

Curriculum Visions

Muslim

faith and practice



Teacher's Guide

in PDF format for printing

Lisa Magloff

Curriculum Visions

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Author

Lisa Magloff, MA

Religious Adviser

Imam Kazi Abdul Kadir

MA Islamic theology, philosophy and law

Editors

Brian Knapp, BSc, PhD, and Gillian Gatehouse

Art Director

Duncan McCrae, BSc

Senior Designer

Adele Humphries, BA

Photographs

The Earthscape Editions photolibrary.

Illustrations

David Woodroffe

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Unit 1: What it means to be a Muslim

Muslims believe that God sent many messages to humanity over time. Some of these messages were given to the Jewish patriarchs, like Moses and Abraham; others were given to Jesus and the apostles. So, Muslims share many of the basic beliefs of Judaism and Christianity and many aspects of Islam, such as belief in heaven and hell and in a judgement day, will be familiar to many children. Muslims also venerate the prophets and patriarchs of the Jewish and Christian Bibles as people who were close to God. However, Muslims believe that God's final message was given to Mohammed, and that this message supercedes all previous messages.

You may like to begin your study of Islam by pointing out on a map the countries that are predominantly Muslim. You may also like to note the way that Islam spread outwards from Arabia. Some countries and regions that are predominantly Muslim include: all of the Gulf states, Albania, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Benin, Gambia, Jordan, Lebanon, Maldives, Morocco, Tunisia, Mozambique, Kyrgyzstan, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Brunei, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Syria, Turkey, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, northern Sudan, northern Nigeria, Oman, Palestine, Somalia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and western Sahara.

There are a few different branches of Islam, but the two main branches are Sunni and Shi'ite. They share most of the same beliefs (including all of those covered in the student book) and differ primarily in their ideas of who should lead Islam and who will be saved by God. Many Sunni Muslims consider Shi'ites to be apostates and heretics, so you will need some sensitivity if discussing this difference in class. Here is some basic information about the history of the two branches:

Shi'ite Islam began in 661 CE. Before this, the leaders (Caliphs) of Islam were people who were from the same clan, or family, as Mohammed. After the third leader died, there was an argument as to who should lead Islam – a man named Ali ibn Ali Talib, who was married to Mohammed's daughter Fatima, or a man named Uthman, who was from a different clan than Mohammed, the Umayyid clan.

A war soon broke out between Muslims who supported Ali and Muslims who supported Uthman. After many years of fighting, Ali was killed in 661 CE and the Ummayid clan became the leaders of Islam. Ali's son Husayn formed a group called the Shi'ites and continued to fight the Ummayids. The Shi'ites believe in a strict kind of Islam, in which only people who follow the Five Pillars exactly can be saved.

After the death of Ali, the Ummayids developed a less-strict kind of Islam. This was called Smooth Path Islam, or Sunni Islam. The Sunni Muslims believed that anyone could convert to Islam, and God would decide who was a believer and who was a non-believer on the Day of Judgement.

There are many different groups of Shi'ites. The largest are the Isma'ilis. They broke away from the other Shi'ites in 762 CE when there was an argument over who should lead the Shi'ites. There are many Isma'ili Muslims in England.

Today, about 80 per cent of all Muslims are Sunni. Most Muslim countries follow Sunni Islam. Only Iran, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Yemen and some of the Gulf States follow the laws of Shi'ite Islam.



Unit 2: A Muslim way of life

The concept of Islamic Law may be difficult for children to understand and you may like to begin by comparing it to rules of behaviour used in other religions. All religions have guidelines or rules for how to behave.

For example, Christians have the 10 Commandments; Jews also follow the 10 Commandments, but the Jewish Bible contains other guidelines as well, called mitzvot. Buddhists follow the Eightfold Path; Sikhs have the Reht Maryada. You may like to read a few of the religious laws or guidelines from each religion to compare them. You may wish to use the excerpts below:

Christian

The Ten Commandments

And God spoke all these words:

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

You shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them...

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy...

Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.

You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.”

Jewish

Some mitzvot about love and brotherhood

- ▶ Love all human beings who are of the covenant (Lev. 19:18)
- ▶ Do not stand by idly when a human life is in danger (Lev. 19:16)
- ▶ Do not wrong anyone in speech (Lev. 25:17)
- ▶ Do not tell tales (Lev. 19:16)
- ▶ Do not take revenge (Lev. 19:18)
- ▶ Do not bear a grudge (Lev. 19:18)
- ▶ Do not leave an animal that has fallen down beneath its burden, unaided (Deut. 22:4)

Buddhist

Eightfold Path

The eight right ways leading to the cessation of sufferings.

- 1) Right view: See the world through eyes of compassion and wisdom.
- 2) Right thought: Do one thing at a time and do it as well as you can.
- 3) Right speech: Speak kindly to others.
- 4) Right action: Always do your best.
- 5) Right livelihood: Choose a job that does not hurt others.
- 6) Right effort: Look to your own behaviour before criticising others.
- 7) Right remembrance: Always be careful in your thought, words and deeds, so you do not hurt others.
- 8) Right concentration: Always try to have clear thoughts.

Sikh

Excerpt from the Reht Maryada, Sikh code of conduct

A Sikh must not take hemp (cannabis), opium, liquor, tobacco, in short any intoxicant. His only routine intake should be food.

Piercing of the nose or ears for wearing ornaments is forbidden for Sikh men and women.

The true Sikh of the Guru shall make an honest living by lawful work.

A Sikh shall regard a poor person's mouth as the Guru's cash offerings box.

A Sikh should not steal, form dubious associations or engage in gambling.

He who regards another man's daughter as his own daughter, regards another man's wife as his mother, has relations with his own wife alone, he alone is a truly disciplined Sikh of the Guru.

You may also like to compare Muslim halal law with Jewish kosher laws.
Both are very similar.

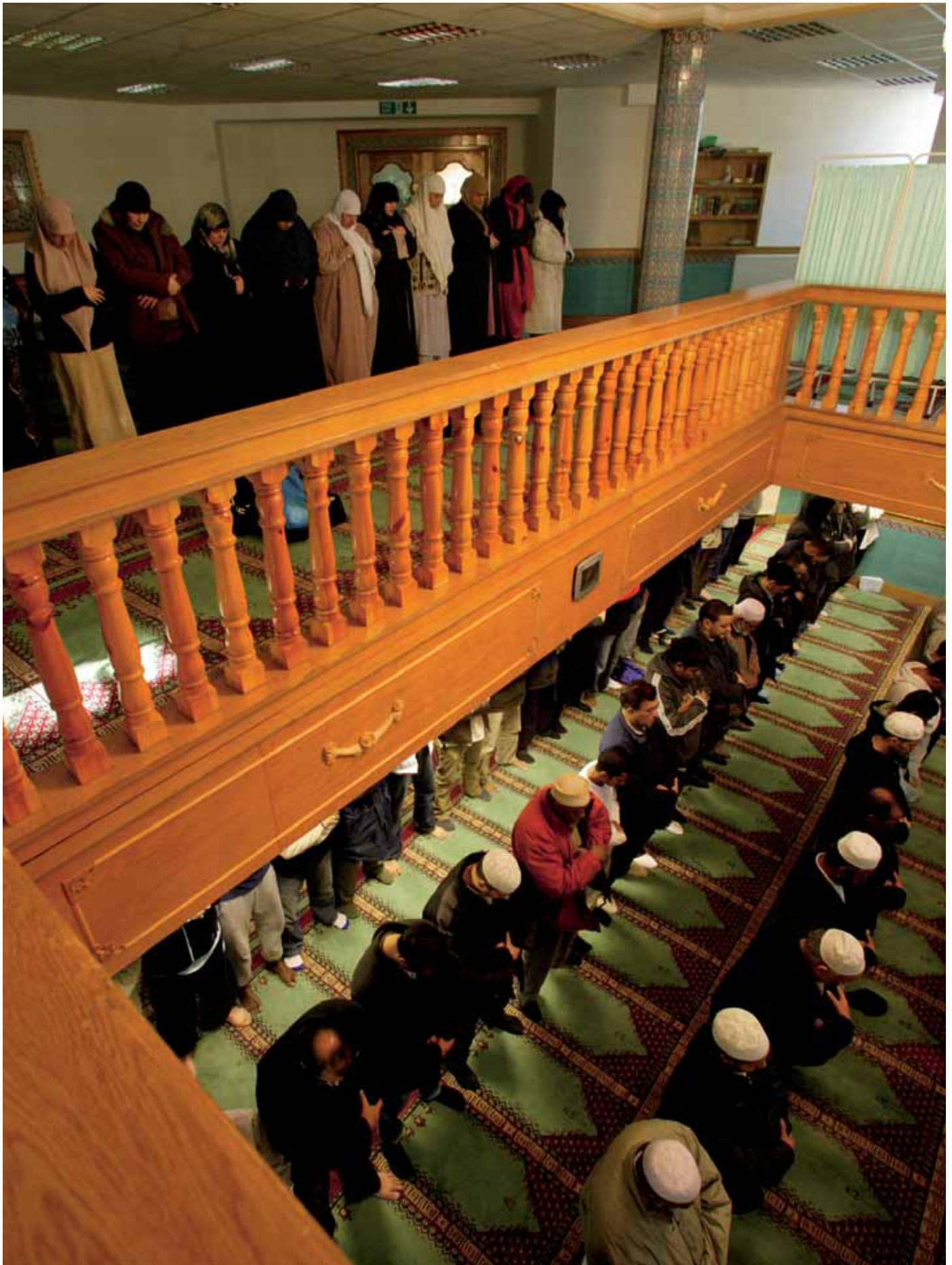
Similarities:

- ▶ All pork products are forbidden.
- ▶ The animals to be slaughtered must be free from disease and contamination.
- ▶ Meat and poultry must be slaughtered in prescribed ways. These are different for kosher and halal. For example, in halal, the animal is killed while facing Mecca. However, for both, the animal must be killed swiftly by a cut to the throat.
- ▶ Animals must not be allowed to see other animals being killed, in order to prevent terrorising them, and they can't be stunned or drugged before they are killed.
- ▶ Blood cannot be consumed and must be drained from animals after slaughter.

Differences:

- ▶ Halal laws forbid alcohol; kosher laws allow it.
- ▶ Halal laws allow shellfish; kosher laws forbid it.
- ▶ Kosher laws forbid any combination of dairy and meat products; halal laws have no such restriction.
- ▶ In kosher law, utensils that have come into contact with meat may not be used with dairy, and vice versa. Utensils that have come into contact with non-kosher food may not be used with kosher food. In kosher law, grape products, such as wine, made by non-Jews may not be consumed.





Unit 3: Mohammed the prophet (pbuh)

You may like to spend some time in this unit discussing the founders of other religions. Christians believe that Jesus was a part of God. Muslims believe that Mohammed was an ordinary person whom God had chosen to send messages through. God chose Mohammed because of his belief in God. In the region Mohammed came from, most people believed in many gods, but Mohammed believed in one God. This is similar to the story of Abraham, the founder of Judaism. Abraham was an ordinary person, and he lived in a place where the people believed in many gods. But Abraham had an unshakable faith in one God, so God chose him as a messenger. Similarly, Sikhs believe that Guru Nanak, and the other founders of Sikhism, were chosen and inspired by God to teach the messages of Sikhism. The Buddha was not chosen, but discovered for himself how to achieve enlightenment. Hinduism is different, in that it has no one founder, but Hindus believe that the gods and goddesses are parts of God who come to earth. Hindus also believe that God has inspired many people throughout time through the gods and goddesses, to teach the messages of Hinduism.

The people who lived around Mecca in Mohammed's time worshipped many gods. Each clan worshipped a different god. Statues of these gods were kept in a shrine called the House of God (Ka'ba). According to legend, the Ka'ba had originally been built by Adam. The rulers of Mecca charged the clans money for visiting the Ka'ba. When Mohammed began preaching that there was only one God, this endangered their livelihoods and beliefs, and this is why they forced Mohammed and his followers to flee Mecca for Medina.

Unit 4: Holy scriptures



Mohammed (pbuh) received his first message from God in 610 CE. After this, the angel Gabriel gave Mohammed a few messages from God every year until he died – 114 messages in all. Mohammed could not read or write, so he would recite the messages to his followers. Mohammed had his followers memorise the Qur'an as he taught them. The messages were written down by Mohammed's followers during his lifetime, but were only put together into the Qur'an after Mohammed's death.

The Qur'an is divided into chapters, each of which is called a surah, a word that means literally "a fence or enclosure". The shortest of the surahs has ten words, and the longest surah, which is placed second in the text,

has 6,100 words. The first surah, the Fatihah (“The Opening”), is relatively short (twenty-five words). Except for the first surah, the surahs are placed not in chronological order but in order of decreasing length.

The surahs are divided into short passages, each of which is called an aya. The word aya is often translated as “verse”, but literally it means “sign”. They are arranged generally in order of length, from longest to shortest (except for the first verse), and not in chronological order.

Muslims also have many books of hadiths (traditions). These are things that Mohammed’s followers wrote down about Mohammed’s actions and sayings that were not directly from God. The hadiths are used to answer questions that are not answered in the Qur’an. For example, the Qur’an does not say what to eat at the end of a fast. But the hadiths say that Mohammed used to eat some dates and water, so many Muslims follow this tradition.

Some passages from the Qur’an and hadiths are given below. You may also like to use the information given in the *Christian faith and practice* section of this CD to compare holy texts from different religions.

Surah 1

**In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.
Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds;
Most Gracious, Most Merciful;
Master of the Day of Judgment.
Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek.
Show us the straight way,
The way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace,
those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray.**

An excerpt from Surah 23:3

Verily your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and is firmly established on the throne of authority, regulating and governing all things. No one can plead with Him except after His leave has been obtained. This is Allah your Lord; Him therefore serve ye: will ye not receive admonition?

Excerpts from the hadiths of Bukhari

Anas said:

The Prophet said, “Whoever possesses the following three qualities will taste the sweetness of faith:

1. The one to whom Allah and His Apostle become dearer than anything else.
2. Who loves a person and he loves him only for Allah’s sake.
3. Who hates to revert to disbelief (Atheism) after Allah has brought (saved) him out from it, as he hates to be thrown in fire.

Aisha said:

The Prophet said, “All drinks that produce intoxication are Haram (forbidden to drink).

Abu Said Al-Khudri said:

Allah’s Apostle [Mohammed] (p.b.u.h) said, “The taking of a bath on Friday is compulsory for every male (Muslim) who has attained the age of puberty.

Abu Said said:

I testify that Allah’s Apostle said, “The taking of a bath on Friday is compulsory for every male Muslim who has attained the age of puberty and (also) the cleaning of his teeth with Siwak, and the using of perfume if it is available. Amr (a sub-narrator) said, “I confirm that the taking of a bath is compulsory, but as for the Siwak and the using of perfume, Allah knows better whether it is obligatory or not, but according to the Hadith it is as above.)

Abu Huraira said:

Allah’s Apostle [Mohammed] (p.b.u.h) said, “Any person who takes a bath on Friday like the bath of Janaba and then goes for the prayer (in the first hour i.e. early), it is as if he had sacrificed a camel (in Allah’s cause); and whoever goes in the second hour it is as if he had sacrificed a cow; and whoever goes in the third hour, then it is as if he had sacrificed a horned ram; and if one goes in the fourth hour, then it is as if he had sacrificed a hen; and whoever goes in the fifth hour then it is as if he had offered an egg. When the Imam comes out (i.e. starts delivering the Khutba), the angels present themselves to listen to the Khutba.

Islamic Law (shari'ah)

Children may be confused about the difference between Islamic Law (shari'ah) and the rules given in the Qur'an. Islamic Law describes how to behave in everyday life. It includes laws given in the Qur'an, but has evolved over time as new events and inventions occurred that were not discussed in the Qur'an. So, Islamic Law contains not only the guidelines in the Qur'an, but also guidelines by Islamic scholars and jurists who interpreted and applied the Qur'an and hadiths to new situations.

Shari'ah law is often in the news because of its harsh punishments and its treatment of women. It is important for children to realise that most Muslims obey the laws of the country they live in and use the shari'ah laws as a guideline.

In fact, there is tremendous variation in the interpretation and implementation of Islamic Laws in Muslim societies today. Several countries with a large Muslim population, including Turkey, Indonesia, Bangladesh and India, have largely secular constitutions and laws, with only a few Islamic provisions in family law. Many countries in the Middle East and North Africa maintain a dual system of secular courts and religious courts, in which the religious courts mainly regulate marriage and inheritance and the secular courts everything else. Saudi Arabia, some states in northern Sudan and northern Nigeria, Libya and Iran use only shari'ah law.

Unit 5: The five pillars of Islam

The student book gives a fairly detailed description of Islamic prayer. You may like the children to discuss different ways to pray used in different religions. Here are some prayers from other religions that you may like to use.

Christian prayer

The Lord's Prayer, a prayer that Jesus taught, which is recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke:

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name.
Your Kingdom come,
Your will be done,
On earth as in heaven
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
As we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the
glory are yours.
Now and forever. Amen

Jewish prayer

The Shema, composed of several verses from the Jewish Bible and said daily by many Jews. This is an excerpt:

Hear, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.
Blessed be the Name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever
And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your
soul and with all your might.
And these words that I command you today shall be in your heart.
And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall speak of
them when you sit at home, and when you walk along the way, and when you
lie down and when you rise up.
And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be for
frontlets between your eyes.
And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.
And it shall come to pass if you surely listen to the commandments that I
command you today, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all
your heart and all your soul.

Hindu prayer

From the Rig Veda:

O Lord lead me, from untruth to Truth, from darkness to Light and death to Immortality.
May good thoughts come to us from every side, pure, unobstructed, overflowing. May we, O Devas, with our ears hear what is good. Holy ones, may we see with our eyes what is good.

Sikh prayer

An extract from the Kirtan Sohilla, recited before going to sleep:

One God alone is the Teacher of teachers, though He shows Himself in many ways.
Follow that way, which glorifies God.
Just as seconds, minutes, hours, quarters of a day, lunar days, week days, months,
Are created by one sun and so are created many seasons by it,
Similarly God who is One has many manifestations, so says Nanak.

Buddhist prayer

This is an Amida Buddhist prayer called the Golden Chain Prayer:

We are a link in Buddha's golden chain of love that stretches around the world; we will keep our link bright and strong.
We will be kind and gentle to every living thing and protect all who are weaker than ourselves.
We will think pure and beautiful thoughts, say pure and beautiful words, and do pure and beautiful deeds.
May every link in Buddha's chain of love be bright and strong, and may we all attain perfect peace.

Prayer times

Muslims do not ask God for anything when they pray. Instead, prayer is a way of showing devotion to God. Each movement and saying in the prayer is done exactly the same way each time.



4



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The times for prayer are set by the movement of the sun. Dawn prayer is said just before sunrise. The noon prayer starts when the sun has passed its zenith. The afternoon prayer starts when the length of a shadow of a vertical rod is equal to its shadow at noon plus twice the length of the rod, or is equal to the length of the rod plus its shadow at noon. Sunset prayer begins immediately after sunset. The night prayer begins when the sky is completely dark, or about 90 minutes after sunset.

There are different methods for calculating the prayer times, but most people today rely on published charts or online programmes. In most Islamic countries, a person called the muezzin chants a call to prayer from the minaret of each mosque to let people know when it is time for prayer. The call to prayer is a rhythmic chant thought up by Mohammed. It is

always the same. It starts with the words God is great, which are repeated four times. Then the muezzin chants six sentences, two times each:

**I bear witness that there is no God but Allah.
I bear witness that Mohammed is God's messenger.
Rush to prayer.
Rush to success.
Allah is the greatest.
There is no God but God.**

Before the dawn prayer, the muezzin also chants:

Prayer is better than sleep.

When praying anywhere but inside a mosque, many Muslims use a small rug called a prayer mat. The rug can be put down anywhere to provide a clean surface.

Fasting

Many religions use fasting as a way to help worshippers focus on God, or for penitence. For example, some Christians fast for part of Lent and many give up something that they like (such as sweets) as a sign of penitence. Jews fast for 25 hours during the holiday of Rosh Hashanah as a sign of penitence. Some Hindus and Buddhists observe fasts of various lengths and for various reasons. For example, Mahatma Gandhi fasted many times for peace. His hope was that his sacrifice would help to bring peace between Hindus and Muslims in India, who were fighting at the time. There are also secular fasts. For example, some people raise money for charity by fasting for a day and then donating the money they would have spent on food to a charity.

Unit 6: Pilgrimage

The Hajj is unique in many ways, but all of the religions that we study have some type of pilgrimage. While all Muslims try to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lives, Shi'ite Muslims also have a second site of pilgrimage, the city of Mashhad in northeastern Iran.

Christian pilgrimage

There are many Christian pilgrimage sites, spread throughout the world. These are usually churches that house the relics (remains) of certain saints. Many Christians make pilgrimages that involve visiting many different churches, often travelling on foot for long distances and sleeping in hostels along the way.

Christian pilgrimages were first made to sites connected with the life, birth and crucifixion of Jesus, and many Christian pilgrims travel to Israel every year, especially around Easter, to visit these sites. Beginning in the 4th century, pilgrimages also began to be made to Rome and other sites associated with the apostles, saints and Christian martyrs, or to places where the Virgin Mary had been sighted, such as Lourdes and Fatima. Some Christians make pilgrimages in order to pray for special favours from God, such as healing an illness.

The largest single pilgrimage in the history of Christendom was to the Funeral of Pope John Paul II after his death on April 2, 2005. An estimated four million people travelled to the Vatican City, in addition to the almost three million people already living in Rome, to see the body of Pope John Paul II lie in state.

Jewish pilgrimage

In ancient times, all Jews were required to make a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem three times a year: at the holidays of Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot. There the people (only men were required to make the pilgrimage) would worship at the Temple and make sacrifices to God. Of course, most Jews lived close to the Temple in those days.

Modern Jews do not have any formal pilgrimages, but many Jews travel to Israel to visit various holy sites. The most important of these is the Western Wall, which is all that remains of the ancient Temple. Even Jews who live in Israel make 'pilgrimages' to the Western Wall. Once there they

pray at the wall. Tradition says that God will answer prayers left in the chinks in the wall. Today, it is possible to fax prayers to the wall and have them inserted. You can see a web cam of people praying at the Western Wall at www.aish.com.

Hindu pilgrimage

There are a great many pilgrimage sites in Hinduism. Many of these are associated with the deeds and actions of various gods and goddesses. The most popular Hindu pilgrimage site is the city of Varanasi, or Benares, on the banks of the Ganges River in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.

Varanasi is the site of the holy shrine of Lord Kasi Viswanatha (a form of Lord Shiva). Hindus believe that if they bathe in the Ganges River, or die in the holy city, they will be released from the cycle of reincarnation and will go directly to Heaven. Because Hindus traditionally cremate the dead, many bodies are cremated in Varanasi and the remains scattered into the Ganges each day, along with offerings of food and flowers. At the same time, tens of thousands of people bathe in the Ganges each day and drink the water.

Other Hindu pilgrimage sites include large festivals held yearly or every few years. The largest of these is the Kumbh Mela, which is held every 12 years. The last Kumbh Mela attracted more than 12 million pilgrims – the largest pilgrimage in the history of the world.

Sikh pilgrimage

There are no formal or required Sikh pilgrimages, but Sikhs often make pilgrimages to the important Sikh temples (gurdwaras) in India. The most important of these is the Golden Temple in Amritsar. Other Sikh holy sites of pilgrimage are places where important events in the history of Sikhism occurred, or where Sikh Gurus were martyred for their faith.

Buddhist pilgrimage

Buddhists have several pilgrimage sites that have to do with the life of the Buddha. These include his birthplace in Lumbini; the deer park in Sarnath where he delivered his first teaching; Bodh Gaya, where he became enlightened; and Kusinagar where he passed away. Tibetan pilgrims also have pilgrimage sites in Tibet, such as Lhasa, the capital of Tibet and the traditional home of the Dalai Lama, Mount Kailash and Lake Nam-tso. After the Chinese occupation of Tibet, Tibetans were unable to visit and worship at these sites.

Unit 7: Islamic celebrations

Islamic calendar

You may want to show students an Islamic calendar covering two or three years, so they can see more clearly how the holidays move through the seasons over time. This means that there are no Muslim holidays that are associated with certain times of the year. For example, there are no harvest festivals or winter celebrations. They can also see that the yearly fast for Ramadan occurs sometimes in the summer and sometimes in the winter. This means that, when it occurs in the summer, the amount of daytime, when people cannot eat, is very long.

Other religions use a lunar calendar. For example, Judaism uses a lunar calendar that adjusts for the difference in length between the lunar year and the solar year. So, Jewish holidays move around a bit each year, but do not move from season to season. Some dates on the Christian calendar, such as Easter, are calculated using a lunar calendar, so these holidays also move around a bit. There are several lunar Buddhist calendars, depending on which country people are living in. These calendars also make adjustments so that the holidays do not move around too much. The Hindu calendar is also essentially lunar, but also uses the position in the sky of the sun and planets to calculate months.

Holidays

Islam has fewer holidays than most other religions. There are only the two main holidays, or Eids, discussed in the student book. But there are many other festivals, or mawlid, held throughout the year. These are celebrated differently in each country. For example, in Egypt, there are many mawlid for Muslim saints that are celebrated with carnivals and feasting. However, some places, like Saudi Arabia, frown on these types of festivities and do not have them. The mawlid for Mohammed's birthday is celebrated around the world, but again, in some places it is simply marked with prayer and lectures, while in others there are parades and carnivals.



