

Family Geography Night

A "Getting Started"
Manual for Teachers



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♥ Getting Started ♥

Implementing a Family Geography Night at your school site is quite easy if you have a few ideas to get you started. This manual is intended to assist you in getting started and is by no means the one and only way to make it work. The first thing to keep in mind is whatever works best for you, your staff, and your school community - is the best way! The second thing to keep in mind is flexibility. Each year that I have organized a Family Geography Night at my school it has changed from the year before. I am constantly looking for new and exciting ways to make Geographic Learning come to life for our students. In order to do this, I have gathered new activities each year and adapted and or changed the ones I have previously used to make them both timely and moving for the children and their families. The final thing to keep in mind is learning should be a mixture of fun and knowledge so that it is contagious!

This manual will include:

- ♥ Ideas for the format.
- ♥ Suggestions for promoting the event.
- ♥ Fun activities that work.
- ♥ Where to go for supplies and donations.

♥ Format ♥

If you already have Family Nights at your school currently, such as Math/Science or Literacy, the Family Geography Night can easily be adapted to the same format. Family Nights work best in a large area such as a Multipurpose room or cafeteria. Some schools find it necessary to use actual classrooms in order to accommodate very large numbers of participants. The school where I work is grades K-5 with approximately 1,000 students. I have always held our Family Geography Night in our cafeteria and it comfortably held the 300+ attendees. The reason being is that the time frame is left open so students and their families may come and go any time throughout the scheduled hour and a half or two hour time block. The following is how a Family Geography Night can look at your school.

♥ Stations ♥

The cafeteria is set up in stations using the large lunch tables that are already in the cafeteria. There is a teacher/volunteer (some of my former students have even come back to help me with this event) in charge of each station.

♥ Sign-in, Door Prizes, and Passport ♥

As families arrive there is a sign-in table where they sign-in and fill out a door prize ticket and pick up a Geography Passport (A sample passport is included with this manual). The passport lists all the exciting centers that await them. When the families complete a center they are given a Geo sticker to place on their passport.

♥ Displays ♥

Many maps and Geographic posters hang on the walls around the cafeteria. Signs are also posted at each table listing the activity.

♥ At Home Activities Packet ♥

When the families are done for the evening they can pick up an additional packet of at home activities pertaining to geography.

♥ Suggestions for Promoting the Event ♥

A good place to start promoting this event is right in your own classroom. Have your students create banners letting the school know about the event, and hang them up around the campus.

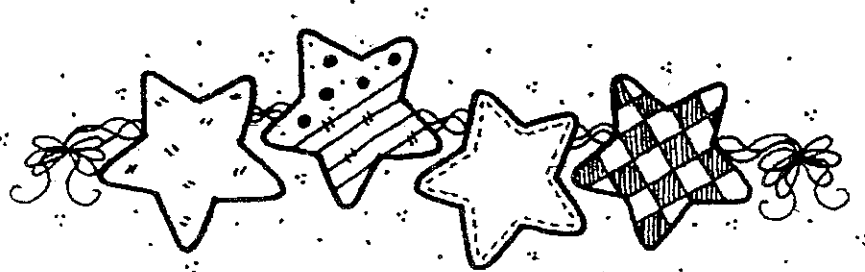
Have your students write a letter home asking their parents or guardians to take them to Family Geography Night. Offer no homework to those students who attend.

Create a flyer (a sample flyer is included in this manual) that can be sent home with each student. A copy of this same flyer can be sent to each school site in your district to inform them about the exciting event you will be having. This year I sent a flyer to our home schooling families and they were very appreciative.

Advertise the event on your school marquee. This is also a nice way to let the community at large know about the great things that take place at your school.

If you have a district wide newsletter or web site advertise there and include a short story of what families can expect.

Events such as these are attractive to the media especially if they are timely and coincide with Geography Awareness Weeks and or Earth Day. Contact local newspapers and inform them of the event, or send your flyer with a short paragraph describing what will take place.



♥ Fun Activities That Work ♥

Organizing which activities you do and the number of activities, should depend on how many volunteers you have to help on the night of the event. Every station should have a volunteer present to facilitate, answer questions, and give the Geo sticker when the participants are done. However, each station should be as self explanatory as possible. The idea is to have hands-on or make-it take-it activities, so the participants have an actual product of their learning to take home with them. Also keep in mind that each station should have geographic purpose and be connected to the state standards.

- ♥ Computer Station - Set up several computers in the multipurpose room for students and their families to sample geography programs. A few suggestions are: Carmen San Diego, Trudy's Time and Place House, Geosafari Geography, Maps and Globes, and Geo Bee (NGS). A few web sites to try with geography emphasis are: nationalgeographic.com, yahooligans.com, and scholastic.com.
- ♥ Where In the World - Photocopy pieces of different maps. Participants guess where in the world they are located.
- ♥ Fly Swatter Game - Using a overhead projector, project a large black-lined map onto the wall. The facilitator calls out a clue and the first to "swat" the right place, wins.
- ♥ Compass Rose - Construct a large compass rose out of brightly colored construction paper. Label the ordinal and cardinal positions.
- ♥ Pop-up Books - Using dye-cut shapes of continents or animals for habitats, construct a mini pop-up book. Include pre-made paragraphs describing the continent or habitat for students to glue into their book.
- ♥ Water/Land forms Book - Using positive and negative space as well as tear art, construct a water and land forms book. A sample lesson is included in this manual.
- ♥ Sports Geography - Students answer geographic questions related

to sports teams. You can also have newspapers available and have students figure out the answer to specific questions using the sports pages.

- ♥ Bean Maps - Students construct a mini map of California designating regions with different beans (kidney, lima, bush, etc.).
- ♥ Geo Library - Have the librarian read geographic stories to students or have them on display.
- ♥ Cultural Showcase - Find an expert on your campus. Have them bring in items from their culture to display. Include a map to show where they come from. Play music from the culture at this station.
- ♥ Geo Poetry - Find short poems that name a place. Photocopy them and put them in a box. Students pick a poem, read it, locate their place on a map, and then glue it to a black line of the U.S.A. or world for them to take home with them.
- ♥ Treasure Hunt - Students start at a main table and are given a geographic clue that will lead them to other places in the room. Each clue uses ordinal directions that will lead them back to the main table where they will get a prize.
- ♥ A Map of Me - Young students can map their eyes, ears, nose, mouth, etc. on a large black line of a person.
- ♥ Habitat Triaramas - Provide a table of crayons, construction paper, black lines of animals, plants, land forms, etc. Students construct a three dimensional diagram of a habitat to take home with them. A sample black line triarama pattern is included in this manual. It should be photocopied on construction paper.
- ♥ Heal the World - Provide students with a piece of lined paper with a world on it and the following prompt - "If I could Heal The World." After they complete the prompt, provide them with an endangered species Band-Aid to place across the world.
- ♥ Where We're From - Have a large map available on the wall. Using a dye cut of a person, the families write their name across it and the

country their family originally migrated from (most families will need more than one dye cut). Tape them to the map. This makes for a great visual display.

♥Others - Have classroom geography projects on display. Have a table of Geography games and puzzles. Have a Geo-store where students and family members can purchase small geography related items such as pencils, erasers, and sharpeners.

♥Where to go for Supplies and Donations♥

Let people and organizations know about your Family Geography night. You will be surprised at just how many people and companies are willing to donate prizes for the evening. Ask your local grocery store to donate refreshments. Remember, it never hurts to ask! Here are some great places to get you started for supplies for your event.

♥ The California Geographic Alliance

CSUDH

Diane Hembacher

School of Education, SOE 1027

1000 E. Victoria St.

Carson, CA 90747

(310) 243-2706

(310) 243-2800 fax

♥ Thomas Bros. Maps

17731 Cowan

Irvine, CA 92614

(800) 899-6277

♥ Automobile Club of Southern California

♥ Trader Joe's (Grocery store)

♥ Newspapers In Education

(Contact your local newspaper for their coordinator)

♥ Oriental Trading Company, Inc.

P.O. Box 3407

Omaha, NE 68103-0407

<http://www.oriental.com>

Mini Book of Landforms and Bodies of Water



Adapted by Lynda Lemon-Rush



Materials: Six pieces of blue and green construction paper per student approximately 4 1/2" x 6", glue, pen or marker for labeling, stapler, maps and or atlases for locating the different land forms and water bodies.

Procedure:

1. List the names of landforms and bodies of water for students to see. Discuss their definition and explain that usually what we see on land has a twin or counterpart in water systems. For example, island and lake.
2. This activity uses tear art with the blue and green paper to show positive and negative space, so don't throw away any of your scraps, you will use all pieces. Students will only tear from the green pieces of paper, so the blue pieces should be set aside. ISLAND/LAKE: Instruct students to tear a circle from the center of one of the green pieces of paper. The circle that is torn out will be glued to a piece of blue paper. The remaining piece of green is glued to the backside of this same piece of blue paper. PENINSULA/BAY: Instruct students to tear a thumb shape shape from their green paper and glue down on a blue piece of paper. Align the remaining green to the back side of the same blue piece of paper. STRAIT/ISTHMUS: Instruct students to tear a slightly rounded piece from the top and bottom of the green paper, leaving a bridge-like area in the middle. Glue semi-circle green pieces to one side of the blue at the top and bottom to make the strait, and glue the remaining green piece to the other side of the blue to make the isthmus. GULF/CAPE: Instruct students to make these similar to the peninsula/bay, but on a larger scale. Glue the cape to the top of the blue paper, but the remaining green piece should be aligned to the back side of the blue so it resembles the Gulf of Mexico. SYSTEMS OF LAKES/ARCHEPELAGO: Instruct students to tear 4-5 small holes from the green paper, and glue to a piece of blue. The remaining green piece will be glued to the back side of the same piece of blue.
3. Label each piece directly on the landform and water body. Sort pages with lake, bay, strait, gulf, and systems of lakes facing up. Put the remaining piece of blue paper on top to make the cover "My mini-book of water bodies." The back side will get the remaining piece of green "My mini-book of landforms."