



*Here are some ideas to help you and your students learn about and celebrate Mother's Day. Sources with additional information and guidance are listed at the end of this guide.*

### **Teaching About and Celebrating Mothers, Mother Figures, and Mother's Day**

#### **Prereading Focus Questions**

1. What is special about a mother? A grandmother? An aunt?
2. How would you honor or celebrate a parent or a special adult in your life?
3. What does "home" mean to you? How might this word mean more than just the place where you live? What does "family" mean to you? How might this word mean more than just your mother and father? How might these words mean something different to various people?
4. Describe a special adult or relative in your life who encourages you to think about what you will do when you are an adult. How will you achieve this goal together? What advice has this person given you to help you reach your goal?

#### **Comprehension Questions**

1. Think about the book you just read featuring a mother or mother figure. How does the main character gain a greater understanding of his/her mother (and cultural heritage) by the end of the story?
2. How do this character and his/her mother share and have fun together?
3. Is the mother (or mother figure) good at solving problems? How do you know?
4. Do you think the main character and his/her mother (or mother figure) make a good team? Why or why not? What problem do they solve together?
5. How do the family members show they care for one another in the book?
6. Describe the main character's relationship with her/his mother (or mother figure).
7. How does this story celebrate mothers, grandmothers, and other special women in our lives?
8. How does this story recognize and celebrate growing up?
9. How does the main character feel at the beginning, middle, and end of the story? How does the character change from the beginning to the end of the story?
10. What lesson(s) does the mother (or mother figure) want to impart to the main character? Does the character learn this by the end of the story? Is this a valuable lesson for other children?
11. How are this family and mother-child relationship similar to and different from your own family and mother-child relationship?

#### **Writing Activities**

1. Suggest that students write a story about a special time with their mother, stepmother, grandmother, aunt, or other mother figure with whom they have a close relationship. Describe a time you learned something from her.

2. Imagine or think of a time when your parent, guardian, or other special person in your life wasn't able to visit you for a week or more. Write a letter to this person. Describe what you miss about your time together, what you are looking forward to doing the next time you see her, and what has been going on in your life while you have been apart. Share your daily activities and any challenges you face.
3. What is the best advice you think you have received from your mother, grandmother, or mother figure? Why do you think so? Why do you think she gave it to you?
4. Challenge students to retell the story (or an event in the story) from the mother's point of view.
5. Have students create a Venn diagram to compare their families with the family in the story. Using the Venn diagram, students can write a couple of paragraphs explaining the similarities and differences.
6. Write a paragraph describing what makes your family unique and why you are proud of your mother, grandmother, aunt, or other special woman in your life.
7. In a letter to the principal, argue why this story should be read in all classes for Mother's Day. What makes this story a particularly powerful or meaningful read aloud for Mother's Day?
8. Suppose you are the main character in the story. Write a thank you letter to the mother or mother figure for her help, actions, or advice.

### Home-School Connection

1. Encourage students to interview their mother, stepmother, grandmother, aunt, or other mother figure about her life. Students should create a timeline of major moments in her life, whichever moments are most meaningful to her. Using the timeline as a guide, students can write a personal narrative/biography describing the events and their significance.
2. Have students interview their mothers, stepmothers, grandmothers, aunts, or other mother figures about their childhoods. When was there a time she wanted to show she was ready for more responsibility? What could she not wait to do when she grew up? How did she show her family that she was responsible and could be trusted? How did it make her feel to perform "grown-up" jobs?
3. Encourage students to interview their mother, stepmother, grandmother, aunt, or other mother figure about her family. What is one challenge or problem you or your family has faced? What happened? How did you resolve the problem? Describe your feelings. Have students write a personal narrative about the event as if they were telling the story to someone who does not know them or their family. Draw a family portrait of your own family to include with the narrative.
4. Have students create a family tree of their own families including extended family members and anyone they identify as being a part of their family.
5. Have students brainstorm a food and recipe that reminds them of their mothers, grandmothers, or mother figures. Is this a food they have made together? Is this a family recipe? Is this a food they make often or only on special occasions? What makes this food special to them? Why does it remind them of their mothers? If possible, have students bring the dish in to share along with a copy of the recipe. Assemble the recipes into a class book for students to share a copy with their families.
6. Have students ask their mothers, stepmothers, grandmothers, aunts, or other mother figures about their childhood interests. What did she wear when she was a child? What was the first animated movie she remembers seeing in a movie theater? How

- much did milk, rice, bread, or a candy bar cost when she was your age? Make a list of things and compare how much they cost when she was a girl with the cost now.
7. Encourage students to interview their mothers, stepmothers, grandmothers, aunts, or other mother figures about their favorite things. If she could only have five objects with her, what would they be and why? Alternatively, which five objects describe her the best? Have students sketch these objects. Students should write a few sentences explaining what the object is and why it is significant to their mothers or mother figures.
  8. Have a "Bring your mother or mother figure to school day." Encourage students to design an invitation to welcome a female family member or mentor for a special reading day at school. Students may pick a book of interest at their independent reading level and read to their special guest in class. Adults can choose to read a bilingual book with the adult and child alternating reading passages or choose to read a book in her home language.
  9. Welcome parent-volunteers into the classroom. If you need extra time for small group instruction with struggling readers, consider inviting a student's family member to lead a read aloud and follow-up activity throughout the week of Mother's Day. This celebrates parents as teachers and encourages intergenerational fellowship of books. For more frequent engagement, mothers, grandmothers, and guardians can practice word work, sight words, or math facts with struggling readers. They can also lead extension activities with computer research to delve deeper into the history, culture, or themes of a read aloud.
  10. Celebrate students' other home languages in school. Co-lead a read aloud with a parent or guardian using a bilingual book (make sure you each have a copy!), such as in Spanish and English. Alternate reading the story in both languages. Follow up the story by asking the same question first in Spanish and again in English. Have the parent-volunteer ask first in Spanish and call on students to answer the questions in Spanish. Even if not all the students speak or understand Spanish, one student (or the parent) at the end of the question's discussion can summarize what was said and translate it into English for the rest of the class. Have the parent conclude the read aloud by leading an art or craft activity that is relevant to the book topic. Reflect with the class on why you read the text in both English and Spanish.

### **Make a Mother's Day Card:**

Materials: paper, scissors, glue, pen, magazine pictures, glitter, markers or colored pencils

Fold a thick sheet of paper in half to make your card. The front of the card is for your collage. Cut or tear magazine pictures for your collage. Place them on top of the card to try out your design before you glue it. Once you create a design you like, glue it in place. Open the card up and lay it flat so it can dry overnight. The next day you can draw on the collage and write "Happy Mother's Day" on the inside of the card. And don't forget to sign your name!

### **Lee & Low Books for Mother's Day**

Lee & Low Books offers an award-winning selection of diverse books for children. Be sure to share these books with your students as you celebrate mothers and mother figures in their lives.



***A Shelter in Our Car*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2853>)

by Monica Gunning, illustrated by Elaine Pedlar

Zettie and her Mama left their warm and comfortable home in Jamaica for an uncertain life in the United States, and they are forced to live in Mama's car.

***Abuela's Weave*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2350>)

by Omar S. Casteñeda, illustrated by Enrique O. Sanchez

A girl in Guatemala learns about family tradition and trust from her grandmother.

***Amazing Faces*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2713>)

by Lee Hopkins, illustrated by Chris Soentpiet

An anthology of poems focusing on the human experience—emotions, perceptions, and understandings—as expressed by poets of diverse heritage and reflected in illustrations featuring people of all ages and backgrounds.

***Antonio's Card/La tarjeta de Antonio*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2771>)

by Rigoberto González, illustrated by Cecilia Álvarez

A tender story about a boy struggling to express his love for his mother and her partner in a nontraditional family.

***Arrorró, mi niño: Latino Lullabies and Gentle Games***

(<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2356>)

by Lulu Delacre

A book of Latino lullabies and games in English and Spanish, inspired by the author's own childhood in Puerto Rico.

***Auntie Yang's Great Soybean Picnic*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2768>)

by Ginnie Lo, illustrated by Beth Lo

When Jinyi and her family discover a soybean field, they begin a tradition that becomes a staple of a Chinese American community in the Midwest.

***Catching the Moon: The Story of a Young Girl's Baseball Dream***

(<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2372>)

by Crystal Hubbard, illustrated by Randy DuBurke

The spirited story of Marcenia Lyle, the African American girl who grew up to become Toni Stone, the first woman to play for an all-male professional baseball team.

***Children of Long Ago*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2375>)

written by Lessie Jones Little, illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist, introduction by Eloise Greenfield

A celebration of African American childhood in the early 1900s, as told through poems that detail the daily pleasures of young children's lives.

***Cora Cooks Pancit*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2840>)

by Dorina Lazo Gilmore, illustrated by Kristi Valiant

Cora and Mama work together to cook up *pancit* for the family in this celebration of Filipino heritage and foods.

***Destiny's Gift*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2384>)

by Natasha Anastasia Tarpley, illustrated by Adjoa J. Burrowes

Destiny loves words, and her favorite place in the world is Mrs. Wade's bookstore, where words abound.

***Elizabeti's Doll*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2387>)

by Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen, illustrated by Christy Hale

A young Tanzanian girl finds a special doll, and realizes how much she loves the doll when she almost loses her.

***From North to South/Del Norte al Sur*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2838>)

by René Laínez, illustrated by Joe Cepeda

This nuanced bilingual picture book tackles the difficult and timely subject of family separation and deportation.

***Gettin' Through Thursday*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2395>)

by Melrose Cooper, illustrated by Nneka Bennett

A young African American boy experiences the love and support of his family as they try to make ends meet each week.

***Goldfish and Chrysanthemums*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2398>)

by Andrea Cheng, illustrated by Michelle Chang

A Chinese American girl helps preserve her grandmother's childhood memories of China by creating a special garden for her in America.

***Grandma and Me at the Flea/Los Meros Meros Remateros***

(<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2823>)

by Juan Herrera, illustrated by Anita De Lucio-Brock

Every Sunday Juanito helps his grandmother sell old clothes beneath the rainbow-colored tents at the remate, the flea market.

***Grandma's Purple Flowers*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2400>)

by Adjoa J. Burrowes

An African American girl who cherishes her frequent visits to her favorite Grandma finds a way to remember her grandmother with hope and joy after she passes away.

**Home at Last** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2405>)

by Susan Middleton Elya, illustrated by Felipe Davalos

A sympathetic tale of a mother-daughter bond and overcoming adversity.

**Honoring Our Ancestors** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2824>)

by Harriet Rohmer

Through stories, art, and photographs by fourteen outstanding artists, *Honoring Our Ancestors* will inspire children and their families to gain strength from the past as they ask themselves, "Who do I honor?"**How Far Do You Love Me?** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2818>)

by Lulu Delacre

A picture book about the love between parents and children.

**I and I Bob Marley** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2702>)

written by Tony Medina, illustrated by Jesse Joshua Watson

A biography in verse of reggae legend Bob Marley, exploring the influences that shaped his life and music on his journey from rural Jamaican childhood to international superstardom.

**In Her Hands: The Story of Sculptor Augusta Savage**(<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2712>)

by Alan Schroeder, illustrated by JaeMe Bereal

A recreation of events from the childhood and early career of Augusta Savage, a pioneering female sculptor and major figure of the Harlem Renaissance.

**Irena's Jars of Secrets** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2759>)

by Marcia Vaughan, illustrated by Ron Mazellan

A biography of Irena Sendler, a Polish Catholic social worker who helped save nearly 2500 Jewish children during the Nazi occupation of Poland during World War II.

**Journey Home** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2416>)

by Lawrence McKay, illustrated by Dom Lee and Keunhee Lee

A biracial girl gains a new sense of identity when she travels to Vietnam with her mother.

**Kiki's Journey** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2779>)

by Kristy Orona-Ramirez, illustrated by Jonathan Warm Day

Kiki and her parents travel back to the Taos Pueblo reservation where she was born to learn more about their Tiwa Indian heritage.

**Little Melba and Her Big Trombone** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2854>)

by Katheryn Russell-Brown, illustrated by Frank Morrison

A biography of African American jazz virtuoso Melba Doretta Liston, a pioneering twentieth-century trombone player, composer, and music arranger at a time when few women, of any race, played brass instruments and were part of the jazz scene.

***Love to Mamá: A Tribute to Mothers*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2424>)

edited by Pat Mora, illustrated by Paula S. Barragán

Thirteen Latino poets celebrate their bonds with their mothers and grandmothers.

***Love Twelve Miles Long*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2760>)

by Glenda Armand, illustrated by Colin Bootman

The story of young Fredrick Douglass and his mother, who lived on a neighboring plantation and often walked twelve miles at night to see her son.

***Mama Elizabeti*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2425>)

by Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen, illustrated by Christy Hale

A girl in Africa learns how to help take care of her younger siblings, including a new baby sister.

***Mama's Window*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2426>)

by Lynn Rubright and Patricia McKissack

After his mother dies, "Sugar" Martin is sent to live with his gruff uncle Free, a crippled loner who makes his living fishing in a swamp in the Mississippi Delta in the early 1900s.

***Maya's Blanket/La Manta de Maya*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2886>)

by Monica Brown, illustrated by David Diaz

In this bilingual book based on a Yiddish folk song, a young girl's cherished baby blanket becomes old and worn over time and she finds new ways to use it as she grows up.

***My Very Own Room/Mi propio cuartito*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2798>)

by Amada Irma Pérez, illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez

Five little brothers, two parents, and a house full of visiting relatives make a young Mexican American girl feel crowded.

***Nana's Big Surprise/Nana, ¡Qué Sorpresa!*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2852>)

by Amada Irma Pérez, illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez

Nana's move from Mexico should be a joyous occasion, but her husband Tata died; Amada and her brothers cheer her up with a chicken coop.

***No Mush Today*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2698>)

by Sally Derby, illustrated by Nicole Tadgell

A young girl rebels against eating mush for breakfast everyday, seeks solace with her grandmother, and eventually realizes there's no place like home.

***Poems in the Attic*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2881>)

written by Nikki Grimes, illustrated by Elizabeth Zunon

A young girl grows closer to her mother after discovering a box of poems her mother wrote about her experiences living around the world and growing up as a child of an Air Force serviceman. Told in alternating free verse and tanka poems.

**Raymond's Perfect Present** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2439>)

by Therese On Louie, illustrated by Suling Wang

A Chinese American boy receives a nice surprise of his own when he tries to surprise his mother with flowers that he grew himself.

**Saturday at the New You** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2444>)

by Barbara E. Barber, illustrated by Anna Rich

A girl spends the day at her mother's hair salon, a neighborhood gathering place.

**Seaside Dream** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2722>)

by Janet Bates, illustrated by Lambert Davis

This story celebrates a treasured relationship between child and grandparent. Set in a lush, coastal neighborhood, this contemporary story lovingly affirms family bonds that transcend age and distance and warmly captures the joy of giving from the heart.

**Seeds of Change: Planting a Path to Peace** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2716>)

by Jen Cullerton Johnson, illustrated by Sonia Lynn Sadler

A biography of scientist Wangari Maathai, the first African woman—and first environmentalist—to win a Nobel Peace Prize (in 2004) for her work planting trees in her native Kenya.

**Sunday Shopping** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2883>)

by Sally Derby, illustrated by Shadra Strickland

Every Sunday night a young girl and her grandmother go on an imaginary shopping using newspaper ads and play money.

**Sweet Potato Pie** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2459>)

by Kathleen D. Lindsey, illustrated by Charlotte Riley-Webb

In this fictional story set in the South in the 1920s, an African American girl and her family sell Mama's sweet potato pies at the Harvest Celebration to raise money and save their farm.

**The Happiest Tree** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2401>)

by Uma Krishnaswami, illustrated by Ruth Jeyaveeran

Meena, a young Asian Indian American girl, grows in self-confidence when she learns to practice yoga and apply the underlying principles to her performance in the school play.

**The Have A Good Day Café** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2402>)

by Frances Park and Ginger Park, illustrated by Katherine Potter

Mike finds a way to help his family's food cart business survive while also helping his Grandma feel at home in America.

**The Hula-Hoopin' Queen** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2848>)

by Thelma Lynne Godin, illustrated by Vanessa Brantley-Newton

A spunky African American girl has a hula-hooping competition with her friends in Harlem, and soon everyone in the neighborhood—young and old alike—joins in on the fun.



***The Storyteller's Candle/La velita de los cuentos***

(<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2804>)

by Lucia Lucía González, illustrated by Lulu Delacre

A biography of Pulra Belpré, New York City's first Latina librarian.

***Tofu Quilt*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2710>)

written by Ching Yeung Russell

A collection of poems telling the story of Yeung Ying, a young girl in Hong Kong in the 1960s who, against the conventions of society and family members, aspires to become a writer

***Two Mrs. Gibsons*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2828>)

by Toyomi Igus, illustrated by Daryl Wells

*Two Mrs. Gibsons* is the author Toyomi Igus's tender and touching tribute to the two most important women in her life—her Japanese mother and her African American grandmother.

***Under the Mesquite*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2723>)

written by Guadalupe Garcia McCall

Lupita, a budding actor and poet in a close-knit Mexican American immigrant family, comes of age as she struggles with adult responsibilities during her mother's long illness. Young adult novel in verse.

***Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2478>)

by William Miller, illustrated by Cornelius Van Wright and Ying-Hwa Hu

The true story of the famous writer, who as a young girl, learned about hope and strength from her mother.

### Sources with More Ideas for Lessons on Mother's Day

**WEBSITES**

Lee & Low Books:

<https://www.leeandlow.com/educators>

National Center for Families Learning:

<http://www.familieslearning.org/>

¡Colorín Colorado!

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/>

Reading Rockets:

<http://www.readingrockets.org/>

ReadWriteThink:

<http://www.readwritethink.org>

ShareMyLesson:

<http://www.sharemylesson.com>

Edsitement:

<http://edsitement.neh.gov>

### **ORDER INFORMATION**

**On the Web:**

<https://www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering> (general order information)

**By Phone:** 212-779-4400 ext. 25

**By Fax:** 212-683-1894 fax

**By Mail:** Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue, NY, NY 10016

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