

Islam

Islam is an Arabic word meaning "submission" and in the religious context means "submission to the will of God". "Islam" is derived from the Arabic word "sal'm" which literally means peace.

The religion demonstrates peace and tolerance. Muslims, the followers of Islam, are worldwide and number 1.2 billion. Indonesia has the largest population of Muslims, two hundred and twenty-eight million, while Saudi Arabia has twenty-two million. Forty percent of the seven to ten million American Muslims are African Americans.

All Arabs are not Muslims. Same ways, all Muslims are not Arabs. Allah is the Arabic word for God, which is used throughout the world by all Muslims and by Christian Arabs. *Muslims believe in the same God as Christians and Jews believe.*

The message of Islam is, "Say, we believe in God and that which was revealed unto us, and that which was revealed unto Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and that which was revealed unto Moses and Jesus, and the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered" (The Qur'an, 3:84). Islam can be traced to Adam, the first prophet of Islam. The Qur'an was however revealed in 610 AD to the Prophet Mohammad (peace be on him; pbuh).

The Articles of Faith

1. Belief in Allah, the one and only God, the creator of all human beings, the God of Jesus, Moses and Mohammad.
2. Belief in the Prophets and the messengers of Allah - Adam, Noah, Jacob, Isaac, Jesus, Moses, the last Prophet Mohammad, as well as many other prophets.
3. Belief in the books of revelation sent by Allah - the Psalms Torah, Bible, and the Qur'an.
4. Belief in the angels of Allah. The Qur'an was revealed to Mohammad through Angel Gabriel. Other angels include Michael, who was the first to bow down before Adam, as well as the angels that revealed the Bible to Jesus and the Torah to the Moses.
5. Belief in the Day of Judgment. Muslims believe in the Day of Judgment, as well as Heaven and Hell. All believers will be rewarded for good deeds and punished for the bad ones.
6. Belief in Allah's fore knowledge. This means the all-knowing nature of God.

The Pillars of Islam

1. *Shahada*- the testimony of faith. "I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and that Mohammad is his last messenger."
2. *Salat*- Prayer, which is offered five times a day.
3. *Sawm*- fasting, which is observed from dawn until dusk during the Islamic month of Ramadan.
4. *Zakat*- Charity. This requires the annual giving of a fixed amount of personal assets for the benefit of the poor, the incapacitated, and the deprived.
5. *Hajj*- Pilgrimage to Mecca. All able bodied Muslims should perform pilgrimage at least once in their lifetime. The Hajj is performed at Mecca. According to The Qur'an, the Prophet Abraham is the father of all prophets and his son Ishmael built the *Kaaba*.

Islam condemns violence

Islam condemns terrorism and the killing of innocent lives. The word terrorism and Islam are contradictory. One cannot be a true Muslim and terrorist at the same time. The Qur'an states, "Who so ever kills a human being...it shall be as if he has killed all mankind and who so ever saves the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind" (The Qur'an 5:32). Suicide is also a grave sin in Islam. Only God has the right to give and take life.

Jihad

The word jihad has its origin in the verb *jahada*, which means to struggle. The word has a few different connotations, since struggle can occur on several levels. For most Muslims, it is an intimate struggle to purify the soul of satanic influence, or inner struggle of the soul to obey what God has said is good and forbid what is evil, speaking of truth in the face of a tyrant, and to defend against oppression. This self-defense aspect of jihad has been grossly misunderstood in today's world. The Qur'an and teaching of Islam have placed severe restrictions on the later form of Jihad. When fighting, Muslims are required to follow strict rules of warfare and spare unarmed people. Killing innocent civilians, women, children and the old is strictly prohibited. In addition, Muslims are not to destroy property, burn crops, pollute water supply, or cut down trees.

Women in Islam

Islam stresses the equality between men and women. During the sixth century, when The Qur'an was revealed, Islam liberated women in many ways, including giving them the right to own property and to vote. Suffrage for women in Islamic states was won almost thirteen hundred years before it was in the United States.

“O Mankind! We created you from a single pair of male and female and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is one who is the most righteous of you. And Allah has the full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)”(The Qur'an 49:13).

Nowhere does the Qur'an state that one gender is superior to the other. The Qur'an makes it clear that sole basis for superiority of any person over another is piety and righteousness, not gender, color or nationality.

The Muslims use the Qur'an as Islamic law with the Hadith, the words and practices of our Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon him). Some of the Prophet's Hadith's are:

“The best of you is he who is best to his wife”.
“Paradise is under the feet of the mothers”.

Muslim scholars have insisted that education is not only a right, but also a religious obligation on all Muslim men and women.

Finally, it should be stated first that Islam regards her role in society as a mother and a wife as her most sacred and essential one. There is no decree in Islam that forbids women from seeking employment whenever there is a necessity for it, especially in which society needs her. Examples of these professions are nursing, teaching, medicine and social and charitable work. Moreover, there are no restrictions on benefiting from women's talent in any field as demonstrated by the Prophet's wife, Khathidja, who as a businesswoman, employed the Prophet earlier in his life and later proposed marriage to him.

Related Web Sites:

Islam: A Home of Tolerance, not Fanaticism
By Yusuf Islam (formerly the singer Cat Stevens)
www.alhewar.com/cat_stevens.htm

The information in this brochure is extracted from the works of several authentic scholars of Islam.

Facts about Islam



Crescent Peace Society

Mission

“Enhance the understanding of the Muslim cultures through educational and cultural activities involving the exchange of ideas and experiences among the people of diverse cultures.”

A non-profit organization serves as a focal point of action in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area for raising awareness of different Muslim cultures. It establishes and maintains liaisons with educational institutions, religious groups, and local media. In order to better represent the peaceful nature of Muslim cultures existing in the United States of America and around the world, the Society aims to analyze, evaluate and respond to any local media publications or programs that misrepresent Muslim issues /cultures.

The Board and the Executive Committee of Crescent Peace Society invite you to join the Society's cause for propagating a better understanding and awareness of different Muslim cultures and for peace and harmony all over the world.

The membership is open to all US residents or citizens of any religious affiliation or culture.

Crescent Peace Society
www.crescentpeace.org

Classroom and Islam

Talking to the parents is a good way to get an idea of those activities in which they will allow their child to participate. Asking ahead of time can prevent misunderstandings and promote an atmosphere of caring concern. Not all Muslims follow the following, so parent discussion is advised:

Provide a quiet place that the student can pray at the proper times. The times of prayer fluctuate throughout the year depending on the length of day light hours. Islam does not permit the unnecessary mixing of males and females, except among close family members. While this is generally not a problem in the primary grades, it becomes one later.

Parents may ask that their child be excluded from P.E. class for this reason and for modesty's sake. Muslims are not permitted to "dress down" or take community showers. Modesty is of the highest priority. Many older girls will wear a head cover in keeping with this belief. Dancing with persons of the opposite sex is definitely not allowed. Mixing for classroom work is not considered permissible either. Please, consider this when making cooperative group assignments.

Dietary laws are clearly spelled out for Muslims. They are not allowed to have any pork, pork products, or alcohol. If you have a pizza party for your classroom, be considerate and make sure there is a cheese pizza available. Marshmallows contain gelatin and are not allowed. Gelatin is often produced by boiling pork bones. Checking treats before you buy them can go a long way in promoting good will in the classroom and making your Muslim student feel included.

Muslim's celebrate two major holidays each year. These holidays are based on a lunar calendar and are at a slightly different date each year. The holidays are Eid Al Fitr, which is celebrated after the month of fasting. Your student may elect to fast this month. Fasting is a sign of faith. If your student is fasting, please be supportive; you will not only gain the respect of your student, but his or her family as well. Rest assured, your student is eating before sunrise and after sunset. Fasting for children is not required but many like to participate. Perhaps you can send the student to a resource room during lunch rather than making him hang out in the cafeteria. As stated, Eid Al Fitr is celebrated at the end of the month of Ramadan. Expect your student to be absent for a minimum of one day and possibly three. The holiday typically lasts three days.

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Eid Al Adha is the celebration in memory of the sacrifice Abraham was going to make of his son Ish'mail to God (Muslims believe it was Ish'Mail and not Issac) and of God's mercy in letting Abraham sacrifice a lamb instead. This holiday also lasts three days. On one of these days your student may go with the family to sacrifice a sheep. Do not be surprised if your student freely shares the experience!

Muslims will also expect their child to be excused from any non-Muslim holiday celebrations. If you are having your class make holiday gifts, perhaps you could rename the gift your Muslim child is making. He or she could be making an Eid gift, for example, or perhaps just a present to show he or she loves his or her family

Islamic Informational Links:

[Islamic City](#) Here you can listen to the call to prayer, get news and information about Islam and what is happening in the Islamic world. There is even a bazaar to shop at. The theme of this site is that of an Islamic city.

Send an Islamic Greeting Card:

[Eid-Ecards](#) This site has many different styles of cards. The artwork is beautiful here. There are also cards for everyday.

[Musalman](#) This site has e-cards with beautiful Islamic calligraphy.

[Eid Mubarak](#) This site's name means "Happy Eid". Here you can create a custom card.

[Blue Mountain Greetings](#) This site has e-cards for almost all religions and holidays! This is definitely a site to bookmark for your multicultural classroom. Take note: this is a subscription site!

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