

***How My Family Lives in America*, by Susan Kuklin. Simon & Schuster Books for Young People, 1992.**

Story Summary: Meet Sanu, Eric, and April, three children from three very different families and learn about their lives. Their stories emphasize the seemingly minor and everyday ways heritage is transmitted through stories, songs, games, language, and special occasions. The stories told in this book show the importance of choice and adaptation in forging a cultural identity. They enable the readers to examine their own families: what makes them the same, what makes them distinct, and how this uniqueness is celebrated.

Objectives: The students should be able to:

- understand that each family is unique;
- recognize what makes each person's family unique;
- recognize differences in others and consider these differences in a positive way;
- learn about children of different ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds;
- analyze the similarities shared by the characters in the story;
- analyze how diversity can enhance a person's life;
- recognize that the United States is a pluralistic country composed of many native and ethnic groups;
- understand the concepts of ethnicity and immigration; and
- identify differences and similarities among the customs in Senegal, Puerto Rico, Taiwan, and America.

Suggested topics for discussion:

- What special days do you celebrate with your family? What are some of the traditions that are part of these celebrations?
- What makes up a family? How can families be unique?
- What is a tradition? Share a tradition from your family.
- What is family heritage?
- Why is it important for children to learn about their family's heritage?
- Why is it important for families to remember and continue family traditions? Would you like to create a new tradition for your family? What would it be?
- What similarities or differences do you see between your family and the families in the story?
- How do you think the children feel about their families in the story? What clues lead you to that conclusion?

Suggested Activities:

- Research your family heritage.
- Make a family tree.
- Make a collage to share a family celebration showing any traditions involved.
- Interview an older relative about how traditions got started.
- On a map, locate the countries discussed in the story.
- Make a map showing your family heritage.
- Compare and contrast a family from the story with your own family.
- Bring in a recipe representing your cultural heritage to make a class recipe book.
- Choose a country of interest to research.

- Write an autobiographical sketch about yourself and your family. Model it after the stories in the book.
- Bring in pictures of your family. Talk about how different families use pictures to remember special times and traditions. Create a photo essay about your family. The essay could focus around a celebration or just everyday life.