



GET CREATIVE
WITH ART ONLINE

MODULE No: 1 of 8

Love and Family

- Lesson Background for Teachers -



LESSON AIMS and OBJECTIVES

- To think about why love is important to people
- To consider definitions of family and different types of family relationships
- To think about different ways to depict family connections through Art

FOCUS

Art, Drama, Language (SMSC) Spiritual, moral, social, cultural understanding

AGE RANGE

Ages 9 – 11 (Adaptable for younger or older pupils)

SKILLS

Analytical Thinking/ Creativity/ Perception/ Self Awareness

Theme: Love and Family

What do we think of when we think of it?

When we think of Love and Family, we might think of our parents or our children or the people that look after us or who we care for. Sometimes, it might be one special person in our life—a relative, or carer or friend we can rely on.....and sometimes it might be an extended family with several different generations of relations. Family can mean different things in different cultures. In some societies it might be typical to live in a large, multigenerational 'extended family group', made up of children, parents, grandparents and even great grandparents all living together. In others, having just one parent or person to rely on and love can be a lot more typical. So, different people in different places will think of different things when they think of Love and Family.

Why is it important?

Scientists say that every child needs to be loved and appreciated to fulfil their potential and grow to be 'fully themselves' -- or fully emotionally actualized. Secure attachment and a sense of belonging are important – knowing that other people are looking out for you and thinking about you.

Most people, going through life, need to feel these bonds of love and family to feel happy and fulfilled.

Sometimes people say that they need people around them to care for to feel 'complete', and this can be a way we express our need to love and care for others and to be loved and cared for ourselves. We can find these feelings of belonging in those who look after us or who we look after -- in our siblings, in our friends or in our other social groups, like sports teams and work groups and religious communities. School can also provide a sense of family, helping us learn how to live and engage with others.

How does it affect our lives/ our world?

If we don't have love or family, we can feel 'unconnected' to our world and those around us. So feeling part of a supportive family group – whatever type or size of family that might be—can be hugely important to us as individuals.

In a broader sense, societies need order and structure to operate successfully--to have calm, to govern themselves and to pass on the accepted ways of living and behaving to the next generation.

In that wider sense, families can be the very building blocks of society. They can be the structures which nurture the young, care for the old, keep alive the traditions that bind us together and model the way of we should behave to each other.

These days, some people even talk about our 'global family' – the collection of all peoples in all countries of the world who we should think of and show love for in the decisions we make that can affect the future of humanity and the future of the planet.

Did you know

- Love is the most popular subject of songs and plays. For thousands of years, humans have put into music their most intense longings and feelings of their hearts, with everyone from Confucius to Dolly Parton to The Beatles writing love songs. (Most of the lasting love songs are about heartbreak.)
- When we feel love, our brains release chemicals which affect our mood and development. Oxytocin is sometimes called the 'love hormone' and is essential for developing strong parent-child bonds -- and our Oxytocin level increases with physical affection like cuddling.
- There can be many different types of families, but researchers have found that strong families have common qualities which contribute to a sense of well-being.

Even if these families have problems, they share qualities of:

- Appreciation and affection.
- Commitment/ Loyalty
- Strong communication
- Deep coping skills
- Common beliefs & attitudes
- Joy and fun

HOW MIGHT AN ARTIST PORTRAY 'LOVE and FAMILY'?

- Before photography was invented, portrait paintings were the only way to capture a person's likeness. Many artists made their living by painting the families of the rich and famous in their finest clothes. While it was less common to paint their own families, some artists also created art featuring their own families. Sometimes the family were simply convenient models. But for many, it was a labour of love. This was the case for Thomas Gainsborough, whose paintings of his family were so numerous, they had their own exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery in London in 2018, called 'Gainsborough's Family Album'.
- Paintings of family can be dashed off quickly as unfinished 'studies' because of easy access to the subject. Or they can take a long time and be filled with detail, again because of the ease of access to the particular family member/s who are the focus.
- Often, the societal norms of the time strongly affect the way that artists have portrayed love and family. In periods of buttoned-down formality in history, many paintings of lovers or of family groups are formal and hard in a way that shows little affection and can leave us 'cold' today. They can include dark, sombre colours and subjects can look stern or detached. In more relaxed or romantic times, subjects have been idealized and romanticized in a more passionate way that can be equally as unrealistic in their representation, but perhaps more pleasing with brighter colours and more happy atmospheres.

OUR MAIN ARTWORK



- Title THE PAINTER'S DAUGHTERS WITH A CAT
- Artist: THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH 1727 – 1788, English
- Medium: Drawn in White Chalk or pastel on canvas and then painted in oils
- Dimensions: 76 x 63 cm
- Date Completed: c 1759
- Location Displayed: THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON, UK.
- Web link: www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/thomas-gainsborough-the-painters-daughters-with-a-cat
- How /When was it acquired by the gallery? Bought 1923

How does it communicate 'LOVE AND FAMILY'?

Thomas Gainsborough was an English portrait and landscape painter, considered one of the most important British artists of the second half or the 18th century. He was the youngest of nine children and showed great skill with drawing and painting by the time he was 10 years old. He enjoyed painting landscapes more than portraits, but his portraits became so popular in his lifetime that he sometimes felt trapped having to paint the rich and famous for money. Often these portraits were in the very formal style of the times, but in paintings of his family (such as this artwork) a loving tenderness and vulnerability shine through. This painting was never completed. Can you make out the unfinished outline of the daughters' cat?

IN CONTEXT

Are there other works by the same artist (or others) that help us understand it more?

These 3 paintings by Gainsborough show the approach he had to capturing family portraits.



Gainsborough painted at least five other portraits of his daughters and this earlier one from 1756 called, 'The Painter's Daughters Chasing a Butterfly', is even more famous. It is also at The National Gallery, London.



Gainsborough left 50 family portraits which make up his 'Family Album', made for love, not money, (more than any other 18th century artist). They include this early work from 1748, 'The Artist With his Wife Margaret and Eldest Daughter Mary'.



At heart, Gainsborough loved to paint the countryside, so many of the works he completed for paying families fuse his landscape and portrait styles. One of the most famous is 'Mr. and Mrs. Andrews' (1750) also on show at The National Gallery, London.

OTHER ARTWORKS THAT SAY SOMETHING ABOUT 'LOVE and FAMILY'



From Greece

- Title: **GRANDMA'S FAVOURITE**
- Artist: **Georgios Iakovidis** 1853 – 1932, Greek
- Date Completed: 1893
- Location : **THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF GREECE**

What it says about 'Love and Family'

The strong bonds between grandparents and grandchildren are a part of the 'family culture' of Greece. This artist became known as a 'painter of childhood' and many of his works portray the loving relationship between children and their elderly grandparents. Families are not just made up of parents and their children and this painting displays the bonds of extended family.



From Italy

- Title: **THE FISHERMEN'S WIVES**
- Artist: **Massimo Campigli**, 1895 – 1971 Italian
- Date Completed: unknown
- Location Displayed: **THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ITALY**

What it says about 'Love and Family'

This painting could be of a beach in England or Holland or Africa (except perhaps for the clothes) because it is the emotion of the women on the beach which comes through. They are looking out to sea, waiting for their fishermen husbands to return. Some are relaxed, some are worried and some are supporting each other. They have become like an extended family all together, while each watches for their own family member to return.



From Sweden

- Title Breakfast Time
- Artist Hanna Pauli, Swedish, born 1864, dead 1940
- Date completed 1887
- Medium Oil on Canvas 87cm x 91 cm
- Location Displayed National Museum, Stockholm purchased in 1910

What it says about 'Love and Family'

Somebody is invited, the chairs are waiting. The table which is laid with beautiful objects gives associations to family life and domesticity. What's on the table? Who will be coming for breakfast this morning? What's going to be served?

PUPIL ACTIVITIES:

(POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES TO USE AS APPROPRIATE WITH YOUR PUPILS)

Teachers can choose from each category below or devise their own – or different activities, like creating computer generated images, a piece of music/ song/ rap inspired by art or researching other galleries or pieces of art they feel illustrate this theme.

ART ACTIVITIES

Gainsborough's picture is a sketch. Sketching allowed him to quickly capture the character of his two daughters and their relationship, without needing to worry about other details. Use charcoal, pastel or soft pencil to sketch two of your classmates. Then swap round. Or make a sketch of your family. Try to show the character and relationship of the people you are sketching.

In the past, our family portraits were painted. Today, we can capture memories of families and friends electronically. Take a photo with your favorite people that captures their spirit and personality and the connection between you. Focus on expressions, poses, costumes and setting. --Alternatively, make a collage or montage from individual photos or drawings which you can then photograph.

If you had to design a monument to celebrate something that you love, what would you choose to celebrate? *A football team, a singer, your favorite food, one of your friends or family?*

What would you design? *A computer game or animation? A statue? A mural?* -
What would it show?

Gainsborough's girls are holding a cat, which was probably a loved member of their family, though we can't really see it. Make a picture of yourself holding your favourite pet. It could be one that your family loves or an imaginary one that you would love to have.

LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

Unconditional love means that we should love ourselves and each other, whether we are happy or sad, and be patient and forgiving even when someone makes a mistake. When we feel true love, we love each other no matter what – both in good times and in hard times. Think about some difficult situations you have faced, such as missing a friend or feeling disappointed. Write about a time when you have felt unhappy but still experienced unconditional love.

When this picture was made, Gainsborough's daughters were 10 and 8 years old. You can see from the way they hold one another that they were very close and liked to be together. In fact, they lived together nearly their whole lives. Describe someone special that you would like to live with when you grow up. It could be a real or an imaginary person.

If you had to describe Gainsborough's picture to someone who could not see it, what three things do you think it would be important to tell them? Discuss with a partner how you would describe it.

Think about different types of families. How many can you describe?

DRAMA ACTIVITY / Circle Time

Is there someone (person or pet), not connected to you by blood, that you still consider a family member – or would like them to be – and why?

Create a group still image like a family portrait, with you and all your family members, including this one, special member. Consider how everyone would be depicted: what would be everyone's facial expression, where and how would everyone sit or stand? You can do this in small groups, taking up some time to prepare and set the image. Now present it to the rest of the class and see if anyone can guess the "guest" member!

2. Each member of the group portrait take turns and express an emotion, by stating a word or phrase, remaining in role. Everyone observe the family portraits somewhat come to life, by family members, one by one, expressing their feelings. Discuss: what emotions are common between the portraits? How many different ways are there for people to express the same or similar emotion?

USEFUL RESOURCES:

2018 Guardian Review of Gainsborough's 2018 Family Album Exhibition

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/nov/25/gainsboroughs-family-album-national-portrait-gallery-review-npg-thomas-daughters>

Evening Standard article on 10 Artists who captured their Families in their Art

<https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/famous-artists-family-portraits-painting-a3992341.html>

2 Olympic athletes discuss what love means to them

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yt6E0J1bAHA>

Single parent, pop star 'H', talks about his family

<https://news.sky.com/story/steps-star-ian-h-watkins-on-life-as-a-single-parent-families-come-in-all-shapes-and-sizes-12358971>

UN Resources on 'Changing Families' <https://www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-of-familie>