



"The Proud Family"
Culture Shock
A Disney Channel Episode for Cable in the Classroom
Ages 8-14

Program Synopsis:

Penny and her friends are excited about a cultural fair they are having at school. As part of the fair, students will switch households with another family for one week and thereby immerse themselves in a different culture. As the names are being announced, Penny becomes alarmed when she realizes she will be switching with the Zamines, a Pakistani family.

Penny feigns sickness and does everything else she can to get out of the cultural exchange, but her mom will have none of it and makes her go. In the beginning, it is extremely awkward for Penny. She is given a hijab to wear on her head, and when she is hungry and asks what the family will be eating, she is told that it's Ramadan, a time when Muslims fast from sunup to sundown.

Although Penny initially has a hard time, she soon begins to appreciate the Zamines' culture. At the end of Ramadan, her new family goes out to dinner together to celebrate. After the meal, as Penny is walking back to the Muslim family's house, she discovers it has been defaced with graffiti that reads: "Go back to your country!"

After the week concludes, the students have a chance to go in front of the entire school and talk about their experiences. Penny uses this opportunity to discuss the graffiti incident. She describes how the Zamines may be "weird" and different, but so is every other family, and that what matters within a family is that everybody cares about one another. Penny, referring back to the graffiti incident, says that anyone who really knew the Zamines could never write such mean words on their house.

Objectives:

The student will:

- Learn to better appreciate cultural diversity
- Learn about other cultures, customs, and traditions
- Understand that others should be treated equally regardless of race, culture, or creed

Preview Questions:

- What is culture?
- Do you know your family's cultural background? If so, describe it.
- What is Ramadan?
- Have you ever visited a foreign country? How was it different?
- Why do some people treat those who are different with disdain?
- What are some ways in which people of different cultures can coexist peacefully?

Post-Viewing Questions:

- What kind of festival were they having at Penny's school?
- What cultures were represented at the festival?
- Whose family did most of the children want to switch with?
- What was the point of the family switching?
- Why did Penny pretend to be sick after learning she'd be going to the Zamine house?



- Why were Penny and her friends so upset over Culture Awareness Week when they found out what families they were going to?
- What holiday was Penny's host family celebrating?
- Who do you think had a harder time adjusting, Penny or Radiga? Why?
- What did Mrs. Zamine make for Penny to wear? Did Penny wear it?
- How did the clothing differ in the two households?
- Who helped Penny appreciate the cultural exchange? How did he help her?
- What did Penny and her new family do to celebrate the end of Ramadan?
- How did the vandalism affect Penny and her attitude toward different cultures?

Vocabulary:

Ramadan, culture, festival, fast, vandalism, hijab, Islam

Have students use a dictionary to define each word or term above. Students can arrange the words on a piece of graph paper to make a word search puzzle, or to create a crossword puzzle and come up with their own clues for each term.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Activity #1: Compare/Contrast

Background information: At the end of the episode, Penny and her two families (her actual family and the Zamines) are walking home after a celebration dinner only to find that someone has vandalized the Zamine home with toilet paper and the words "Go back to your country!" written across the garage. This act upsets Penny who, on the following day, decides to make a brief speech at the concluding ceremony of Cultural Awareness Week. Penny makes the point that all cultures are fundamentally alike, no matter how different they may seem from the outside.

Have students brainstorm ideas on the similarities and differences that exist among various cultures. Based on "*The Proud Family*" episode, have the students compare and contrast Penny's life with Radiga's. Some examples might include:

- Household roles: women do the cooking in Radiga's home, men in Penny's home
- Clothing: Penny wears clothes of her choice, Radiga wears special Islamic coverings
- Food: Penny's family eats when and what they want, Radiga's is observing Ramadan by fasting during the day
- Women's role: in Penny's home, the women (her mother and grandmother) call the shots; in Radiga's home, the women only speak when spoken to or asked for advice
- Extended family: both Penny and Radiga have relatives living with them
- Entertainment: both families go to the same restaurant to eat and dance

Students should take the information and develop a multi-paragraph paper that focuses on the similarities and differences between the two cultures.



Activity #2: Journal

Background information: Penny has been invited to switch places with another student to experience a different culture during her school's Cultural Awareness Week. Penny and Radiga (a new student from Pakistan) have been paired up to switch families. At first, Penny, feeling uncomfortable, is unwilling to participate in many of the Zamine family rituals. However, by the end of the episode, she has a new appreciation for the Zamines and their unique customs, all of which she was completely unaware of before. This experience also opens Penny to being more appreciative of her own family and its traditions.

Ask students to discuss the following ideas from Penny's point of view:

- A new home for the week
- The family traditions of watching soap operas, attending cricket matches, sewing, and playing chess
- Getting reprimanded for speaking during the men's chess match
- Mrs. Zamine making Penny a hijab to wear
- Mr. Webb talking with Penny about Ramadan and its cultural significance
- Going to the restaurant to eat and celebrate
- Finding the Zamine home vandalized

Discuss student ideas and list several responses on the board. Have students use the responses discussed (as well as others of their own) to write five chronological journal entries from Penny's point of view. Each entry should reflect a different event from within the story.

Extension: Have students write about the same events from another character's point of view, preferably Radiga's.

Activity #3: Cinderella Stories

Background information: Part of the goal of Cultural Awareness Week is for the students to understand the similarities that all cultures share. By the end of the episode, even Penny has begun to understand just how alike two diverse cultures can be.

Bring in several copies of different Cinderella stories from around the world:

- The Rough-Faced Girl, by Rafe Martin (India)
- Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters, by John Steptoe (Africa)
- The Golden Sandal, by Rebecca Hickox (Middle East)
- Yeh-Shen, by Ai-Ling Louie (China)
- The Irish Cinderlad, by Shirley Climo (Ireland)
- Cendrillon, by Robert D. San Souci (Caribbean)

Encourage students to notice the similarities present in all the stories and to discuss the different cultural elements that each country adds to the tale. Have students create a version of the Cinderella story based on their own heritage. Students should take the time to create a book cover with a short summary on the back. (If a student's heritage is already represented, have the student write a modernized version based on contemporary American culture.)



MATH

Activity #1: Graphing

Background information: It is Cultural Awareness Week at Penny Proud's school. During this period, each student switches places with another of a different culture. The purpose is to have students gain insight into how their peers live so that they may become more aware of other cultures. Every student comes to the festival dressed in his or her cultural attire. Some students are not even aware that their peers are so culturally diverse.

Prior to this lesson, it may be necessary to review with students what a tally table, survey, and bar graph are, since they will be using those terms to complete the assignment. Ask students to make and complete a survey of their peers by asking them what their cultural heritage is. Possible cultures may include:

- Latino (Mexican, Guatemalan, Cuban, etc.)
- African-American
- Asian-American (Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, etc.)
- European (English, German, French, etc.)
- Jewish
- Arabic

Students may need to go home and ask their parents what their cultural heritage is prior to this assignment. After taking a survey of their peers, have students create a graph that plots the results. Students should then use this information to write a paragraph detailing their findings.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Activity #1: Family Tree

Background information: Penny is participating in Cultural Awareness Week at school. Part of knowing your heritage is being familiar with your family tree.

Prior to this lesson, have students research their family tree by talking to their aunts, uncles, grandparents, and parents. As a class, brainstorm questions that would be useful to ask relatives in order to gain this type of information. Some of these questions may include:

- Who was the first person in our family to come to the United States?
- From what country did they come from originally?
- Why did they come to the U.S.?
- Has the majority of our family always lived in this area since first coming to the U.S.?

If possible, have students talk to both paternal and maternal relatives so they can gain the most insight into their heritage. Once this type of information has been recorded, have students plug their ancestry into a family tree. Students can then inform the class of their particular heritage(s).



Activity #2: Cultural Day

Background information: Penny's school is observing Cultural Awareness Week. During this time, Penny and her classmates are being asked to switch families with someone of a different cultural background. Penny is switched with Radiga Zamine, a new Pakistani student. Although timid at first, Penny soon learns a lot about Radiga's culture and begins to appreciate its unique qualities.

Have students research and study their own cultural heritage and then share it with the class during a special cultural awareness day of their own. Students should come to school as follows:

- Wearing traditional culture attire
- With a food item that is representative of their culture
- Prepared to create a display showcasing their culture

Each student will create a tri-fold display board that includes:

- The location of their ancestral homeland
- The flag of that homeland
- Pictures or other visual elements that reflect their culture
- A special item of cultural significance that they can display

Allow time for each student to walk around the room and experience the other cultures on display. The students can jot down notes to indicate:

- Which culture(s) they would like to learn more about
- Which culture(s) they already knew about
- New information they picked up during the walkthrough

Encourage students to share with the entire class the new things that they learned.

Extension: Invite several parents of students to speak to the class about their culture and some of the traditions and customs that they observe.

Activity #3: Cultural Awareness

Background information: Penny's school is observing Cultural Awareness Week. During this time, Penny and her classmates are being asked to switch families with someone of a different cultural background. Penny is switched with Radiga Zamine, a new Pakistani student. Although timid at first, Penny soon learns a lot about Radiga's culture and begins to appreciate its unique qualities.

Build on the cultural awareness theme by asking students to list several different cultures that they would be interested in learning more about. Then have them create a display depicting one of these different cultures. Students should provide information similar to what they previously researched while exploring their own heritage.

Provide books and Internet access (if available) so that students can research the different culture and/or country that they have chosen to explore.



Students should come to class:

- Dressed in that culture's traditional attire
- With a special food item from that culture
- With a display showcasing the culture they selected

Each student needs a tri-fold display board that includes:

- The location of that country or cultural region
- The country's flag (or region's flag[s])
- Pictures or other visual elements that reflect that culture
- A special item of significance that can be displayed

Allow enough time for each student to walk around the room and experience the other cultures on display. The students can jot down notes to indicate:

- Which cultures they already knew about
- New information they picked up during their walkthrough

At the end of the day, have students write a brief summary of how their own culture is similar to or different from the new culture/country they researched.

Activity #4: American Attire

Background information: During Penny's visit with the Zamine family, Mrs. Zamine sews a special hijab for Penny to wear. A hijab is a type of headdress that Pakistani women cover their heads with. At first glance, Penny thinks Mrs. Zamine has made her a tablecloth, but soon realizes her error.

Have students brainstorm different types of clothing that Americans might wear such as:

- Blue jeans
- Tennis shoes
- Sports jerseys
- Sweat suits
- Baseball hats

Have students create a special American "outfit" that other cultures might relate to if they were studying American culture. It might be necessary to point out that, in truth, there is no particular American "outfit" because America is such a culturally diverse country. You may also want to mention that American attire varies depending on the age group being studied.

Activity #5: Ramadan

Background information: In this episode, Penny Proud experiences culture shock when she switches families with a new Pakistani student. During her time with the Zamine family, Penny is introduced to the important Muslim religious holiday of Ramadan. At first, she is reluctant to participate in such unfamiliar customs and rituals, but some encouraging advice from her teacher, Mr. Webb, pushes Penny to slowly begin appreciating the Zamines' heritage.



Given the nature of this episode, it might be of interest to students to learn more about Ramadan. Discuss this holiday after explaining that there are many holidays specific to certain cultures. Some interesting facts about Ramadan might include:

- It is a religious holiday where Muslims are encouraged to reflect upon their lives, practice self control by fasting, and demonstrate their devotion to God. The last 10 days are especially important because they represent the revelation of the Qur'an (sacred book) to Muhammad.
- It takes place during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and is determined by physical sightings of the moon. Ramadan lasts for one month.
- It is celebrated by fasting between sunup and sundown, reading the Qur'an, doing good deeds, and seeking to purify one's life.

Have students write about a tradition that they celebrate within their family and share it with the class.

Activity #6: Pakistan

Background information: In this episode, Penny Proud participates in a cultural exchange with a student from Pakistan.

Due to the nature of the episode, students may wish to learn more about the nation of Pakistan. Some interesting facts might include:

- Location: Asia
- Capital: Islamabad
- Population: 150 million (2000)
- Religion: Islam
- Size: 796,095 square kilometers
- Surrounding countries: India, Afghanistan, China, Iran
- Language: Urdu
- History: came into being in 1947 with the division of India into Muslim (Pakistan) and Hindu (India) regions. In its 50-year history, Pakistan has fought three wars with India over the disputed land of Kashmir.

Have students research the same items as above on another Islamic country such as:

- Iran
- Iraq
- Kuwait
- Jordan
- Egypt
- Libya
- Indonesia
- Morocco
- Tunisia
- Turkey



RESOURCES

Internet

Celebrating Ramadan

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/editorials/july-dec01/ramadan.html>

Details one girl's experience celebrating Ramadan

Islamic Holidays and Observances

<http://www.colostate.edu/Orgs/MSA/events/Ramadan.html>

Describes the observance and history of Ramadan

Pakistan

<http://www.interknowledge.com/pakistan>

Contains a detailed look at the people, culture, and history of Pakistan

Cultures on the Edge

<http://www.culturesontheedge.com>

Celebrates cultures from around the world

Culture Quest World Tour

<http://www.ipl.org/div/kidspace/cquest>

Looks at cultures throughout the world

Multiculturalpedia

<http://www.netlaputa.ne.jp/~tokyo3/e>

Teaches respect and understanding for different people and cultures

Islam

<http://www.pbs.org/empires/islam>

Delves into the faith, culture, and innovations of Islam

Celebrate Hispanic Heritage

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/hispanic/index.htm>

Brings to light Hispanic heritage in the United States

Diversity, Prejudice, and Respect

http://kidshealth.org/kid/grow/tough_topics/diversity.html

Encourages students to practice tolerance towards others

Books

All the Colors of the Earth, by Sheila Hamanaka, Harper Collins, 1999.

Celebrating Ramadan, by Diane Holt-Goldsmith, Holiday House, 2001.

The Colors of Us, by Karen Katz, Henry Holt, 1999.

Family Pictures / Cuadros de Familia, by Carmen Garza, Children's Book Press, 1991.



The Friends, by Kazumi Yumoto, Farrar Straus Giroux, 1996.

Magid Fasts for Ramadan, by Mary Matthews, Clarion, 2000.

Muslim Child: Understanding Islam through Stories and Poems, by Rukhsana Khan, Albert Whitman, 2002.

Peace in Our Land: Children Celebrating Diversity, by Bunny Hull, Brass Heart, 2002.

Quilted Landscapes: Conversations with Young Immigrants, by Yale Strom, Simon and Schuster, 1996.

The Rainbow People, by Lawrence Yep, Harper Collins, 1989.

Ramadan, by Suhaib Hamid Ghazi, Holiday House, 1996.