



Caring for Our Families

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☀ Values

- Tradition of Caring
- Reconciliation
- Tolerance
- Patience
- Sense of Humor
- Social Emotional Learning

☀ Reflection Questions

Have you ever been to a family reunion? Do you enjoy them? Why or why not?

What does the word “family” mean to you? What are blended, extended and biological families?

Would you rather have a large or small family? Why? What are the benefits of each?

☀ Lessons Learned

Family gatherings can be like a special glue that holds people together.

If you want to change the world, a good way to start is by caring for your family.

Planning special events with your cousins is fun and makes for great memories.

“Caring is such a simple thing, yet it is so often neglected in our fast-paced world.” In this story, Marianne Larned tells how she and her mother and aunt, realized that their family was drifting apart and that something precious was being lost. “Somewhere along the way, our family’s tradition of caring seemed to fade,” she says. “Sometimes we forgot how much we needed each other.” By creating a family reunion, they reconnected with each other, renewed old friendships and rekindled their family spirit. In the process, they passed a special legacy of caring on to the next generation. “We forget to take time for each other and for our families,” says Marianne. “But if we want to change the world, that’s the best place to start.”

☀ Language Arts: SEL & Diversity

Invite students to remember or ask their parents or guardians about past family gatherings and write a report on the highlights. Have students draw their family tree, including past and present family members. Make copies for grandparents and close relatives and ask them for help in filling in the “branches” Ask students to interview their parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents and make a timeline of historical and/or important family events in their lives.

☀ Social Studies: Diversity

Have students write about the family traditions they celebrate during the holidays and on special occasions. Discuss the cultural, ethnic and other origins of these traditions. Have students develop a genealogical research project to determine their family roots. The World Wide Web is a good starting place.

☀ Community Service: Service Learning

Help organize a family reunion; a cookout, beach party, camping trip or pot -luck dinner. Organize games and sports with your cousins. The book *Family Reunion* by Jennifer Culberton will give you some good ideas. Invite people who live alone and/ or far from their families to join you for the holidays. Take photographs at a family gathering and make a small album for a Christmas present.

