

## The Proud Family: Seven Days of Kwanzaa

A Disney Channel Program for Cable in the Classroom  
Grades 3-7

### PROGRAM SYNOPSIS

When the Prouds invite a homeless family to spend the holidays with them, they are surprised to find that their guests don't celebrate Christmas. The Prouds are even more surprised when the family returns the day after Christmas to begin celebrating the seven days of Kwanzaa with them. Over the next week, the homeless family teaches the Prouds about the seven principles of Kwanzaa and shows how their love and familial support—the same values celebrated in the Kwanzaa holiday—have sustained them in difficult times. Thanks to their new friends, the Prouds learn to value their time together more than their material possessions, and each family member gains a new sense of cultural pride.

### OBJECTIVES

The student will:

- Learn the seven principles of Kwanzaa.
- Learn about the history of Kwanzaa.
- Design a Kwanzaa table.
- Reflect on his/her goals for the new year as they relate to the principles of Kwanzaa.



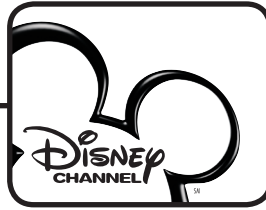
### ABOUT KWANZAA

Kwanzaa is a non-religious holiday created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga to celebrate African American heritage, community, and culture. Based on African celebrations of the first fruits of the harvest, Kwanzaa is celebrated from December 26 through January first. Each night of the holiday represents one of the seven principles of Kwanzaa:

- **Umoja** (oo-MO-jah): Unity
- **Kujichagulia** (koo-gee-cha-goo-LEE-yah): Self-determination
- **Ujima** (oo-JEE-mah): Collective work and responsibility
- **Ujamaa** (oo-JAH-mah): Cooperative economics
- **Nia** (NEE-yah): Purpose
- **Kuumba** (koo-OOM-bah): Creativity
- **Imani** (ee-MAH-nee): Faith

Each night, Kwanzaa begins with celebrants asking the question "Habari gani?" or, "What's the news?" The answer is the word for the principle celebrated that night. A family member lights the Kinara, a ceremonial candleholder with a candle for each principle. The first night's black center candle for Umoja is lit first; on the following nights, it is lit first again and then followed by each subsequent night's candle until on the last evening all are lit.

Kwanzaa is a cultural holiday, not a religious one. It emphasizes awareness of the self, family, community, ancestors, and African heroes. Many African American families personalize their celebrations with song, dance, storytelling and special meals. Kwanzaa is an opportunity to look back on the previous year and make goals for the new year that reflect the principles of the holiday.



## VOCABULARY

**Kwanzaa** (KWAN-zah): An African American holiday celebrating the “first fruits” of the harvest, celebrated December 26th- Jan 1st.

**Kinara** (kee-NAR-ah): A ceremonial candleholder for Kwanzaa that holds seven candles, each representing a principle associated with the holiday.

**Habari gani?** (hah-BAR-ee GAHN-ee): Swahili for “What’s the news?” That question is asked at the beginning of each evening’s Kwanzaa festivities, and is answered by the word for the principle celebrated that night.

**Harambee** (hah-RAHM-bee): Swahili for “Let’s pull together.” Chanted seven times each night of Kwanzaa.

**Vegan:** A person who does not eat animal products, such as meat, dairy, or eggs. Some vegans also do not wear leather or eat processed foods.

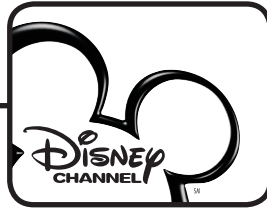
## PRE-VIEWING DISCUSSION

1. Ask the students what they know about Kwanzaa. Have they ever celebrated it? What holidays do they celebrate in their family? Discuss how the holidays they celebrate give them a sense of family and community.
2. Ask if students have ever encountered a homeless person. If so, what were the circumstances? What beliefs do students have about the causes of homelessness?
3. What values have students learned from their families? Ask students to think of an example of a family member valuing a character trait or sense of community over a material possession.

## POST-VIEWING DISCUSSION

1. What were some of the homeless family’s beliefs? What did the Proud family learn from these beliefs? At one point in the show, Penny Proud is caught between the selflessness practiced by her homeless friend Stephanie and the materialism of her clique. Who did students identify with? Why?
2. What did students learn about celebrating Kwanzaa that they didn’t know before? How is the holiday different from and/or similar to other holidays they celebrate? In many ways, Kwanzaa is like the U.S. holiday Thanksgiving. What similarities and differences do students see between the two? Explain that Kwanzaa was created by an African American professor in the 1960s as a way to create cultural unity and pride. Have students discuss why different elements of the holiday may have been included. What do students know about the struggles of African Americans in the 1960s? Can they see a need for this new holiday? What have students experienced in their own lifetimes that they would create a holiday to commemorate, draw attention to, or celebrate?
3. Have students’ beliefs about homeless people changed based on this show? Why or why not? What surprised them about the life of the homeless family in the story?





## **ACTIVITIES**

### **Activity #1: People and Principles: Kwanzaa in Action**

**CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:** Social Studies, Language Arts

In celebrating Kwanzaa, African Americans pay tribute to ancestors and historical figures who have led inspiring lives. Draw on this aspect of Kwanzaa by having students research an African American historical figure, such as Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., Marcus Garvey, Mary McLeod Bethune, Langston Hughes, Frederick Douglass, or Maulana Karenga, creator of Kwanzaa. Alternatively, students may choose to report on exemplary relatives rather than famous historical figures.

Students who chose a well-known role model should use library and Internet resources to find out about the person's life and accomplishments. Students who chose a personal friend, relative, or ancestor who embodies the principles of Kwanzaa should interview family members or others who can provide information about the subject.

Print the Disney Channel "Proud Family" Biography Worksheet and distribute to students. Have each student use the worksheet to record what he or she learned about the subject. In the space provided, have students write a short paragraph describing the person. Below that, students should list as many ways as possible that the person demonstrates the principles of Kwanzaa.

Projects can be turned in and/or presented to the class.

### **Activity #2: Flag Symbolism**

**CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:** Social Studies

The colors of Kwanzaa are red, black, and green, like the flag of black liberation created by Marcus Garvey (1887-1940), a crusader for black nationalism. The black represents the people; the red, their struggles; and the green, hope for the future.

What do students know about the meanings of colors and symbols in flags from around the world? Assign each student a flag from a different country. Have them use books and online resources to learn about the significance of colors and symbols of that flag. Students can draw the flag they are assigned with the country's name at the top and a legend at the bottom defining each color and symbol used. Display the flags in the classroom so students can learn about flags of the world.

### **Activity #3: East Africa**

**CURRICULUM CONNECTION:** Geography

Kwanzaa was inspired by African harvest celebrations. Show students a map of Africa. Familiarize them with the different countries. Swahili, the language spoken in Kwanzaa celebrations, is spoken in East Africa. Have students look at the countries in East Africa. As they look at the map, ask students these questions:

Which country is the furthest south?

Which countries are on the coast?

Which countries do not touch the coast?

For further exploration, have students study an African culture's "first fruits" customs, such as those of the Zulu tribe.

### **Activity #4: Tales Worth Telling**

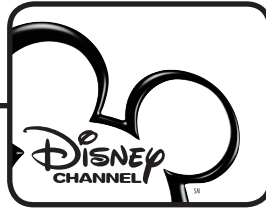
**CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:** Language Arts

African American storytelling is often incorporated into Kwanzaa celebrations. Choose an African folk tale or African American story or poem that represents the principles of Kwanzaa and read it to the class. On the Web, visit African Myths and Fables <http://www.afro.com/children/myths/myths.html>, or look for books like these in your school or public library:

*The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales*, retold by Virginia Hamilton. Scholastic, 1993.

*Favorite African Folktales*, edited by Nelson Mandela. W. W. Norton, 2004.

Point out that fables and parables found in African American culture have been told and retold for generations. In these tales, animals often depict human personality traits and characteristics. As a class, discuss how the story or poem that you've selected reflects the principles of Kwanzaa.



### Activity #5: Show Time!

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: Cultural Literacy, Drama

Through their generosity, caring and cooperation, Penny's homeless friend Stephanie and her parents represent the principles of the Kwanzaa holiday. Encourage students to think about and express everyday ways that people exhibit the principles of Kwanzaa.

Write each of the seven principles of Kwanzaa on a separate index card.

- **Umoja:** Unity
- **Kujichagulia:** Self-determination
- **Ujima:** Collective work and responsibility
- **Ujamaa:** Cooperative economics
- **Nia:** Purpose
- **Kuumba:** Creativity
- **Imani:** Faith

Divide students into pairs or small groups, giving each group one of the cards.

Have each group come up with a brief skit or story that demonstrates the principle on the card. For example, if a group has the card for Ujima, or collective work, they could create a skit or story about mowing an elderly neighbor's lawn or helping a neighbor change a flat tire.

Without announcing which Kwanzaa principle is being dramatized, have each group present its skit, or have a group member read the story aloud. The other members of the class can guess which principle is being presented.

### Activity #6: My Kwanzaa Table

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: Cultural Literacy, Art

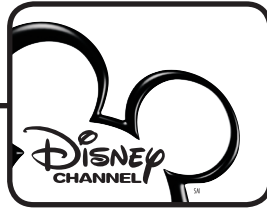
When the Proud family comes downstairs on the first day of Kwanzaa, their guests have decorated their dining room table for the holiday. Have students design their own Kwanzaa tables, utilizing all of the elements present in a Kwanzaa celebration.

Photocopy a large circle to represent the tabletop, and pass a copy to each class member. On the board, write or draw the symbols associated with Kwanzaa:

- **Kinara**, a candleabra with one black candle in the center, three red candles on the left, and three green candles on the right
- **Kikombe cha umoja**, or unity cup
- **Muhindi**, or ears of corn (one for each child in the family)
- **Mkeka**, or woven mat
- **Mazao**, or crops
- **Zawadi**, small gifts of educational or spiritual value

Have students draw a Kwanzaa tabletop design for their family. They may want to add symbols that have meaning for their family or for the Kwanzaa holiday, such as the flag or specific foods. Have each student write a brief explanation to accompany the tabletop design, explaining the significance of each symbol of the table and how it relates to the student's family. Students can take their designs home to share with their families.





### Activity #7: Postage Power

CURRICULUM CONNECTION: Math

In 2004, the U.S. Postal Service issued a new Kwanzaa stamp. Purchase a 20-stamp sheet to show the class, then use the sheet as the basis for math games.

How much is the whole sheet worth?

One row?

One column?

For a more extended lesson, have students look at the rectangle created by the sheet of stamps. How many rectangles can they create from the stamps in one sheet, starting with a rectangle of one across and two down, up to the entire sheet of five by four?

### Activity #8: Helping the Homeless

CURRICULUM CONNECTION: Social Science

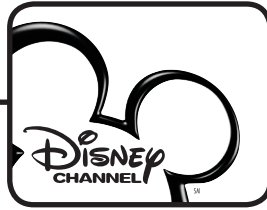
Penny Proud discovers many ways to help the homeless. She and her family visit the homeless shelter, invite a homeless family to dinner, and give money to the poor. Design a class project to help the homeless: Have a canned food or clothing drive, organize a bake sale to benefit a charity for the homeless, or take a class trip to serve a meal at a local shelter. For more ideas or information, contact your local shelter or homeless organization, or look on the internet.

*Help the Homeless*

<http://170.97.167.13/kids/hthsplsh.html>

This site teaches kids who the homeless are and how to help them.





Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# THE PROUD FAMILY

## Biography Worksheet: Kwanzaa Principles in Action

A person I admire: \_\_\_\_\_

### Brief Biography

Use the space provided to describe the person's life and accomplishments.

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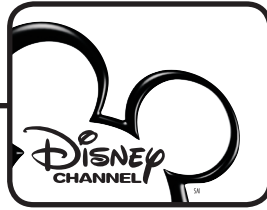


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### Ways this person exemplifies the principles of Kwanzaa.

Choose as many as you can.

<b>Umoja</b> Unity	
<b>Kujichagulia</b> Self-determination	
<b>Ujima</b> Collective work and responsibility	
<b>Ujamaa</b> Cooperative economics	
<b>Nia</b> Purpose	
<b>Kuumba</b> Creativity	
<b>Imani</b> Faith	



## **RESOURCES**

### **Internet**

*The Official Kwanzaa Website*

<http://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org>

Dr. Maulana Kalenga's official site for the holiday, with history, celebration descriptions, and his annual message to celebrants.

*Everything about Kwanzaa*

<http://www.tike.com/celeb-kw.htm>

An informative site about celebrating the Kwanzaa holiday.

*CNN Kwanzaa Page*

<http://www.cnn.com/EVENTS/1996/kwanzaa/>

Find a wealth of links to Kwanzaa food, fun, and resources.

*Kwanzaa for Kids*

<http://members.cox.net/in2vabeach/kwanzaa4kids/welcome.htm>

A straightforward explanation of the holiday, its history, and nightly celebration rituals. Contains some African folk tales that could be incorporated into lessons.

*Make a Kwanzaa Mat*

<http://www.cstone.net/~bry-back/holidayfun/matt.html>

Craft site for a fun activity: Making a red, black, and green Kwanzaa mat.

*The Kamusi Project*

<http://www.yale.edu/swahili/>

A site dedicated to the study of the Swahili language.

*The National Homeless Coalition*

<http://www.nationalhomeless.org>

Provides information on advocacy and issues affecting the homeless.

*National Alliance to End Homelessness*

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/>

Provides toolkits and information on fighting the homeless in your community and nationwide. Click on "Factsheets for Kids," then "Grades 3-5" for educational activities to help young people learn about the issues surrounding homelessness and what they can do to help.

*Help the Homeless*

<http://170.97.167.13/kids/hthsplsh.html>

This site teaches kids who the homeless are and how to help them.

### **Books**

*African Folk Tales*, by Hugh Vernon-Jackson, Dover Publications, 1999.

*Celebrating Kwanzaa*, by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith, Holiday House, 1994.

*The Children's Book of Kwanzaa: A Guide to Celebrating the Holiday*, by Dolores Johnson, Alladin Press, 1997.

*The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, Arnold Rampersand, Ed., Vintage Classics, 1995.

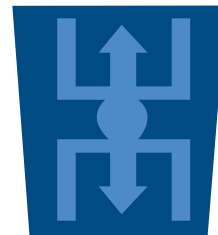
*The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou*, By Maya Angelou, Random House, 1994.

*Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community and Culture*, by Maulauna Karenga, University of Sankore Press, 1997.

*Seven Days of Kwanzaa*, by Angela Shelf Medearis, Scholastic Paperbacks, 1994.

*Seven Spools of Thread: A Kwanzaa Story*, by Angela Shelf Medearis, Albert Whitman & Co, 2000.

*A Very Special Kwanza*, by Debbi Chocolate. Scholastic, 1996.



*Understanding*