



RILEY'S RAINFOREST

"Send down ... from the clouds of Thy mercy the rains of Thy healing..." —Bahá'u'lláh

Your Cool Culture

When someone mentions "culture," what comes to mind? Your family's fun traditions? Travel? Yummy kinds of food?

For many of us, culture is an important part of who we are. It can be based on where you live, who your ancestors were, or both. It includes the language, traditions, foods, arts, and other things that make up your way of life.

Your "race" is part of the picture, too. Though there's no scientific basis for race, people still use this term for cultural groups. But many of us don't fit into just one category. In the 2010 U.S. Census, nine million people said they belong to more than one race.

Discovering your cultural background can be cool, but it can sometimes be confusing. You may run into people who don't respect your culture, or who expect you to fit a stereotype. Or maybe you want to learn more about your family's roots.



Remember that only *you* can decide who you are. And your culture is only part of your identity. Your spirit, talents, and interests are what make you unique. When you're confident in those things and appreciate them in others, culture is just a fun part of the puzzle.

So have a great time exploring your culture. Talk to elders in your community, and get involved in celebrations and traditions. Find things that you love about your background, such as stories, songs, or customs, and share them with friends. We can enjoy all of Earth's diversity, since we're all world citizens from one human family.

Canopy of Questions

What do you want to know about staying healthy and happy? Health can involve your body, mind, emotions, and spirit. Send your questions to brilliant@usbnc.org. Responses are given by a health professional.

“What do you do when a popular girl bullies you on the bus?”

—Isabella, age 12

Dear Isabella,

You have a right to feel safe and protected, no matter where you are. No one should look away when you or any other kids are being picked on.

If you are bullied, tell adults. You need special care and guidance, and so does the bully. God created people to be like the cells of one body or like one family. When we forget that, many people get hurt.

Bullies are full of fears, insecurities, and a desire to have power over others. They represent the forces of darkness, like Darth Vader in *Star Wars*.

Good people are like the forces of light. To confront the darkness, stay with a group of kids who are kind and compassionate. Try to sit near the front of the bus. Ask parents, teachers, and the bus driver to get involved when you see bullying behavior.

You and your friends can also pray for the bullies, so they find healthy ways to attract attention to themselves.

*Wishing you joy,
Keyvan Geula
Licensed Family Therapist*

Explore & Soar: Friends and Four S's

It's not always easy to make different friends. Try these tips:

- SMILE at people. It lets them know you're open and friendly.
- SHARE your stuff. Offer a taste of your snack or a turn with your game.
- SIT with someone new in class,

in the cafeteria, or on the bus.

- STAND UP for kids who are picked on. Being a friend can be the best way to make one.

