

TAKE ACTION GUIDE:

POET AGAINST PREJUDICE



ABOUT THE FILM

Faiza Almontaser is a 17-year-old senior at Brooklyn International High School. In 2006, Faiza emigrated with her family to Brooklyn, NY, from a small farming town in Yemen. Raised as a religious Muslim, she often struggles to reconcile her cultural background with the realities of being a high school student in one of New York City's most socially dynamic neighborhoods. In POET AGAINST PREJUDICE, Faiza asks us all to examine our own notions, attitudes, and biases about other religions, ethnicities and nationalities in our nation of immigrants.

LEARN MORE

When thinking about the issues presented in the film, consider Articles 2, 18 and 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Article 2:

(1) Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 18:

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public and private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 26:

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

REFLECT AND SHARE

1. The impact of and questions raised by immigration are some of the biggest issues we currently face as a nation. Research US immigration statistics for the past 10 years. How many families immigrate to the US each year seeking better education and more opportunities? What percentage of current citizens are immigrants? What percentage of your community's residents are immigrants? How have these percentages changed over the past 10 years? What effect did this immigration have on the countries these families have left? What might make it difficult or easy for them to come to the US? What steps must the families go through if they want to come here legally? What kind of discrimination did families historically face after immigrating? After doing this research and seeing POET AGAINST PREJUDICE, how would you characterize what has or hasn't changed about immigrants' circumstances in America over the past several decades?
2. Faiza uses poetry to channel and express her feelings of disenfranchisement, just as many historical victims of discrimination have done. Using your own form of artistic expression (poetry, spoken word, song, drawing, etc.), reflect on why discrimination against immigrant populations has persisted in the US for so many generations, and how you would feel if you picked up and moved to another country today. How would you cope in your new environment? Just as Faiza struggles with her shifting identity—as a Muslim and as an American—how would you balance your desire to hold on to your heritage with wanting to assimilate into your new environment? Call upon a memory of any discrimination or bullying you may have experienced in your own life as you explore the use of artistic expression as a mode of reflection.

TAKE ACTION

1. Host a community or private screening of POET AGAINST PREJUDICE to raise awareness of the challenges facing immigrants in the US and how storytelling through film can deepen our understanding of global issues. Email info@bykids.org for more information.
2. The ADL (Anti-Defamation League) has several programs and resources you can use to combat hate in many forms in your school or community. Explore their resources: adl.org/about/education. Research and identify other organizations in your community that work to end hate and encourage tolerance and respect for all. What will you do to take action?
3. Give to the ACLU's Immigrants' Rights Project, which is dedicated to expanding and enforcing the civil liberties and civil rights of immigrants and to combating public and private discrimination against them. See: aclu.org/immigrants-rights.
4. Sign a petition or start one of your own to raise awareness about:

Immigrant Rights:

change.org/search?q=immigrant%20rights

Racial and Religious Discrimination:

change.org/search?q=discrimination

Bullying:

change.org/search?q=bullying

ABOUT BYKIDS

BYkids produces real-world films for kids, by kids. Talented young storytellers from around the world are paired with seasoned filmmakers to create powerful documentaries about their lives. In partnership with public television and education innovators, we share the films and their educational resources to help make global issues feel personal, relevant and actionable for millions of students. Our work serves as a catalyst for change, igniting important conversations and inspiring a new generation of social activists. To support our work, visit bykids.org/donate.

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