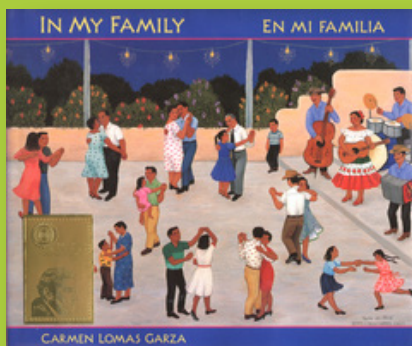


TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS

In My Family/En mi 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: 4.7/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: 830L

*Reading level based on the Spache
Readability Formula

Themes: Neighbors, Home, Holidays and Traditions, Friendship, Food, Family Life, Cultural Diversity, Childhood Experiences and Memories, Biography/Memoir, Art, Collaboration, Dreams and Aspirations, Identity and Self Esteem, Pride, Texas, Latino/Hispanic/Mexican Interest

SYNOPSIS

In her eagerly-awaited second book for children, *In My Family/En mi familia*, internationally-renowned artist Carmen Lomas Garza takes us once again to her hometown of Kingsville, Texas, near the border with Mexico. Through vibrant paintings and warm personal stories, Carmen brings to life more loving memories of growing up in a traditional Mexican American community: eating *empanadas*, witnessing the blessing on her cousin's wedding day, and dancing to the *conjunto* band at the neighborhood restaurant.

In My Family/En mi familia is Carmen Lomas Garza's second book of family pictures, a continuing tribute to the loving family and community that shaped her childhood—and her life.

Awards and honors include:

Pura Belpré Illustrator Award Honor, ALSC/REFORMA



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: "Every time I paint, it serves a purpose—to bring about pride in our Mexican American culture. When I was growing up, a lot of us were punished for speaking Spanish. We were punished for being who we were, and we were made to feel ashamed of our culture. That was very wrong. My art is a way of healing these wounds, like the sábila plant (aloe vera) heals burns and scrapes when applied by a loving parent or grandparent. The paintings and stories in this book are my memories of growing up in Kingsville, Texas, near the border with Mexico. This is my second book of family pictures."—Carmen Lomas Garza

Additional titles to teach about family and culture:

Family Pictures / Cuadros de familia written and illustrated by Carmen Lomas Garza

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

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

aloe vera plant, border, horned toads, high noon, fire ants, *Nopalitos*, *empanadas*, filling, *piñata*, mesquite wood, cascarones, confetti, paste, cone, outer ear, vacuum, cleansing, copal incense, ruda plant, weeping, Virgin of Guadalupe, Bishop, water tank, offerings, rattlesnakes, crush, chaperoning, crocheting, fringe, braid, veil, bless, accordion, bass, heaven

Academic

purpose, pride, culture, punished, ashamed, wounds, applied, fascinated, surface, comforting, encouraging, briefly, rebellious, counselor, communicate, roams, astonished, image, miracle, appeared, constant, opportunity, advice, phase, extinguish, treatment, evaporate, pilgrimage, ignite

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? Who is in the pictures? What kinds of events and experiences might someone want to remember by taking or making picture?
3. 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?
4. What is “pride?” How might someone show pride?
5. Read the dedication on the last page of the book: “This book is for my nieces and nephews who have learned to recognize their mother or their father or other relatives in my paintings. It is also for all the other children who will see themselves in the paintings and share the celebrations.” What does Carmen Lomas Garza mean here? Why might she dedicate this book to all children who see themselves in the paintings? What does she mean by “see[ing] themselves in the paintings”? Why might this be important to her?

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, author’s introduction, illustrations, bilingual text, author’s question and answer page, and author’s dedication.



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 why the author is proud of her family and culture

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 does the author say is her purpose for painting?
2. What does the author find fascinating about horned toads? Why is she up on her toes?
3. What is the grandfather doing with the knife? What does the grandmother do with the cactus pads?
4. What tradition do Aunt Paz and Uncle Beto have? What does the author remember about their tradition? Can you find each person the author describes in the picture?
5. What does each person do at the birthday party?
6. What are *cascarones*? How are they made? Why does the author call her brothers “sneaky?”

7. What is the earache treatment? Why is it needed?
8. Why does the healer come? What does she do?
9. What is the story of the weeping woman? How do the children look as they listen?
10. Who is in the Virgin of Guadalupe painting? What are they looking at? What is the story about the appearance of the Virgin?
11. Why does the family go to the ranch in south Texas? What do they see?
12. What is each person doing in the One Afternoon painting?
13. What is each person doing in the Blessing on the Wedding Day picture to prepare for the wedding ceremony?
14. What is the setting of Dance at El Jardin? What sights, sounds and feelings can you imagine based on the description in the text?

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. How did the author feel when she was teased for speaking Spanish? What does it mean to heal a wound? How can pride help heal wounds?
2. Why would the author's mother and grandmother be mad about children playing in the hot sun in the middle of the day?
3. What does “the food of last resort” mean? What other foods might be considered “foods of last resort?”
4. Why do you think Aunt Paz and Uncle Beto have their empanada party year after year, even though their house is very small?
5. What can you learn about the author's parents from the Birthday Barbeque story and painting?
6. What do you think makes the *cascarones* tradition memorable for the author?



“The style and color of the illustrations... augment the sympathetic tone and gentle insight of this album-like book. . . a handsome sequel to *Family Pictures*.”

–*The Horn Book*

“... another sparkling family album that lovingly shares the artist’s memories of the Hispanic cultural experience as lived in the Southwest.”

–*Booklist*

“After taking in this collection, one is left with an overwhelming feeling of the artist’s love for her strong Mexican American extended family and community.”

–*San Francisco Chronicle*

7. What might the author have been thinking as a child watching her mother treat her father’s earache?
8. Why do you think the author thinks the counseling helps her sister more than the healer’s treatments?
9. Why do you think the parents tell their children that the weeping woman would get them if they went in the empty lot? Is it true?
10. What do *The Virgin of Guadalupe* and *The Miracle* tell readers about the author’s family’s religious beliefs and traditions? What information do they give about the place where the author grew up?
11. What does *One Afternoon* tell readers about the author’s grandmother?
12. What might the mother be saying to the bride? What makes this moment special?
13. What makes the *Dance At El Jardin* painting special to the author? What feelings and memories does it evoke for her?
14. Return to Question 1. Do you have any additional thoughts now that you’ve read the book?

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.

1. In the introduction, the author says her paintings serve “to bring about pride in our Mexican American culture.” How do her paintings do this? What makes you proud of your own culture? How do you demonstrate this pride?
2. What patterns or commonalities did you notice in the stories and pictures? Why might the author have included some of those elements again and again?
3. Based on the paintings and stories, what conclusions can you draw about her family? What do they enjoy? What are their strengths? What are some of their beliefs and values? Give examples to support your answer.
4. Choose one painting that reminds you of your own family. Describe your connections to it. Choose one painting that shows something very different from what your own family does. Describe what makes it different and what your family does instead.
5. Read the author’s dedication at the end of the book. Why do you think she chose to write such a dedication? Why do you think she chose these particular stories and paintings to share with children?

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. Read the questions and answers from the author. Discuss the following questions: Were any responses surprising? Did any responses clarify things you were wondering as you read the book? What other questions would you ask the author?
2. Read *Family Pictures* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/family-pictures-cuadros-de-familia>), the author's first collection of paintings and family stories. 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. 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>). Both are provided by [ReadWriteThink.org](http://www.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. Have students research ways throughout history that people have demonstrated pride in their cultures, beliefs or lifestyles (Examples include: exhibitions/demonstrations of arts, sports, etc., protests, and parades/celebrations). Have each student present about a particular example and/or create a photo slideshow as a class with examples of groups demonstrating their pride.
2. Have students select one of the topics in the book to research in more detail and present to the class, perhaps including photos or videos found on the Internet to give more information (Examples: Horned toads, *nopalitos*, *empanadas*, Mexican American birthday traditions, *cascarones*, *ventosa* earache treatments, *curanderas*. *La Llorona* stories, pilgrimages to see the Virgin of Guadalupe, rattlesnakes, Mexican American wedding traditions, and *conjunto* bands and related dances).

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. Return to the final painting in the book, “Dance at El Jardin.” What details in the painting and text show how special this memory is to the author? Ask students to imitate the author’s art and writing styles to create a picture and accompanying story that depicts a memory similarly special to them.
2. 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). 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).

3. Notice the cut paper decorations, *papel picado*, in the Birthday Barbeque painting. Have students try making their own by cutting folded tissue paper. Simple directions can be found here: <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* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/making-magic-windows>) to create more intentional cut paper designs. (This author study of Carmen Lomas Garza from Denver Public Schools uses Garza’s work as springboard to explore *papel picado*: 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 interview family members about traditional stories from their upbringing or culture, using *La Llorona* as an example. Invite families to write down stories or come to school and share them. Discuss how stories are used to teach children across cultures. Make connections to how the author uses stories in her book to teach readers.
2. As a class, develop a set of interview questions to ask an older family member about their upbringing. Generate generalized questions related to paintings in the book, such as, “How did your family celebrate birthdays or weddings?” “What remedies did you use when someone was ill?” etc. Share responses at school.
3. Invite family or community members to your class to describe memories from their own childhoods that evoke pride in their culture or upbringing. 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.

ORDERING INFORMATION

On the Web:

www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering (general order information)

www.leeandlow.com/books/in-my-family-en-mi-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 *In My Family*



\$9.95, PAPERBACK

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*Reading Level: Grades 4–5

*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

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Guided Reading Level: Q

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points: 4.3/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: 830L

THEMES: Neighbors, Home, Holidays and Traditions, Friendship, Food, Family Life, Cultural Diversity, Childhood Experiences and Memories, Biography/Memoir, Art, Collaboration, Dreams and Aspirations, Identity and Self Esteem, Pride, Texas, Latino/Hispanic/Mexican Interest

RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

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