



## **A Family Apart Thematic Unit** © 2011 by Chris Juhl

This thematic set of activities for the book *A Family Apart* may be used over 20-25 days. *A Family Apart* explores the theme of sacrifice for the betterment of others. The teacher may also wish to explore other concepts with this book. The concept of hope or of doing what is right regardless of the outcome is another element that may be examined. Please note, the teacher should repeatedly be exploring the concept of sacrifice as it is repeatedly discussed in the book. (NOTE: There is not a movie for this book, however, there are several videos on YouTube that deal with the orphan trains of the mid to late 1800's. The teacher may wish to choose one of the following videos for his/her class to view:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcSyP6\\_3j3w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcSyP6_3j3w)

This video is from Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman---It is the first part of a five part series that deals with the orphan trains. The teacher will need to click on the next four parts to view the entire episode:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTE79EhaNIM>

**TEACHER PRE-ACTIVITY PLANNING: The teacher will need to buy a box(es) of cupcake or cookie mix for this activity.**

**Day 1—Introductory Activity**—The day of the activity, the teacher will have students make a batch of cookies or a batch of cupcakes. After the cupcakes or cookies are ready to eat, the teacher will give each student two of the items. Each student will be instructed to give the items away to someone at school that is not in his/her class (specifically to someone who did not make the cupcakes/cookies). The students will also take home a cupcake/cookie to give to a family member or a neighbor. While making the cupcakes/cookies, the teacher should discuss with students how wonderful the items smell/how great it will taste/how nice it would be to eat one right away. Students should have an anticipation of how nice the cookies/cupcakes would be. Then, the teacher should inform them of the plan to give the items away. After students have finished making the items, the class should have a student-led but teacher-directed discussion about giving away something that you really, personally want. The discussion should lead to self-sacrifice for the good of others. Students should talk about examples of sacrifices that they have encountered in their own personal lives, and examples of sacrifice that they have seen in the lives of others. There is the sacrifice of time, money, and travel that each family probably experiences. The discussion should come around to: If it is such a sacrifice, why do your parents send you to the school? Students should make sure that they experience this sacrifice of giving away something that they want. After this discussion, the teacher should pass out magazines (like *National Geographic*) for students to make a collage of pictures that show one person sacrificing for another or for a group.

**Day 2—Introductory Activity**—During this day students will present collages. Depending on the size of the class, the teacher should take a few minutes with each student allowing him/her to display and explain his/her collage. The class should then display the projects in one central location and should create a thematic bulletin board that names the project—WORTHWHILE SACRIFICES, etc. After this display has been created and named, the class should have a student-



led but teacher-directed discussion on how it felt to give away the cookie/cupcake made the day before. In a Christian school, the teacher should speak on the sacrifice that Jesus made in coming to this Earth to die for our sins. Is it really a sacrifice if it is something that someone wants to do for the well being of others? Students should be told that one of the final projects will be to give away (sacrifice) something of value to them. The valuable item may be money, or a video game, or a nice shirt. The item may be given to a homeless shelter, toys for kids Christmas collection, or may be given to a needy/worthy child in the neighborhood. At the beginning of class, students should start thinking of what they will give away. After this discussion and the making of the bulletin board, the teacher should read the following:

**“The book you are about to read is a true-to-life story. It covers events that actually happened. The characters themselves may not be real, but they do represent a group of people that were very real. The story deals with the many orphan trains that took children from the large cities of the Northeast, like New York City, to small farming communities in the Midwest, like Missouri. The conversations and events are true-to-life. The book is called, A Family Apart. We will be learning about worthwhile sacrifices while reading this book. The following video(s) will give you a quick overview of what the Orphan Trains were about: (teacher should show the following video)**

**<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AT0FCoOQPlo&feature=related>**

**and/or**

**<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IsRALN8P2WM&feature=related>**

Next, the teacher should hand out a copy of the book to each student. The students should be allowed a moment to tell of any additional knowledge they may have of the orphan trains. A discussion on orphans and why they may be sent west would be appropriate. The teacher should then spend the rest of the second day going over the different reading strategies that will be employed for this book. This should be followed by the class as a group reading the first two chapters and doing the first set of reading strategies for the book after reading chapter two. It should be noted, this is a different type of book. Chapter One is merely an introductory chapter that sets the stage for the rest of the book. The characters in this chapter are not seen or discussed again until the last chapter of the book. For this reason, there are no activities that involve these characters.

**Reading activities:** There are two reading/writing activities for this unit.

**The first reading activity** is character mapping. In character mapping, students will need a piece of unlined paper for each of the main characters. In the middle of the page, students should either draw a picture or a symbol that represents that character. From this symbol, students should make four bubble circles. Each bubble should be labeled as follows: **How he/she looks, how he/she acts, what I like about him/her, what I would change about him/her.** Then, from each of these bubbles, students should use descriptive words and phrases or specific examples of events that help describe the character that is drawn in the middle of the page. The student should put these characteristics in bubbles from the four main bubbles. For example, if a character is described as tall and muscular, the student should put these words in a bubble from “how he looks.”



It is strongly recommended that before the students begin character mapping that the teacher provide each of them with pieces of unlined copy paper and a pocketed folder to keep the character maps safe. The students will use these maps over and over as the characters grow and possibly change. Let students know that as time progresses in the book, a character's attitude, beliefs, and behavior may change. It is okay to write a characteristic that is the exact opposite of what has been previously written. It is also suggested that the teacher collect these folders at the end of the character mapping activity every day so that the sheets do not become torn, lost, or misplaced. The teacher may also wish to supply Post-It Arrow Flags for the students to use as a highlighter so that the characteristics are easy to find at the end of the chapter. Being able to highlight the book without using a pen preserves the book. Being able to use these while reading the book keeps the students from having to stop every few minutes to write down the characteristics.

Below is a list of the characters that will need a character map. After each character is a list of possible characteristics that a student could choose for the character. After reading chapter two, it would be wise for the teacher to work with the students as they begin the character mapping of the characters listed on the next page. Please note, the characteristics from the first few chapters that the teacher will use to help students understand how to properly do this activity are in bold print. It will also be wise for the teacher to remind students on a regular basis to be updating their character maps. (PLEASE NOTE: This list is not complete. Students may have some information not found on this list, or they may choose different words than the ones on this list. The teacher should grade the character mapping accordingly. The teacher will also want to spend time on how to make inferences about a person's character. If the book states that his face turned red and he clinched his fists, then he is easily angered.):

Frances Mary Kelly—**Quick tempered; hard-working; embarrassed to be poor; good daughter; good big sister; watchful;** protective, fast thinking, compassionate, jealous, hopeful, 13, gentle with animals, brave

Ma—**Loving, kind, selfless, warm, thoughtful, strong, wanting what's best for kids, desperate, willing to sacrifice**

Mike—**Mischievous, confident, independent, imaginative,** short, thief, smart-mouthed, confident, short for his age, comical, brave, spontaneous, almost 12

Megan—**Gentle, dependable, good with kids, practical,** unsure of herself, easily frightened, plain, pleasant, 12, even-tempered, nurturing

Peg—**Energetic, independent, freckle-face,** 7, short, easily scared,

Petey—**Sweet, loving, impulsive, babyish,** mischievous, easily scared, enthusiastic, easily adapts

Danny—**Follower, tall and thin, sweet, plump face,** tall, defends Mike but is dependent on Mike, admires Mike,

Andrew—Good looking, kind, strong, gentle, brave, caring, understanding

Margaret—kind, gentle, intelligent, teacher, friendly, tall, pleasant-faced

Jake—kind, strong, loving, smart, brave, friendly, warm, tall, pleasant-faced, professor

**The second reading activity** is for students to do two essay questions for each chapter. The first essay question is done during the reading of the chapter. It is one question, or a series of questions, that should be answered in paragraph form. Students then are given a second essay question that is written on the board. It is recommended that this question either be done as: 1—a closed book quiz; or 2—a timed open book quiz; Please review how to organize and write an essay answer with students. The teacher should have the class do the quiz for chapter two together. This



should help students see how to organize and phrase their essay answers. Let students know that these answers must be in paragraph form and organized. The information in the answers should stick to just what the question asks. The student sheets on this will have the question that students will answer while reading the chapter. The second question will be written on the board. Students should be told during this time whether they may use notes, an open book, or a closed book for this quiz.

The questions for the board quiz are all on one sheet and numbered according to the chapter the questions come from. All of the answers to the quizzes are on the pages following these questions. Please remind students to always write in paragraph form.

### Concluding Projects:

There are three concluding projects for this book:

**The first project** is a writing project. Students are to write two paragraphs. The first is to predict what happens to the family after the book ends. Students may wish to concentrate on Mike's situation since that is the one that is referenced at the end. The second paragraph is to write an opinion paragraph on whether Ma's decision was a good or bad decision for the family. (Recommended—25 pts.)

**The second project** is to have students write a 100-150 word essay on the history of the orphan trains. The teacher should show students how to properly document where information is attained for such a project. (Recommended—25 pts.)

**The final project** is two parts. The first part is for the student to give away the item that was mentioned at the beginning of this lesson. The second part is to have students volunteer at a homeless shelter, soup kitchen, or clothes distribution center for those in need. The children in this book were essentially, homeless. They were sent West to provide a home for them. The teacher should research where in the area there is a homeless shelter, soup kitchen, or clothes distribution center where the students may volunteer. Students should be encouraged to suggest to their families that the entire family then find time on its own to volunteer at the shelter/kitchen/center. Students receive credit for participating, journaling on the activity, and writing a thank-you letter to the organization for allowing them to participate. (Recommended—50 pts.)

NOTE: The teacher may have to give individual direction on each of these activities to some students that do not understand the directions.

Total = 100 pts.

**Experience the Book! Activities:** The following Experience the Book! activities are done so that students may feel some form of common bond to the characters in the story. These activities are only suggestions, but they can create an excitement for the book.

**The first activity** for this book should be done after the reading of chapter three. The Kelly family originally came from Ireland. Although most Irish immigrants spoke English, their style of English was different than the English spoken in America today. For this connect activity, students will attempt to read part of the book in an Irish brogue (accent). Students should first watch this video:



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2PHch4IPPQ>

After listening on how the Irish speak English, the teacher should have each student read one paragraph of chapter four in an Irish brogue. Students may wish to try to speak with an Irish accent for the rest of the day.

**The second activity** should be done after the reading of chapter 5. Frances decides that the only way that she and Petey can stay together is for her to become a boy. The girl, Frances, becomes the boy Frankie by cutting her hair and changing her clothes. In the book, this simple solution fools everyone. Students will attempt to fool everyone as well. The class should be divided in half. The teacher and students should bring in a variety of items to help change the facial appearance of students. Items such as ski masks or full masks are not acceptable. However, items like glasses, fake mustaches, etc. are fine. The teacher will need to set up a desk or table that one team can hide behind. The other team should step outside while the first team disguises the appearance of two or three of its team members. The second team should return to the classroom and sit in front of the table that the first team is hiding behind. (Note: The bottom of the table/desk should be draped so that students cannot see under the table). Now, team one will have one of its disguised team members lift his/her head barely above the edge of the table and place his/her chin on the table. This team member should be wearing a hat so that the hair does not give him/her away. Team two will attempt to guess who the person is. The team will be allowed to only get ONE guess, and it should be written down. Next, team one will have the second team member do the exact same thing. Again, team two will write down its guess. Finally, team one will have the third member lift his/her head and again team two will write down its guess. After team one is finished, the teams will trade places with team two disguising team members and team one guessing. The team that guesses the most opposing team members' correct identity wins this connect game.

**The third activity** should be done after the reading of chapter 8. In chapters 7 & 8, the Kelly children see a multitude of new places and view some exciting events. The West is a whole new world to children. For this connect activity, students will make a clay or play-doh model of one of the exciting events that the children had on this trip West. The teacher should take the top half of a basic two-piece cardboard box, like a fruit box, and cut out one of the four sides. Next, the teacher should place brown paper on the bottom of the box. The teacher will then give a box to each of the groups. Along with the box, each group should have modeling clay or several cans of play-doh. Using the clay or play-doh, students should recreate one of the events experienced by the children. An alternative to this would be for the groups to each display one scene from the railroad trip. The boxes would then be placed in chronological order for display in the classroom.

**PLEASE NOTE:**—The first chapter of this book should be read together as an introduction to the story. The first chapter and the end of the last chapter do not tell the story of the Kelly children and the orphan train. They simply help to set up and conclude the telling of the story.



## **Chapter Two *A Family Apart***

Name\_\_\_\_\_

While reading chapter 2—Frances Mary encounters several very mean and rude people in this chapter. Describe three of them. (10 pts.)

After reading chapter 2 (10 pts.)--



### **Chapter Three *A Family Apart***

Name\_\_\_\_\_

While reading chapter 3—What is wrong with Mara? How does Mara get help, and who gets the help? How do Mara's aunt and uncle respond to this? (10 pts.)

After reading chapter 3 (10 pts.)--



### **Chapter Four *A Family Apart***

Name\_\_\_\_\_

While reading chapter 4—What is Ma’s plan for her six children? Why has she chosen this plan?  
(10 pts.)

After reading chapter 4 (10 pts.)--





### **Chapter Five *A Family Apart***

Name\_\_\_\_\_

While reading chapter 5—What are the Kelly children's and the other children's feelings about going to Missouri? (10 pts.)

After reading chapter 5 (10 pts.)--



### **Chapter Six *A Family Apart***

Name\_\_\_\_\_

While reading chapter 6—The Orphan Train children were poor and not used to fancy things. They are also not used to being out of the city. Write about several events that happen on the train that support these two sentences. (10 pts.)

After reading chapter 6 (10 pts.)--



## **Chapter Seven *A Family Apart***

Name\_\_\_\_\_

While reading chapter 7—Several exciting events take place in this chapter. Please describe two of these events. Remember to write in paragraph form. (10 pts.)

After reading chapter 7 (10 pts.)--



## **Chapter Eight *A Family Apart***

Name\_\_\_\_\_

While reading chapter 8—What are some of the words or phrases that show that the children were nervous about being adopted? (10 pts.)

After reading chapter 8 (10 pts.)--



## **Chapter Nine *A Family Apart***

Name\_\_\_\_\_

While reading chapter 9—Give your impressions of each of the families that have adopted the Kelly children. (10 pts.)

After reading chapter 9 (10 pts.)--



## **Chapter Ten *A Family Apart***

Name\_\_\_\_\_

While reading chapter 10—List some of the reasons Frances finds her new home inviting and welcoming. (10 pts.)

After reading chapter 10 (10 pts.)--



## **Chapter Eleven *A Family Apart***

Name\_\_\_\_\_

While reading chapter 11—Name some of the new activities that Frances and Petey experience at their new home. (10 pts.)

After reading chapter 11 (10 pts.)--



## **Chapter Twelve *A Family Apart***

Name\_\_\_\_\_

While reading chapter 12—How does Frances get involved with the Underground Railroad? (10 pts.)

After reading chapter 12 (10 pts.)--





### **Chapter Thirteen *A Family Apart***

Name\_\_\_\_\_

While reading chapter 13—How is it discovered that Frances is actually a girl? How does she feel once it is discovered that she is a girl? (10 pts.)

After reading chapter 13 (10 pts.)--



**Board Questions:** Write the following questions on the board after the students have finished the book part of the worksheet. These should be done as a quiz. The teacher should let students know what type of quiz they will be taking for each chapter. It is suggested that questions with an asterisk (\*) symbol before them be given as a closed book quiz question. Questions with a plus sign (+) before them should be given as a timed open book quiz. It is suggested that the timed quizzes be 4-5 minutes in length

Questions to be written on the board:

- \*2—Where did the family come from? Why did they leave their home country? What happened to Da?
- +3—How does Mike steal from the man outside the restaurant? What happens to Mike?
- \*4—Do you agree with Ma's decision? Why or why not?
- +5—How does Frances decide to change herself? How does Katherine describe Missouri to the children?
- \*6—There are two events that happen on the train as it travels from Albany to Buffalo. The first is the conversation with the army office. The second is Frances seeing the slave. Describe both.
- +7—Mike shows that he is a brave young man with a good heart in this chapter. He still has to deal with a bad reputation. Explain these sentences.
- \*8—How is St. Joseph, Missouri, different from New York City? How does Captain Taylor make Mike feel good about himself?
- +9—Find four phrases or quotes that support your description above. For example, "Mrs. Swenson's smile was so bright her gentle face glowed." This quote shows you that the Swenson's were good people. Find four more of these.
- +10—Frances does a few things that almost show that she is a girl. Name two of these. Next, tell how Frances's quick thinking keeps her from getting caught.
- \*11—Why do you think Jake is out of bed late at night? What makes you think this?
- +12—Why does Frances feel connected to the escaped slaves?
- \*13—Are Frances and Petey better off now with the Cummings than they were in New York City? Why?

#### Answer to Book Worksheets and to Board Quiz Questions

Please note: These answers are to be given in paragraph form. The answers below contain some of the information that the students should include in their answers. At the end of these answers is the answer sheet for chapter one. It is suggested that the teacher hand this worksheet out after students have finished chapter one to demonstrate to them how answers should be phrased and written. To use this answer sheet, please note that the number indicates the chapter and the word book means the question that was handed out on the initial worksheet. The word board means the question that was written on the board after the students have finished reading. So, 2 book= the answers to the worksheet question that the student answered while reading the book.

2 book— Answers will vary but could include: Mr. Waterfield assumes Frances cannot read. He also yells at her. The mother of the young girl in blue says to not talk to Frances and that she is "one of those children." The police officer tells her to not dawdle with her betters. Mrs. Watts doesn't want Frances to even rest up or dry off. (Any three events will do.)

2 board— Answers will vary but could include: The family is from Ireland. They fled Ireland because of the potato famine. Da died of a lung disease.



3 book— Answers will vary but could include: Mara is very sick. She is sweating with a fever and barely able to move. Frances tells, Ma who gets a doctor and the Children's Aid Society to help. Mara's aunt and uncle are afraid for Mara.

3 board— Answers will vary but could include: Mike runs into a group of men full speed and knocks one down. He grabs the man's money clip and runs. A police officer and the man find at arrest Mike.

4 book— Answers will vary but could include: Ma plans on sending all six children out West with the Children's Aid Society. She is doing this because she wants a new start for them. Mike won't have to go to prison, and the other kids can have a life and a family.

4 board— Answers will vary but could include: Yes—She is a single mom and cannot raise the kids. She needs to keep Mike out of prison. She wants a better life for her kids. No—These are her children and she should be raising them. Ma took the easy way out. Frances could help make money, or the family could move and leave New York City.

5 book—Frances—Wants to stay with Petey—misses Ma—thinks it won't be like it was; Mike—Answers will vary but could include: hides his fear with humor; Danny—Wants to be with Mike; Peg—misses her mother; Megan—scared, blames Mike; other kids—want mothers—worried about not be wanted—worried about not wanting to go where they are sent.

5 board— Answers will vary but could include: Frances goes by Frankie. She cuts her hair and dresses like a boy and pretends to be the kids' big brother. Katherine describes Missouri as being perfect. Rolling hills, loving people, green fields in summer, and beautiful snow in winter.

6 book— Answers will vary but could include: Clara gets caught under a woman's dress and has never seen the fancy ruffles before. The children are amazed by the apples, men on horses, and the scenery. The children think that pigs are dogs with funny noses. Peg doesn't know that a cow gives milks.

6 board— Answers will vary but could include: The army officer is going to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He has fought Indians and has a gun in his satchel. The slave has been captured. Even though he is now in a free state, bounty hunters will return him to his slave state.

7 book—Answer should be in paragraph form. Answers will vary but could include: The train starts a fire that Mike and Frankie help to put out. Mr. Crandon's pants catch on fire and Mike helps put them out. The children cross the Mississippi River. They see tons of boats and feel the mist on their faces. Train robbers attach the train. Mike helps rescue items.

7 board-- Answers will vary but could include: Helps put out the fire; save Mr. Crandon's life; attacks the train robbers; retrieves Katherine's ring; admits to being a thief; is told he should be returned to New York City.

8 book- Answers will vary but could include at least three of the following: Children asking where they will live. Megan's body shuddered, and she squeezed Frances's hand. Danny said that he and Mike were together. Frances wanted to shrink back and disappear. Frances held Petey tight. Danny inched toward Mike. Megan's knuckles were white. Frances was dizzy with an upset stomach.

8 board-- Answers will vary but could include: St. Joseph is dusty/dirty and the people don't dress as nicely as they do in New York City. NYC is much larger. Captain Taylor tells Mike he will be fine out West. Thinks he is a good, young man.

9 book-- Answers will vary but could include: Cummings—Seem friendly and truly caring; Browders—Loving, kind people—taken with Megan; Swensons—Gentle and kind people; Friedrichs—rough, rude, and greedy people.

9 board—Accept reasonable answers. Answers will vary but could include: "Frances could see laugh crinkles at the corners of the woman's eyes." (Mrs. Browder) "Mrs. Browder reached out and



pulled Megan into her hug.” “She swung to see a tall, pleasant-faced couple standing beside her.”  
 “The son was scowling as they entered.”

10 book—Cummings are kind people; House looks like the home of her dreams; plenty of food; a welcome party; incredible kitchen; huge fireplace; large farm area.

10 board—1--She is caught with a doll. She throws it down quickly and punches one of the boys in the stomach. 2—Washes the dishes. Says that she does work when it needs to be done. 3—Is supposed to take a bath. Tells Margaret she is too tired to take one. 4—Washes up AGAIN in the evening. Says that her Ma always made them keep themselves clean.

11 book-- Answers will vary but could include: Their own beds; milking cows; going to school; driving cows; chopping wood; carrying water; cleaning the barn.

11 board—He is helping an escaped slave. The bounty hunters, Jake’s discussion with Frances about the Underground Railroad, and Jake’s good character help the reader know that he is helping an escaped slave.

12 book-- Answers will vary but could include: Frances is sure that Jake is hiding escaped slaves. She searches the barn and finds the slaves. The slaves need to be moved, but Jake becomes very sick. Jake and Margaret allow Frances to take the slaves to the Mueller farm.

12 board-- Answers will vary but could include: Janus and Odette had a son who was ripped away from them when he was five. They have never seen him since. Like the Kelly children, they are separated from loved ones. They are both Families Apart.

13 book—Katherine finds out. Ma writes a letter asking how each of her children is doing. Katherine also noticed how Frances looked at Andrew.

13 board—This is an opinion question, so students are allowed to express their opinion as long as they defend them.



**First list of Spelling & Vocabulary words for *A Family Apart***

1. pedestrians
2. precariously
3. pungent
4. infectious
5. reluctant
6. idolized
7. indignation
8. suspicion
9. accusation
10. occasional
11. reassured
12. fugitive
13. baritone
14. appetite
15. debatable
16. advertisement
17. prominent
18. solemnly
19. reputation
20. shepherded

**Second list of Spelling & Vocabulary words for *A Family Apart***

1. intently
2. spectators
3. determination
4. enthusiasm
5. commotion
6. rotund
7. frustration
8. grudgingly
9. contemptuously
10. sidled
11. geography
12. protested
13. cringing
14. serene
15. debatable
16. alternative
17. amazement
18. repetitive
19. suspense
20. interrupted