

Family Paideia Seminar Plan

Text: ***One of the Family* (painting) by Frederick George Cotman**

Ideas, Values: **Animal, Art, Family,** **Generations**

Pre-Seminar Content

Big Ideas Chat:

Have each member of the family, adults as well as children, draw an initial sketch of your family. Display the drawings together (on a table or bulletin board) and discuss as a group how they are alike and different.

1st Read:

Display a large version of Frederick George Cotman’s painting, “One of the Family,” for a few days prior to the discussion, either with a print or by leaving it up on a screen. Allow family members to discuss and write about various aspects of the painting as time permits.

Vocabulary:

Discuss with family members any vocabulary that they will need to interpret the painting.

2nd Read:

Distribute smaller prints of the painting ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Frederick\_George\_Cotman\_-\_One\_of\_the\_Family\_-\_Google\_Art\_Project.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AFrederick_George_Cotman_-_One_of_the_Family_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)), one to each pair of participants (perhaps pair an adult with a child). Have the pair work together to use a ruler and pen or pencil to divide the painting into four equal quadrants (upper right, lower right, lower left, and upper left). Discuss as pairs what each quadrant reveals about the family portrayed there. (Note: the painting is in the public domain and can be printed for this use or viewed on screens.)

Pre-Seminar Process:

* Share why you are having the discussion.

(Sample script from our classroom Paideia Seminars: Modify to fit your household.)

*“A Paideia seminar is a collaborative, intellectual dialogue about a text, facilitated with open ended questions.”*

*“The main purpose of seminar is to arrive at a fuller understanding of the textual ideas and values, of ourselves, and of each other.”*

* Describe what you want to accomplish.
* Set a Family Goal.
* To balance the talk time
* To refer to the text
* To ask a question
* To speak out of uncertainty
* To build on others’ comments

Seminar Questions:

* Opening (Identify main ideas from the text):
* Who is the most interesting family member in this painting? (Take turns having everyone share their responses, perhaps starting with the youngest person present. Don’t explain why until everyone has shared.)
* What is so interesting about that person? (Anyone can respond)
* Core (Analyze textual details):
* Why do you think Cotman titled this painting “One of the Family”?
* Could the title refer to other members of the family than the horse? If so, how?
* Who is the man in the shadows in the upper right corner of the picture? How do you know?
* Who is the older woman in the lower right corner of the painting? Again, how do you know?
* Why did Cotman choose to set his portrait of this family when and where he did?
* What is the most surprising or interesting thing about this family?
* Closing (Personalize and apply the ideas):
* How is your family like the family in the painting? How is it different?

Post-Seminar Process:

*“Ask each person what they liked most about the discussion.”*

* Have the family do a quick check of the discussion goal.

Post Seminar Content:

* Transition to Writing:

Based on this painting and our discussion of it, how would you change your drawing of our family in order to make it more inclusive and more revealing? Revisit your original sketch and add other details and/or notes about how you’d improve your drawing.

* Writing:

After examining and discussing Frederick George Cotman’s “One of the Family,” create a detailed drawing that shows your entire family in a setting that reveals something surprising or unique about it. Set the drawing somewhere in your home.

Before beginning, talk together about the kinds of things that makes your family different—surprising or unique.

Then, have everyone in the family (adults as well as children) create their detailed portraits of your family. Discuss as a whole group and then display around the house, each drawing in the location where it is set.

This Paideia Lesson Plan was created by:

 Name: Terry Roberts

 Organization: National Paideia Center

\*Text is attached if open sourced.

\*Text is cited if it needs to be procured.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Frederick\_George\_Cotman\_-\_One\_of\_the\_Family\_-\_Google\_Art\_Project.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AFrederick_George_Cotman_-_One_of_the_Family_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)