and extended.

How My Family Lives in America, by Susan Kuklin. Simon & Schuster (Juv.), 1992, ISBN 0027512398 (school/library binding). Three young children whose parents immigrated to the United States from Senegal, Puerto Rico, and Taiwan share what they are learning from their elders. The author notes that she compiled this photo essay “to show how families impart a sense of identity to their young children.”

How to Tape Instant Oral Biographies, by Bill Zimmerman. Betterway Publications, 1999, ISBN 1558705260 (paperback). Designed to help students undertake family history projects, including suggestions for conducting interviews and using photos and documents.

In My Family (En Mi Familia), by Carmen Lomas Garza. Children’s Book Press, 1996, ISBN 0892391383 (school/library binding); 2000, ISBN 0892391634, (paperback). Through vibrant paintings and warm personal stories, the author/illustrator brings to life moving memories of growing up in a traditional Mexican-American family.

My Backyard History Book, by David Weitzman. Little, Brown, 1975, ISBN 0316929026 (paperback). This resource includes many fun projects for kids exploring their own family and local history. Its activities — such as tracing genealogy and making time capsules and rubbings — demonstrate that learning about the past begins at home.

My Family Kaleidoscope assessment activity

Learning Goal

- Students will begin to explore their own family culture.

Correlations with NCSS Curriculum Standards

Individual Development and Identity

- *Early Grades:* 4c — Describe the unique features of one's nuclear and extended families.
- *Middle Grades:* 4c — Describe the ways family, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and institutional affiliations contribute to personal identity.

Activity Overview

By exploring the culture of their own family, students will learn how influences such as neighborhood, personal interests, language, likes and dislikes, and accomplishments affect both their own cultural identities and that of their families. After students identify an aspect of their family's culture they wish to explore, they plan and conduct an interview with a family member of their choice.

Students then describe in their Culture Journals how their family culture has influenced who they are. Finally, they create a display, exhibit, or presentation to share the things they have learned about family culture.

Materials Needed

- Students' Culture Journals
- Student copies of the **My Family Kaleidoscope assessment rubric** (page 12)
- Student copies of the **Getting Ready to Interview (Part A)** activity sheet (page 13)
- Student copies of **The Interview (Part B)** activity sheet (pages 14-15)
- Student copies of the **Culture Journal Writing (Part C)** information sheet (page 16)
- Student copies of **The Presentation (Part D)** activity sheet (page 17)
- Student copies of the **Project Checklist** (page 18) (optional)
- Art supplies and/or computer software programs, as needed for student presentations

Teacher Instructions

The Assessment Rubric

At the beginning of the assessment activity, distribute the rubric to students and explain how you will use it to measure their achievement. Since there are several components to this assessment, it's best to review pertinent sections of the rubric with students as you move through the activity. Be sure that they understand the relevance of the criteria before proceeding with each part of the assessment.

1. Review

Ask students to review the responses they wrote in their Culture Journals to these Before-Viewing and After-Viewing questions:

- Whom do I consider to be members of my family?
- What would I like to learn about my own family culture?
- What everyday activities are important to my family?
- What special traditions does my family share?
- What beliefs and values are important to my family?

You may wish to replay the portion of Program 2, “Family Kaleidoscope,” that shows students participating in Family Day.

2. Interview Questions

Explain to students that they will be engaging in a project designed to help them learn more about their own families. Tell students that:

- families come in all shapes and sizes.
- each student can define whom they consider to be members of his or her own family.
- they may make up their own ideal family or work with an individual or family with whom they feel comfortable.

Inform students that they will be composing interview questions to ask of a family member of their choice. You may wish to distribute the **Project Checklist** now to help students understand the components and time lines of this project.

Give each student a **Getting Ready to Interview** (Part A) activity sheet and a **My Family Kaleidoscope** rubric. As a class, read through the steps of Part A. In regard to Step 1 (What do I want to learn about my family culture?), point out that everyday activities and traditions are just as important to a family’s culture as special events or fancy celebrations.

Before students begin Part A, review the corresponding portion of the rubric, making sure they understand the way in which their performance is being measured. Provide students with time to complete Part A. You may wish to let them pair up afterward to review one another’s interview questions.

3. Conducting the Interview

When students finish Part A, distribute **The Interview** (Part B) activity sheet and have them write their interview questions on it. Then, guide them through the steps of setting up, conducting, and concluding their interviews, including writing a thank-you note to the interviewee.

Review with the class the Part B section of the rubric, ensuring that students realize how you are measuring their performance. Give students a week to finalize their interview plans and conduct their interviews.

4. Journal Writing

Distribute to students the **Culture Journal Writing** (Part C) information sheet and review it with them. Explain that, in their Culture Journals, they will describe and give examples of the things they learned about the ways their families have influenced their personal identity and development.

To help students prepare, recommend that they review the responses to their questions on **The Interview** activity sheet. Turn their attention to the rubric and go over the component dealing with Part C to make certain students comprehend it.

5. Student Presentations

Guide students in selecting a way to share with their classmates the things they learned from their family interviews. Tell students to use **The Presentation** (Part D) activity sheet to help them prepare. Have them include a description of the ways their families have influenced their unique cultural identities. Before students prepare their presentations, review Part D of the rubric with them, so they understand the expectations.

Tell them they may create an exhibit or display, or demonstrate a family hobby or activity. Suggestions include sharing family objects, creating a scrapbook, making a poster with photographs and captions, designing a family tree, making a time line on butcher paper using photographs or artwork, painting a mural, making a diorama, and creating a computer-based display.

Allow students a week to create their presentations, either at home or at school. Schedule one to two hours for the presentations or provide a large exhibit area where students can display their work. You may wish to review early drafts of the students' projects. They then can revise and complete their presentations using your comments.

My Family Kaleidoscope assessment rubric

Name _____
 Date _____ ID# _____

Explore your own family culture.

ACTIVITY	RESULTS			
	Just Beginning 1 point	On My Way 2 points	Almost There 3 points	Well Done 4 points
Part A: Getting Ready	Wrote 1 interview question but it was unclear.	Wrote 2 interview questions but they were vague.	Wrote 3 interview questions and they were understandable.	Wrote 4 interview questions and all were well stated.
Part B: The Interview	Recorded 1 answer but the answer was unclear.	Recorded 2 answers but the answers were vague.	Recorded 3 answers and the answers were understandable.	Recorded 3 answer and all answers were well stated.
Part C: Culture Journal Writing	Wrote 1 complete thought but gave no examples.	Wrote 1 complete thought and gave 1 example.	Wrote 2 complete thoughts and gave 1 example.	Wrote 2 complete thoughts and gave 2 examples.
Part D: Design of the Presentation	My design doesn't relate to any written ideas. Classmates understand little of my presentation.	My design relates to 1 written idea. Classmates understand some of my presentation.	My design relates to 2 written ideas. Classmates understand most of my presentation.	My design relates to 3 or more written ideas. Classmates understand all of my presentation.

Correlations with NCSS Curriculum Standards — *Individual Development and Identity*

- Early Grades: 4c — describe the unique features of one's nuclear and extended families.
- Middle Grades: 4c — describe the ways family, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and institutional affiliations contribute to personal identity.

Name _____

Date _____ ID# _____

My Family Kaleidoscope: Part A

Getting Ready to Interview

Directions: You are about to explore your family culture. You will begin by interviewing a member of your family. Follow steps 1 through 4 to help you prepare for this interview.

Step 1

What do I want to learn about my family culture?

Hint: Review your answer to this question in your Culture Journal.

Step 2

Which member of my family should I interview? Why?

Hint: Who would best be able tell you about what you want to learn?

Step 3

What questions should I ask during the interview?

Hint: Ask questions that get the person to talk. (*Example:* "What did you like about your first job?") Avoid questions that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." (*Example:* "Did you like your first job?")

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Step 4:

Circle the tools you will use during the interview.

pencil and paper

tape recorder

camera

video camera

Student Activity

Name _____

Date _____ ID# _____

My Family Kaleidoscope: Part B
The Interview

Directions: Write the interview questions you composed on the **Getting Ready to Interview** activity sheet in the boxes below.

Family Member's Name:

Question #1: _____

Answer #1: _____

Question #2: _____

Answer #2: _____

Question #3: _____

Answer #3: _____

Question #4: _____

Answer #4: _____

My Family Kaleidoscope: Part C

Culture Journal Writing

Directions: The information below will help you to write in your Culture Journal about how your family culture has shaped you into the person you are today.

1. Review the answers to your interview questions.
2. Think about the things you have learned about your unique family culture.
 - What examples did you discover that show how your family culture has been formed by the neighborhood, personal interests, language, likes and dislikes, and accomplishments?
3. Think about how your family culture has influenced who you are today.
 - What examples did you discover that show how your family culture has shaped who you are today?
4. Now, write down your thoughts to the above questions in your Culture Journal. Explain how your family culture has made you who you are. For help getting started, read this example:

During my interview with my aunt, we went outside to look at some of the plants in her yard. I learned that my aunt likes to grow a lot of different kinds of plants. She pointed out the purple flowers I helped her plant last spring. My aunt taught me that these flowers have three different names.

I remember planting the flowers. It was really fun. It's even more fun to see how much the flowers have grown. I like growing things and being outside. I think my aunt has helped me learn to like gardening.

My aunt's personal interest in gardening has played a part in shaping my unique cultural identity.

Name _____

Date _____ ID# _____

My Family Kaleidoscope: Part D

The Presentation

Directions: You are going to share with the class the things you learned from interviewing a family member. This sheet will help you to prepare.

1. Read again what you wrote in your Cultural Journal about how your family culture has shaped who you are.
2. Turn your words into a presentation that describes your main ideas. Use the list below to decide the best way to present your information. After you create your presentation, share it with the class.

<p>You may make a:</p> <p>display scrapbook poster w/photos, captions family tree family time line mural computer-based display</p>	<p>song poem newspaper play cartoon collage video</p>	<p>You may use:</p> <p>family photographs family objects your drawings quotes from your interview art clipped from magazines art supplies</p>
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I will make a _____ .

I will use these things:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Name _____

Date _____ ID# _____

My Family Kaleidoscope Project Checklist

Activity	Date Due	Teacher's Comments
Part A Getting Ready to Interview		
Part B The Interview		
Part C Culture Journal Writing		
Part D The Presentation <i>First draft</i>		
<i>Final draft</i> (includes teacher's comments)		
<i>Sharing the presentation</i>		