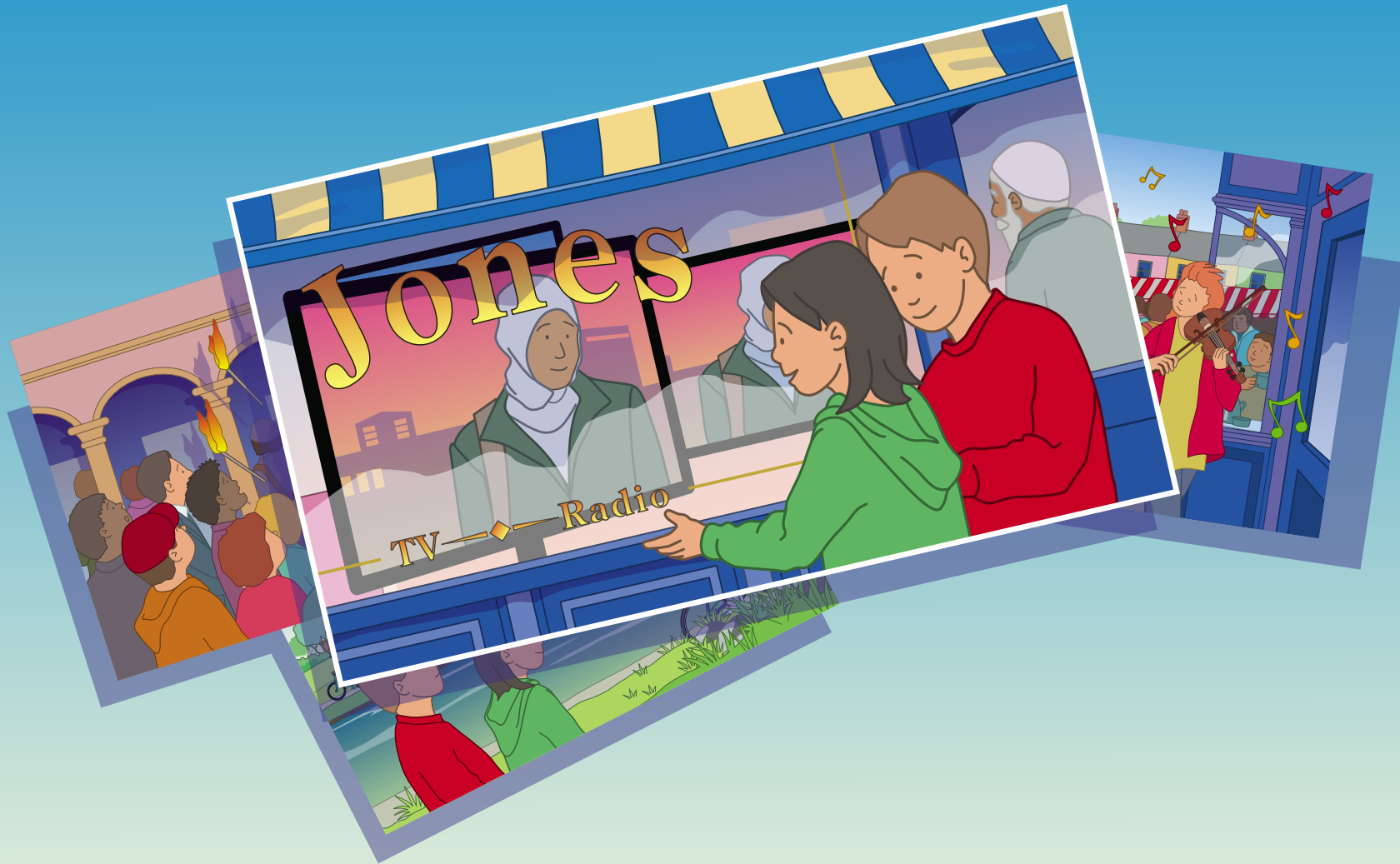


Exploring Why **Veil**



Extended Version

Exploring Why

Veil

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Illustrated by Phillip Vernon



Bear Lands Publishing

About Aled and Siân

Aled and Siân love exploring the places where they live and the places they go to visit. They enjoy playing 'I Spy' to help them get to know these places better. In the *Exploring Why* series Aled and Siân are curious to find out why some of the things around them are important to their Christian, Jewish and Muslim friends.

The series takes seriously the social significance of religion and is based on extensive research into how children learn about themselves, others and the world in which they live.

To support this storybook series, there is a large range of free downloadable resources for children and teachers available at hwb.wales.gov.uk/Resources and st-marys-centre.org.uk

The storybooks and activities are devised for 5- to 7-year-olds, but the downloadable resources make the series relevant for younger and older children too.

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Titles in the *Exploring Why* series are:

Bread
Cross
Light
Menorah
Veil
Water
Symbols of Faith





Aled and Siân love exploring the places where they live and the places that they go to visit. They enjoy playing 'I spy' to help them get to know these places

better. Today, they spotted a woman in a veil on television, and set out to discover how many other veils they could find and where they could find them.



Aled and Siân walked along the busy street. They walked past a street artist drawing pictures in chalk on a pavement. They walked past a musician

playing a violin by a café. Then they stopped by a fountain to watch a clown juggling five fire sticks, around and around in the air.



In the crowd people smiled and watched in their suits and jeans, coats and jackets, ties and coats. “I spy a veil,” said Siân. She was looking at a woman in a veil with two small children. The veil was black

and billowed in the breeze. The veil covered her hair and neck. “I wonder why the veil is so important?” said Aled.



Aled and Siân continued their walk along the street until they came to the park gates. In the park they saw some boys on bikes, laughing as they whizzed past. They saw some boys on the grass, playing

football. They saw some ducks bobbing on the lake, quacking greetings to the children throwing scraps of bread.



Then among all the people, Aled and Siân spotted a woman jogging. “I spy a veil,” said Aled. The veil was white, sporty and sleek. The veil covered her

hair and neck. They watched as the jogging woman ran round the lake and over the bridge. “I wonder why the veil is so important?” said Siân.



Aled and Siân continued their walk along the park railings. They walked past the traffic lights, flashing red, amber, and then green. They walked over the

zebra crossing, looking carefully right, left, and then right again. Then they stopped at the bus station. Here they started counting buses.



As they counted, they saw different kinds of buses. There were the tall double-deckers, reaching up to the sky. There were the smaller single-deckers, lined up row after row. "I spy a veil," said Siân.

There waiting for the number eight bus, they saw a woman in a green and gold veil. "I wonder why the veil is so important?" said Aled.



When they had finished counting, Aled and Siân left the bus station and walked towards the market place. They walked past the hustle and bustle of market stalls. There they saw people prodding ripe

red tomatoes and buying fresh green cabbages. Then they stopped to gaze at the colourful fruit stacked up high.



There on the fruit stall, they saw ripe bananas hanging in bunches. There on the fruit stall, they saw crunchy apples and juicy pears in long tidy rows. "I spy a veil," said Aled. He was looking at a

woman in a veil buying some oranges. The veil was navy blue. The veil covered her hair, face, and neck. "I wonder why the veil is so important?" said Siân.



When they had finished looking at the market stalls, Aled and Siân continued their walk past the new block of flats, past the smart bungalows, and

past the old terraced houses. Then they came to the house where their friends Ahmed and Salma lived with their mother and father and baby Hashim.



As they entered the house, they saw Ahmed and Salma's mother standing in the hall. Today, she was wearing a smart brown coat and she was getting ready to go out. "I spy a veil," said Siân. There in

front of the mirror, Ahmed and Salma's mother was carefully putting on her veil. "I wonder why the veil is so important?" said Aled.



Ahmed and Salma took Aled and Siân to the mosque next to their house. They saw the name of the mosque on a green and white sign above the door. They saw some beautiful writing in a language

they could not read. They saw another sign asking people to turn off their mobile phones and not to smoke.



Coming out of the mosque was a young woman, carrying some books. She was wearing a long grey beaded garment. "I spy a veil," said Aled. The veil was grey and beaded too. The veil covered her hair

and neck. She recognised Ahmed and Salma and smiled. "I wonder why the veil is so important?" said Siân.



Then Ahmed and Salma took Aled and Siân through the mosque doors. They gave a cap to Aled and a veil to Siân. They left their trainers in a big shoe rack. As they walked past the washrooms,

they heard water splashing. Then Ahmed and Salma began to explain why the veil is so important to their family.



Ahmed and Salma showed Aled and Siân some classrooms where boys and girls were sitting on the floor. As they sat, they read aloud from books on low tables in front of them. As Aled and Siân

listened, they heard the sounds of Arabic fill the air. "We read the Qur'an to find out how Allah wants us to live," Ahmed said.



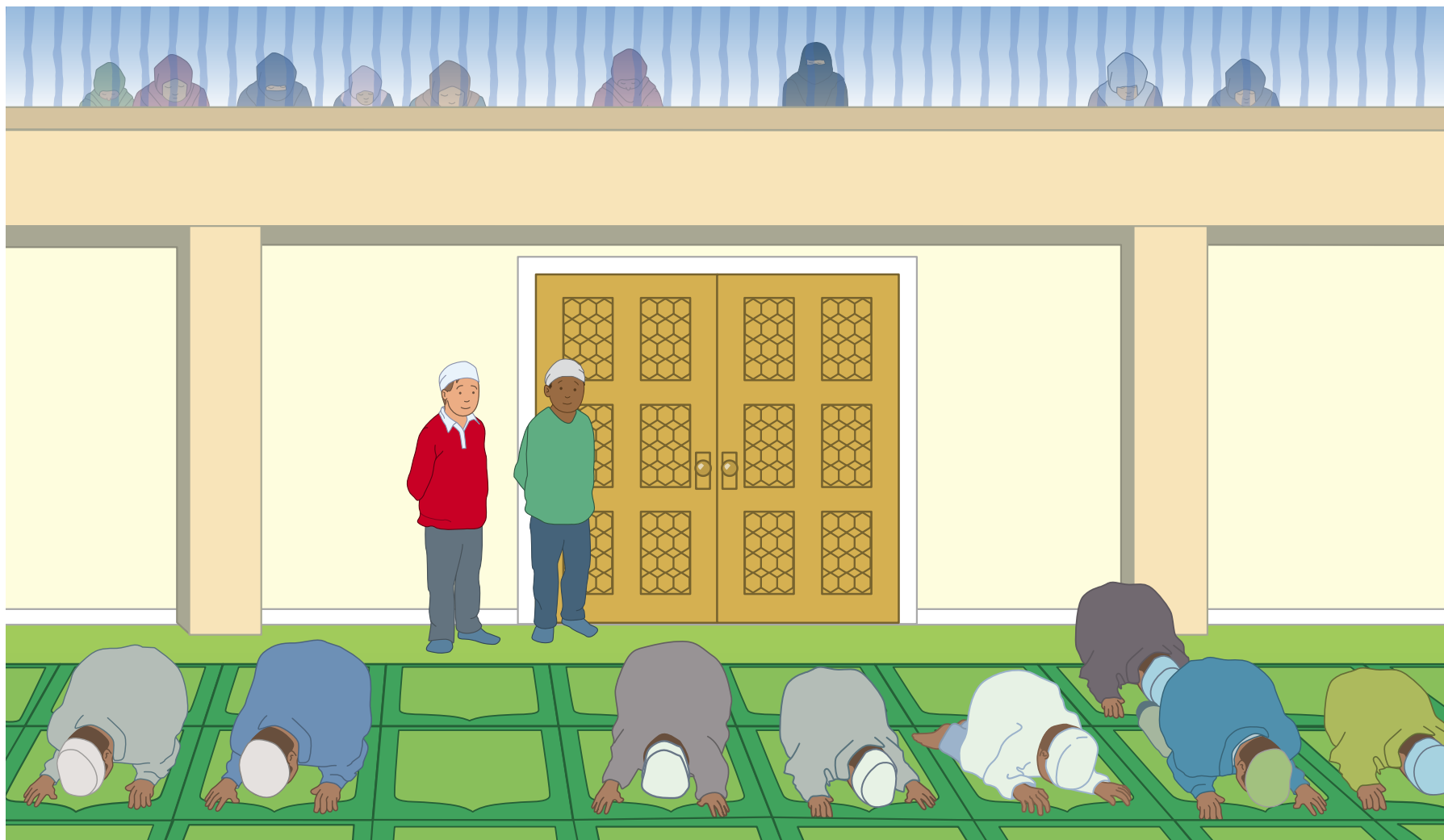
Ahmed and Salma went to a cupboard in the corner of a classroom. Salma stood on a chair and reached up as far as she could. There on the highest shelf she found a Qur'an which was not

being used for the lesson. Opening the Qur'an, Ahmed and Salma began to tell Aled and Siân about how many Muslims dress.



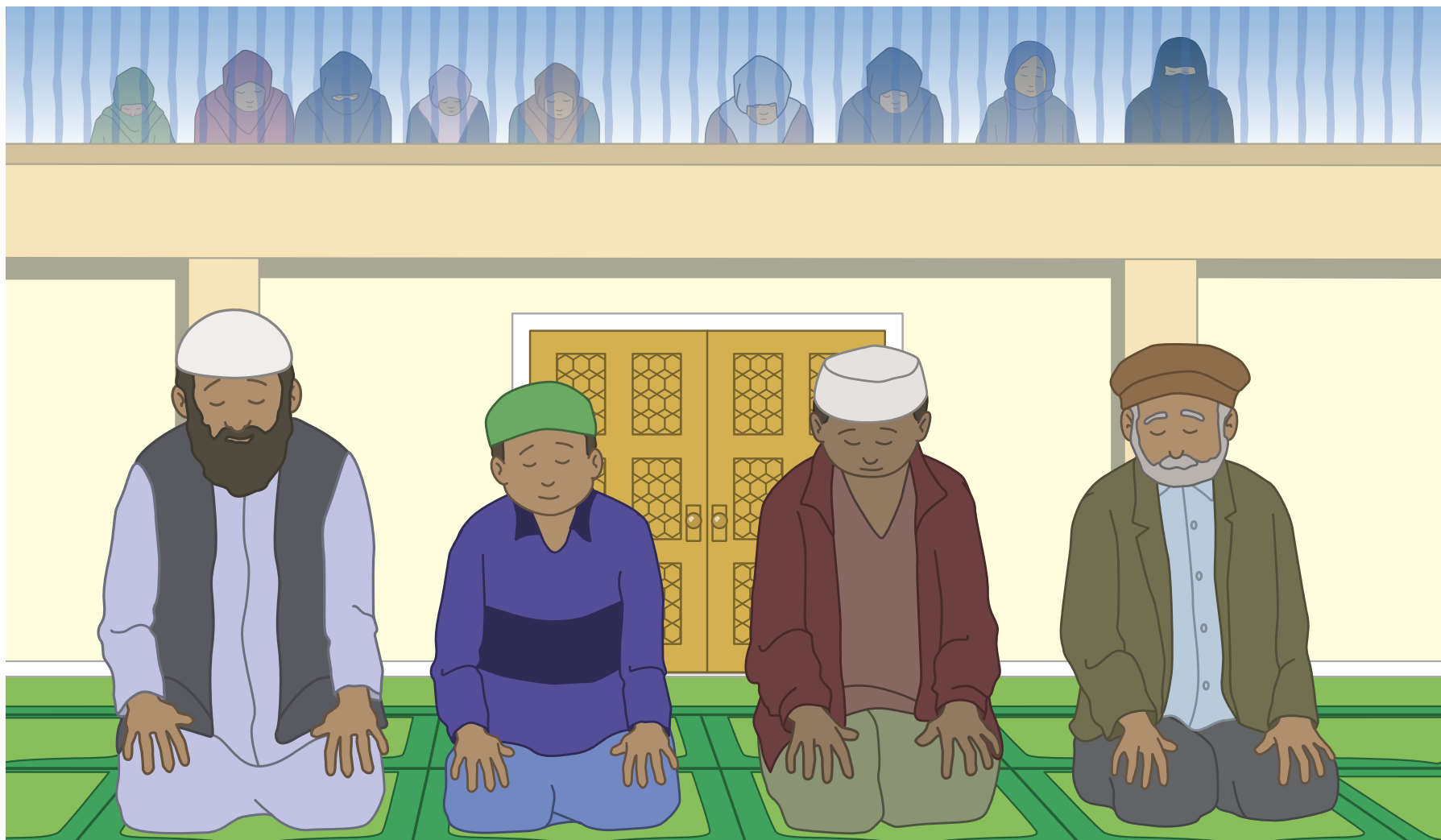
They found surah 24, and read aloud the text. “The Qur’an says that men and women should dress modestly, when they are with people who are not

close family,” said Salma. Many Muslims believe that this means women should cover themselves with a veil.



Ahmed and Salma took Aled and Siân to watch Muslims praying together. They saw the men praying in the prayer hall and the women praying in the balcony above them. Standing, bowing and

kneeling, they all moved together, praising Allah. Saying the same Arabic words, they all spoke together, praising Allah.



As the men and women prayed together, Aled and Siân looked closely at their clothes. They saw many different colours and fashions. They saw many

different head coverings for women and for men. Most of the women's veils covered the hair and neck. A few veils covered the face too.



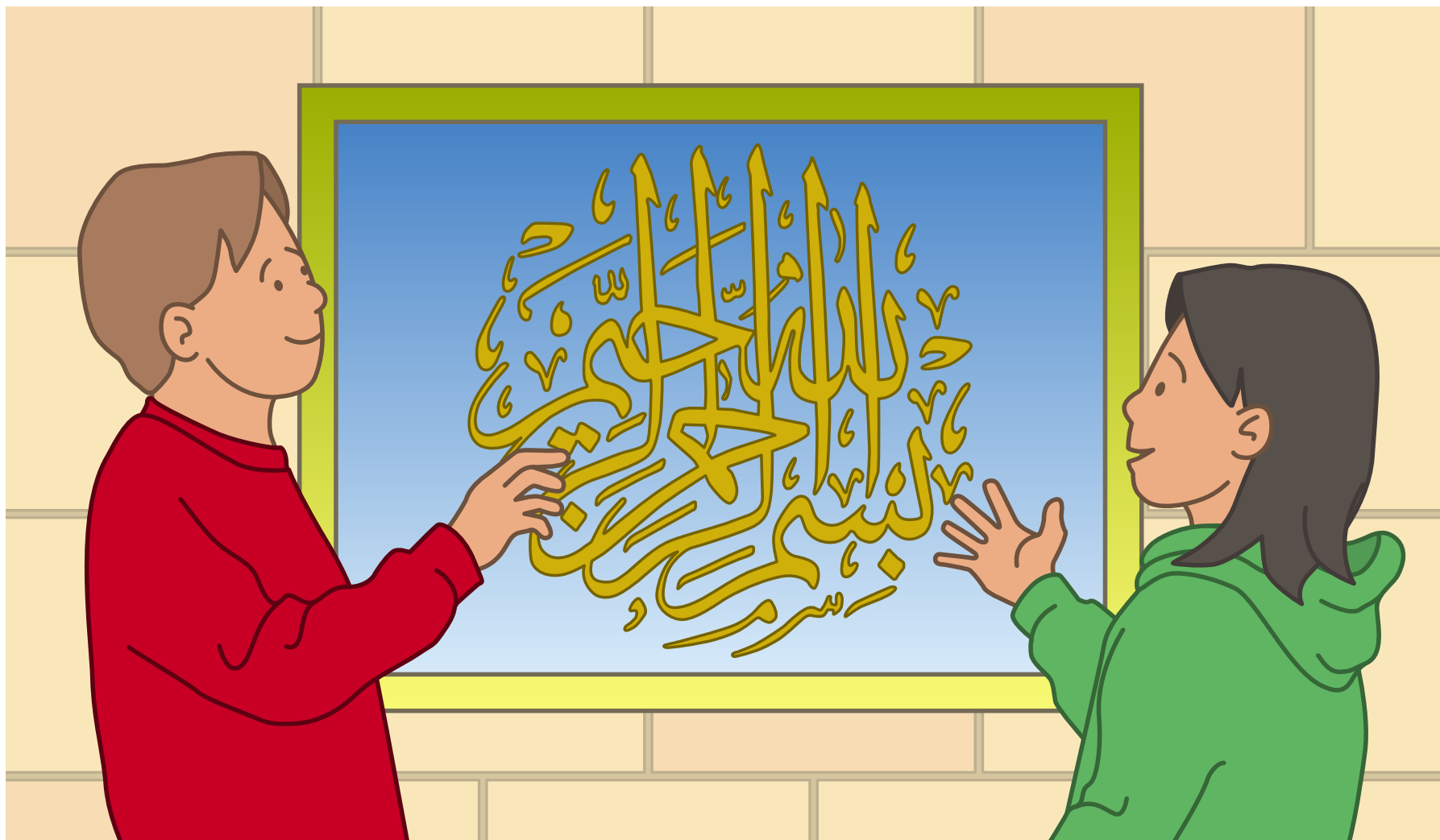
Ahmed and Salma said that Muslims understand dressing modestly in different ways. Some cover more of their bodies than others. Some women

choose not to wear a veil at all if they are not praying or reading the Qur'an. Muslims understand the Qur'an in different ways.



Aled and Siân thought about all the clothes people wear and why they wear them. They thought about school clothes and sports clothes. They thought about summer clothes and winter clothes. They thought

about clothes for the army, police and hospitals. "What do my clothes tell people about me?" said Siân.



Aled and Siân thought about all they had seen and learned about the veil. On a wall nearby, they found the Bismillah in beautiful Arabic writing. “In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful,”

it said. They followed the lines and touched the dots with their fingers. “Now we know why the veil is so important to many Muslims!” said Aled and Siân together.

Aled and Siân are playing 'I Spy' and today they are looking for 'Veils'. They find veils in all kinds of places around where they live. When Aled and Siân visit their friends, Ahmed and Salma, they start asking an important question – “I wonder why the veil is so important?” With the help of Ahmed and Salma, Aled and Siân begin to find some answers.



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