Title: My Name is Bilal

Author: Asma Mobin-Uddin

Illustrator: Barbara Kiwak

Publication Date: 2005

Plot Summary:

Bilal, his sister Ayesha, and their family move to Chicago to a new city, and a new high school, where Ayesha is teased because of her head scarf, and Bilal is ashamed of his heritage. Although no exact time is stated, this story seems as if it could take place today in really any city. Bilal and Ayesha struggle to fit in their new school, and it doesn’t help that Bilal doesn’t want to be called by his name, but instead says that Bill is his first name, and Al is his middle name, because he doesn’t want to be recognized as a Muslim. Bilal becomes convinced that he should be proud of his heritage, and his given name after a teacher, Mr. Ali gives him a book that has the main characters’ name as Bilal. This plays an important role in the book because it changed Bilal’s mind about his name, and gives him a new appreciation for his heritage. The issues that Bilal had are now resolved, with him being true to himself; he is now sticking up for his sister, going by his name Bilal, and is not ashamed of his heritage, and even openly takes a break from basketball to go pray with his new Muslim friend, Hakim.

Multicultural Focus:

Religious beliefs is a huge diverse topic. Not only are there many different religions, but also many traditions and different family values that come with along with them. Not only does this addresses the diversity of religion, it also addresses identity and confidence issues, which I think are more common than not. I love that this books focuses on Muslim teens, and becoming confident. I think that a majority of Americans associate “Muslim’, with the negative stigmas that it has so inappropriately come by, in my opinion this shows that a feeling of belonging is possible, even though people may tell you different. I think that this would be a great book to have in any classroom, because it has the great message of not being afraid of being yourself. I think that the older children may understand the religious differences, and in some cases may even be able to relate themselves to Bilal, about being ashamed of their religion and traditions. I think that a majority of students will understand that Bilal feels ashamed because his name is different than most students, and that he does not want to be seen as the outcast, or kid with the weird name.

Teaching Activity Ideas:
In older grades, such as 3rd, 4th, and 5th, this story could be read integrated in with studying other world religions. This book has words that would be appropriate for vocabulary and spelling test, as well as foreign places mentioned that could be used to map out. I would have my student map out the places in this book, as well as the other places that might be listed in books read about different religions. This would not only teach about different religions, but how they coordinate with the different parts of the world.
Title: My Name Is Yoon

Author: Helen Recorvitis

Illustrator: Gabi Swiatkowska

Publication Date: 2003

Plot Summary:

Yoon and her family just moved to America from Korea. She does not like it here. She says that she wants nothing more than to move back to Korea. Her parents encourage her to be patient with herself, and with others. She will make new friends, and will like being in America. Yoon particularly has a hard time writing her name in English, she thinks that it is ugly, and that she much prefers the way the letter "dance" together when she writes her name in Korean. Each day when they learn about something different, that is what she decides her name will be. First day, Cat, second day, Bird, and third day Cupcake. On the night of the third day, Yoon's parents tell her how proud they are that she was patient and made a new friend. "You make us proud little Yoon." She could not wait to go to school the next day, and write Yoon on her paper. When she did, her teacher was very proud and gave her a big hug.

Multicultural Focus:

This story addresses the topic of cultural diversity, and the diversity in languages. Yoon does not like her name in English, so instead decides that she will write something different on the name "line" every day. This book addresses feelings that many children could have, coming from a different country, or even a different part of the world. Yoon feels different, inferior, and mad that she cannot go "home". I can understand why multiple children would feel this way, and could relate to Yoon. Children who speak different languages, and how might be learning how to write in English.

Teaching Activity Ideas:

I think that this would be a good story for grades 1-3. I think that it would be fun to invite someone could speak and write Korean, and do an art project of all the children’s names in Korean. This would be a great activity to do involving multicultural education.