

## TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS

# Family Pictures/Cuadros de familia

*written and illustrated by Carmen Lomas Garza*

## About the Book

**Genre:** Nonfiction (Memoir)

**\*Reading Level:** Grades 4–5

**Interest Level:** Grades K–6

**Guided Reading Level:** Q

**Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:** 4.3/0.5

**Lexile™ Measure:** AD790L

\*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

**Themes:** Sharing and Giving, Home, Holidays and Traditions, Friendship, Food, Family Life, Dreams and Aspirations, Cultural diversity, Childhood Experiences and Memories, Growing Up, Autobiography/Memoir, Art, Identity and Self Esteem, Pride, Texas, Latino/Hispanic/Mexican Interest

## SYNOPSIS

*Family Pictures* is the story of Carmen Lomas Garza's girlhood in Kingsville, Texas: celebrating birthdays, making tamales, picking cactus, and confiding to her sister her dreams of becoming an artist. These day-to-day experiences are told through fifteen paintings and stories, each focusing on a different aspect of Carmen's traditional Mexican American culture growing up.

The paintings and stories reflect the author's strong sense of family and community and demonstrate how her mother's love and hard work helped Carmen achieve her dream. For the hundreds of thousands of Mexican Americans, Carmen Lomas Garza offers a book that reflects their lives and cultural traditions. For others, this beautiful work will offer insights into a fascinating life and a rich community.

Sandra Cisneros provided the introduction and Pat Mora the afterword for this touchstone of Latino children's literature.

### Awards and honors include:

**Notable Children's Book**, American Library Association (ALA)

**Pura Belpré Illustrator Award Honor**, ALSC/REFORMA

**National Book Festival - Texas**, Library of Congress Center for the Book



## BACKGROUND

**Hispanics/Latino Community in South Texas:** A report from the Office of the State Demographer in Texas predicted that Hispanics will outnumber whites in Texas by the year 2020 and make up the majority of the state's population by 2042. Hispanics already make up the majority of the population in the southernmost counties in Texas. (See more information and graphics here: <http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local/article/Hispanics-to-outnumber-whites-in-Texas-by-the-end-6375597.php>.) The pictures and stories in this book are based on the author's memories of growing up in Kingsville, Texas, near the Mexican border.

**Author's Note:** "The pictures in this book are painted from my memories of growing up in Kingsville, Texas, near the border with Mexico. From the time I was a young girl, I always dreamed of becoming an artist. I practiced drawing every day; I studied art in school; and I finally did become an artist. My family has inspired and encouraged me for all these years. This is my book of family pictures."—Carmen Lomas Garza

**Note on the art in the book:** In making the paintings you see in this book, Carmen Lomas Garza used a variety of materials: oil on canvas, acrylic on canvas, and gouache on arches paper. The text is the result of a close collaboration between Carmen and editor Harriet Rohmer, who interviewed Carmen about her paintings and then prepared the manuscript of the original edition with David Schecter.

**Afterword by author Pat Mora:** "Gracias to Carmen Lomas Garza for sharing her family and community, for letting us enter the homes and traditions of South Texas. [Since its publication in 1990], I've enjoyed sharing this visual memoir with adults and children. Readers of all ages revel in its community rhythms and customs, and in the Latino values of family closeness and respect for the elderly and young alike. Carmen's art offers us pleasure and affirmation. Like artists around the world, she documents and salutes her people. Luckily, the publication of *Family Pictures* has made her artwork available to adults and children at our libraries, schools, and in our homes. May each of us who holds this book not only study, enjoy, and celebrate its images and words, but also celebrate the splendid artist, Carmen Lomas Garza." —Pat Mora, author and poet

## Additional titles to teach about family and culture:

***In My Family / En mi familia*** written and illustrated by Carmen Lomas Garza

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/in-my-family-en-mi-familia>

***Poems to Dream Together/Poemas para soñar juntos*** written by Francisco Alarcón, illustrated by Paula Barragán

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/poems-to-dream-together-poemas-para-sonar-juntos>

***Auntie Yang's Great Soybean Picnic*** written by Ginnie Lo, illustrated by Beth Lo

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/auntie-yang-s-great-soybean-picnic>

***Celebrate! Connections Among Cultures*** written and photographed by Jan Reynolds

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/celebrate-connections-among-cultures>

***Hot, Hot Roti for Dada-ji*** written by F. Zia, illustrated by Ken Min

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/hot-hot-roti-for-dada-ji>

***Tashi and the Tibetan Flower Cure*** written and illustrated by Naomi Rose

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/tashi-and-the-tibetan-flower-cure>

***Caravan*** written by Lawrence McKay and illustrated by Darryl Ligan

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/caravan>

***Mama and Papa Have a Store*** written and illustrated by Amelia Lau Carling

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/mama-and-papa-have-a-store>

***Cora Cooks Pancit*** written by Dorina Lazo Gilmore, illustrated by Kristi Valiant

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/cora-cooks-pancit>



### VOCABULARY

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below. Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

#### Content Specific

border, artisans, entertainers, booths, tacos, chicken coop, piñata, handkerchief, cakewalk, Mexican Americans, university, punch, nopal cactus/nopalitos, mesquite tree, parboil, chili powder, hammerhead shark, pier, jacks, Las Posadas, tamales, cornmeal, quinceañera, attendants, escorts, prescription drugs, healer, rue plant, copal, incense, constellations

#### Academic

tag along, recognize, involved, tender, custom, refuses, scene, soak, chill, grand, pale, debt, respected, inspired

### BEFORE READING

#### Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. What information can a family picture provide? What kinds of things might a family be doing in a family picture?
2. Do you have any family pictures at home? When you look at them, what do they make you think about?
3. What is an “extended family?” Who is in your extended family? What do you do when you spend time together?
4. Look at the map. Can you find Texas? Where is Mexico? What might it be like to grow up very close to the border with another country?

#### Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Talk about the title of the book. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?

Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, introduction, illustrations, bilingual text, afterword and author's note.

#### Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out about:

- read to find out about the author's family memories from her childhood in South Texas
- study the paintings in the book to learn more about the stories they depict
- use the paintings and stories to learn more about the author's family values

Encourage students to consider why the author and artist, Carmen Lomas Garza, would want to share this story with young people. Have students also consider why she would write the text in Spanish and English.



## AFTER READING

### Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses.

**To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

### Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What do Carmen and her friends see at the fair? Can you find each thing she mentions in the painting?
2. What does the grandmother do with the oranges? Why?
3. What are the grandparents doing to the chickens? Why?
4. What do the children do at the birthday party? How does the piñata game work?
5. How does the cakewalk game work? What is each family member doing in the picture?
6. How does nopal cactus become food? Describe the steps the author lists.
7. What does the family see at the beach on Padre Island?
8. What are the family members doing in the Rabbit painting?
9. What does the author's family do to celebrate Las Posadas?
10. What different tasks are required to make tamales? Can you find each person the author lists? How can you tell who's who? Based on the painting, what's it like in the author's parents' kitchen during this time?
11. Why is the family on the porch? What details do you notice in the painting?

12. What interested the author about the *quinceanera* she saw? What details does she include in the text and her painting?
13. What does the healer do? Can you find details in the painting to match the description in the text?
14. What do Carmen and her sister talk about on the roof?

### Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. On what does Carmen focus her painting of the fair? How do you think she can tell when a little girl is a father's favorite? Why might that be something she notices?
2. What does the author mean, "whatever they were involved in we would get involved in?" What does this statement tell you about her relationship with her grandparents? What does it tell you about what her grandparents believed about raising children and grandchildren?
3. What does the author mean, "I never knew how the chickens got to be soup?" Why might the scene surprise Arturo?
4. What words would you use to describe the birthday party scene? What does this picture suggest about the author's community?
5. Why do you think Carmen chose to paint the cakewalk even though she wasn't playing? Why do you think this memory is important to her?
6. Why do you think the grandfather gathers his grandchildren when it is time to pick cactus?
7. What information does the painting give about Carmen's memories of seeing the hammerhead shark on the beach? Why might this experience have been memorable for her?
8. Why might Carmen have been watching her grandfather from the other room and not sitting in the kitchen with the rest of her family?





“An inspired celebration of American cultural diversity in English and Spanish. . . . *Family Pictures/Cuadros de familia* is a visual feast, and an aural delight.”

–*School Library Journal*

“Lomas Garza explains the paintings, supplying additional information, making this book an introduction to the artistic process as well as family history.”

–*Parents’ Choice*

“[V]ibrant, canvaslike illustrations. . . . Readers of various ethnic origins should use this exemplary bilingual book as a litmus test for exploring diversities of multicultural lifestyles.”

–*Publishers Weekly*

9. What does the tradition of celebrating Las Posadas tell you about the author’s community?
10. What smells, sounds and feelings might the author remember from making tamales with her family? What does the fact that all the family members help make tamales, not just women, tell you about the author’s family?
11. Explain the feeling the author has on her porch on the watermelon night. What does she mean, “It was like being in our own little world?”
12. Why does the author choose not to have a *quinceanera* of her own?
13. Why might a sick person ask a traditional healer for help in addition to (or instead of) a regular doctor? What does it mean that *curanderas* are “highly respected?”
14. Why do you think the author included her mother in this painting? What is the significance of showing her mother making the bed?
1. How would you describe Carmen Lomez Garza’s paintings? What did you enjoy about her paintings and stories? Did anything surprise you? If so, what? What questions did you have about her work?
2. What do the paintings and stories in this book teach readers about Carmen Lomez Garza’s family’s values? Give examples to support your ideas. What are some of your family’s values? Give examples of how your family demonstrates its values.
3. Many of the paintings and stories in this book reflect traditions of the author’s family that have to do with food. What conclusions can you draw related to this family and food? What are some of your family’s traditions related to food?
4. At the end of the book, the author writes that her mother, “made up our beds to sleep in and have regular dreams, but she also laid out the bed for our dreams of the future.” What does she mean? Who inspires your dreams of the future? How?
5. In the afterword, Pat Mora writes that Carmen Lomas Garza’s art “documents and salutes her people.” What does this mean? Why is this artwork significant to Mexican American people?

## Reader’s Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. **Suggest that students respond in reader’s response journals, essays, or oral discussion.** You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

## ELL/ESL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)  
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.



1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
  - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
  - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about one of their own family traditions.
5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.
6. Have students help add sticky-notes to the paintings labeling details from the text.

## INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

### English/Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3 and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 8)

1. Return to the questions posed by Sandra Cisneros in the introduction. Discuss whether students agree with her interpretation of the stories the author's pictures tell, or if they have different ideas.
2. Read *In My Family* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/in-my-family-en-mi-familia>), a second collection of paintings and family stories by the same author and artist, Carmen Lomas Garza. Ask students to make connections between the two texts. Create a categorized chart with information about the author's family traditions with information from both books (e.g., "Food," "Celebrations," etc.)
3. Read other books about Mexican American families, such as *Nana's Big Surprise* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/nana-s-big-surprise-nana-que-sorpresa>) or *Finding the Music* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/finding-the-music-en-pos-de-la-musica>). Ask students to make connections between texts. What cultural traditions are discussed across texts? What about examples of more generalized family and community values?
4. Read other books that discuss children's relationships with their grandparents such as those in this collection: <https://www.leeandlow.com/collections/grandparents-collection>. Create a chart comparing grandparent relationships across stories.
5. Use the text as a springboard to talk about students' own family stories. Have students create a class book with pictures and descriptions about their own ancestry and family traditions. An example of book directions can be found here: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/family-traditions-class-book-941.html>. Or, study the art of storytelling more in depth with this lesson plan (<http://www.>



[readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/storytelling-social-studies-classroom-928.html?tab=4#tabs](http://readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/storytelling-social-studies-classroom-928.html?tab=4#tabs)). Both are provided by [ReadWriteThink.org](http://ReadWriteThink.org), a website developed by the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English.

## Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)  
(Writing Standards, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9)

1. Locate Kingsville, TX (the author's hometown) on a map. Discuss nearby cities, geographic features, etc. Also locate other places mentioned in the book, such as Reynosa, Mexico and Padre Island.
2. Have students select one of the topics in the book to research in more detail and present to the class (Examples: *Pinatas*, nopal cactus, *Las Posadas*, *tamales*, *Quinceanera*, and *curanderas*).
3. On her website, Carmen Lomas Garza writes, "The Chicano Movement of the late 1960s inspired the dedication of my creativity to the depiction of special and everyday events in the lives of Mexican Americans based on my memories and experiences in South Texas. I saw the need to create images that would elicit recognition and appreciation among Mexican Americans, both adults and children, while at the same time serve as a source of education for others not familiar with our culture" (<http://carmenlomasgarza.com/about/artist-statement/>). Have students research the Chicano Movement (<http://www.brown.edu/Research/Coachella/chicano.html>). Discuss why the movement may have inspired Garza and what she means by the statement above.

## Art

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1 and 2 and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)  
(Writing Standards, Texts Types and Purposes, Strand 3 and Research to Build and Present Knowledge, Strand 9)  
(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

1. Develop language for talking about paintings using the Grades K–2 lesson plan from the Smithsonian Center for Education and Museum Studies (<http://>

[www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/lesson-plans/latino\\_family\\_stories/index.html](http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/lesson-plans/latino_family_stories/index.html)). Practice using the terms suggested (e.g., setting, actions, time of day) to describe other paintings. Or, use the Grades 3–5 lesson plan to practice differentiating between facts and opinions about paintings ([http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/lesson-plans/latino\\_family\\_stories/index.html](http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/lesson-plans/latino_family_stories/index.html)).

2. Ask students to imitate Garza's style to create their own family pictures. (Colored pencils may be easier for students to use than paints so they can include many details.) Have each student write an accompanying story explaining the details of his or her artwork.
3. Notice the cut paper decorations, *papel picado*, in *The Fair in Reynosa* painting. Have students try making their own by cutting folded tissue paper (<http://pbskids.org/zoom/activities/do/papelpicado.html>). For older students, share Garza's books *Magic Windows* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/magic-windows-ventanas-magicas>) and use the directions in *Making Magic Windows* to create more intentional cut paper designs (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/making-magic-windows>). (This author study of Carmen Lomas Garza from Denver Public Schools uses Garza's work as springboard to explore *papel picado* and other various elements of Mexican culture: [https://www.leeandlow.com/uploads/loaded\\_document/43/CarmenLomasGarza.pdf](https://www.leeandlow.com/uploads/loaded_document/43/CarmenLomasGarza.pdf))

## School-Home Connection

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)  
(Reading Standards, Craft and Structure, Strand 4)

1. Have students prepare information to share with their families about Carmen Lomas Garza and how her artwork celebrates Mexican American culture. Have students ask their families to describe the kinds of paintings they'd create to celebrate their own cultures. Share responses at school.
2. Invite family or community members to your class to tell stories from their own childhoods. Provide students with clipboards and ask them to draw what they imagine as they listen, including details in the style of Carmen Lomas Garza.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ARTIST

**Carmen Lomas Garza** is one of the most prominent Mexican American painters working today. Born and raised in Texas, she knew from a young age that she wanted to be an artist. She practiced drawing every day. Her parents encouraged her to go to college and study art. She is a graduate of the Texas Arts & Industry University, Juarez-Lincoln/Antioch Graduate School, and San Francisco State University where she earned her master of arts. She now lives in San Francisco, California. Lomas Garza is a recipient of numerous awards, including for her children's books. Lomas Garza has won the Pura Belpré Illustrator Award, Pura Belpré Illustrator Award Honor, and Notable Children's Book from the American Library Association, among others. Her paintings have traveled all over the United States and Mexico in many exhibitions in galleries and museums. Visit her website at <http://carmenlomasgarza.com/>.

## ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

**LEE & LOW BOOKS** is the largest children's book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, "about everyone, for everyone," is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company's goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at [leeandlow.com](http://leeandlow.com).

## ORDERING INFORMATION

### On the Web:

[www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering](http://www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering) (general order information)

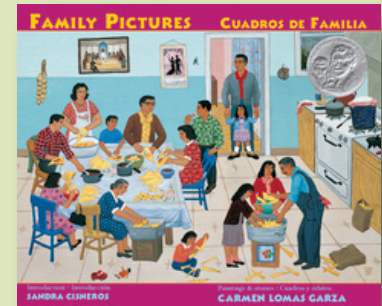
[www.leeandlow.com/books/family-pictures-cuadros-de-familia](http://www.leeandlow.com/books/family-pictures-cuadros-de-familia) (secure online ordering)

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

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

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

## Book Information for Family Pictures



\$9.95, PAPERBACK

978-0-89239-207-0

40 pages, 8-3/4 x 10-1/4

\*Reading Level: Grades 4–5

\*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Interest Level: Grades K–6

Guided Reading Level: Q

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points: 4.3/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: AD790L

**THEMES:** Sharing and Giving, Home, Holidays and Traditions, Friendship, Food, Family Life, Dreams and Aspirations, Cultural diversity, Childhood Experiences and Memories, Growing Up, Autobiography/Memoir, Art, Identity and Self Esteem, Pride, Texas, Latino/Hispanic/Mexican Interest

### RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/family-pictures-cuadros-de-familia>

*All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.*