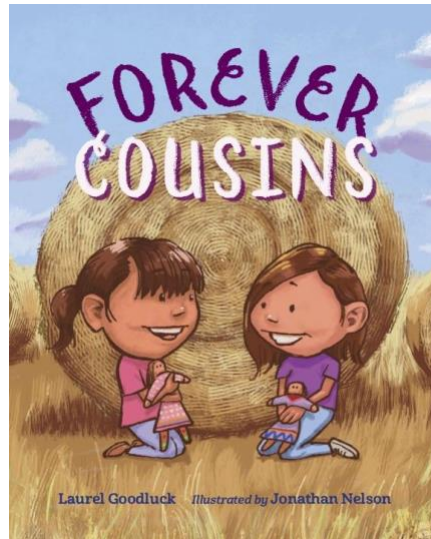


## **Forever Cousins**

Written by Laurel Goodluck and Illustrated by Jonathan Nelson



## **My Forever Person**

A lesson created by Madeleine Richards

Created for University of Colorado Boulder's 2022 Children's Book Festival. Open Education Resource available <https://www.colorado.edu/event/bookfest/>

### **Lesson Summary**

For this lesson, students will participate in a read aloud of the book *Forever Cousins* by Laurel Goodluck and illustrated by Jonathan Nelson. As they are reading the story, they will be reflecting on what it means to be a 'forever cousin' and why those relationships are important to both Native Americans and themselves. Students will reflect on these themes through discussions with their peers and in turn-and-talks to help students' comprehension of the topics explored in the story and to give students time to collaborate with each other to form responses to discussion questions. In the story, the two main characters give each other their favorite doll to remind the other person of them when they are apart. Students will then think about a person in their life who they don't get to see very often (cousin, friend, grandparent, etc.) and who they want to create a paper doll or action figure for. Students will also write a friendly letter to send along with their paper doll or action figure to their 'forever person'. Once students complete their letter and doll, the teacher will choose from different options, which are explained in later sections of the lesson plan, of how to send projects to students' forever people.

## Intended Audience

This lesson was created with first grade students and standards in mind. However, I have included a letter template appropriate for older students. Discussion questions can also be modified to provide more in depth conversations.

## Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Ask and answer open ended questions about the story and its characters.
- Discuss the significance of the characters' dolls.
- Create a paper doll or action figure that resembles themselves and/or includes elements of things that are special to them.
- Draw connections between events in the story and events from other stories or events from their own lives.

## Curriculum Standards

- Oral Expression and Listening, Standard 1a (CCSS: SL 1.1)
  - Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *grade 1 topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- Reading for All Purposes, Standard 1a (CCSS: RL.1.3)
  - Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
- Writing and Composition, Standard 4a (CCSS: L.1.1)
  - Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

## Materials Needed

- *Forever Cousins* book
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers (original and Colors of the World set for different skin tones)
- Copies of paper doll template (included at the end of the document)
- Copies of letter writing template (included at the end of the document)
- Copies of letter to send home to adults (included at the end of the document)

## Lesson Directions

Lesson plans can be extended beyond recommended time to allow for more in depth conversations or time spent writing the letter.

Day/Time	Directions
<p>Day 1 ~ 45 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduce the Hidatsa people and where they are originally from, and how they had to move off their traditional lands to either live on a piece of land set aside for them or live in cities. Explain that the word Magúu [mah-goo] is the Hidatsa word for grandma.</li> <li>● Before reading, ask students questions to activate their prior knowledge such as: What do you think a ‘forever cousin’ might be? Do you have any cousins? Have you ever moved to a new school or city? Have you ever had a friend move to a different school or city? etc.</li> <li>● Begin reading aloud from <i>Forever Cousins</i>. Stop in these places to ask students discussion questions, giving students time to talk with a partner to discuss their responses to the questions:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Page 5: “What do you think the author meant by the sentence ‘cousin goodbyes are bumpy too’?”</li> <li>○ Page 8: “Why do you think the girls are always holding their dolls close? Do you have any toys that help make you feel better?”</li> <li>○ Page 15: “Have you noticed any details that show up a lot in the story or the pictures? What is it and why might it be important?”</li> <li>○ Page 19: “How do you think Amanda and Kara are feeling now that they are seeing each other again?”</li> <li>○ Page 24 (final page): “Why do you think the girls swapped dolls? What do you think will happen when the girls say goodbye to each other again?”</li> </ul> </li> <li>● After the story, ask students if they can think of anyone in their lives who lives far away from them or who they don’t get to see often that they know they still have a special relationship with, or a ‘forever person’ (for example: a cousin, friend, grandparent, aunt or uncle, etc.).</li> <li>● After the discussion, explain to students that they will create a paper doll similar to what the girls had in the story. Explain that these dolls will be given/sent to their forever person along with a letter that they will write. Finish the day by inviting students to think about who they will want to write the letter and make the doll for.</li> </ul>
<p>Day 2 ~ 45 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Begin by rereading the story and give students a chance to discuss their ‘forever person’ idea with a partner.</li> <li>● Introduce the parts of a friendly letter (date, greeting, message, and sign off) by writing a friendly letter on an anchor chart.</li> <li>● Give students time to begin drafting their letter to their forever person.</li> </ul>

<p>Day 3 ~ 45 minutes (May need additional time to finish projects)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Begin by giving students time to finish their letter to their forever person.</li><li>● Once students have finished their letters, explain that they will be designing and coloring a paper doll that in some way represents them or something that is unique to them. Give students time to color and cut out their doll.</li><li>● Once students have completed their letters and their paper dolls, give students time to present their dolls and letters to a small group. After this the teacher will collect the project to then choose how to send the projects on to their students' forever people. If postage is a financial barrier for your school or your families, I would suggest one of the electronic options. Options for sending projects could include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Collecting addresses and postage (either from your school or families) to mail individual projects to their intended recipients.</li><li>○ Send projects home with students for families to send projects to their intended recipients.</li><li>○ Collecting email addresses to email individual projects to their intended recipients electronically and send physical copies home.</li><li>○ Sending electronic copies of the projects to students' families for them to forward on to their intended recipients and send physical copies home.</li></ul></li></ul>
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## Sample Product

Date: 9/20/22

Dear Allison,

This week, we learned about our forever person, who is someone we don't see a lot, but still have a special relationship with. I miss you a lot, but can't wait to see you and hear about Amsterdam.

Love, Madeleine



## **About the Creator of the Lesson Plan**

My name is Madeleine Richards, and I am currently a first year Master's student at the University of Colorado at Boulder pursuing a degree in Curriculum and Instruction with a Literacy Focus. I am also teaching first grade at Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic School. I graduated with my Bachelor's in Elementary Education with a minor in Spanish from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN. I have always loved sharing my love of literature with my students and other teachers, and I hope that other teachers will enjoy this lesson!

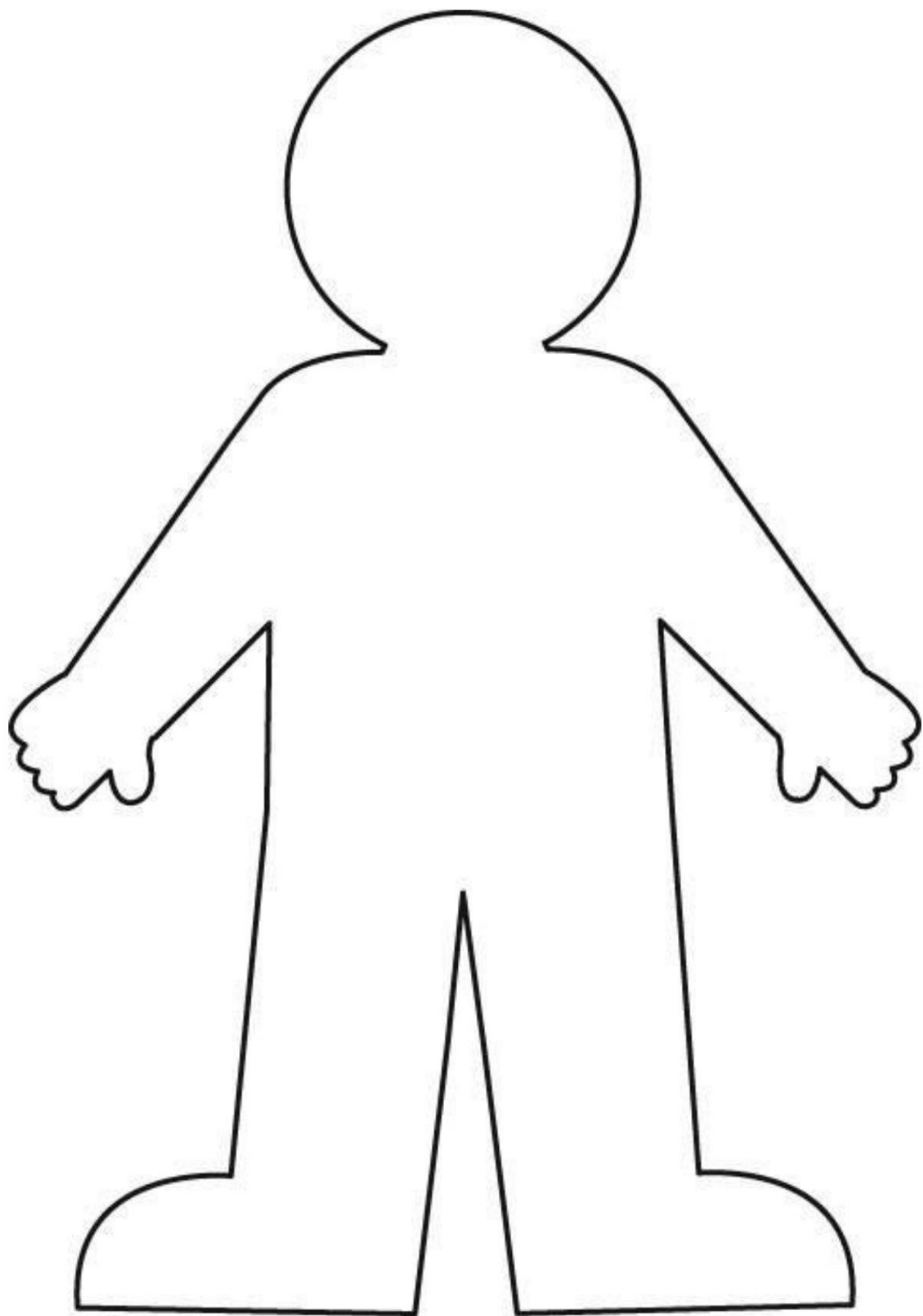
## Family Letter Template

Dear Families,

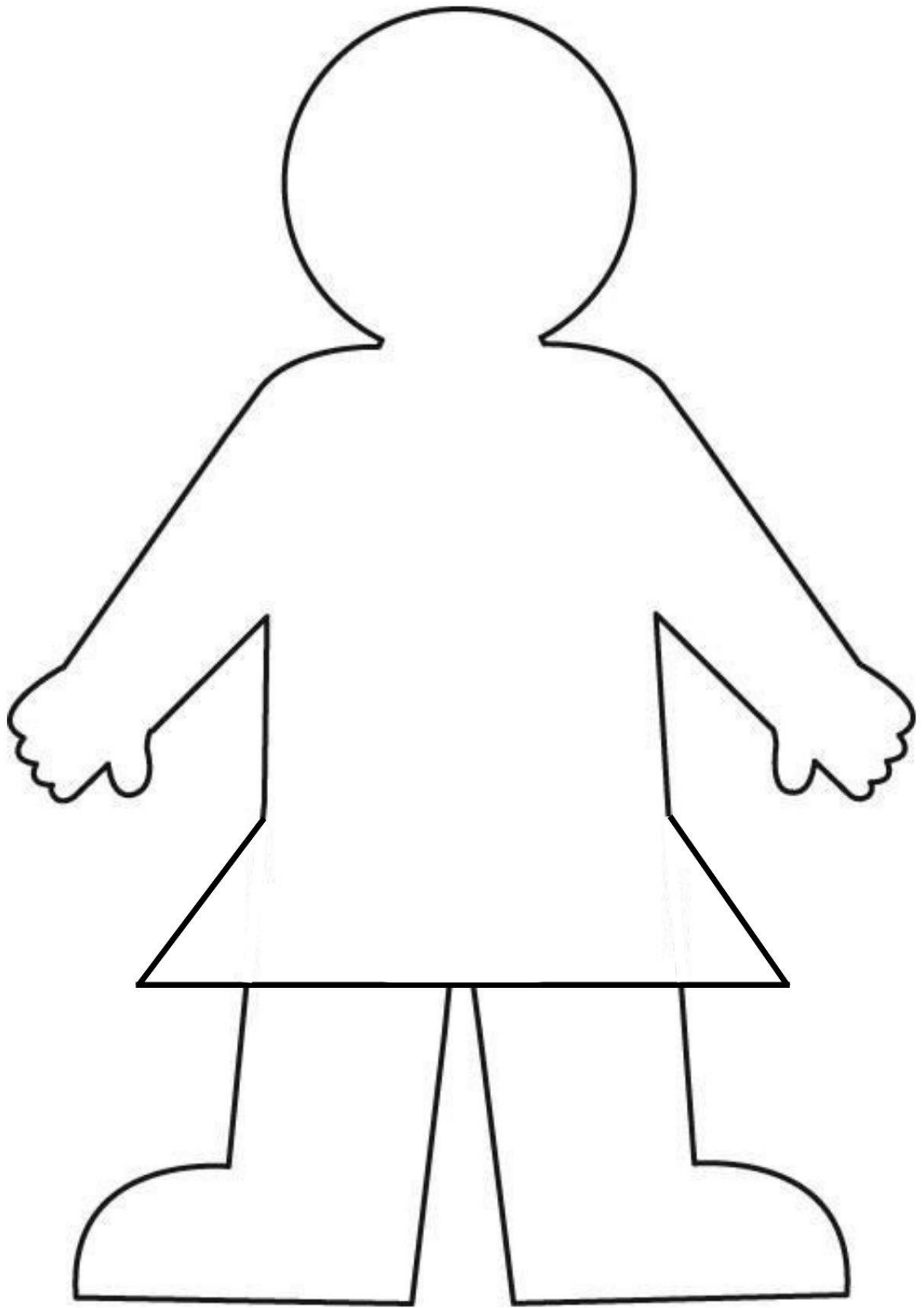
This week we have been reading the book *Forever Cousins* written by Laurel Goodluck and illustrated by Jonathan Nelson. We have been discussing the importance of people in our lives who we don't get to see often, but know that they're always going to be important people in our lives. In the story, the two main characters are cousins who go from living close to each other to only seeing each other at family reunions. At first the girls are nervous about what the move means for their friendship, but when they finally see each other again they realize that no matter how far apart they are, or how infrequently they see each other, they will always have a special bond. This is also shown when the two girls give each other their favorite dolls to remember them by.

Students have been reflecting on a person in their lives who they have a similar bond with who they don't get to see often, or their 'forever person'. They have worked on creating their own paper dolls or action figures and letters to send to their 'forever person'. I will be reaching out to you all to determine the best ways to send your child's projects to their forever person. Thank you for your participation in this project and making our students and their forever person feel special!

Sincerely,







Date:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Love,

