



## Mommy, Mama, and Me

*Lesléa Newman , Carol Thompson (Illustrator)*

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Rhythmic text and illustrations with universal appeal show a toddler spending the day with its mommies. From hide-and-seek to dress-up, then bath time and a kiss goodnight, there's no limit to what a loving family can do together.

Shares the loving bond between same-sex parents and their children.

## **Mommy, Mama, and Me Details**

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Author : Lesléa Newman , Carol Thompson (Illustrator)

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## From Reader Review Mommy, Mama, and Me for online ebook

### Airiz C says

Not so long ago, we heard about Peter Parnell's controversial children's book *And Tango Makes Three*, a true story about a pair of male Penguins in Central Park Zoo raising a chick. In its wake, many other gay-centric picture books were drawn and penned. Writer Leslea Newman and illustrator Carol Thompson created a twosome of such books, focusing on lesbian and gay parents separately.

*Mommy, Mama, and Me* is a simple glimpse at how two mothers care for their kid.

In artful mixtures of pastel-colored illustrations and rhythmic, playful voices, these books feature a day in a life of a lesbian and a gay couple. I'm pretty sure that LGBT parents will be happy to know that there are bedtime stories that can reflect their family setup.

The best thing about these books is a message that lies embedded at its core, one that even most adults find hard to comprehend nowadays: there's really nothing wrong with having two homosexual parents as long as they love their child and they can provide his/her needs. The writing is pretty straightforward—no frills and complexities and 'coming-out' problems and all that jazz. In fact the books didn't even touch the sensitive issues of homosexuality, they just zeroed in on the loving relationship between mothers, fathers, and children.

These are not exclusive for gay parents. I think these would be great starting materials to teach any child that there are different types of families, that love comes in many different ways, and (I'll reiterate) that what's important in family is not the gender of a kid's guardians but that all of the unit's members love one another.

Controversies would always be close on this kind of literature's heels, of course. I wouldn't be surprised if these simple books would be listed as 'most challenged.'

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### Mike Kriznar says

Michael J. Kriznar

Controversial Books

Mommy, Mama, and Me

Mommy, Mama, and Me is a well-written book by Leslie Newman and illustrated by Carol Thompson. This book is controversial as many believe it promotes a lesbian relationship.

The wording and illustration in this book shows how a relationship can be between two women, and how the love for the child can be the same. It starts with mommy picking him up while mama pours juice. Mommy combed his hair while mama rocked him in a chair. The story continues showing different things they do during the day. It shows how parents do things with the boy separately but how some things they do together, such as bathing him. At the end, both Mommy and Mama put him to sleep and kiss him goodnight.

I believe this is a well written book that would be good for younger children to learn about the different types of families. Of course, it would have to be approved by the school district. Many schools across the county have banned it from the school. As one review put it, this book "shares the loving bond between same-sex parents and their children. It helps encourage acceptance, love, and strong values in a family." That sharing and love is essential in a child's development.

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### **Elizabeth says**

This book *Mommy, Mama and Me* by Lesléa Newman was published in 2009 and is a picture book that shows the same gender parents raising their child. This book won the Stonewall Book Award Nominee for Children's and Young Adult literature in 2010. I feel as this book would be intended for 1st and 2nd graders because that's an age where the children can get a bit of understanding of different types of families. It is told by a child and how the two moms' do different things for their child. I rated a 3 because it definitely came across a great message about having the same gender parents showing they equally raise a child. The illustrations are easily drawn to show young readers what is happening on each page. It is wonderful to have a book like this for young children because there is 8 words or less on each page, very easy for children to read on their own. It's also a simple task that the mommy or mama do for their child that children reading this book can relate to what their parents do for them. Our society today is very opened with same gender parents so having this book can teach children that having same gender parents is known and accepting.

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### **Ben Truong says**

*Mommy, Mama, and Me* is a children's picture book written by Lesléa Newman and illustrated by Carol Thompson which focus on a family with two lesbian parents. It is the companion book to *Daddy, Papa, and Me*.

Newman's text is lyrical, rhythmic, and easy to understand. The story is straightforward and in its simplicity, a good story. Thompson's art is simply wonderful, colorful and compliments the text very well.

The premise of the story is quite simple – it's just a day two mothers spend with their child playing at the playground and then their bedtime ritual at home. Such a mundane thing that parents of any gender or sexuality does every day, yet I think that's the point to the whole story. There is no mention of struggles being gay parents, just the struggle with taking care of a child.

All in all, *Mommy, Mama, and Me* is a wonderful children's book, which hopefully teaches children that families comes in different shapes and sizes, but at the core, just the same as any other family.

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### **Lisa C says**

My absolute favorite thing about this book and the follow-up story, *Daddy, Papa, and Me*, is that at no point is there an effort to say "this is what it's like to have same-gender parents." The entire point, told in part by its absence, is that home-life is essentially the same as having two-gender parents. Both show love and attention; teach; guide; parent. Unlike some older titles, neither mother is attributed in either action or artwork as more "feminine" or "masculine." In fact, it's a little hard to tell the difference, other than by what the child itself describes, making both parents truly equal. Simple, accessible, and an excellent way to introduce LGBT normalcy in all types of homes.

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### **Brooke Lewis says**

Mommy, Mama and Me is a poetry book depicting two mothers and their son participating in daily activities together. The mothers play with their son in relate able activities like, going to the park, bath time and bedtime. It is an easy read with bright, attention grabbing illustrations. The characters are portrayed as kind and caring people who enjoy family time. The book gives plenty of opportunities for students to ask questions and consider. Young children will easily be able to read and comprehend the book. However the plot and story line does not include a problem and solution. The book instead, sort of offers a list of activities the family enjoys on a regular day. The illustrations follow in conjunction with the words on each page and really bring the story to life. The book does portray the two mothers as being of different race. The book gives children a new insight into lesbian families without using any biases or chapter oversimplification. There is no dialogue in the book. The author is a reliable source because she, Leslea Newman herself, is lesbian too. This book and Daddy Papa and me would be my go to options for introducing gay and lesbian families to young children. The casual approach is nice. It creates a sense of normalcy and comfort for the reader.

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### **Allie says**

I'm reading this tomorrow for my letter M playgroup! The rhymes are really fun and the illustrations are warm and inviting.

I've been pushing the boat out a little bit in playgroup lately by including books that are explicitly about diverse topics (vs. books with diverse children in the illustrations but not necessarily *about* a diverse topic). It always *feels* scarier before you do it. You get scolded once and it really can affect you! In reality, it's not a big deal and everyone is fine because good books are good books. And if they're not fine, they can stick it in their ear.

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### **MaryannP says**

I wasn't sure what to classify this book as under our current genres so I classified it as realistic fiction because it discusses family units that exist.

I enjoyed this book because it was very simplistic, easy for early readers to read and comprehend, and can be extended to early elementary students as a mini lesson to guide discussion around various family units.

The book walks us through a young boys family which consists of two mom's, one that is referred to as mommy and one that is referred to as mama. They are presented separately on some pages, showing what they help the child with such as reading a story or bathing, but also show the mom's helping the child do things together. I like how the book is poetic where the lines rhyme so it's easy for early readers to follow.

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### **Emilie Liebert says**

This book shows a young boy going through his day with his two mommies. They both are very involved in

his life, and clearly love him.

It's beautifully written and illustrated, and delves into the life of a child with two mothers. It shows that it doesn't matter whether the parents are two women, two men, or anything in between because they show the child love and acceptance, and that's all that matters. They take care of him. All he knows is how happy he is. I love that it switches between Mommy and Mama in the stanzas so you know they both care for him in ways; they don't have gender roles either. The illustrations show you who is who to him. It's also fun to read out loud due to rhyming stanzas that can be almost musical. It's a sweet story that shows that LGBT+ parents are the same as what is considered "normal" parents. It would be best between preschool and maybe 1st grade, depending on the audience.

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### **Liz says**

Mommy and Mama enjoy a day with their darling, bouncing baby. Each mother does their own special things with baby during the day from flying up in the air to cooking in the kitchen. At the end of the day baby is tucked into bed and kissed good-night by both Mommy and Mama. Showing that love truly does make a family.

Pioneer Gay and lesbian author Leslea Newman's newest books *Mommy, Mama and Me* and *Daddy, Papa and Me* offer a board book option for loving same-sex families. With the colorful illustrations by artist Carol Thompson the day to day life of these non-traditional families is depicted in a realistic way. Newman's basic text reiterates the universal "I love my mommy/I love my daddy" themes. These books are wonderful additions to any board book collection but they are particularly valuable to a community that is greatly under-represented in children's literature.

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### **Betsy says**

What is the purpose of your average everyday board book? It's not really a crazy question. In the history of printed literature, board books are relative newcomers. I mean, books for babies and toddlers? A radical notion! Yet parents who start reading to their kids early find that their children are better readers later on down the road. As a result, sometimes board books are simplified adaptations of already existing picture books, and sometimes they are written with the intention of beginning and ending their lives as board books (though if you're Sandra Boynton, sometimes you'll see the rare board book to picture book crossover). Topics cover everything from animal sounds to colors, peek-a-boo, letters, numbers, and families. Always with the families. Small children like to see children like themselves in books just as parents like to see their family situations reflected in the literature their kids read. The problem is that there really isn't a lot to pick and choose from if you're a modern gay or lesbian couple. On the picture book side of things you can sometimes find a sweet story in the midst of all the pabulum (*Mini Mia and her Darling Uncle* perhaps), but it's relatively rare. And on the board book side of things? Essentially you can either find translated/bilingual editions of Moreno Velo and Termenón Delgado's charming *Manu* series, but that's almost entirely it. Now Tricycle Press is taking a chance and producing some quality baby board book fare for the busy single sex family. What is the purpose of your average everyday board book? To teach children about the world, of course. Credit to author Leslea Newman and illustrator Carol Thompson for producing not one but two titles (*Mommy, Mama, and Me* and *Daddy, Papa, and Me*) for new families.

In *Mommy, Mama, and Me* a small child (Boy? Girl? Unclear) discusses the activities that make up a day

with Mommy and Mama. Gentle rhymes describe everything from "Mommy lets me help her cook" to "Mama helps me read a book." No matter what this family does, however, they do it together until at the end of the day, "Now I'm tucked in nice and tight. Mommy and Mama kiss me goodnight." Similarly the book *Daddy, Papa, and Me* covers similar ground. Only in that book a slightly older toddler runs, plays, and eventually tuckers out an exhausted Daddy and Papa. Accompanied by bright and lively illustrations, these board books are keepers from page one onward. The art itself is a mixture of mixed media and what looks to be watercolors.

There was a time (and I like to think that it's past) when if an author or illustrator chose to write a story with a family in it that wasn't white, people would start tsking and murmuring under their breath that no white family would ever consider purchasing books about anything but similarly white families. The fact that black, Asian, Hispanic, and other ethnic groups readily purchased stories about all kinds of families that weren't their own race never really seemed to change their minds on the matter. As a children's librarian I do occasionally have to deal with parents who look at the books I recommend to them and then say, "Do you have anything less . . . urban?" \*sigh\* Still, it's less common than it used to be. Now in the case of these two books, I can almost anticipate people readying their arguments that no straight family would ever buy board books about gay folks. And again, the fact that gay families have little choice BUT to buy stories about straight family units doesn't seem to make much of a difference. To my mind, I don't think you're giving people enough credit. Are there people out there who will exhibit shock and horror at these loving little portraits and forbid them from their homes? Undoubtedly. Such are the times in which we live. But by the same token, I have faith that there are lots of forward thinking, intelligent people out there who recognize that if you want to build tolerance in your youngster, why not start sooner rather than later? Why not indeed.

I think one of the things I like the most about this book is the fact that like that delightful *And Tango Makes Three*, the whole point of the book isn't wrapped up in the fact that these families have homosexual parents. I've been waiting for good books where the parents just happen to be gay to come out, and so far I've been routinely disappointed. In the case of these Newman/Thompson titles, what you're dealing with here is just your standard I-love-my-mommies / I-love-my-daddies fare. No different really from a million other board books out there today. And yes, the point behind writing the books may have been to write something for those same families, but its themes are universal; Toddlers and parents loving one another. And I think we've plenty of room on our bookstore and library shelves for that.

In terms of the art, I've seen Carol Thompson's illustrations for books like Frieda Wishinsky's *Oonga Boonga* and Toby Forward's *What Did You Do Today* before. In this book she has managed to walk that fine line between being realistic and being stereotypical. She could have flamboyanted up the gay dads and butched to the nines the moms if she wanted to. So her job here was to create believable families that didn't reek of faux values. So, for example, while you won't see the dads sporting out-of-date moustaches and earrings, at the same time these don't look like two businessmen who happen to be living in the same space. Similarly, Mommy and Mama make up a believable lesbian couple that doesn't resemble television's vision of what lesbians look like (long-haired models, etc.).

Yup. Pretty nice from top to toe. I urge you, however, to consider these books as more than just merely token lit. Sure, I'd love to see publishers taking a chance and creating more books of this type out there, but the stories really stand on their own merits and deserve to be considered as just great little board books in and of themselves. Cute and touching by turns, it's the lucky baby that gets to have these read to them. No matter what your family looks like, if you have an anklebiter on your hands, these are fine literature for tiny tots. More than just the sum of their parts.

Ages 0-2.

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### **Cassidy Smith says**

I loved this book. I thought I was great because it's not about a nuclear family and all the kids from your calls may not be from a nuclear family. The illustrations are cute the cartoon type as usual. The baby in the story just explains all the different things that mama and mommy do for it but also it demonstrates how that family is similar to normal families and what they do at home. I feel like this will give kids the chance to realize that can still find similarities in their family in comparison to a friend who might have two dads or two moms. The book is trying to show that all families are families in my opinion. At a time where gay rights and same sex couples are the topic of conversation I think this book is a good thing to read so all kids will know there is nothing wrong with a family being different and that doesn't make it any less a family. I think that kids might have questions but I think that they would be find with the book or going off anything they might be hearing from adults in the house they could have different reactions. I would emphasize are the great things the moms are doing and try to relate to things that their parents do for them.

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### **Ali says**

This is a cute book for young children. The rhyming, illustrations, and simplicity of the book can keep the children interested. The language is suitable for young children and the illustration relates to the age group that would most likely be reading it. If I were a child, I probably would not have noticed the two moms and no dad, I would be focused on the activities they were doing. Unless I had two moms myself, then I would be able to relate. So, I think this a great book for children who are beginning to read and to get them familiar with the concept of same-sex parents without them even realizing it. If they are exposed to the ideas early, it will limit confusion and judgement in the future because it will already be "normal" to them. It is interesting to children. This book is very simple, it does not go into cultural diversity, but does have interracial parents. It does not include a rich plot, problem, or solution. It is age appropriate for beginner readers and the activities the characters are doing will definitely gain interest and help children relate it to what they play with their family. Because the book is short and sweet, there was not a lot of room for different perspectives and values. At that age, children typically only see their perspective, and then other books when they are older will include more things to question and consider. I did not notice any stereotypes or biases, just a family having fun playing together!

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### **Michelle (Sherbet Lemon) says**

D'aww, such a cute little book! written in verse, to show young kids a different kind of healthy loving family dynamic than what they might be used to / expect from society.

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### **Nora Ramirez says**

1- I did like the book because it demonstrates that same gender parents can be loving and caring like any other parents. The pictures show how they nurture the child in all the ways. They both are helping the child in all domains of his developmental growth.

2-I think children would be happy at the end of this story because both "Mommy and MAMA" are being very loving to their child. While reading this book, I will change my tone of voice according to each picture. Also, I could use body movements for children to have a better connection with the story and pictures.

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