

Families Come in Different Shapes & Sizes

OBJECTIVE

To understand that families can be made up of a lot of different people and pets that are special and important to you.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Students will discuss who they think can make up a family and read a story about a dog's family, called *Jaeger Finds a Family*. They'll also make dioramas of families.

MATERIALS

- 🐾 Posterboard
- 🐾 Book: *Jaeger Finds a Family*, by Jennifer Seidel
- 🐾 Shoe boxes for the dioramas
- 🐾 Materials to make the dioramas can include items such as: yarn, felt, wallpaper clippings, small wood and styrofoam pieces, film canisters, pictures cut out of magazines of pets, children and adults (all different ages and ethnicities), construction paper, paper towel and toilet paper rolls
- 🐾 Markers, crayons, pencils
- 🐾 Scissors, glue

ACTIVITY

Preliminary Discussion

- 🐾 Who can make up a family? Discuss that friends, pets and other important people in the student's lives can be considered part of their family. Make a list of the people and animals they consider to be part of their families, on posterboard and hang it up in the classroom.
- 🐾 How should members of a family treat each other? Do pets and people have some of the same feelings?
- 🐾 Who do you consider to be part of your family? Why? How do you treat them?

Procedure

Read the book *Jaeger Finds a Family*. Discuss what kind of family adopted "Jaeger" the dog. Even though a single woman adopted Jaeger, could she be a good family for him? Why? How should a family care for its pets? How does a family take care of one another? Next, make dioramas of families. The students should create any kind of family they want - either their own family or a pretend one. The shoe boxes will serve as homes and the various materials can be used to decorate it and make furniture for the people and pets. The pictures of the people and animals can be taped to small film canisters so they can be moved around. Supplies for the dioramas can be purchased from "Creative Exchange" at low cost. This organization, in the Denver Metro area, receives donations of clean, non-toxic items like leather pieces, yarn, small wood pieces and styrofoam from companies that would otherwise throw them out, and they make them available to educators for use in their classrooms.

Post-Discussion

- 🐾 Have the students discuss their dioramas and describe the people and pets in them.
- 🐾 How can people and pets live together happily?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Display the dioramas at the school or in the library, with descriptions of what they depict.