



### **Activities based around the song *What makes a family***

Regardless of the age, colour, gender, or number of people who you share your home with, they all come together to make the same thing: a family. This song is equally meaningful for all children, whether they are in a foster placement, have two parents of the same sex, a single parent, a blended family, or any other kind of family unit. Whatever the components, the bond is the same.

#### **Music**

- Listen to some other songs on a similar theme, such as [We are family](#) by Sister Sledge and [Same love](#) by Macklemore & Ryan Lewis, featuring Mary Lambert.
- If you have access to a ukulele, try accompanying the song with C, F, G and Am chords.
- Learn about the families of instruments in an orchestra: brass, strings, percussion and woodwind. Why are these instruments grouped together and what are their common traits and differences? (e.g. the violin and double bass are both stringed instruments, but one is smaller and higher pitched than the other). Using an app on a tablet or phone, explore creating your own compositions, seeing how the sounds from different families fit together and complement each other.

#### **Design and technology**

The song includes the following lovely lyrics:

'What makes a family? What ingredients do you need? Stir it up and see.'

Together with your family members, think about what words you associate with family, for example, 'love', 'support', 'care' and 'acceptance'. Write your words (ingredients) down and make them into your own special recipe, which will be unique to your family. These might include: a cup of kindness, three teaspoons of affection, a pinch of humour, a tablespoon of sharing, a zest of patience, half a pound of respect, a dash of silliness, two ounces of love etc.

You could make a poster to go up in the kitchen or even weigh out cake ingredients and re-label them and bake your family a cake.

## PSHE

- Discuss what is meant by the word 'family' and the fact that all types of family are special, unique and normal. How does the word 'family' make you feel? The line in the song,

'Nobody's family's perfect all the time  
It takes a little bit of rain and a little bit of sunshine'

helps us come to terms with the fact that things aren't always perfect – and this is normal. What does the songwriter mean by 'rain' and 'sunshine' in this context?

- Talk about why it's important to understand and celebrate the differences in each other's families.

## Art

The song includes the lyrics:

'Everybody's family is different and different is how they should be.  
We are red we are orange and yellow, we are green, blue and indigo.  
We're unique, we are all different colours but together we're a rainbow.'

Paint your family portrait or create rainbows with paint, play dough, collage or crayons.

## Literacy

- There are some great books around this subject including [The great big book of families](#) by Mary Hoffman and Ros Asquith and *Families, families, families!* by Suzanne Lang and Max Lang, read out loud [here](#).
- Create a character study/profile of someone in your family. Include their physical appearance, likes and dislikes, any distinctive traits and individual characteristics as well as a picture of them. This kind of character study works well for made-up people too and is a great starting point for writing stories.

## History

- Whether you live with your birth parents or not, there is a long genetic lineage that led to you being here. What would you want to tell an ancestor about your current family

and about modern times? Write letters to a made-up ancestor, sharing with them anecdotes about your family.

- Look at family trees of historical figures then create your own fictional ones based on characters you've made up.