

## Focus on Animation: My Filmmaking Class Unit Guide for the Theme Family Album

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### Overall Objective

Demonstrate openness to the diversity of family models in society.

### Grade Level

Students aged 9 to 12

### Content Areas

Languages  
Social Sciences  
Arts and Culture

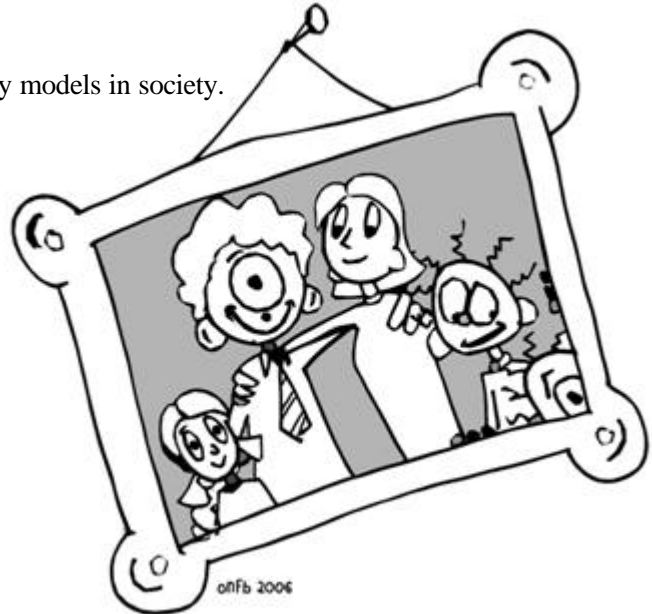
### Films Used in this Unit

*George and Rosemary* (8 min 48 s)

*Stitches in Time* (5 min 16 s)

*Every Child* (6 min 13 s)

*Cuckoo, Mr. Edgar!* (13 min 9 s)



NB: The films can be viewed online free of charge at <[www.nfb.ca/focusonanimation](http://www.nfb.ca/focusonanimation)> in the My Film Class section.

### Materials

Computer, Internet connection, videocassette player, TV set, sheets from a white conference flip chart, markers, magazines and books illustrating a variety of family models, and art materials.

### Summary

This unit will help students become aware of the diverse family models that exist side-by-side in a modern society. It will also make them aware of the stages through which a human being passes in the course of his/her life, as well as the needs specific to each stage.

The unit comprises four activities associated with the theme Family Album, as well as a closure activity. The teacher's notes in the appendix are important to read before presenting the unit in class.

### Introduction Activity

Approximate duration: 45 minutes

Ask the students to define the word *family*. Record their definitions on a large sheet of white paper. Have the students divide into teams of four and discuss the definitions. Then, ask them to compare their definitions with the dictionary definition. Suggest that they consider a variety of family models, by means of the following questions:

- What makes a family?

- What family models do we find in our society? How are these models similar to those in your parents' day? How are they similar to those in your grandparents' day?
- Can you name situations in which children are unable to live with their families? How does Canadian society take care of them and protect them?

Ask the students to make a drawing illustrating what they understand by *family*. Ask for volunteers to present their ideas to the rest of the class.

### **ACTIVITY 1: A family drops from the sky!**

Approximate duration: 60 minutes

**Step 1:** Screen the first few minutes of *Cuckoo, Mr. Edgar!*, until Mr. Edgar prepares to toss the eggs out of his little house. Then, ask the students to describe Mr. Edgar and name any clues that might help us learn more about him. Help the students understand that Mr. Edgar becomes more human when the eggs land in his house, and tell them to write down any clues that show this change. Ask what Mr. Edgar's original intent seems to be when he discovers the eggs, and what prompts him to act the way he does. Encourage them to debate Mr. Edgar's intent.

**Step 2:** Ask the class to divide into teams of four and to list the basic needs of babies by answering these questions:

- What does a human being need to survive?
- What are a baby's specific needs?
- Who are the people best able to meet a baby's needs?

The members of each team should write down their answers on a sheet of white flip chart paper.

**Step 3:** Tell the class that they will find out what Mr. Edgar really does with the eggs. Show the rest of the film, up to the very end. Ask each student to write down what Mr. Edgar does to meet the chicks' basic needs. When they have finished, engage the whole class in a discussion about the meaning of Mr. Edgar's actions.

### **ACTIVITY 2: I need you and a roof over my head**

Approximate duration: 90 minutes

**Step 1:** Set up a flip chart in each of the four corners of the classroom. Divide the class into four groups, and ask each group to move to one corner. Using a marker, each student should write down the basic human need that he/she considers most important. When that is done, ask the students to group the different needs that go together.

**Step 2:** Screen *Every Child*, then ask the students what their first impressions were. Tell them to write individually on a sheet of paper the ways in which different characters in the film meet the child's needs. Then, ask them to compare their answers.

**Step 3:** Introduce the poster entitled *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Child Friendly Language* \*, and ask these questions:

- What do you know about this Convention?
- Why do you think it was established?
- What are some differences between needs, rights and responsibilities?

At the end of the discussion, read the first four articles of the Convention with the students.

\*A link to the poster is provided in the "Web Resources" section below.

**Step 4:** Have ready four copies of the poster. Ask the class to divide into groups of four to debate some of the Convention articles that relate to the family, such as articles 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 18. Then, bring all the groups together and discuss what they understand.

**Step 5:** End the activity by talking about the film's soundtrack:

- What is different about the soundtrack?
- What impact do the sound effects by the Mimes électriques have on the story?

Suggest that the students do impressions of different sounds, while others try to guess what the sounds are.

### **ACTIVITY 3: Defining needs**

Approximate duration: 60 minutes

**Step 1:** Bring to class illustrations from books or magazines showing people of all ages – babies, children, teenagers, adults and seniors – and if possible of different cultural communities. Before starting the activity, you could also suggest that the students bring in such pictures also. Ask for comments on the illustrations, focusing on such things as age, facial expression, clothing, relationships between people, and so on.

**Step 2:** The students should now consider the basic needs of human beings at two stages in their lives: childhood and old age. To facilitate the discussion, ask the students to divide into four groups. Give each group a sheet of flip chart paper to write down the needs. When they have finished, bring the groups back together and display the results of their discussions by means of a timeline.

**Step 3:** Screen *Stitches in Time*. Ask the students to divide into small groups and discuss the stages of life the couple in the film goes through. Draw their attention to the symbolism of certain images, such as an elderly mother from whose knitting babies emerge. Ask the students to write down their observations on a sheet of flip chart paper, and then to share them with the class.

### **ACTIVITY 4: Stitching a life**

Approximate duration: 60 minutes

**Step 1:** Begin by engaging the class in a discussion about solitude and loneliness. Is there a difference? You could also ask the meaning of some related expressions, such as *seeking solitude*, *needing to be alone*, *disturbing someone's solitude* and *being lonely*. You could also ask them to attach the adjective of their choice to the word *loneliness*.

**Step 2:** Screen *George and Rosemary*. Stop the film at the point where George watches Rosemary through the window. Ask the class to divide into small groups and predict what happens next. Then, start the film again and run it until George finally decides to ring Rosemary's doorbell. The students go back into small groups and imagine how the story continues. Then, bring all the groups together again and discuss their predictions.

**Step 3:** Show the rest of the film. Did the students guess the ending of the story? What needs are George and Rosemary meeting by living the rest of their lives together?

**Step 4:** Screen *Stitches in Time*, and ask the students to compare it *George and Rosemary*:

- What do the seniors have in common in the two films? How are they different?
- How does each director tackle the issue of seniors? How do they describe the seniors' day-to-day lives? How do they describe their past?

- What feelings do the characters in the two films appear to have? How are those feelings shown?
- What role do images play in the two films?
- What does the title of each film suggest?
- What differences and similarities do you see in the way the two films tackle the issue?

### **Closure Activity**

Suggested duration: 60 minutes

Suggest that the class paint a mural on the theme of the family. Ask them to divide into groups – preferably small groups – according to their areas of interest, in order to illustrate a variety of family models. Every student should depict at least one members of the family illustrated by his/her team. Encourage the students to portray families from varied cultures.

### **Check for Understanding**

Check whether the students have clearly understood the basic needs of human beings at various stages of life. Check whether they can distinguish among a need, a right and a responsibility. You can use the questions provided for any of the activities to encourage the students to think. Ask them how the film scripts may help viewers better understand the needs, rights and responsibilities of human beings.

### **Evaluation**

You can conduct a formative evaluation throughout the unit, though only the closure activity has evaluation sheets (see the appendix). One of the evaluation sheets is to be completed by the teacher, and the other by the individual students. If you wish, you can arrange an in-class discussion before having the students complete the self-evaluation sheets.

### **Web Resources**

Convention on the Rights of the Child in Child Friendly Language, produced by UNICEF:

[http://www.unicef.ca/education/child\\_friendly.php?lang=en](http://www.unicef.ca/education/child_friendly.php?lang=en)

A poster setting out the Convention articles, on the RCMP site:

[http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/pdfs/NCD-poster\\_e.pdf](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/pdfs/NCD-poster_e.pdf)

The basic needs of human beings:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow%27s\\_hierarchy\\_of\\_needs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow%27s_hierarchy_of_needs)

## Appendix

### *Teacher's Notes*

**Introduction Activity:** Ask the class to keep an open mind during discussions on the family. Given the circumstances of some children, the issue has to be tackled with care. There are a number of family models. Help everyone to understand that some children do not live with their families for a variety of reasons, including the parents' death, family violence, negligence and rejection. In such cases, society is responsible for taking care of the children.

**Activity 1:** Babies depend on adults for survival. They need water, milk, food, proper clothing, emotional security and other things.

**Activity 2:** Physiological, or primary, needs are breathing, drinking, eating, and sleeping. The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by 192 countries of the world. With 54 articles covering all areas, the Convention sets out the rights of children aged 18 and under. Only two countries – the United States and Somalia – have failed to ratify the Convention. The sounds generated by the Mimes électriques add a universal character to the film, which could be taking place almost anywhere.

**Activity 3:** In this activity, you could add secondary needs, such as washing, knowing how to read, being loved, and so on. Compare the needs of a child with the needs of a senior. As they build a timeline, the students will be able to determine how needs vary among different people, and at different stages in their lives. Our needs are also influenced by such factors as disability, personality, and place of birth.

*Stitches in Time* relies heavily on symbolism: a mother knits, and her knitting emerges as babies; a sweater changes into a child; and elderly people sit on a flying carpet. Help the students understand that images appeal to our imagination.

**Activity 4:** Solitude may be rich, burdensome, difficult, desired, endured, and so on. Encourage students to draw upon their personal experiences during the discussion. The two directors made different choices in telling their stories. The director of *Stitches in Time* uses symbolism, while the director of *George and Rosemary* relies on realism. For example, in *George and Rosemary* the director lingers on every small day-to-day action to describe George's world. The titles are suggestive too: *Stitches in Time* tells us at the outset that the life of this couple (who could represent any couple) was knitted over many years, while the title *George and Rosemary* puts the emphasis on the love story of an elderly couple.

**CLOSURE ACTIVITY: Creating a mural on the theme Family Album**

Teacher's evaluation grid

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Evaluation criteria for subject-specific competency: Create personal images**

<b>Student</b>	
Brings personal ideas to his/her images.	
Uses the visual arts language appropriately (shape, line, colour, texture, volume, etc.).	
Uses specific gestures in creating images (free-hand drawing, tearing, cutting out, etc.).	
Organizes the elements of the visual arts production appropriately.	
Identifies the methods used.	
Remains in line with the theme of the family.	

**Evaluation criteria for competency: Cooperate with others**

<b>Student</b>	
Shares his/her ideas.	
Respects the suggestions of fellow team members.	
Participates throughout the creation of the mural.	

**Evaluation:**

- A Exceeds expectations
- B Meets expectations
- C Experiences some difficulty
- D Experiences great difficulty
- NE Not evaluated

**Creation of a mural on the family**      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Self-evaluation of the competency: Create a visual arts production**

*Instructions: In the grid below, check the box that corresponds to your self-evaluation.*

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
I brought personal ideas to my images in the mural.				
I used the visual arts language appropriately (shape, line, colour, texture, volume, and so on).				
I used specific gestures in creating my images (free-hand drawing, tearing, cutting out, and so on).				
I used creative ideas inspired by the theme of the family.				

**Self-evaluation of the competency: Cooperate with others**

*Instructions: Complete the following sentences.*

When working on the mural, I suggested the following ideas:

\_\_\_\_\_

When a member of my team made suggestions, I ...

\_\_\_\_\_

I participated throughout the creation of the mural in the following way:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of artist: \_\_\_\_\_