

Family Book Discussion
***The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family* by Ibtihaj Muhammad**
by Karen Collins, ECLC Media Specialist

The intent of this Book Discussion is to provide examples of literacy-building practices and prompts for conversations with young children. Introducing young children to culturally-diverse and strength-building stories helps develop confidence in self and acceptance of others.

A multitude of focus points will enhance the experience. This Book Discussion includes:

- Using illustrations to enhance understanding of the story
- Building vocabulary and background knowledge
- Using text and illustrations to drive conversations with young children and among family members
- Appreciating artistic choices and techniques in illustrations and text
- Introducing children to a variety of writing styles and effective usage of language

After reading *The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family* with your child, engage in conversation with your child using the following discussion prompts. These are just suggestions. Use your own ideas too!

1. Look at the faces of the girls on the cover. Describe what you think each girl is thinking and feeling.
2. Define "hijab." Hijab is important to this family's culture as a symbol of a girl growing up. The book says, *The first day of wearing hijab is important, Mam had said. It means being strong.* Talk about this with your child. Does your child have special clothing or accessories that make him/her feel strong, special, important?
3. Ask your child if they have ever seen a girl wearing a hijab. Explain that Muslim girls and women wear the hijab as a way to present their inner beauty to the world and to keep their external beauty private. They practice modesty as a spiritual path. Use this information to teach your child the meaning of wearing a hijab.
4. Look at the illustrations of the boys who are laughing about Asiya's hijab. Notice how the illustrator drew these characters, including their words, in silhouette form rather than in realistic form like the other characters. Relate this stylistic choice to the words Mama says: *Some people won't understand your hijab. But if you understand who you are, one day they will too.*
Don't carry around the hurtful words that others say. Drop them. They are not yours to keep. They belong only to those who said them.

5. Discuss how the wise voice of Mama has given Asiya the strength to be confident and not listen to the mean words others say about her hijab.

6. Discuss the concept of a narrator--one who tells a story. In this story, the narrator is the younger sister, Faizah. Find evidence of the love Faizah has for her sister Asiya through Faizah's narration.

7. Introduce your child to some ways people of other cultures and faiths use clothing and accessories as symbols of their beliefs. Here is a link to a reading on YouTube of the board book *Hats of Faith* by Medeia Cohan

<https://video.link/w/djTtb>