



WHALE CLASS

Circle Time

GUIDE

WEEK 9

Family Members

Monday 2 – Friday 6 November 2026 · 13 minutes a day · ages 2.5–6

Everything you need, one page per day.

Week Overview

🖨️ Print • laminate • ring-bind • hold this all week.

The one big idea

I belong to people, my family has names, and every family looks a bit different.

Ask the parents for one family photo the week before. Some children's families look different from each other — every single shape gets the same warm “what a lovely family!” That is the whole point of Wednesday and of Friday's tree.

Five words they'll own by Friday

family

mum

dad

sister

love

Littles (2.5-3) — one word + a gesture is a win: “Mum!” (pat your chest) • “Dad!” (lift both hands up high) • “Love!” (both hands over your heart, then blow a kiss).

Bigs (4-6) — sentence frames: “This is my family.” • “This is my brother / my sister.” • “Families are different.” • “I help my family.”

The 13-minute flow, same every day

2 min	Magic Box hook — box chant → shake → sniff → dramatic peek → the day's real object.
4 min	Teach — the day's word, with the photo or the object held up so everyone can see. Get it wrong once on purpose so they can correct you.
3 min	Song — chorus → today's new verse → chorus, with the actions.
3 min	Game — one named game, tied to the day's word.
1 min	Close — whisper → louder → loudest: “Mum... dad... SISTER! I LOVE MY FAMILY!”

Magic Box, day by day

Mon	The teacher's own family photo, in a frame — you go first, and you name every person in it
Tue	A baby's sock — the smallest person in a family
Wed	Grandma's glasses (or her scarf) — the oldest person in a family
Thu	Two dolls, a big one and a small one — the brother and the sister, for the role play
Fri	The whole-class photo and the family-tree cloth, + all the week's props

Theme shelf • four trays

1 • Size	Family size grading — five nesting dolls or figures, tallest → shortest. Control: shadow outlines printed on the mat.
2 • Cards	Family-word 3-part cards — dad 爸爸 / mum 妈妈 / grandpa 爷爷 / grandma 奶奶 / baby 宝宝. Control: the whole control cards.
3 • Match	Photo ↔ name matching — each child's family photo and their own name card. Control: matching symbols on the backs.
4 • Tree	The family tree tray — a felt tree, small pegs and photo frames. Control: one frame per branch; a full tree has no empty frames left over.

Chinese • 立冬 (Saturday 7 November)

汉字 一天一个: 家 • 妈 • 爸 • 人 • 爱. 儿歌《我的好妈妈》. Ask every child 你家有几口人? and count on fingers together — the most natural counting work of the year. On Friday: 北方立冬吃饺子 — this weekend your family eats together.

Friday's parent wrap-up names this week's Dark Phonics sound: **c** — “cuddle, cousin, care” — *the cat can!*

Who's in My Family?

Today's words: **family**

Grab: your own family photo in a frame, in the Magic Box; every child's family photo in a basket (the ones you asked the parents for last week); the 家 character card.

2 min Magic Box hook

Today the box is **flat and heavy**. Hold it on two flat palms. Whole class chants:

Everyone: "What's in the box? What's in the box?"

Shake it — nothing rattles at all. Peek in, and let your face go soft and slow.

Teacher: "It's flat... it's hard... it's got **glass** on it. Oh. It's my favourite thing in the whole world." (*lift out your own family photo, hold it against your chest for one long beat, then turn it round*)

Hands over hearts. **"Family!"**

4 min Teach • Family

Hold your photo high and go person by person, pointing, one beat each:

This is my **mum**. (*pat your own chest*)
 This is my **dad**. (*both hands up high*)
 This is my **sister**. (*hand at sister height*)
 And this is **me** — look how small I was! (*hand down at knee height*)

Now the photo goes round the circle, ten seconds each: a child points at somebody in it and you name them again. Littles say the one word **"Family!"** or **"Mum!"** Bigs take the frame: **"This is your mum."**

Then the basket. Each child's own photo comes out, they come and fetch it, and they name **one** person in it. Every photo gets the same warm line from you: *"what a lovely family."*

Teacher fails: point at your own **dad** in the photo and announce "...and this is the **baby**." Nod, very pleased with yourself. Wait.

Lay the 家 card beside the photo. Tell them once: 家 means *home* and *family* — one word for both. Leave it there; no drilling.

3 min Song • I Love My Family — chorus + Monday verse

Mum and Dad and baby too, (*one finger up for each*)
 Grandma, Grandpa — I love you! (*blow a kiss*)
 This is my family, big and small, (*arms wide, then hands close together*)
 And I love them, love them all! (*hands to heart, then hug yourself*)
Monday's verse: Family, family, one, two, three, (*three fingers up, one at a time*)
 Everybody here loves me! (*hands to heart*)

The one song of the week — same chorus at every circle, one new verse each morning. It is also a counting song: one finger for mum, one for dad, one for baby. Chords and the full sheet are on the Song tab.

3 min Game • Who's in my family?

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" Every child sits with their photo on their knees, face down until it's their turn.

Teacher: "Stand up... hold it HIGH... who is this?" (*go round the circle, one child at a time*)

Littles point and say one word: **"Mum!"** Bigs give the sentence: **"This is my mum."** and if they can, **"This is my baby brother."**

Go all the way round; everybody stands up once. The only comment anybody's photo gets is yours, and it is the same one every time.

If a photo didn't come, that child **draws** their family on a card there and then, and it goes on Friday's tree exactly like everyone else's. Never leave a child standing with nothing in their hands.

1 min Close

Photos held flat against chests. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: "Mum... dad... SISTER! I LOVE MY FAMILY!" (*photos lifted right up over their heads on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? *The Family Book* (Todd Parr) — every page is a different family. By page four they will be shouting "that's a family too!" at you.

My Mum · Big to Small

Today's words: **mum** (*family comes back every day*)

Grab: one **baby's sock** in the Magic Box; a set of **nesting dolls** (or five family figures, tallest to shortest); a mat with their shadow outlines drawn on it; one of your own shoes; the 妈 card.

2 min Magic Box hook

Today the box weighs **nothing**. Balance it on one finger so they can see. Chant:

Everyone: "What's in the box? What's in the box?"

Shake it. Silence. Shake it harder. Still silence. Tip it upside down over your palm and one tiny sock falls out.

Teacher: "Whose sock IS this? It's so... **small.**" (*hold it up on one finger and wait — somebody will say baby*)

"A **baby!** And who looks after the baby?" Pat your chest. "**Mum!**"

4 min Teach · Mum

Your shoe goes on the mat, then the baby's sock beside it. Biggest to smallest, out loud:

Dad's shoe — **BIG!** (*stamp once*)

My shoe — middle. (*tap your own foot*)

Baby's sock — **tiny.** (*hold it up on one finger*)

And **Mum?** Mum holds them all. (*scoop the whole lot into your two hands*)

Littles pat their chest and say "**Mum!**" Bigs take the frame: "**This is my mum.**" "**My mum looks after the baby.**"

Then the nesting dolls, taken apart one inside the other in front of them — dad, mum, big sister, little brother, baby — counting each one out loud as it appears, then all the way back in again.

Teacher fails: try to fit the **biggest** doll inside the **smallest** one. Squeeze. Frown. Try again, harder. Let them shout at you.

The 妈 card goes down beside yesterday's 家. Sing one line of 《我的好妈妈》 — one line only, then stop.

3 min Song · I Love My Family — chorus + Tuesday verse

Chorus twice with the actions — then yesterday's verse if they call for it — then today's new one:

Tuesday's verse: My mum is soft, my mum is kind, (*stroke your own cheek, then hands to heart*)

The nicest mum you'll ever find! (*both arms thrown wide*)

Sing today's verse *softly*, like a lullaby, and rock while you sing it. The chorus stays big and bouncy — the contrast is what makes them notice the words.

3 min Game · Nesting dolls

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" The dolls go in a heap in the middle; the outline mat goes beside them.

Teacher: "**Biggest** first... now who comes next?"

One child at a time picks up a doll and stands it on the outline it fits. Littles name it as it lands: "**Dad!**" "**Mum!**" "**Baby!**" Bigs: "**The baby is the smallest.**"

Twice through together, then two children do the whole line on their own while the rest of the class watches and checks.

The **outlines are the lesson**. A doll on the wrong shadow looks wrong to the child before anybody says a word — so say nothing.

1 min Close

Everybody's hand flat on their own chest. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: "Mum... mum... MUM!" (*both arms up into a big hug on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? *Are You My Mother?* (P. D. Eastman) — they will say "are you my mother?" with you on every single page.

My Dad & Grandma

Today's words: **dad** (*family · mum come back*)

Grab: grandma's glasses (or her scarf) in the Magic Box; a cloth big enough to hide a whole child behind; the 爸 card.

2 min Magic Box hook

Today the box gives one small dry rattle. Chant, shake it twice, then peek in for a long time.

Everyone: "What's in the box? What's in the box?"

Lift out the glasses and put them on. Look slowly round the whole circle *over the top of them*, at every face.

Teacher: "Whose glasses are these? They're my **grandma's**. And do you know what my grandma is? She is my **dad's mum**." (*hold both hands up high*)

Both hands up high. **"Dad!"**

4 min Teach · Dad

Stand up for this one. Everybody copies:

My dad is **TALL!** (*stretch right up on tiptoe*)
 My dad is **strong**. (*both arms up, muscles*)
 He lifts me **UP**... (*lift an imaginary child high*)
 ...and I never fall! (*catch, and hug*)

Littles lift both hands and say **"Dad!"** Bigs: **"This is my dad."** **"My dad is tall."**

Then the family ladder, drawn in the air with your hands, three levels high: **grandma and grandpa** at the top — **mum and dad** in the middle — **me** at the bottom. Grandma is dad's mum. That is the sentence of the day and it lands with the four- and five-year-olds hard.

Teacher fails: balance grandma's glasses on your **knees** and peer earnestly through them at the ceiling. "Ah, now I can see my grandma perfectly." Wait.

Chinese moment: lay the 爸 card down — now 家 · 妈 · 爸 sit in a row; point along and let them say them. Then ask every child 你家有几口人? and count it on fingers together. It is the most natural counting work of the year.

3 min Song · I Love My Family — chorus + Wednesday verse

Chorus twice — today make "big and small" enormous, arms right out then hands almost touching — then:
Wednesday's verse: My dad is strong, my dad is tall, (*muscles, then stretch up tall*)
 He lifts me up — I never fall! (*lift high, then catch*)

Actually lift one child on "he lifts me up" if your back allows it. If it doesn't, lift a doll — they laugh just as hard and nobody gets hurt.

3 min Game · Guess whose voice

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" One child goes behind the cloth. Everyone else is completely silent.

Teacher: "Say hello... **who is that?**" (*the hider says "Hello, hello, hello" — the same three words every time*)

Hands up, then the class names the friend. Littles just point at the right person, and that counts. Bigs: **"I hear Lily!"**

Six children behind the cloth, then hand the cloth to a Big and let them run it while you sit in the circle.

Same three words every time, always. The moment the hider chooses their own sentence, the class is guessing the **words**, not the **voice** — and the game stops being about family at all.

1 min Close

Hands ready at the shoulders. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: "Dad... dad... DAD!" (*both arms fly straight up over their heads on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? 《我爸爸》 (Anthony Browne) — read it in Chinese, and let them shout 我爸爸! on every page.

Brother & Sister

Today's words: **sister** (*family · mum · dad come back*)

Grab: two dolls, one big and one small, in the Magic Box; a baby doll; the doll corner set up with a little table, a bed and a pot; the 人 card.

2 min Magic Box hook

Today the box is **fat**, and something bumps about inside it when you tilt it. Chant, then shake — a soft *knock... knock*.

Everyone: "What's in the box? What's in the box?"

Teacher: "There's something in here... no. There are **TWO** somethings." (*lift out the big doll, then the small one, and sit them side by side facing the class*)

"This one is **big**. This one is **small**. Same mum. Same dad. Same house. Who are they?"

Arms round yourself in a hug. "**Sister!**" "**Brother!**"

4 min Teach · Sister

The two dolls do the whole thing in your hands while you say it:

A big one and a small one, (*hold each doll up in turn*)
 Same mum, same dad, (*point to one, point to the other, then hug them together*)
 We run and we play... (*walk the two dolls along the floor*)
 and we **SHARE**. (*pass one doll's cup across to the other*)

Littles say the one word: "**Sister!**" or "**Brother!**" Bigs: "**This is my sister.**" "**I have a big brother.**" "**I share with my sister.**"

Then go round the circle: who has a **sister**? Hands up — count them out loud. Who has a **brother**? Count. Who is the **baby** in their house? Count. It is real information about real people and they are riveted by it.

Teacher fails: hold the two dolls up, one in each hand, and announce sadly "These two have never met. They are complete strangers." Hold the pose. Wait.

The 人 card goes down. 一个人, 两个人 — count the whole class in Chinese while you're there. Then say each of 哥哥 · 姐姐 · 弟弟 · 妹妹 once, pointing at the dolls. Once each, no drilling.

3 min Song · I Love My Family — chorus + Thursday verse

Chorus twice — then today's verse, which is the only one with the **Am** in it:

Thursday's verse: My sister, my brother, we run and play, (*run on the spot*)

We share our toys — (*most of the day!*) (*hand something over, then a shrug*)

"(*most of the day!*)" is **spoken**, not sung, in a stage whisper behind your hand. It gets a laugh every single time, and by Friday they say it before you do.

3 min Game · The family house

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" The doll corner is the house; the big doll, the small doll and the baby doll move in.

Teacher: "Who **cooks** the dinner? Who goes to **bed**? Who **helps**?"

Four children at a time take a job and act it — one cooks, one lays the table, one puts the baby to bed, one sweeps the floor. Everybody else narrates it: "**The sister is cooking!**" Littles narrate with one word: "**Cook!**"

Two rounds with new children each time, and the fourth job is always **helping** somebody else.

No fixed roles — a boy can be the mum and a girl can be the dad. Say absolutely nothing about it, either way; just let it happen and keep narrating.

1 min Close

Everybody's arms wrapped round themselves. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: "Sister... brother... **FAMILY!**" (*squeeze the hug tight on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? 《我妈妈》(Anthony Browne) — the sister book to yesterday's 《我爸爸》. Read the two back to back and they will spot it themselves.

I Love My Family + Big Review

Today's words: **family · mum · dad · sister · love** — the whole week

Grab: the **whole-class photo** and the folded **family-tree cloth** in the Magic Box, with every prop from the week underneath; all the children's photos and a pot of pegs; the awards (print pack page 17); the 爱 card. Saturday is 立冬 — have the dumpling story ready.

2 min Magic Box hook

The box comes out fat and bulging and won't quite shut.

Teacher: "Today the box is FULL — it's got our whole WEEK inside it!"

Pull each prop out and hold it up in complete silence. They will supply the word before you can.

Your photo → **"Family!"** The baby's sock → **"Mum!"** Grandma's glasses → **"Dad!"** The two dolls → **"Sister!"**

Last of all, a folded cloth. Shake it right out — a big bare tree with no leaves and no pictures. Everybody waits.

Hands over hearts: **"LOVE!"**

4 min Teach · Love, then the whole week

Everybody stands. We tell the whole week with our bodies, twice — slow, then fast:

Family — one, two, three! (*three fingers up, one at a time*)

Mum — soft and kind. (*pat your chest*)

Dad — strong and tall! (*arms up high*)

Sister, brother — we play! (*run on the spot*)

And I **LOVE** them all! (*hands over your heart, then blow a kiss*)

Littles do the five gestures and shout the five words. Bigs owe you a whole sentence for each one: **"This is my family."** **"I help my family."** **"Families are different."**

Teacher fails: on "I love them all", clap both hands over your **ears** instead of your heart, and look delighted with yourself. Hold it. Let them move your hands down.

Chinese moment: the 爱 card joins the row 家 · 妈 · 爸 · 人 · 爱, the whole week on the mat. Then tell them: tomorrow is 立冬, the day winter starts, and 北方立冬吃饺子 — families sit down and eat dumplings together. Fold an imaginary dumpling with them, all twenty pairs of hands.

3 min Song · I Love My Family — Friday verse, then the WHOLE song

Friday's verse: I love you and you love me, (*point out, then point at yourself*)

One big family — happy as can be! (*arms right round the whole circle*)

The finale: chorus → Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday → chorus, standing in front of the finished family tree. They learned it one verse a morning without ever noticing, and this run-through **is** the review of the entire week.

3 min Game · Build the family tree

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" The tree cloth is pegged up on the wall at child height; every child is holding their own photo.

Teacher: "Come and put your family on the tree."

One at a time: peg the photo onto a branch and say one thing about it. Littles: **"My family!"** Bigs: **"This is my family. This is my mum."**

By the end the tree is covered and every single family in the room is on the wall — and they are all different, and nobody has to say so.

Leave it up. Parents find themselves on it at pick-up time and read the whole week off the wall. That is your parent report done, for free.

1 min Close + awards

Every child gets a "You are a STAR!" award to take home with the 立冬 news. Then, standing in front of the finished tree, with all five gestures:

Everyone: "Mum... dad... SISTER! I LOVE MY FAMILY!" (*both hands over hearts, then a blown kiss at the tree on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? *The Family Book* (Todd Parr) again — on Monday you read it to them; today they read it to you, in front of the tree.

★ “I Love My Family”

Ukulele · warm and rocking, like a cuddle · it is a holding song, not a marching song.

C (0003)

F (2010)

G7 (0212)

Am (2000)

Strum: Down · Down · Down-Up. Four slow downs per bar works fine. The only Am in the whole song is at the top of Thursday's verse; the other four verses are just C and G7.

CHORUS — EVERY SINGLE DAY

C Mum and Dad and **F** baby **C** too, (*one finger up for each*)

F Grandma, **C** Grandpa — I **G7** love you! **C** (*blow a kiss*)

C This is my **F** family, big and **C** small, (*arms wide, then hands close*)

F And I **C** love them, **G7** love them **C** all! (*hands to heart, then hug yourself*)

MONDAY · FAMILY

C Family, family, one, two, three, **G7** everybody here **C** loves me!

TUESDAY · MUM

C My mum is soft, my mum is kind, **G7** the nicest mum **C** you'll ever find!

WEDNESDAY · DAD

C My dad is strong, my dad is tall, **G7** he lifts me up — **C** I never fall!

THURSDAY · SISTER

Am My sister, my brother, we run and play, **G7** we share our toys **C** (most of the day!)

FRIDAY · LOVE

C I love you and you love me, **G7** one big family — **C** happy as can be!

Each day: chorus → today's verse → chorus. Friday, sing the whole thing top to bottom, standing in front of the finished family tree — that run-through **is** the week's review. “(most of the day!)” is spoken, not sung, in a stage whisper. If your fingers get stuck, put the uke down and do the finger-play instead; the actions carry the meaning either way.