

*FAMILY*

*ACTIVITY PACK*

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# FAMILY

## FAMILY

Family is many things to all people, from a loving and supportive base to a complicated tree of connections to close friends and even pets. These books and activities help middle schoolers understand that wonderful and challenging families come in all forms and sizes.

This activity packet includes a selection of resources for educators, families, and students.

**BOOKLIST:** A list of books about family recommended by RIF

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITY:** An activity about family for the classroom

**HOME ACTIVITY:** An activity about family designed to help students continue learning at home

**STUDENT ACTIVITY:** An activity about family for students to complete independently

We suggest you print and copy the **Home Activity, Student Activity, and Booklist** pages and send them home to extend the learning.

For more reading resources, visit

[www.RIF.org/literacy-central/collections/middle-school-family-literacy-initiative-family](http://www.RIF.org/literacy-central/collections/middle-school-family-literacy-initiative-family)

# FAMILY BOOKLIST

## FAMILY BOOKLIST



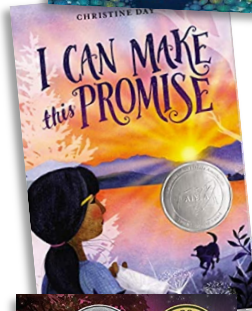
### Dancing Home

Authors: Alma Flor Ada and Gabriel M. Zubizarreta  
The Arts, Grades 3-7



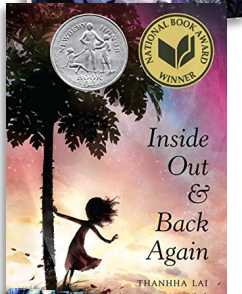
### Ghost Squad

Author: Claribel A. Ortega  
Horror, Grades 3-7



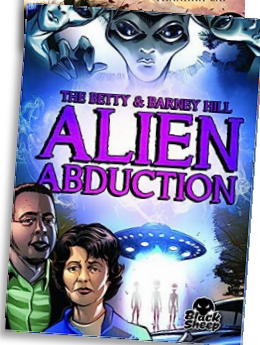
### I Can Make This Promise

Author: Christine Day  
Mystery, Grades 3-7



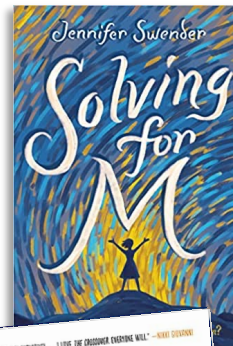
### Inside Out & Back Again

Author: Thanhha Lai  
History, Grades 3-7



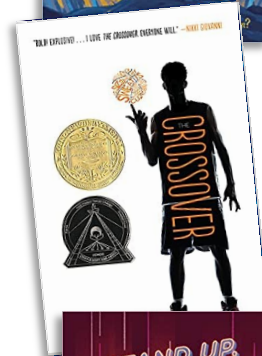
### The Betty & Barney Hill Alien Abduction

Author: Chris Bowman,  
Adventure, Grades 3-8



### Solving for M

Author: Jennifer Swender  
STEM, Grades 3-7



### The Crossover

Author: Kwame Alexander,  
Sports and Gaming, Grades 3-7



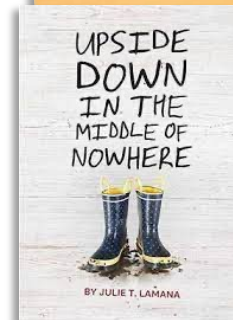
### Stand Up, Yumi Chung!

Author: Jessica Kim  
Funny, Grades 4-7



### Stargazing

Author: Jen Wang Friendship,  
Grades 3-6



### Upside Down in the Middle of Nowhere

Author: Julie T. Lamana  
Nature, Grades 4-6

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

### FAMILY: IN QUOTATION MARKS

Family can be a charged topic for everyone. This activity is designed to provide a structure for discussing families – and all the comforts and challenges that may come along with them – that ensures everyone’s voice and comfort level is considered.

### STEPS

1. Create small groups in your class according to your favorite grouping strategy.
2. Select one literary quote about family and post it in the classroom. For example, the opening sentence of *Anna Karenina*, by Leo Tolstoy: “All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.”
3. Have the groups open their discussion by talking about the quote. What does it mean? Do they agree with it? Are they surprised by it?
4. Next, ask each group to come up with a quote about family. Prompt them with some suggestions related to the quote you used to open the activity. For example, if you used the Tolstoy quote, suggest that your students come up with a quote that could be the first sentence of a novel. Or suggest that they use the families in the literature they’re reading for the basis of the quote.
5. Post the group-generated quotes around the room and allow time for students to read them and respond anonymously using sticky notes. Read the responses aloud to the class, if you like.
6. (Optional) Challenge students to use one of the class-generated quotes to start an original short story, poem, song, or cartoon. Consider creating a class anthology about family.

# HOME ACTIVITY

## HOME ACTIVITY

### PHOTO CAPTIONS

Your middle schooler's class has been reading about and discussing family at school and this activity is designed to extend the learning at home.

Whether you have family photos all over the walls in your home, just a few tucked away in a drawer, or countless images on your phone, photographs hold entire stories in their frames. This activity will help preserve special moments in your family's history in a new way.

### STEPS

1. Select one or more photographs to use in this activity. If you do not have photographs that go back in time, take a new photograph of a family member engaged in a hobby or pursuit they enjoy and/or take a candid picture of a group of family members.
2. Talk with your middle schooler about all the details in the photograph: the clothing, any background that's visible, items (posters, awards, furnishings, etc.), jewelry, hairstyles....
3. Tell your middle schooler everything you can remember about the occasion for the photograph: when it was taken, who snapped the picture, who else was there, etc.
4. Write a caption for the photograph, beyond just the person or people in it and when it was taken. Create a caption that captures the history and the moment.
  - Example: Aunt Izzy learned to garden from Grandpa and has always grown vegetables. She's only 4 here and pulling up carrots before they're ready.
5. Do this for as many photographs as you'd like. Consider creating a new photo album with captions that will help future generations learn about your family.

# STUDENT ACTIVITY

## **STUDENT ACTIVITY**

### MY FAMILY IS...

It can be hard to define and/or describe one's family. This poem format will give you a structure for ideas that may all add up to a good description of your family – even if it doesn't contain any names or formal relationships. Let's see how it sounds when you complete it.

### STEPS

1. To prepare for this task, spend a few minutes thinking about how you define family. You may include family members, friends, pets, community members, and more.
2. Don't review the poem template before you start. (Or look now, if you must.)
3. Fill in each section based on your experiences with your family.
4. When all the sections are complete, read the poem from start to finish. If you like, read it out loud. Try to remove all the "My family is" sentence starters and see how that changes your poem.
5. Do you think the poem is a good representation of your family and how you feel about them? If you want, revise.
6. (Optional) Share the poem with your teacher and ask to see the poems of other students who decided to share with the class.

MY FAMILY IS...

# MY FAMILY IS...

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

My family is \_\_\_\_\_  
*(favorite foods or meal)*

My family is \_\_\_\_\_  
*(an inside joke or family legend)*

My family is \_\_\_\_\_  
*(a habit your family has, e.g., sleeping late on weekends, playing music during housecleaning)*

My family is \_\_\_\_\_  
*(numbers, names, or relationships – ages, nicknames, sister/uncle/tia/etc.)*

My family is \_\_\_\_\_  
*(one inanimate object/item in your family/home, described in detail)*

My family is \_\_\_\_\_  
*(the last thing you laughed about with family members)*

My family is \_\_\_\_\_  
*(the last thing you cried about with family members)*

My family is \_\_\_\_\_  
*(whatever you want on this last line)*