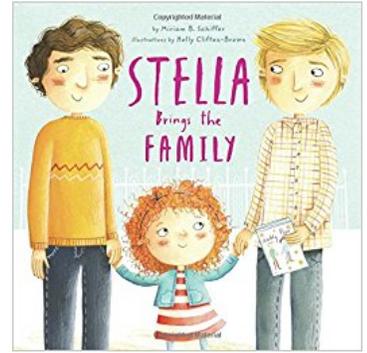


Stella Brings the Family

By Miriam B. Schiffer

Stella's class is having a Mother's Day celebration, but Stella has two daddies. What should she do? It's not that she doesn't have someone who helps her with her homework, or tucks her in at night. Stella has her Papa and Daddy who take care of her, and a whole gaggle of other loved ones who make her feel special and supported every day. She just does not have a mom to invite to the party. Fortunately, Stella finds a unique solution to her party problem in this sweet story about love, acceptance, and the true meaning of family.



Discussion and Questions:

- What might help Stella not feel so worried?
- How could you help Stella feel that others accepted her family?
- What are some reasons that Stella is proud of her family?
- How could you help Stella and others understand that families who are different from her own are not a bad thing?

Activities:

Ages Birth to 5:

- **Parachute Activities**
 - Gather a parachute and small foam/plastic balls (like those in a ball pit). A bed sheet or table cloth and paper balls could be used if needed.
 - To focus on teamwork, use the parachute and balls to have a bounce off. As a group, work together to bounce all the balls off the parachute. Groups can also raise the parachute to come together as one underneath.
 - There are many fun games to do with a parachute that can incorporate teamwork, fine and gross motor skills, and can even include music and songs. For more ideas on parachute games, check out <https://bit.ly/1BXOTuC>
- **Songs**
 - The More We Get Together by Raffi - Available at <https://youtu.be/W-MQB4WRpl?t=1m20s>
The more we get together
Together, together
The more we get together
The happier we'll be
Cause your friends are my friends
And my friends are your friends
The more we get together
The happier we'll be
 - If You're Happy and You Know It attributed to Dr. Alfred B. Smith - Available at <https://youtu.be/71hqRT9U0wg>
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.
If you're happy and you know it, your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.
To encourage interaction, add verses to include: smile at a friend, give a high 5, hug a friend, etc.
 - Everyone Is Different by Lanny Sherwin – available at <https://bit.ly/2OKsl9H> (© 2006 Sherwin Communications, LLC/ASCAP)

Verse 1

We're all different colors, we wear different clothes,
We speak differently from different zip codes.
We're short, we're tall, we're fat, we're thin,
We're square pegs in round holes just trying to fit in.

Chorus

Everyone is different, it's really no big thing,
It's the differences between us that make life interesting.
Those little quirks that make us work are Heaven-sent,
So give a little thanks that we're all different.

Verse 2

We're wise, we're weird, we're cool, we're geeks,
We're pieces of a puzzle – strangely unique.
But put us together and what do you see?
The world is our home, and we're one big family.

Chorus

Everyone is different, it's really no big thing,
It's the differences between us that make life interesting.
Those little quirks that make us work are Heaven-sent,
So give a little thanks that we're all different.

Ages 3 to 5:

- **Family Tree**
 - Supplies: glue, markers, colorful construction paper, copy of a tree without leaves, safety scissors
 - Cut leaves out of construction paper and glue them onto a tree. For very small children, cut the leaves out prior to the activity. Older children can cut leaves using safety scissors.
 - Children should be encouraged to label the leaves with the names of people they love and who love them, such as family members, friends, teachers, neighbors, and others.
 - Next help the child glue the leaves onto the tree. Children should place the leaves wherever they want to on the paper. Assist children as needed.
- **Family Portrait**
 - Supplies: paper, markers, crayons
 - Invite children to draw their family. When they have finished the picture, assist them in labeling each person in the picture.
 - Encourage the child to share what they love about those in the picture. Adults can write these statements on the back if desired.
 - This picture can be displayed in a location that is visible to the child.
- **Compare and Contrast**
 - Gather a set of child safe items that are similar, but not identical, and allow time for children to play with the items. After some playtime, discuss what was the same about the toys and what was different.
 - Continue the conversation by sharing the ways in which the toys are fun to play with even though they were not exactly the same. This can help older children recognize that differences are not problematic or negative.
 - For younger children, choose items that are relevant to them (balls, rattles, soft blankets, body parts, etc.). Encourage caregivers to narrate what they notice that is similar and different between the items.