**The Proudest Blue RE Ideas**

A picture containing map

Description automatically generatedThis lesson unpacks the importance of accepting ourselves and being proud of who we are.

These ideas are aimed at children in Year 2, but can be adapted for older or younger pupils. They are based on the book ‘The Proudest Blue’ by Ibtihaj Muhammad and S K Ali, and link to the class reflection and art ideas in the Diocesan ‘All Are Welcome’ Project. It’s helpful to have a copy of the book, but you can also watch the story being read [here.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXsZF-sUQ_Q) **(Slide 1)**

There are more ideas than you will be able to use, so select the activities that you think will work best with your class, but try to include something from each section. It is better to do one or two things well, than try to cover too much (less is more!)

**Communicate and Apply – Feeling Proud**

**Slide 2** Play the ‘I Feel Proud Song’ from Sesame Street and ask the children to listen out for the things that the different characters are proud of. Ask them to think about what they’re proud of in their lives. The song says, ‘I feel so proud, I’m happy to be me,’ ask the children to talk with a partner and share something that makes them happy to be themselves. *Keep an eye open for children who struggle to think of anything and encourage them to come up with an achievement.*

Talk with the class about whether some achievements are better than others, e.g. is there a difference between being picked for the football team or winning a dance competition, and being a good friend or taking care of your little brother?

Is being proud always a good thing? Could it make you boastful? Could it make you look down on other people? Talk about the difference between being happy about who you are and confident in your achievements, and the sort of pride that makes you think you’re better than others.

Establish that everyone has something to be proud of and that it’s good to feel confident about who we are. This will look different for each one of us.

**Inquire and contextualise – The Hijab**

**Slide 3** If you want to learn more about the Hijab that Asiya wears in the story, then you may like to use the Cbeebies [‘What’s on your Head?’](ttps://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000sf7k/whats-on-your-head-series-1-2-hijab) video about wearing a hijab. It is aimed at younger children, but you could discuss this with your class. Sharmin talks about why she chose to wear a hijab to show her Muslim faith. Do the children think it’s a good idea to have an obvious sign that you follow a particular religion? What about Christians who choose to wear a cross? Perhaps the important thing is not to be ashamed of what you believe, do they agree with this idea? Is it similar to a football fan wearing a team shirt or scarf? Or does it have some deeper meaning?

*It is important that children understand that not all Muslim women wear a hijab or headscarf, it is usually a personal choice. Remember to use the language of Some / Others / A few.*

**Slide 4** Ibtihaj Muhammad, who wrote The Proudest Blue, is an Olympic medallist in fencing. The YouTube clip shows her in action. She says that when she first started to compete, people used to tell her that she didn’t belong and that she couldn’t be successful, because she looked different and dressed differently. Now she wants children and young people to know that they should never apologise for who they are, or let other people tell them what they can and can’t do.

She has become the model for a Nike range of sportswear for active Muslim women, to encourage others to take up new sports.

Do the children agree that anyone can be or do anything they want to? What if you’re no good at singing, but you want to be a famous singer? What if you’re not sporty, but you want to be a professional athlete? Can everybody reach the top? Does this matter?

**Slide 5** Ibtihaj Muhammad says that when she was young, she used to sew hijabs for her dolls, and now she has become the model for a hijab-wearing Barbie.

Ask the children what design they would choose for a doll or action figure that shows something they are proud of.

**Slide 6** You could also show the picture of Nadiya Hussain, who won the Great British Bake Off in 2015 wearing a hijab. She said she was worried that people wouldn’t accept her because she was a practising Muslim and wore a hijab, but she has gone on to become a very successful television personality and an important role model for other Muslim women who look different because of their headscarves. She once baked the Queen’s birthday cake and she also narrated the CBeebies *What’s On Your Head* series. (Slide 3)

**Evaluate – Being Proud of Who we Are.**

Ask the children if they have learned anything from Ibtihaj Muhammad’s (And Nadiya Hussain’s) example. E.g. to be proud of who they are, not to let other people limit them.

**Background pattern

Description automatically generatedSlide 7** Look at the paper boat that Faizah makes in the story. It reminds her to be proud of who she is and not hide it away. Ibtihaj Muhammad says that ‘the parts of ourselves that might make us appear ‘different’ are worth celebrating.’

Ask the class to draw or write something they’re proud of on a sheet of A4 paper, and then show them how to make it into a paper boat. (If necessary, [follow these instructions](https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Paper-Boat#:~:text=1%20Fold%20an%208%20%C2%BD%20in%20x%2011,rectangle%20that%20are%20sticking%20out%20over%20the%20triangle.) and practise first!)

You could either find somewhere to float them, or create a ‘Proudest Blue’ display.

**Slide 8** Introduce the expression, *Whatever floats your boat.* What do the children think it might mean? Can they think of any examples of people being happy to let other people be different?

Use a strategy such as the Snowball technique for them to share their ideas with a partner, then join up to make a four, then an eight, then the whole class. Alternatively, try the goldfish bowl technique, where they stand in two concentric circles facing a partner and discuss what they think the saying means. Then after a minute, everyone moves one place to the left, so they have a new partner. Repeat as often as is productive, or for as long as time allows, so children can share their ideas with different members of the class.

**Follow up books**

You may like to read one or more of these books with your class to explore the idea of being proud of who you are, and not letting others limit you.

* Dogs Don’t do Ballet, Anna Kemp
* Amazing Grace, Mary Hoffman
* Red, A Crayon’s Story, Michael Hall
* The Hueys in the New Jumper, Oliver Jeffers

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