

■ 15th to 50th Cousins – Classroom Workbook

The problem?

■ We've forgotten that we're all family.

The solution?

■ Join the family reunion and help bring us back together.

Dr. Bernie Furshpan reminds us: from the smallest strands of shared DNA to the biggest truth—that we all live on this one spinning planet—we are connected. We're cousins. All of us.

1. Meet Your Cousins!

Relationship	Shared Ancestors	Generations Back	Example Timeframe
1st Cousin	Grandparents	2 generations	~50 years
5th Cousin	Great■ Grandparents	7 generations	~175 years
15th Cousin	Great ¹ ■ Grandparents	~16–18 generations	~400–500 years
50th Cousin	Great■■ Grandparents	~52 generations	~1,300–1,500 years

■ Fun Fact: By the time you're at a 50th cousin, you're related to everyone on Earth through overlapping family trees!

2. Chart of Our Shared Tree

You



■■■ Parents

■ ■■■ Grandparents (1st cousins start here)



■■■ 7 Generations Back (~200 yrs) → 5th cousins



■■■ 16–18 Generations Back (~500 yrs) → 15th cousins



■■■ 52 Generations Back (~1,500 yrs) → 50th cousins

■■■ Everyone's tree overlaps

3. Mitochondrial Eve ■

Scientists have traced all living humans back to one common mother, nicknamed **Mitochondrial Eve**, who lived about 200,000 years ago in Africa.

- She wasn't the only woman alive then.
- But only her genetic line survived in everyone today.
- That makes her our great-great-great...x thousands grandmother.

4. The Science Behind “We’re All Cousins”

- Each generation, your DNA gets cut in half when passed down.
- By 15th cousins, you probably don’t share visible DNA anymore.
- But population math shows: go back far enough, and family trees overlap.
- All humans share common ancestors in the last 2,000–3,000 years.

■ That’s why “15th to 50th cousins” isn’t just poetic—it’s scientifically true!

5. Reflection & Action

Think & Write:

- How does it feel to know that everyone in your classroom is your cousin?
- What would change if we treated strangers like family?

Action Challenge:

1. Greet a friend with: "Hey, Cousin!"
2. Share a "cousin fact" with your family.
3. Create a classroom "family reunion" chart—connect all students as cousins.

6. Our Mission ■

Together, we can do better.

Together, we will do better.

Because this isn't just a classroom—it's a family reunion.