



Family

Written by Aunty Fay Muir and Sue Lawson;
Illustrated by Jasmine Seymour

Teacher Notes prepared by Christina Wheeler

OVERVIEW

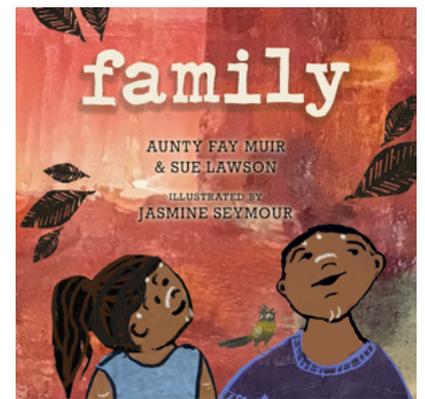
Family is a thoughtful contemplation for all to learn the different ways that family makes us whole. This beautifully illustrated children's picture book shows everyone that 'family' can be about heart and home; an endless sky; stories and songs. It 'learns' us how to be with each other and with Country. Families come in all shapes and sizes, and this remarkably simple story teaches us, that family can be many things. This is the second book from the Our Place series, that introduces young minds to:

- First Nations' cultural philosophies that Aunty Fay Muir, a Boonwurrung Elder, holds close to her heart
- Beautifully-told meditation on what family is and can be
- Universal themes
- Unique and exceptional illustrative style
- Wonderful addition to every family's bookshelf
- Well suited to Early Childhood

ABOUT THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR

Fay Stewart-Muir is a Boonwurrung Elder who cares about sharing her culture and stories with all, to enjoy and take on a journey of learning. Sue Lawson's award-winning young adult and children's books are recognised for the sensitive way they explore the exciting and heart-breaking complexities of growing up. Her first book with Aunty Fay is *Nganga: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Words and Phrases*.

Jasmine Seymour is a Darug writer, artist and teacher. Her previous books are *Baby Business* and *Cooee Mittagarr*.



THEMES

Aboriginal Australians - Social Life and Customs

- Family
- Elders
- Ancestors
- Country
- Stories and song
- Respect
- Identity

AUDIENCE AND WRITING STYLE

Family by Aunty Fay Muir, Sue Lawson and Jasmine Seymour shares the importance of family in Aboriginal culture. *Family* provides the cornerstone for cultural stories, song, identity and Country. The rich illustrations help readers to make further connections to this concept, while the written text reflects the centrality of family to Indigenous Australians. It is appropriate for a range of year levels in the primary years ranging from Prep-Year 4.

LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

This book and the classroom activities provided are primarily relevant to the following areas of the Australian Curriculum:

Learning area	Year level
English	Years F-4
HASS (History)	Years 2-4

The appendix highlights relevant content descriptors and cross-curriculum priorities that relate to the text and classroom ideas provided.

CLASSROOM IDEAS

- Before reading, examine the cover and title of the book. What does the word ‘family’ mean to you?
- *Family* teaches us about the important role kin plays in many First Nations culture. After reading the text, write a reflection that shares what you have learnt about this important aspect of Indigenous life from the story.
- Create a graphic organiser to show how family impacts on so many aspects of Aboriginal life.
- Using the illustrations as a guide, discuss the connection between family and many of our First Nations cultural groups. How does family support the important beliefs of caring for Country, listening to Elders, building strong relationships with extended family and keeping the traditions of story and song alive?
- What activities do the family do together? How do the illustrations add to the written text to help explore this in more detail?
- How does the family help teach about looking after mob and Country? What does it mean to look after Country? How do the Aboriginal characters in this book care for Country?
- What does it mean to learn how “to be to each other”? How should you “be” to your family? Share in a reflection.
- Explain to a friend what you think the book *Family* is about.
- What lessons do Aunts, Uncles, Elders and Ancestors share with younger members of the family?
- How does *Family* teach young people the importance of belonging and identity? What place does storytelling and songs play in ensuring that many of our First Nations’ cultures are kept strong?
- How important are Elders, Aunts and Uncles? What do they share with younger members about culture and heritage?
- How does your family help teach you important values? What are these values?
- Discuss the use of figurative language used in the following extract: Caring for twisting gum, rushing river, sighing sea.” How is such imagery a powerful tool in writing?
- Use the illustrations to discuss the sorts of things families do together to build stronger connections with one another and their culture. Give examples from the text to support your ideas.
- In a reflection, explain how important your family is to you.
- Below is the written text from *Family*. Read it as a poem, discussing the language features and line breaks. Create and illustrate a poem of your own about your family.

Family.
Heart and home.

Yarning old people,
endless sky,
breeze through silky oak

Family.
Stories and songs.

Sharing how to care
for mob and Country.

Listening to Aunties,
Uncles, Elders and Ancestors.

Learning how to be –
to each other,
to Country.

Family.
Caring for twisting gum,
Rushing river,
Sighing sea.

Family.
Kinship that binds,
Showing the way.

Connecting
to ancestors,
to who we are,
to who
we will be.

Family.
Heart and home.



APPENDIX – LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

Year	Curriculum Area
F	English Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none">Recognise that texts are created by authors who tell stories and share experiences that may be similar or different to students' own experiences (ACELT1575)Identify some features of texts including events and characters and retell events from a text (ACELT1578)
1	English Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none">Discuss characters and events in a range of literary texts and share personal responses to these texts, making connections with students' own experiences (ACELT1582)
2	English Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none">Discuss the characters and settings of different texts and explore how language is used to present these features in different ways (ACELT1591)Discuss the characters and settings of different texts and explore how language is used to present these features in different ways (ACELT1591) Hass Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none">The ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples maintain special connections to particular Country/Place (ACHASSK049)
3	English Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none">Discuss how language is used to describe the settings in texts, and explore how the settings shape the events and influence the mood of the narrative (ACELT1599) Hass History <ul style="list-style-type: none">The importance of Country/Place to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples who belong to a local area (ACHASSK062)
4	English Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none">Make connections between the ways different authors may represent similar storylines, ideas and relationships (ACELT1602) Hass History <ul style="list-style-type: none">The diversity of Australia's first peoples and the long and continuous connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to Country/Place (land, sea, waterways and skies) (ACHASSK083)

