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Alike and Different: My Family, Your Family

Liz Kazandzhy

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Book Review

Title: Alike and Different: My Family, Your Family

Author: Lisa Bullard

Illustrator: Renee Kurilla

Reviewer: Liz Kazandzhy

Publisher: Lerner Publishing Group

Publication Year: 2015

ISBN: 9781467760294

Number of Pages: 24

Interest Level: Primary, Intermediate

Rating: Excellent



Review

Makayla is waiting for her baby brother to be born, and her parents encourage her to learn more about different kinds of families. She starts off at her friend Mateo's house, where everyone talks loudly, speaks Spanish, and has lots of fun. Next she passes Ms. Betsy and Ms. Roberta, a couple with no kids, and tells them all about her family. She then has lunch with Olivia and her dad and learns more about divorce and stepfamilies, and she stops by Jake and his grandparents who take care of him. Finally she visits Parker, a boy with two dads, and comes home to a big party with her immediate and extended family.

The purpose of this series is clearly to educate and promote tolerance toward different groups of people, and this book accomplishes that goal very well. Many types of families are represented, and the protagonist finds something to appreciate in all of them. Illustrations are cartoonish and bright, creating a very cheerful feel, and though the text is a little cartoonish too, it remains easy to read throughout. Also, there are a few interactive questions presented throughout, encouraging the child to consider different aspects of family life. Finally, the last pages contain a fun family activity, a helpful glossary, and resources to learn more. It's worth noting that those who are morally opposed to homosexuality may take issue in the fact that homosexual families are so freely presented here. However, it is precisely this kind of diversity that makes the book so relevant to children's lives right now, since the author presents most major family groups that children will probably come across. Overall, this is a fun, interesting book with a positive and educational message.