Introduction:
Family life plays an important part in most people’s lives. Whether positive, negative, big, or small, the kind of family we are a part of will affect our lives.

Dialogue:
Jill and Martha met last week in class. It’s their first time hanging out and they’re getting to know each other and talking about families.

Jill: So, where does your family come from?

Martha: Well, my dad’s side of the family is from Indiana and my mom’s side of the family is from California. My parents met at college in Florida though, so that’s where I grew up.

Jill: So do you see your extended family a lot then?

Martha: Not really. My family is pretty small and I don’t have a lot of living relatives left anymore. Actually, I just have one aunt in California and my grandpa in Indiana. I see them maybe once a year.

Jill: I guess it is kind of far to travel to those states frequently. Do you have a lot of siblings?

Martha: No, actually, I’m an only-child.

Jill: Your family is pretty small then. So, it’s just you, your mom, and your dad basically?
Martha: Well, my parents are divorced and my dad moved back to Indiana a few years ago. So, it’s basically just my mom and me.

Jill: Oh. I’m sorry to hear that.

Martha: That’s OK. My parents fought a lot when they were together, so it’s better that they are divorced.

Jill: You and your mom must be close then.

Martha: We are. I miss her a lot now that I’m at school. I have a picture of us. Want to see?

Jill: Sure.

Martha: That’s my mom and me on vacation last year.

Jill: You really take after your mom! You look like sisters!

Martha: I know. Everyone says we look alike. What about you? Do you have a big family?

Jill: Yeah. I have a really big family. They all live in Florida, so I have six aunts, five uncles, maybe 20 cousins, and two sets of grandparents nearby!

Martha: That sounds like a lot!

Jill: It is. Plus, I have seven siblings. Two sisters and five brothers.

Martha: Your parents had eight children! That’s so many!

Jill: I know. Our house is crazy. I’m the oldest and I always had to baby-sit!

Martha: How old are your siblings?

Jill: Let’s see… They’re 20, 18, 14, 10, 8, 4, and 1 and a half.

Martha: Whoa! That’s a pretty big age range.

Jill: I know it’s unusual. My parents just love having kids, I guess.

Martha: So, do you see your family often?

Jill: Yeah. They live about 10 minutes from my apartment. I see them almost every weekend. I see my extended family about once a month too.
Martha: That must be so nice to have such a big family close by.

Jill: It is. It can be a little hectic sometimes, but it’s nice to know that there are so many people who can help you out if you need it.

Martha: That’s so different from what I’m used to.

Jill: You should come over for dinner at our house one Sunday. They love to meet my friends.

Martha: Sure. That’d be fun!

Jill: OK. Let me tell my mom and I’ll ask her what date will be good and let you know.

Martha: Sounds good.

Vocabulary:

- **hanging out**: spending time together
- **extended family**: relatives in addition to your nuclear family (parents and siblings)
- **relatives**: family members
- **only-child**: a child that has no siblings
- **close**: having an intimate relationship
- **hectic**: characterized by excitement, activity, or confusion

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you come from a large or small family? How many people are in your family?
   - I come from a pretty small family. My family includes my parents and a brother, so four of us. I have one aunt that lives in Germany and that’s pretty much it! I wish I had a bigger family.

2. Who are your favorite relatives and why?
   - My favorite relative was my grandmother, who passed away about two years ago. She was my favorite relative because I loved her personality. She was very funny and sassy. She was always so nice to us too.

3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of being an only child?
   - The advantages of being an only child might be that you don’t have to share your parents’ attention with siblings and you don’t have to share things like toys with siblings. A disadvantage might be that an only child gets lonely. They don’t have any siblings to play with.
4. How important is it to you to see your parents and relatives regularly after leaving home?
   -To me this is very important. I'm very close to my family and even though I'm away from home now, I like to see them as much as possible. My family lives about seven hours away from me, so I try to see them on all of the holidays.

5. Who do you look like in your family? Who do you take after the most?
   -I take after my mom. Everyone who sees us says we look alike. People even think pictures of my mom as a young woman are pictures of me.

6. Is divorce permitted in your culture? Is it common in your country?
   -Sure. Divorce is permitted in the U.S. and is quite common nowadays. Lots of couples get divorced.

7. Should grown-up children be responsible for looking after their elderly parents? Why or why not?
   -I think they should be. In the U.S., it is quite common for children to put their parents in nursing homes when they are old instead of taking care of them themselves. I think this is wrong. I believe that family members should take care of each other when they need it, including children taking care of the parents.

8. On what occasions does your family get together?
   -My family gets together on most holidays and birthdays. We get together for Christmas, Thanksgiving, and New Years. We get together a lot as well just for fun, for no special occasion.

9. Would you like to have a twin? Why or why not?
   -I think it would be fun to have a twin. You would always have a friend by your side and a very close sibling. I think twins have very special bonds and I think it would be nice to experience that.

10. Do you enjoy family get-togethers? Why or why not?
    -Yes, I do. I love getting together with my family. We enjoy spending time together a lot. I don’t get to see them very often, so when we have get-togethers, it’s a lot of fun.