Families Around the World

Margriet Ruurs



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A successor to the popular Children Around the World written and illustrated by Donata Montanari, this book allows young readers to visit with fourteen children, each from a different country, to learn about their families. Based on real children, each one's story fills a two-page spread and is told in the first person, beginning with a greeting in the child's native language. From Ryan, who lives on a Texas cattle farm, to Nkoitoi, who tends the family goat in Kenya, to Baatar, who moves regularly with his nomadic family in Mongolia, there is a vast range of homes, locations, customs and activities presented here, all of it enthusiastically illustrated with bright colors and vivid detail by illustrator Jessica Rae Gordon. There is variety in the heads of the families as well: a single parent, multiracial parents and same-sex parents are all represented.

For all the children's different experiences, however, it is clear how much their lives have in common with one another, and likely with the book's readers. The love they have for their family members, the joy they find in play and the beauty they see around them wherever they live are experiences that cross borders. This is a wonderful, uplifting global studies title perfect for exploring cultures and geography. It would also be useful for a social studies unit on families and family relationships. Adding to its value as a teaching tool are suggestions for lesson plans built around the book, as well as a glossary and pronunciation guide for foreign words.

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