



Family Structures Grade 7

UNIT OVERVIEW

Unit Topic: Family Structures

Duration

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| 1) The Importance of Family | 40 minutes |
| 2) The Structure Of Contemporary Families | 40 minutes |
| 3) Television Families | 80 minutes |

Description

This unit will begin by examining the important role the family plays in the socialization, education and care of children. Through the use of story and the media, students will then examine contemporary and traditional family structures and the love that forms and sustains them.

Background Information

We live in an ever-changing social environment and many new ideas of what constitutes a family are emerging. This makes any discussion about family structures very complex. Catholic teaching upholds the traditional family as the ideal for the full and happy development of children while at the same time recognizing that many of today's families find reaching that ideal a great challenge. Divorce, reproductive technology, sexual freedom, demands on our time, the influence of the media, and changing social norms have all had a significant impact on the well-being of families. To help teachers present family in a positive light, while recognizing the tension that exists between Catholic teaching and present experience, a number of teacher resources have been provided in the appendices of each lesson. These are designed to inform the teacher so that they can respond to student questions in a manner that is in keeping with church teaching and honours the experience of the student.

Planning Ahead:

- Lesson 1** Prepare to use either the provided PowerPoint presentation or create overheads from its slides.
- Lesson 2** You may wish to prepare a group of students to perform a dramatic reading of the poem, Legacy of an Adopted Child, to be performed during lesson two for the other students.

Catholic Graduate Expectations

A Caring Family Member Who:

- (d) Values and honours the important role of the family in society.
- (e) Ministers to the family, school, parish, and wider community through service.

Overall Expectations

Students will:

- deepen their understanding of family

Specific Expectations

Students will:

- identify the various ways in which the family unit nurtures and supports its members.
- Identify contemporary family structures

Assessment and Evaluation

Summative Assessment: Assess student graphic organizers, pamphlet, computer presentation, or posters based on a rubric that has been designed for each specific task.

Formative Assessment: Assess journal for 1) articulation, 2) the ability to infer meaning from text and 3) reflect on its relevance to their lives.

Formative Assessment: evaluate the T chart using a teacher-generated checklist.

Formative Assessment: Assessment of the worksheet, Television Families for thinking and analyzing skills.

Personal Communication: use classroom discussion to assess student knowledge and understanding of contemporary family structures.

Links to Fully Alive

The following lessons have been create to extend and complement the present lessons and content of the student text prepared for Theme 2, *Living in Relationship*, Topic 2 *The Family*.

- Lesson 1 serves as an introduction to theme 2, topic 2, and should be conducted prior to any reading of the text in the student book.
- Lesson 2 is linked to Living in a Family (student text, p. 37) providing an activity to promote learning around contemporary family structure.

- Lesson 3 supports and extends Lesson 1 – *Television Families* (theme 2, topic 2, *Living in a Family*). The lesson has been modified to ensure that students experience a variety of family structures. Background information has been provided for the teacher that is based on Catholic teaching and provides recent research to assist with any discussion that might arise around controversial structures such as single parent mothers and same-sex parenting.

Suggestions for Accommodations

- Provide opportunities to “pair share” or arrange for student to have a ‘study buddy’
- Arrange activity breaks to assist student to focus on instruction
- Review important vocabulary
- Provide checklists, outline, and organizers to assist in assignment completion.
- Provide oral discussion before writing
- Clarify definitions, terms and vocabulary in assignments
- Make use of computer technology where possible
- Make expectations explicit

Black line Masters

- BLM 1 Five Positive Aspect of Family Living
- BLM 2 Journal Reflection: Corinthians 12:26
- BLM 3 Family Love T Chart.
- BLM 4 Parent Letter
- BLM 5 Television Families

Teacher Resource Appendix

- TRA 1 Slide notes for Power Point presentation.
- TRA 2 Contemporary Forms of Family – pgs.32-34
- TRA 3 Family Facts – pgs. 47-54

Additional Resources

Pope John Paul II: 1994 - Year Of The Family, *Letter To Families*

Catholic Organization for Life and Family, CCCB Publication, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops – messages on the family and the sanctity of marriage

- World Peace: A family recipe!
- The Christian Family, Good news for the world
- A Child gives life to love and love to life!

- Marriage Matters

Mike Aquilina. *Love in the Little Things: Tales of Family Life*. ISBN-10: **0-86716-814-5**

(A book of short stories about family life)

Websites

www.colf.ca - Catholic Organization for Life and Family.

This organization is an independent group funded and approved by the Knights of Columbus and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. It offers easy to read pamphlets and brochures on many issues related to family life and Marriage. Pamphlets are also available that discuss life issues such as stem cell research, abortion, euthanasia and doctor assisted suicide.

www.vifamily.ca - The Vanier Institute of the Family.

Here you will find a series of occasional papers commissioned by the *Vanier Institute for the Family* and authored by leading Canadian experts in the field of family studies. The following papers found under the heading of *Contemporary Family Trends* relate specifically to this unit: 1) Divorce: Facts, Causes and Consequences; 2) One Parent Families: Characteristics, Causes and Consequences and Issues; 3) Strength in Families: Accentuating the Positive.

Family Structures Grade 7

Lesson One

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY

[top](#)

Description

- Through a series of activities, students explore the importance of living in a loving family for the positive and holistic development of the child.

Materials

- BLM 1: Five Positive Aspects of Family Living
- BLM 2: Reflections on 1Corinthians 12: 26
- TRA 1: Slide Notes for PowerPoint Presentation.
- PowerPoint Presentation or overheads: *Five Positive Aspects of Family Living* (provided as a separate file on the CD)
- Slide Projector or computer and LCD projector.

Notes to Teacher

Beginning this unit, by giving students the **BLM 5** handout, *Television Families*. Have them complete the activity sheet at home and return it to school in time to share their results as part of lesson three (3).

Lesson One requires the use of the PowerPoint Presentation (Five Positive Aspects of Family Living) or overhead slides created from the slides in the PowerPoint Presentation file (provide as part of this program on the CD)

Future discussions on contemporary family structures in Lesson 2 (lesson 1, page 37 of the Fully Alive teacher's manual) are made easier if students understand how important the institution of family is to the development of the child.

Later in grade 8, students will explore the characteristics of a strong family, and could be reminded of *the role of family* studied in grade 7.

All statistics used in this lesson have been summarized from data presented on the Vanier Institute of the Family website, primarily from *Strength in Families: Accentuate the positive*. Dr. Ben Schlesinger, PH.D..

Overall Expectations

Students will deepen their understanding of family

Specific Expectations

Students will identify the various ways in which the family unit nurtures and supports its members.

Assessment Opportunities:

Formative Assessment: Assess journal writing for 1) articulation, 2) the ability to infer meaning from text and 3) reflection on its relevance to their lives.

Formative Assessment: Assess students' graphic organizers, pamphlets, computer presentations, or posters based on a rubric that has been designed for each specific task.

Summative Assessment: culminating activity to be assign after lesson three and completed by the end of theme 2, topic 2 of the family life program, *Family*.

TEACHING / LEARNING STRATEGIES

- 1) Write the following quote from Paul Connolly on the board;

“A family is a group of people who will risk being themselves in order to help one another discover the fullest possible expression of their own humanity.”

 - a) Ask students to reflect on this quote and then to break the statement down into a list of key words or points the author wishes to make.
 - b) Key points to be taken from the quote:
 - a family is a unit of 2 or more people
 - in a family people can be who they really are without fear
 - free from fear of rejection, a person is free also to reach out and help others
 - in family persons come to discover what it means to be human
 - in family persons are free to express their humanity fully
 - c) Ask several students to share their list so that others can add to their list any new ideas. Lists form part of student notes.
- 2) Tell student that today they are going to explore what scientific research tells us about why families are so important - why we need a family to be whole – to be happy – to feel safe. All the information you are about to hear has been taken from the website run by the Vanier Institute for the Family (*Strength in Families: Accentuate the positive*. Dr. Ben Schlesinger, PH.D.)
- 3) **Brainstorming:** In small groups, have students brainstorm reasons why family is important to them (e.g. food, shelter, love, companionship, comfort, free to be me, learning, etc). Students then share their ideas with the whole group as the teacher records ideas on chart paper.
- 4) **Teacher Presentation & Whole Group Discussion :**
 - a. Use the PowerPoint presentation, *Five Positive Aspects of Family Living* and slide notes provided in teacher resource to outline for students the important role families play in the development of the child.
 - b. If computer technology is not available, use the PowerPoint slides to create overheads.
 - c. Discuss with students how important it is to belong to a family and how the family contributes to our happiness and well-being. (See slide notes in the teacher resource section below to help frame a discussion around each slide.)

- 5) **Graphic Organizer, pamphlet, computer presentation, or Poster:**
- Divide students into small groups and provide them with a copy of **BLM 1** *Five Positive Aspects of Family Living*.
 - Assign each of the original small groups one of the 5 positive aspects of family living from the list.
 - Using computer software, art supplies or paper and pencil, students create either a graphic organizer, poster or pamphlet presenting/depicting examples of how families might fulfill the particular aspect of family living that has been assigned to the group.
 - Encourage students to reflect back on the previous discussion and on their own family experiences for ideas.
- 6) **Gallery Walk:** Post graphic organizers, posters, and pamphlets around the room. Give students time to visit each group's work and, using post-it notes, comment on what they like about the work and/or what further ideas might be expressed to give the work a greater impact.
- 7) **Journal Reflection:**
- a. Distribute **BLM 2** *Reflections on I Corinthians 12:26* and have student complete it for homework.

Connecting with parents - *You may wish to have students discuss the reflection question with their parents prior to writing. They could include in their reflections some the ideas taken from that discussion*

Optional Activities

Presentation: If time permits you may wish to have student design and deliver a presentation to the younger grades about the importance of family.

Advance Preparation for the lesson two: In Lesson two, students will reflect on the poem, *Legacy of an Adopted Child*. You may wish to have one or more students prepare a dramatic reading of the poem to enrich the experience for the other students.

BLM 1**Five Positive Aspect of Family Living**

- Families Nurture the Development of the Child
 - Socially
 - Emotionally
 - Physically,
 - Spiritually
 - Intellectually

- Families identify the child as belonging to a particular group
 - Nationality
 - Culture
 - Religion
 - Family member
 - Position in family

- Families are where values, symbols, traditions, rituals, and practices are created and passed on to future generations
 - Christmas Dinner rituals
 - Prayer and Sunday Worship
 - Cleanliness rituals
 - Work ethic
 - Life long learner

- Families provide a place of hope and security. They are guardians of the child's freedom
 - Encourage hopes and dreams for the future
 - Comfort sorrows
 - Nurture needs - Food shelter love
 - Love unconditionally
 - Offer children enough freedom to discover who they are
 - Discipline out of love

- Families are the place where children learn to be positive members of society
 - Model caring for other family members
 - Model supporting for the poor
 - Model working in the local community
 - Model political involvement
 - Provide opportunities for children to experiences what parents model

BLM 2**Reflections on 1Corinthians 12: 26**

The human person realizes dignity and rights in relationship with others, in community. "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it: if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it."

(1Corinthians 12: 26)

Reflection Questions: What can we learn from this passage about how we are to live with the other members of our family? What does this teaching look like in our everyday interactions with the other members of our family?

Assessment Rubric**APPENDIX 1****Slide Notes for Power Point Presentation**

Slide 1: Read the Thomas Jefferson quote to the students and ask them to suggest why Thomas Jefferson might feel that way. Based on this quote, what do you think family life was like for him?

Today we are going to look at what such a positive family might be like for all of us. No family is perfect but that should not stop us from imagining and striving for the joy of living in a good and loving family

Slide 2 dialogue: When a child is born, they begin a lifelong journey of becoming the person God intended them to be. Parents and other family members play a significant role in the Socially, Emotionally, Physically, Spiritually, and Intellectually development of the child.

Question for Students: Can you tell me some ways in which family members and close family friends might support the development of a child in any one of these areas? Think outside the box and remember to include all family members, not just parents and older siblings. (*Affirm responses but do not add to them at this point. The idea is to help them understand the meaning of e.g. social, spiritual development and to begin to see the role the entire family plays*)

Slide 3 dialogue: Each person is born into a family and that family belongs to a particular culture (Canadian/East coast), represents one or more nationalities (Jamaican/Irish/Polish), and may belong to a particular Religion (Hindu/Muslim/Christian). Our ancestry, the organizations we belong to, and the culture(s) we live in all help to define who we are, what we eat, how we dress, how we care for our health and much, much more. They give us a sense of belonging to something, belonging to a group of people with a particular set of values, traditions, morals and practices. Often

a particular language defines them. The family is where children are first welcomed into a particular social group. It is the most important place for children as they form their identity and discover the importance of belonging. I am the son or daughter of Mr and Mrs Jones; I am the third child in a family of five, I am the only granddaughter my Father's parents have, I am as tall as my uncle Jonas.

Student Reflection: Invite students to turn to one other person next to them and share 5 things that define their sense of belonging.

Slide 4 dialogue: Families is where values, symbols, traditions, rituals, and practices are created and passed on to future generations. Parents teach their children what is right and wrong, both by their actions and by word. How and when parents discipline their children, rather or not other adults share in the disciplining of children, or for what acts children are disciplined also shapes the person the child becomes.

Within the family, children learn the importance of cleanliness and the joy of learning how to do something well. They learn to be responsible, to finish the work they are given and to do it to the best of their ability. It is in the home that children also learn the importance of daily prayer and Sunday worship. It is not only the parents who help children to learn all of this. All members of the family share this responsibility. A child can learn from an older brother or sister how to make their bed or how to say their prayers at night before they go to bed.

Questions: What are some other things children can learn from the members of their family? What about grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins? What role do you think they should play?

Slide 5 dialogue: Families provide a place of hope and security. They are guardians of the child's freedom. When we are growing up, there are many times when we feel afraid and alone, when we feel our freedom has been taken from us. When we are being bullied at school and we do not know who can help, when we argue with our best friend or when a close relative dies. Good families offer us a safe place to express our fears, to ask for help, to be ourselves without fear of being ridiculed or rejected.

Home is where we are fed, are given a warm comfortable bed to sleep in, and have a place where we can escape from the stress of everyday life.

At home, we should be able to find unconditional love and forgiveness for our mistakes. Parental discipline can be a sign of great love. Caring parents want to make sure the child understands the harm they have done so they will refrain from making the same mistake again. They are concerned for the happiness and safety of their child.

It is the family that encourages us to face challenges with enthusiasm, gives us opportunities to reach for the stars with confidence and the freedom to question or even challenge existing rules as we grow to become the best person we can be.

Slide 6 dialogue: As a child grows older, they learn from their families what it means to be charitable and caring. They see family members caring for each other, being politically and socially active. Children may even be given the opportunity to go out into the community with family members to perform works of social justice – working at soup kitchen, running the local church Bazaar, or canvassing door to door for the Cancer society. Even the simple act of shovelling a neighbour’s driveway when they are too ill or too old to do it for themselves is a great example of service to others that moulds the child into a good member of society. Families are the place where children learn to be positive members of society.

Question: What are some other things that families could do together as caring and compassionate members of society?

Family Structures Grade 7

Lesson Two

WHAT IS A FAMILY?

[top](#)

Description

- Students will examine several stories of contemporary family structures and discuss their weaknesses and strengths.
- A special focus will be given to multicultural families formed through adoption.

Materials

- **BLM 3:** T-Chart on Family Love

Notes to Teacher

Multicultural Families: In Canada today there is a significant rise in inter-racial marriages and in the adoption of children who are of a different race than the parents. The following story will help students reflect on the love that generates and celebrates diversity within families. It may also open a discussion around multicultural marriages and offer a teachable moment around respect for diversity and the dignity of all persons.

Catholic Graduate Expectations

A Caring Family Member Who:

- (f) Values and honours the important role of the family in society.
- (g) Ministers to the family, school, parish, and wider community through service.

Overall Expectations

Students will:

- deepen their understanding of family

Specific Expectations

Students will:

- identify the various ways in which the family unit nurtures and supports its members.
- Identify contemporary family structures

Assessment Opportunities:

Formative evaluation: evaluate the T chart using a teacher-generated checklist.

TEACHING / LEARNING STRATEGIES

- 1) **Read and Respond:** Read about different types of families (pages 37 – 38 Fully Alive student text) with the students and list the family-type labels on the chalkboard (e.g. nuclear, one parent, etc).
- 2) **Story Telling:** Share with the students that in some instances, a husband and wife are unable to have children. Today it is becoming more common to meet parents who have adopted a child from another country. They form a very unique family, a multicultural family. Tell them that the story you are about to read to them is just such a story. Encourage them to listen for signs of love expressed in the words of this mother in the story below (A Forever Family).

A Forever Family

“If there is one thing I would want people to know about adoptive families it is that we are the same as everyone else, our story just starts differently. “

8 year old adopted child

This is our story. It started with a phone call informing us that our file requesting permission to adopt had been matched with a beautiful ten-month-old baby girl in the city of Hangzhou, China. Our twelve-month wait was over. Our prayers had been answered. Miracle of miracles, we were parents.

Many parents fall in love with their child upon seeing the first ultra sound picture. For our family it was the referral photo provided by the adoption agency that filled our hearts with a kind of love we had never felt before. In that tiny photo we saw the eyes of our daughter for the first time. The expression on her face seemed to be saying, “Hurry up Mom and Dad. I am waiting for you to come and bring me home.” It would be another six weeks of making travel plans, finalizing details at work and completing government paper work before we were actually in Hangzhou, the birthplace of our daughter.

No words can describe the moment we held our daughter for the first time. She was so tiny and scared with big tears rolling down her face. It is hard to imagine what was going on in her mind as she was placed into our arms, two complete strangers to her. I remember thanking God for this incredible gift and then holding her so close whispering into her ear, “It’s ok little one. Mommy and Daddy are here. We will take care of you. Welcome to the family.” With gentle soothing, plenty of hugs, and lots of Cheerios (a favourite treat) she slowly began to let her guard down. Two weeks later we boarded the plane home to Canada bonded as a family.

It’s been 8 years since we became a forever family. Life has settled into a wonderful routine of regular family life - school, work, vacations, celebrations etc. What is never routine is our love for each other. It grows stronger every day. We are a

forever family held together by an invisible and unbreakable red thread called love.
God brought us together and for that we are grateful every day.

*An invisible red thread connects those who are destined to meet,
regardless of time, place or circumstance.
The thread may stretch or tangle, but never break.*

(Ancient Chinese Belief)

- 3) **Whole Class Discussion:** Tell students that in this story, *The Forever Family*, we can readily see the two cultures that form this family; Canadian and Chinese. However for many of us our own families are formed by the union of various cultures. For instance, my family is a result of the union of (name all the cultures that are represented in you family tree (e.g. Irish, French & German)). Ask students to share their family cultures.
- Question:** How does you family celebrate or express their connection to these cultures? (e.g. wearing green on St. Patrick’s Day, eating traditional meals at Christmas and other cultural holidays)
 - Question:** If you adopted a child from another country, what might be some of the things you would want to do to honour their traditions? (learn to cook some of their national foods, take them to their home country when they are old enough to enjoy the visit, learn to speak their mother tongue so your child can be bilingual, practice some of the other cultures traditions as well as you own.)
 - Question:** What do you think would be the best thing about growing up in a racially diverse family? Would there be any challenges? What could be done to eliminate or reduce these challenges?
- 4) **T Chart:** Working alone or in pairs, students complete the **BLM 3 T Chart** on Family Love.

Optional Activity

Poetry Reading: Invite the students who have prepared the dramatic reading of the poem **Legacy of an Adopted Child**, to present while others listen. (note: A dramatic reading would have the greatest impact but if the poem can not be enacted, ask a student who can read the poem with feeling and accuracy or read it yourself.)

Legacy of an Adopted Child

Once there were two women, who never knew the other.
One you do not remember, the other you call Mother.
Two different lives shaped to makes yours one.

One became your guiding star, the other became your sun.
The first one gave you life, and the second taught you to live it.
The first gave you a need for love, the second was there to give it.
One gave you a nationality, the other gave you a name.
One gave you the seed of talent, the other gave you an aim.
One gave you emotions, the other calmed your fears.
One saw your first sweet smile, the other dried your tears.
One sought for you a home that she could not provide,
The other prayed for a child and her hope was not denied.
And now you ask me through your tears
The age-old question, unanswered through the years.
Heredity or environment - which are you a product of?
Neither, my darling. Neither.
Just two different kinds of Love.

Author Unknown

BLM 3

T-Chart Family Love

**“It is love at the heart of the family
that gives life and nourishment to its members.”**

Instructions:

Read the statement on love and family above and think about why love is so important to the happiness and well being of a family. How does love nourish family members? What signs of this life-giving, nourishing love might a visitor notice? Present your ideas by completing the T Chart below. An example has been given for you.

What does nourishing life giving love look like?	What does it nourish in the person?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good morning greeting (hug) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know I am wanted - feeds my self esteem.

Contemporary Forms of Family

1. The Catholic Organization for Life and Family (COLF) present the following Catholic image of family in the following excerpt taken from their website. Founded on the sacrament of marriage, the family is the privileged place where a man and a woman can fulfill both their vocation to love and their call to communion. The spouses know they can always count on a renewable supply of love, because of the presence of God at the heart of their marriage. As the fundamental unit of society, the family is the cradle of new life, the first school of life and faith. The family is where we learn love and friendship, unconditional acceptance, justice and forgiveness, the gift of oneself and the spirit of service. In the family, we discover the inalienable value of each human life. The family is the source of consolation, support and accompaniment for those who are suffering, vulnerable, sick and elderly. The future of our society depends on the health and well-being of Canadian families

Family Structures Grade 7

Lesson Three

TELEVISION FAMILIES

[top](#)

Description

- The following activity is a rewrite of Grade seven Fully Alive **Theme 2, Topic 2, Lesson 1**– *Television Families*.
- It has been redesigned to help students respond to the complex family structures that have emerged in our time, many of which are extremely controversial.

Materials

- **BLM 4** Parent Letter
- **BLM 5** Television Families
- (Optional) excerpts from movies/television shows depicting various family structures
- (optional) television & DVD or VCR player

Notes to Teacher

Cautions: The structure of contemporary families has changed significantly and students may bring up such structures as:

- Families formed through the use of Reproductive technology (e.g. when a single women chooses in vitro fertilization to have a child)
- Same – sex couples who choose to have children either by adoption or through in vitro fertilization/surrogate parent.
- Single teen mothers who decide to keep and raise their child, usually without assistance from the father and with or without help from their family.

As students share their television show critiques, it is possible that some of these family structures will be presented. Many television shows promote the choice of some to become a single parent; some commercials and shows also present images of same-sex parents. Although the Catholic Church teaches that it is God’s wish for families to be as a life-long, stable and cohesive unit that provides children with two loving parents – one man and one woman united in the bonds of marriage and open to the procreation of children, - the reality of contemporary Canadian families often falls short of this ideal.

While being honest about Catholic teaching and the challenges of single/same-sex parenting for both parent and child, the emphasis for grade 7 students should be

placed on the great goodness and love that single parents and same-sex parents have the potential to offer a child.

It is also important is to help students identify the responsibility of the child to support and uphold the other members of their family, particularly in times of trial. The good that can be found in family, regardless of its structure, should be the primary focus of this lesson.

It is intended to offer teachers a language for discussing the beauty of diversity and love that all families have the potential to offer their members and to inform teachers of the Catholic understanding of Family.

Information compiled from research conducted by the Vanier Institute for the Family and the Catholic Organization for Life and Family (CCCB) will help teachers respond to students should students focus their discussion on one or more of controversial family structures

A Parent/Guardian Letter has been provided to encourage their participation and to ensure that parents/guardians are comfortable with their child watching the shows assigned. The list of selected shows should be added to this letter before sending it home. The letter also states that if parents/guardians do not wish their child to watch T.V. or a particular show, they have the right to refuse and the child will not be penalized. This honours their right to be the first educators of their children

Learning Expectation

Students will :

- Identify contemporary family structures

Assessment Opportunities:

Paper and Pencil Task: Assess journals for 1) articulation, 2) the ability to infer meaning from text and 3) reflect on its relevance to their lives.

Paper Pencil Task: Assessment of the worksheet, Television Families for thinking and analyzing skills.

Personal Communication: use classroom discussion to assess student knowledge and understanding of contemporary family structures.

Unit Culminating Activity: On completion of lesson 3, students are assigned the culminating activity to be submitted at the end of the Fully Alive Theme 2: Living in Relationships.

TEACHING / LEARNING STRATEGIES

- 1) **Preparation:** Create a list of television shows that demonstrate a variety of family structures. Add this list to the Parent/Guardian Letter provided in the appendices. Be sure to choose only those shows that would be age appropriate for a grade 7 student.

- 2) **Completing Handout:** In co-operation with students, assign students one of the shows from the list on the parent letter. Alternately students, with the assistance of their guardians/parents could select a television show from the list on the Parent/Guardian letter. Students are to view the show about the family and complete Activity Sheet 6 provided on page 40 in the *Fully Alive* teacher manual.

- 3) **Alternate approach:** In class, show students excerpts from three or more television shows or movies that depict various family structures. Complete the activity as outlined under *Television Families* on page 40 of the Fully Alive teacher's manual.

- 4) **Involving Parents:** The parent letter has been provided to encourage parents to watch the show with their child and discuss with them the questions that will be discussed in class.

Unit Culminating Activity

Students work alone or in groups to complete their choice of one of the following:

- i. Write a series of poems to express the meaning and importance of family (Acrostic, Haiku, Narrative, etc)
- ii. Write and bind a story for younger children that promotes the important role that family members play in the life of a child.
- iii. Take photos of members of their family, as they perform the many tasks associated with living in a co-operative, loving family. Use these photos to create a collage or other artistic display.
- iv. Design and carry out an interview with their family to demonstrate the important role each member plays in the development of the other members of the family. The interview can be presented in the form of a video presentation, newspaper article or an artistic representation of their choice, with the approval of the teacher.

Sample Parent Letter

Dear Parents/Guardians

Your child has been (assigned one of the shows listed below to watch and report on.) (asked to select and watch a television show that depicts family life in one of several contemporary family structures. He/She is then to complete the form Television Families and bring it back to the classroom. (We encourage you to assist your child in selecting an appropriate show from the list below that meets with your approval.)

We hope that you will be able to view the show with them and discuss the following question with your child to prepare them for a classroom discussion on contemporary family structures.

- What did you discover about family life from this show?
- Was the portrayal of family life realistic? In what way?
- Was the portrayal of family life unrealistic? In what way?

Assignment Due:

List of Possible Shows:

Kindly sign and return this letter indicating your participation in this assignment with your son/daughter. If it is your decision that your child not participate in watching one of these shows, know that your child will not be penalized.

I was able to watch and discuss the TV show and assignment with my son/daughter

My son/daughter did this assignment on their own

I do not wish that my son/daughter participate by watching one of these shows.

Signature of Parent

BLM 5

Television Families

Name _____ Date _____

Television Families

Name of show: _____

Date show was watched: _____

What did you notice about:

Family relationships (family members, affection, respect for each other, discipline, resolution of conflicts)?

The way family members spend their time (jobs, school, household tasks, recreation)?

Family life-style (type of house or apartment, furnishings, clothes, car, appliances, travel, recreation)?

Is the portrayal of family life realistic? Unrealistic? Give some examples.

Unit Culminating Activity

Complete you choice of one of the following:

1. Write a series of poems to express the meaning and importance of family (Acrostic, Haiku, Narrative, etc)
2. Write and bind a story for younger children that promotes the important role that family members play in the life of a child.
3. Take photos of members of their family, as they perform the many tasks associated with living in a co-operative, loving family. Use these photos to create a collage or other artistic display.

Design and carry out an interview with their family to demonstrate the important role each member plays in the development of the other members of the family. The interview can be presented in the form of a video presentation, newspaper article or an artistic representation of their choice, with the approval of the teacher.

Family Facts

The following research findings have been provided as a teacher resource to assist you in answering student questions with confidence. They are not meant as a student resource.

WHAT IS A FAMILY?

The Catholic Organization for Life and Family (COLF) present the following Catholic image of family:

Founded on the sacrament of marriage, the family is the privileged place where a man and a woman can fulfill both their vocation to love and their call to communion. The spouses know they can always count on a renewable supply of love, because of the presence of God at the heart of their marriage. As the fundamental unit of society, the family is the cradle of new life, the first school of life and faith. The family is where we learn love and friendship, unconditional acceptance, justice and forgiveness, the gift of oneself and the spirit of service. In the family, we discover the inalienable value of each human life. The family is the source of consolation, support and accompaniment for those who are suffering, vulnerable, sick and elderly. The future of our society depends on the health and well-being of Canadian families

According to Statistics Canada's Census (2006)

HOW MANY FAMILIES ARE THERE?

THERE ARE 8.4 MILLION FAMILIES* IN CANADA

- 46% are married couples with children
- 35.6% are married couples without children
- 8.3% are common-law couples with children
- 10.1% are common-law couples without children
- 15.9% are lone-parent
- 80.1% of lone-parents are female

* In Statistics Canada's 2006 Census, a Census family was defined as follows: Refers to a married couple with or without children, or a couple living common-law with or without children, or a lone parent living with one or more children. This excludes persons living in collective households.

HOW MANY FAMILIES HAVE CHILDREN?

- 41.4% of all families have children living at home
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HOW BIG ARE CANADIAN FAMILIES?

- 48.4% are comprised of 2 persons
 - 22.1% are comprised of 3 persons
 - 20.8% are comprised of 4 persons
 - 9% are comprised of 5 or more persons
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HOW MANY PEOPLE OVER 15 YEARS OF AGE ARE MARRIED?

- 12,470,395 Canadians. That's 48.5% of everyone over the age of 15.
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HOW MANY PEOPLE OVER 15 YEARS OF AGE ARE LIVING COMMON-LAW?

- 2,731,635 Canadians. That's 10.8% of everyone over the age of 15
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WHAT IS THE AVERAGE AGE AT WHICH WOMEN MARRY FOR THE FIRST TIME?

- 28.5 years of age
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WHAT IS THE AVERAGE AGE AT WHICH MEN MARRY FOR THE FIRST TIME?

- 30.6 years of age
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HOW MANY MARRIAGES WILL END IN DIVORCE?

- Of those couples who married in 2006, 38% of marriages could be expected to end in divorce.
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HOW MANY MARRIAGES ARE FIRST MARRIAGES FOR BOTH PARTNERS

- Three out of four (75%) of all marriages were first-time marriages in 2006 down from 81% in 1981
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HOW MANY CHILDREN DO PEOPLE USUALLY HAVE?

- The fertility rate is 1.5 children - meaning that current trends suggest that, on average, women will have 1.5 children over the course of their lives.
 - The average age of first time mothers was 27.7 years, up from 24.4 in the mid 70s.
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HOW MANY CHILDREN ARE ADOPTED?

- Each year in Canada, there are almost 3,000 domestic adoptions and another 2000 international adoptions
 - There are also almost 66,000 children in foster care, many of whom are available for adoption
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WHAT KINDS OF FAMILIES DO CHILDREN LIVE IN?

- Two parent families (married) 68.6%
 - Two parent families (common law) 15.5%
 - One parent families 15.9%
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WHO GOES OUT TO WORK?

- 94% of married men aged 29-64
 - 80.1% of married women
 - 83% of lone-parent fathers with school-aged children
 - 60% of lone-parent mothers with pre-schoolers.
 - 76% of lone-parent mothers with school-aged children
 - 71% of wives with pre-schoolers
 - 81% of wives with school-aged children aged 6-14
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WHEN DO THE KIDS LEAVE HOME?

- 60.3% of children aged 20-24 still live at home
 - One out of every four (26%) aged 25-28 live at home with their parents.
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WHO ARE ALL THE FAMILY MEMBERS IN THE WORKPLACE?

- 4.3% are lone-parent mothers
- 1.2% are lone-parent fathers
- 18.6% are wives with children
- 10.1% are wives with no children at home
- 15.2% are single males
- 11.1% are single females
- 11.4% are husbands with no children at home
- 22.4% are husbands with children
- 46.4% of labour force participants have children at home.

HOW MANY COUPLES WITH CHILDREN HAVE BOTH PARENTS IN THE WORKFORCE?

- More than three out of four couples with children count on the earnings of both parents.
 - 7 out of 10 couples with children count on two wages
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HOW MANY FAMILIES CAN'T FIND WORK?

- In 2006, almost one in five lone-parent mothers with children under five were unemployed.
 - 5.4% of wives and 5.4% of husbands with school-aged children were unemployed.
 - 8.9% of wives with pre-school aged children were unemployed.
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WHAT IS THE AVERAGE INCOME OF FAMILIES?

- In 2002, the average family income was \$73,200 before taxes.
 - After taxes, the average family income was \$60,500.
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HOW MUCH INCOME (AFTER TAXES) DOES THE SECOND EARNER IN A DUAL INCOME FAMILY CONTRIBUTE?

- On average, \$17,300 which increased the family income by 35%.
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WHAT TYPES OF FAMILIES LIVE BELOW THE POVERTY LINE?

In 2002:

- 13% of all families were counted as poor
- 2% of elderly families
- 6% of couples with no children at home
- 5% of couples with children
- 11% male lone-parent families
- 35% of female lone parent families

WHERE IS THE POVERTY LINE?

- In 2002, the average family of two or more living in poverty had an income that was \$6,900 below the low-income cut off line.

HOW MUCH COST TO RAISE A CHILD TO AGE 18?

- approximately \$164,483.00 for a boy is the estimated cost of goods and services one could expect to purchase over 18 years.
- approximately \$163,464.00 for a girl is the estimated cost of goods and services one could expect to purchase over 18 years.

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For more current information consult [Profiling Canada's Families III](#) or visit our [Virtual Library](#).

[top](#)