
LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES:

1. **Examine family dynamics:**
 - a. **List the functions of a family unit.**

1.a-1 Introductory Activity: Family Functions

Using the teacher background information provided on page II-A-14 as a basis, follow the activity as outlined on page II-A-15.

1.a-2 Family and Home Definitions

Ask the students to define what the terms family and home mean to them. Have them write their thoughts and definitions on a paper and then have some of the students share these with the rest of the class.

Then, to set the stage for the remainder of this unit, provide the students with these definitions and discuss briefly:

FAMILY: An individual, or a group of people bonded by marriage, blood, or other means who have established a household.

HOME: One's physical residence that serves as a source of shared energy for family members.

(Overhead transparency patterns for these definitions are provided on pages II-A-16 and II-A-17.)

Two songs that could be used to reinforce the meaning of home are:

- Gonna' Leave the Light On Recorded by Lorrie Morgan
- The Lights of Home Recorded by Behle and the Boys

(See graphic on page II-A-18. Various colors of transparencies can be used to depict various areas of home and family. With divorce or family breakup, the light can be separated to illustrate that the full energy is not there.)

Basic concept: The family is the soul of the home. (II-A-19)

1.a-3 Family Fun

Invite a parent or set of parents who make a recognizable effort to promote family traditions, outings, vacations, holiday activities, etc., to be guest speakers and share some of their experiences with the class. A discussion could follow allowing the students to share activities in which their families have participated and as a result have increased family unity.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D:

Assign students to plan and carry out a "Family Fun Activity" with their families.

This should be an activity (or activities):

- in which all family members can participate
- they all will enjoy
- that fits within the family budget
- promotes family unity.

Have the students write a summary of their **FAMILY FUN** on the student activity guide provided on page II-A-20.

b. Analyze changes in the family unit during the past 30 years.

1.b-1 Introductory Activity: Family Show Video Clips

Video tape short clips from family situation comedies on television or movies that show a variety of family types. If possible, try to find some from the 50's and 60's such as *Leave it to Beaver*, *Patty Duke*, and *Donna Reed*. Currently you might use *Full House*, *Family Matters*, *Who's the Boss*, *Roseanne*, *The Cosby Show*, etc. Allow students time to view several and make comparisons related to family type, parental role models, role of the children, etc.

1.b-2 Family Settings

Read the "Family Settings" provided on pages II-A-21 and II-A-22 to the students and have them guess the year or time period. The family settings used are obviously stereotypes of families during different generations. Change whatever is necessary to make the settings more relevant to your students.

After the settings have been read, ask the students to identify the main differences in these family settings, and see if they recognize their own family in the last setting.

Concluding thoughts:

- The family has been through dramatic changes in the past century, more than in any previous human history. We will concentrate on the changes of the past 30 years. These are changes that have impacted your parents and you.
- Until the 1960's most Americans saw the family in a common way. The family would consist of a husband and wife and children, all living together. The father was the head of the household and earned the income. He gave his name to his wife and children. When Betty Smith married John Hamilton, she became known as Mrs. John Hamilton.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D:

- The mother's main tasks were to support and encourage her husband and to raise the children--taking care of everyone's needs. Marriage was entered into as a serious commitment that endured for better or worse. Parents felt an obligation to raise their children to be responsible citizens and to work hard. Children were "seen and not heard", respect was demanded, and while parents made sacrifices for the children, family and community needs and wants were the focus. Life was generally simpler.

If the teacher can find some Norman Rockwell pictures in calendars or books, these are excellent depictions of family values for that time period.

1.b-3 Changes in Family Lifestyles

Use the information on pages II-A-23 and II-A-24 as a guide in addressing the reasons and causes for changes in family lifestyles. An overhead transparency pattern is provided on page II-A-25 for the teacher to use as he/she presents the information. The family unit of today has changed dramatically since the turn of the century. These issues need to be addressed as societal changes that have occurred without making personal or moral judgments. Since every student comes from a different background, it is our purpose to help them see the broader picture, not to imply what their family should or should not be. The students can complete the student activity guide, **CHANGES IN FAMILY LIFESTYLES**, (page II-A-26) as the material is presented.

Lesson summary: After hearing the changes that are occurring in our society, it is easy to see why there is more than a little anxiety in current generations toward marriage, having and raising children, and looking ahead to career choices.

Pose the following questions to the students to assess their concerns and opinions and allow some time for their answers and discussion:

- Which of these changes worries you the most?
- Which of these changes have you seen in your own family?

Concluding concepts:

- Even though there are many changes and challenges for the American family, there are still many strong, functional families.
- Our society needs more families where basic needs are met and development is encouraged and supported.
- Understanding what the American family is facing will help us see how each individual can help to preserve his/her own family unit.
- The teenagers of today can begin setting and preparing for their goals and desired changes in their families-to-be now.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D:

Note: It is important for the teacher to keep a neutral attitude as he/she talks about each change. Additional case studies or personal knowledge can be added as each topic is covered. Remember, the purpose of the activity is to open the student's eyes to the changes that are occurring.

1.b-4 Senior Citizen Interview

Assign students to interview a senior citizen (a family member would be the best if possible) and ask the questions on the student activity guide, **WHAT WAS IT LIKE...?** (page II-A-27). Have the students bring these to class the following day for discussion and comparison.

c. Explore the benefits a strong family unit has on the individual, the community and society.

1.c-1 "Strong Family" Discussion:

Write on the board or use an overhead transparency of this saying (I-A-28): **"A nation is only as strong as its families."** Have the students write their feelings and opinions about the meaning and validity of this statement and then share their thoughts with the rest of the class.

Some concepts for discussion:

1. Strong family units support each other emotionally, physically, and financially. This lessens the demands on society and government agencies for help.
2. Families provide training in values, work ethic and responsibility.
3. Families provide companionship and friendship, especially in later years.
4. Families provide role models for positive, responsible behaviors.
5. Families help distressed family members cope with problems and emotional hard times.
6. Extended family members can help counsel with practical advice based on their life experiences.

Tie this activity to the material covered in activity 1.a-1: Family Functions and explain that building a strong family is truly an important family function.

1.c-2 "Making Memories"

Discuss how little events or activities within families can have a dramatic impact on children and adults that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. Little things, not necessarily expensive or time-consuming, make memories by the love they show. Positive memories impact an individual's self-concept and the activities students will provide for their future families.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D:

Read the story, **MAKING MEMORIES**, (pages II-A-29 through II-A-31) to the students. This story is about a young woman, Frances Fowler, and one of those special times. In some ways it was a day like any other in her childhood, but one she never forgot.

2. Identify ways teenagers can contribute to and improve family relationships and the home environment.

Note: The activities under this competency can be referenced to those in Unit 1: Teenage Transitions Topic F: Being Responsible Competency 4. These activities support those concepts already covered.

2-1 Tied Up In Knots

Follow the directions on page II-A-32 for this activity.

2-2 Advice Column

Read the following letters requesting advice from Teen Living students. After you have finished reading each request, have the class members each write a response to that letter. Share their "advice" with the class.

#1- Dear Teen Living Students,

I am having trouble at home. I'm not at home very much and when I am home my parents are on my case about my room and my school work. What can I do to make things better?

Sincerely,
Steven

#2- Dear Teen Living Students,

My family is stressed! My Mom remarried a pretty nice guy. He has three kids that live with us. That makes 5 kids in our house, and it isn't a very big house. We get along OK, but we are always in each other's way. Help!

Stressed,
Stacie

2-3 Advice for Getting Along at Home.

Have the students read some examples of ways to get along from the article, Your Advice for Getting Along, from CHOICES, Feb. 1993 (page II-A-33). Then have the students complete the student activity guide, **MY ADVICE TO MYSELF FOR GETTING ALONG**, on page II-A-34.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D:

2-4 Family Pledge

Assign the students to develop a "Family Pledge" for their families. Encourage them to individualize it and to include the family concepts they feel are the most important. They can also include an appropriate saying or cliché they have heard. An example of a pledge is provided on page II-A-35.

After the students have finished writing their pledges, provide them with some high quality paper and felt-tip markers to present their pledge in a meaningful manner. If computers and software are available, the students could use these to prepare their pledges for presentation. Laminate the pledges, if facilities are available, and display them around the room for a few days.

2-5 Family Relations Statement Paper

Have the students write a statement paper as outlined below:

This paper must include the following:

1. The opening statement. (Teacher may write it on the board or read it to the students.). In this assignment it will be:
"It is worthwhile for me to improve or strengthen my family relations."
2. Three supporting paragraphs stating reasons or giving examples to support the opening statement.
3. A conclusion that supports the opening statement.

Note: A statement paper is a vehicle for students to assess their feelings concerning an important subject.

2-6 Home Sweeter Home

Give each student a copy of the **HOME SWEETER HOME** student activity guide (page II-A-36) to complete. When everyone is through, as a class review some of the ways to improve family relations.

A follow-up assignment could be given for students to choose up to five (5) things they need to improve and work on one of them for a given period--maybe a week. Then have the students report on their progress and experiences.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D:

2-7 There's More Than Just a Hole...

Place a napkin and a small donut in front of each student. Instruct them not to touch or eat the donut, but just look at it. Lead the class through the exercise as described.

1. Ask a few students to describe the doughnut to someone who has never seen one. Listen to the descriptions. Most of them will focus on the hole in the middle.
2. Ask the class what was the first part they looked at. Was it the hole?
3. Describe to the class that the hole represents all of the things we see wrong in our families--we tend to focus on the missing or negative parts first.
4. The best part of the doughnut is the cake. And there is a lot more cake than there is hole! In our homes we need to look for the positive things happening. They are the cake and that is the part that really counts.
5. We tend to find what we look for. Isn't it better to focus on what you have instead of what is missing and/or something you can't change?
6. A positive outlook can change the entire mood of a home and/or the people who live there!

Basic Concept: We tend to focus on the one point in our families--the HOLE! We forget what we really enjoy about the donut and our families is the WHOLE! It is important that the students differentiate between the HOLE and the WHOLE in their own families.

(Patterns for small signs with the words HOLE and WHOLE are provided on pages II-A-37 and II-A-38.)

3. Analyze ways teenagers can destroy family relationships and foster a negative home environment.

Note: In this section, help students analyze behaviors that can damage or interrupt family harmony. It is not meant to be an indepth search that could end this topic on a negative note.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D:

Teens may not be aware that they have a great deal of influence concerning the atmosphere in the home. Teens generally know the things they do that disrupt home life. Help them to recognize these, and motivate them to control these behaviors. Through the role plays, help them recognize how their bad mood or good mood can change the way others behave or respond. For example: If a parent is having a bad day, and the teenager comes home, recognizes the situation, and attempts to help, the parent may feel better and the family atmosphere improves. The reversal can also be true.

Refer to activity 2-6: Home Sweeter Home in this section.

3-1 Teenagers Role Play

Choose two students to act as parents talking to each other. Provide hats, aprons, newspapers etc. as character props. Give a copy of the written instructions to the participants. Instruct them to assume the assigned roles, stay in character, and ad lib the conversation. These are the instructions:

Role No. 1: You are a parent and your feelings toward your teens are: "My teenagers are driving me crazy!! Help!"

Conduct a conversation with a "parent friend". Tell them all of the reasons why you are feeling this way. Tell them as many reasons as you can think of that make you feel the way you do about your teenagers.

Role No. 2: You are a parent and your feelings toward your teens are: "My teenagers add so much to our family, I just love them!"

Conduct a conversation with a "parent friend". Tell them all the reasons why you are feeling this way. Tell your friend as many reasons as you can for these feelings. Tell them all the things your teenagers do that cause you to have these feelings.

Two students can be given the same situation and they can have a commiserate conversation, or one parent can be neutral and the other have the teens driving them crazy, etc.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D:

3-2 "The Family is Like a Car" Analogy

The family is like a car. A car doesn't run very well unless all of the parts are in good working order. When one part is broken, it affects the other parts, and in many cases, causes the car to stop functioning. The same thing is true of families. When one person in the family ceases to function in a positive manner, it affects the other family members, and in many cases, causes the family to stop functioning as it should.

An enlarged copy of the car on page II-A-39 can be used as a graphic during this analogy.

RESOURCES:**Books:**

Eastman, Philip D., *Are You My Mother*, Random House, Inc., 201 E. 50th St.-22nd Floor, New York, NY 10022. 1991. ISBN: 0-67981-358-6.

Hochschile, Arlie Russell and Anne Machung, *The Second Shift*, Avon Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas-2nd Floor, New York, NY 10019. 1990. ISBN: 0-38071-157-5.

Articles:

Choices Magazine, Feb. 1993, Vol. 8 No. 5., focuses on families and has a number of excellent articles that could be used effectively in this unit.

The Secrets for Strong Families, Choices Magazine, Scholastic Publishers, Nov. 1987 Vol 3. No 3.

Young Beyond Their Years. Newsweek Special Edition, Winter/Spring, 1990. An excellent article on how young adults are NOT leaving home because they have it so good with mom and dad. This is a result of some of the predominant child development philosophies of the 60's and 70's.

Songs:

Gonna' Leave the Light On
The Lights of Home

Recorded by Lorrie Morgan, 1989, RCA label.
Recorded by Behle and the Boys, 1990. Part of album: *The Road You Lead Me To*.

