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Lesson 1.1D Reflection

“What is a family, Learning for Justice”

When I think about “family” growing up, my personal definition was very simple. It was only ever my Dad, Mom, brother, sister and myself. My parents were both only children, so I did not have any Aunts, Uncles, or cousins. Three of the four of my grandparents passed away before I was born, except for my paternal grandmother who was mentally ill. I remember being one of the only students in my class that did not have a grandparent on “Grandparents Day”; and when my friends talked about Christmas, most of them would say how they were going to their grandma’s house. I remember feeling very sad that I did not have a grandma.

The book “Stella Brings the Family” brought back a sense of familiarity, just in a different way. Stella was very sad that she did not have a mother to bring to the Mother’s Day Party. This caused her to worry all week, enough to make her lose her appetite. Thankfully, her teacher was welcoming with the idea of bringing anyone special to her to celebrate with. I often recall my friends’ grandparents asking me to sit with them, so I was not alone. It is such a wonderful feeling, and everyone should feel that they belong.

Another constraint that may cause families to be unable to participate in events such as PTA committee meetings or back-to-back nights, could be the fact that the family only has one car. For example, if Dad was working and not home in time to make it to the event on time, the whole family would have to miss out. I think to encourage additional engagement strategies, one thing you could suggest would be for parents to coordinate with each other to establish carpool networks.

The definition of “family” looks different for everyone. Wouldn’t our lives be so boring if we were all the same. What would we talk about? I love listening to my students come into the classroom in the morning wanting to share something that happened the night before; whether it be a big win in a football game, a new video game they got for their birthday, or the new puppy that their grandma got. The conversations that emerge are so powerful and they all want to engage and learn even more about one another. I really encourage my students (and my own children!) to always be accepting to everyone. No one is perfect, and we should not strive to be, but instead we should love one another and make every person we encounter feel that they belong.