



Cinema/Chicago Education Program Screening : *Mooz-lum*

Director : Qasin Basir

96 minutes

In English, not rated

Please use the below synopsis, study ideas and questions, and helpful websites to lead your students in preparation and post-screening discussion. Following the film, students in the audience are required to respond to the screening with a one page essay that is sent to Cinema/Chicago. *

Synopsis

Growing up under a strict father and the even stricter tutelage of his fundamentalist Muslim teachers, Tariq enters college questioning his faith, values, and identity. With the encouragement of his sister, his friends and sympathetic world-religions professor, he reluctantly searches for answers. When the sudden cataclysm of 9/11 inflames anti-Muslim fervor on campus, Tariq is forced to make a stand one way or the other.

Study Ideas/Questions

1. Tariq is teased because of his name. Think about “non-traditional” names in your school, of your friends, or in your family. In what way do people respond to those names negatively or what ideas or preconceived notions might they have about people with “non-traditional” names.
2. Tariq’s father is strict about his family’s practice of the Muslim faith. His mother disagrees with his father’s decisions about their lifestyle and rules he enforces on the children. His father refuses to back down and in response, the mother proposes a divorce. Discuss the decision making process in your family. Does one person primarily make the decisions or is it shared? Are there consequences to those who disagree with decisions?
3. Tariq is outcast by his classmates for being Muslim. Many people are rejected and teased because of their ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds and practices. Discuss discrimination you have witnessed in your community. How would it make you feel to be discriminated against because of your cultural or religious identity?
4. Tariq is sent to a Muslim school. During his stay at the school, Tariq has limited communication with his parents. Tariq experiences physical abuse while at the school, but does not tell his family until many years later. Why do you think he chooses not to tell them? What would you have done in Tariq’s situation?
5. Tariq rejects his Muslim college roommate and professor when they extend their invites to Muslim related activities or try to discuss the religion. Why do you think Tariq has difficulty believing and embracing the Muslim faith?
6. In the film, each character reacts differently to the 9/11 attacks. Some respond by finding their loved ones, while others react with anger and

- fear. Discuss the different types of responses portrayed in the film. Reflect upon the events of 9/11 and discuss how you, your school, family, and/or community responded to the tragedy. How have things in the United States changed in years since 9/11? How is government, travel, and/or religion different?
7. During the 9/11 events depicted in the film, a Muslim student is hit in the head with a class bottle. Later a mob of angry male students corner two Muslim girls. The angry students threaten the girls and claim that they, as Muslims, must pay for what the terrorists had done. What is wrong with this conclusion? Discuss the idea of “vigilante justice” and the violent retaliations that occurred in Muslim communities following 9/11. Why do you think people reacted and acted in such ways?
 8. Mary’s father finds Mary and Tariq them holding hands and forbids her to see him. Why does the father respond this way? Discuss what fears and misconceptions he may have about Tariq and Muslims.
 9. What did you learn about the Muslim faith and lifestyle by watching this film? How is it similar to other religions?
 10. Research and discuss the recent dispute about the proposal for a mosque to be built near the Ground Zero World Trade Center site. Explain the opposing sides of the argument.

Useful websites

<http://www.eurweb.com/?p=52405>

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=129993971>

<http://www.cinemachicago.org/education/>

*Teachers who do not facilitate the completion of this requirement will not be invited to attend future Education Program Screenings