



STUYVESANT HIGH SCHOOL'S **SPARK PROGRAM**



COUNSELOR: Angel Colon

TEL: 212 312 4800 x. 7260

EMAIL: spark273@gmail.com

WEBSITE: Stuyvesant HS

A Cultural Journey

Culture is not just something that someone else has. All of us have a total, ethnic, racial, linguistic, and religious (or nonreligious) heritage that influences our current beliefs, values, and behaviors. To learn a little more about your own heritage, take this simple cultural journey.

PART 1: ORIGINS

1. When you think about your roots, what place(s) of origin do you identify for your family?
2. Have you ever heard any stories about how your family or your ancestors came to the place where you grew up or how they came to the United States?
Briefly, what was the story?
3. Are there any foods that you or someone else prepares that are traditional for your place of origin or some other aspect of your heritage?
What are they? What is their significance?
4. Are there any celebrations, ceremonies, rituals, or holidays that your family continues to celebrate that reflect your place of origin or some other aspect of your heritage?
What are they? How are they celebrated?
5. Do you or anyone in your family speak a language other than English because of your origins? If so, what language?
6. Can you think of one piece of advice that has been handed down through your family that reflects the values held by your ancestors? What is it?
Does it reflect a cultural, religious, or individual value?

PART 2: BELIEFS, BIASES, AND BEHAVIORS

1. Have you ever heard anyone make a negative comment about people from your place(s) of origin or about another aspect of your heritage? How did you handle it?
2. As you were growing up, do you remember discovering that your family did anything differently from other families because of your culture, religion, or ethnicity?
What was it?

3. Have you ever been with someone in a work situation who did something because of his or her culture, religion, or ethnicity that seemed unusual to you? What was it? Why did it seem unusual?
4. Have you ever felt uncomfortable, upset, or surprised by something that you saw when you were traveling in another part of the United States or the world? If so, what was it? How did it make you feel? Pick some descriptive words to explain your feelings. How did you react? In retrospect, how do you wish you would have reacted?
5. Have you ever done anything that you think was culturally inappropriate when you have been in another country or with someone from a different culture? In other words, have you ever done something that you think might have been upsetting or embarrassing to another person? What was it? What did you try to do to improve the situation?
6. Did you believe in any cultural stereotype that you later learned was false?
7. In your experience or interactions with children, families, or coworkers/colleagues, did you discover or encounter culturally different qualities that made you uncomfortable? How did you address this discomfort?
8. "There are more differences within cultures than there are between cultures." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

PART 3: IMAGINE

1. Imagine that for a week out of this year you will become a member of another cultural or ethnic group. Which group would you choose to be part of for that week? Why?
2. What is one value from that culture or ethnic group that attracts you to it?
3. Is there anything about that culture or ethnic group that concerns or frightens you?
4. Name one concrete way in which you think your life would be different if you were from that ethnic or cultural group.

Adapted from

Lynch, E.W., & Hanson, M.J. (1998). *Developing cross-cultural competence*. (2nd ed.). Baltimore: Brookes.