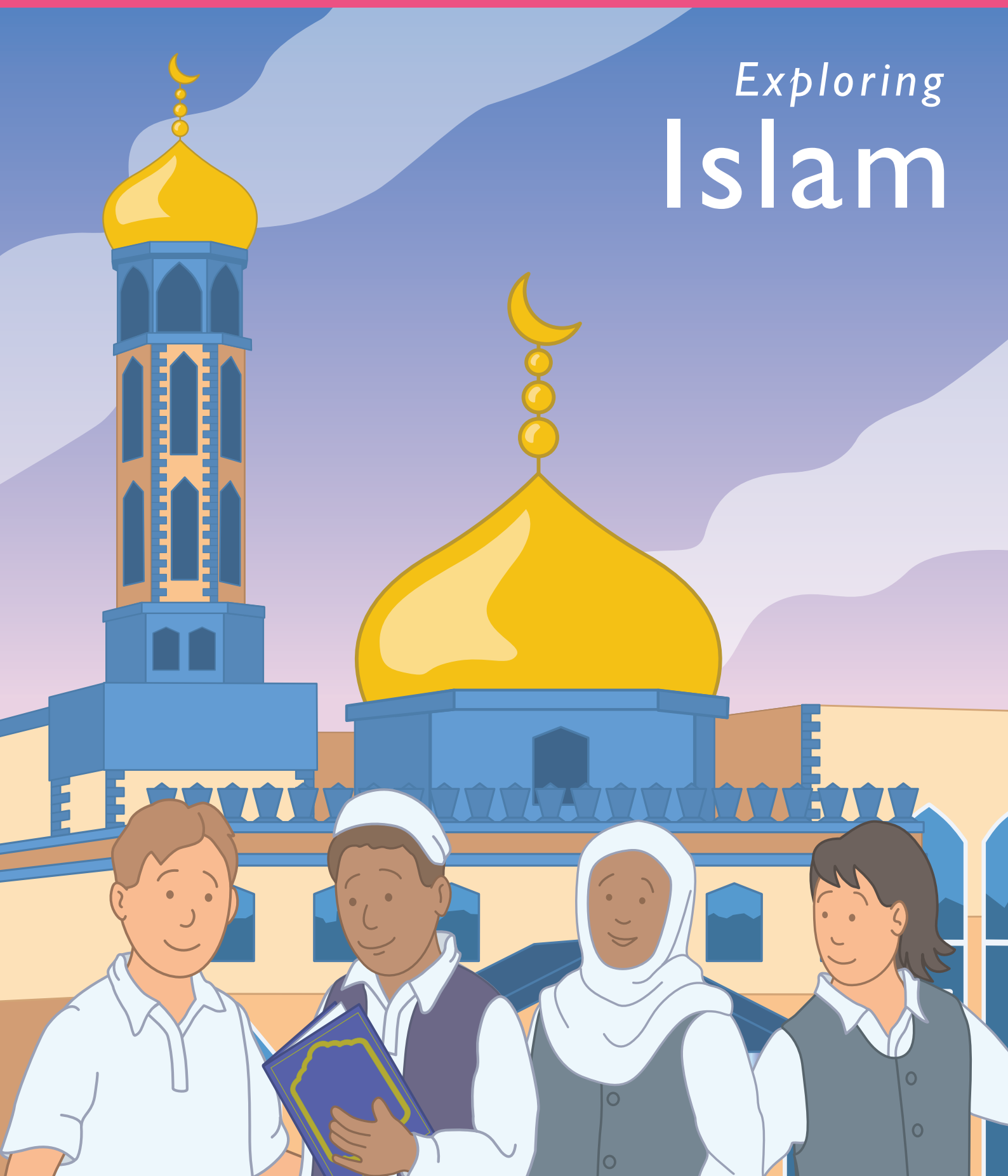


World Faiths Today Series

Exploring
Islam



Teachers' Handbook

World Faiths Today Series

Exploring Islam

Tania ap Siôn and Diane Drayson

Illustrated by Phillip Vernon



Bear Lands Publishing

In the World Faiths Today Series, Rees and Sara learn about the major world faiths in their own country. The seven stories in the series are:

- Exploring Islam
- Exploring Judaism
- Exploring the Parish Church
- Exploring the Orthodox Church
- Exploring Hinduism
- Exploring Buddhism
- Exploring Sikhism



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Exploring Islam

The story

Rees and Sara have two Muslim school friends called Rashid and Fatima who introduce them to key beliefs and practices in Islam. The children explore a mosque and learn about salah (ritual prayer) and what happens in the madrassah (mosque school). They celebrate the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr and learn about the significance of Ramadan (the Muslim month of fasting). Rees and Sara meet two sources of authority in Islam in the form of the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad, and they learn about how these affect the lives of Muslims. They investigate Muslim attitudes to the environment and caring for others through the story about the Prophet Muhammad and the camel and the practice of zakah (almsgiving). They learn about what is halal (permitted by Allah) and haram (forbidden by Allah) in Islam through a visit to a halal food shop and Muslim dress codes, and these make Rees and Sara aware of the diversity in belief and practice in Islam.

The basics

'Islam' means 'submission' to the will of Allah (God), and a Muslim is a person who submits to the will of Allah. In *Exploring Islam* Rees and Sara are introduced to Sunni Islam, the tradition practised by around 85% of Muslims in the world today. Although there are different expressions of Sunni Islam, it is possible to identify a number of central beliefs and practices which provide a starting point for teachers and pupils exploring Islam.

Sunni Muslims believe in:

- the absolute oneness and unity of Allah, who is the creator and the sustainer of the universe;
- the Muslim duty to submit to Allah's will which brings unity, peace, and harmony in this world and Paradise in the afterlife;
- the centrality of the Qur'an as the fullest, most accurate, and final revelation of Allah's will in human history;
- the value of traditions concerning the Prophet Muhammad's speech and actions which provide a source of guidance for Muslims.

Sunni Muslims practise the Five Pillars:

- Shahadah: the Muslim statement of faith which is recited. It professes that there is no Allah but Allah and that Muhammad is the prophet of Allah;
- Salah: the obligatory set ritual prayer which is performed five times every day;
- Zakah: the obligatory almsgiving;
- Sawm: the obligatory fast during the month of Ramadan;
- Hajj: a single pilgrimage to Makkah which is obligatory if certain conditions are met.

Chapter I Visiting a mosque

The mosque

The mosque is a place where Muslims:

- practise congregational prayer (salah);
- receive Islamic education;
- gather together as a community.

Mosque means 'place of prostration', and its main purpose is to provide a clean, quiet place for Muslims to prostrate themselves in prayer before Allah. Many of the features, inside and outside a mosque, point to prayer.

Rees and Sara visit a purpose-built mosque with a minaret (tower) and a dome. From the minaret, a mosque official traditionally calls Muslims to prayer in Arabic five times a day. The adhan (call to prayer) contains the most important beliefs in Islam:

God alone is great [*Allahu Akbar*] – 4 times
 I testify that there is no god but God – 2 times
 Come to prayer – 2 times
 Come to success – 2 times
 God alone is great [*Allahu Akbar*] – 2 times
 There is no god but God – once

Prayer does not have to take place in a mosque; any clean and quiet space is acceptable. The only requirement is for men to attend the mosque for Friday noon prayer (Jumah prayer).

Rees and Sara prepare themselves before entering the mosque by:

- removing their shoes;
- washing;
- covering their heads.

Removing shoes keeps the prayer areas clean. Ritual washing and covering the head are required before prayer and reciting the Qur'an. These preparations are not carried out because the mosque is especially sacred but because of the nature of the rituals themselves. While praying and reciting the Qur'an, Muslims are in the presence of Allah and they must prepare themselves appropriately. The same preparations are made wherever these rituals take place.

Prayer (salah)

Salah is the second Pillar of Islam. Rees and Sara are taken to the main prayer hall where they watch a group of men praying. All Muslim adolescents and adults, both male and female, are required to perform salah five times every day: at dawn, after midday, late afternoon, after sunset, and at night.

Sara and Fatima stand outside the doors because

females pray separately from males, either on a balcony overlooking the main prayer hall or in a separate room. This avoids distractions during prayer. While praying, Muslims recite Arabic words which are accompanied by prescribed movements. Some movements are illustrated by the men in the story although, in real life, Muslims would perform the movements in unison. The movements symbolise submission to the will of Allah, and the accompanying words speak of the oneness, the glory, and the greatness of Allah. Muslims pray side-by-side regardless of social status or race; there are no places of honour. This illustrates the central Muslim belief that everyone is equal before Allah.

Salah helps Muslims learn how to:

- submit to the will of Allah through developing discipline and correct attitudes;
- centre one's life on Allah;
- praise and worship Allah;
- strengthen and unite the Muslim community, both locally and worldwide.

The mosque school (madrassah)

In a madrassah Muslims may learn:

- Arabic, and how to recite the Qur'an in Arabic;
- more about the beliefs and practices of Islam.

Rees and Sara observe a lesson in the mosque school (madrassah) where girls are being taught how to read the Qur'an in Arabic. Arabic is a Semitic language, and the girls are reading the text from right to left, and moving from the 'back' to the 'front' of the book.

Muslims learn how to recite the Qur'an in Arabic because they believe that it is Allah's will that it should be recited aloud for all to hear in the language in which it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. The word 'Qur'an' means 'recitation', and Muhammad was asked to recite the revelations which comprise the Qur'an as they were revealed to him. The recitation of the Qur'an is often described as the purest form of music in Islam because it focuses on and glorifies Allah. In the Islamic world there are recitation concerts and competitions where renowned reciters perform, and CDs are sold of their music.

In non-Muslim countries such as Britain, mosques help to keep Muslims in touch with their religious and cultural traditions as well as with one another.

Activities

Mix and match

Cut out the nine boxes on the 'Write a story' worksheet, and then cut each box into three sections: the heading, the information, and the picture. Mix up all the sections and place them in an envelope. Divide pupils into pairs or groups and give each pair or group an envelope. Pupils need to match heading, information, and picture correctly.

Do the task on the 'Write a story' worksheet (the story can easily be adapted to another genre such as a diary entry or newspaper article, if needed).

Another activity for pupils based on the 'Write a story' worksheet: cut out the nine boxes and ask pupils to divide the boxes into three groups:

- cleanliness (being clean);
- praying to Allah;
- learning about Islam.

In groups ask pupils to reflect on the following question.

- Which of these three activities do you think is the most important, and why?

There is no right answer to this question; the emphasis is on the ideas and quality of argument. Pupils' learning will be enhanced if they have opportunity to see a copy of the Qur'an and its stand, headscarves and prayer caps, and to listen to a CD of the Qur'an being recited.

Why do Muslims pray?

Complete the worksheet 'Practise Muslim prayer positions' and then do the following task.

Muslims believe that Allah is the creator of everything and nothing happens unless Allah wants it to. Allah is so great that Muslims try to put Allah

and what Allah wants at the centre of their lives. Praying like this five times a day reminds Muslims of Allah and their duty to follow Allah's will.

Ask pupils to respond to the following questions.

- Why do you think that Muslims wash themselves so well before praying?
- Which prayer actions show that Muslims believe that Allah is very important?
- Imagine that you had to pray like this 5 times a day. What are some challenges that you would have at school?
- How does praying 5 times a day remind Muslims of their duty to follow Allah's will?

Visiting a mosque

Visit a mosque and identify the places mentioned in the story. How does it differ from the places in the book and how is it the same?

Flags

Look at flags for the different countries of Britain and explore their symbolism (or focus on your national flag). Provide a selection of pictures of flags from around the world, including flags which have obvious Muslim symbols such as the crescent moon. Can pupils identify the flags of Muslim countries? Muslim countries often include the crescent moon in their flags because Islam is seen as being important for that country.

Flags show what is believed to represent a country. Often the designs are quite old. In groups ask pupils to design their own modern flag for their country. They need to consider carefully what they think may represent their country today and explain why.

Chapter 2 Celebrating Eid-ul-Fitr

The festival of Eid-ul-Fitr

The festival of Eid-ul-Fitr celebrates the end of the fast of Ramadan. Muslims thank Allah for the benefits that they have gained from the fast. Eid-ul-Fitr is celebrated by:

- congregational prayer in the mosque;
- giving cards and presents to friends and family;
- sharing a special family meal (often at midday);
- wearing new or best clothes;
- giving zakah (alms) to provide for the poor.

Rees and Sara make an Eid card for their friends, Rashid and Fatima. Eid cards could have a number of different illustrations, for example:

- a mosque;
- a flower or floral pattern;
- a geometric pattern;
- an Islamic symbol such as crescent moon and star;
- calligraphy.

Flowers and floral patterns reflect Paradise, which traditionally is represented by a garden.

Geometric patterns portray central Islamic beliefs concerning the origins, nature, and purpose of the universe. A pattern starts from a dot which represents Allah. From this dot, complex geometric patterns are created which represent Allah's creation. Allah is the starting point and nothing happens without Allah willing it. The patterns represent the ideal universe, which reflects the qualities of its creator: oneness, balance, harmony, and peace. However, human beings break and destroy parts of the pattern through acting in ways which do not conform to Allah's will. Often a deliberate mistake will be included in a pattern to remind human beings that only Allah is perfect.

Beautiful Arabic calligraphy, with wishes for a happy festival, often features prominently on the card. Arabic is written from the right to the left side and an Arabic card opens from the 'back' to the 'front'.

Many of Rashid and Fatima's extended family are present for the Eid celebrations. In Islam the family has special significance because it forms a solid foundation for a strong Muslim community. There is less focus on the nuclear family.

The Ramadan fast

Sawn (the fast during the month of Ramadan) is the fourth Pillar of Islam. From dawn to dusk, nothing should enter a person's body – this includes food, drink, smoking, and non-vital medications and vaccinations. Each night of the fast, after sunset, there is a family fast-breaking meal. Each morning of the fast, before sunrise, there is a light breakfast.

Some of Rashid and Fatima's family have not been fasting. The Qur'an says that certain categories of people are exempt, such as the very young or the very old, women who are pregnant or breast-feeding, the sick, and travellers.

Muslims follow a lunar calendar which means that Ramadan is a moveable fast. This means that the number of hours per day spent fasting often varies according to the time of year. For example, a fast in Britain in June is more difficult than a fast in December, and Muslims living in extreme northern and southern locations are acutely affected by the number of daylight hours. Often, in uncertain or extreme situations, Muslims follow the times for the fast in Makkah.

The fast during the month of Ramadan provides Muslims with the opportunity to:

- submit to the will of Allah;
- empathise with the poor, providing the motivation to give alms;
- offer thanksgiving to Allah for the Qur'an;
- recite and meditate on the Qur'an;
- practise exercising self-control of the body;
- achieve spiritual purification;
- strengthen and unite the Muslim community, both locally and worldwide.

Muslims believe that Allah is the source and provider of all things including wealth. Allah's gift of wealth carries with it responsibility: wealth needs to be used wisely for the benefit of the whole community. The fast reminds Muslims of their duty towards less fortunate members of society.

Muslims around the world fast together, and this unites and strengthens the world-wide Muslim community. Ramadan is a time to focus on Allah and submit to Allah's will. Fatima's comment that Muslims should try not to be angry, argue, or tell lies is significant because negative emotions disrupt this focus, both for the person concerned and for those associating with that person.

Rashid and Fatima's grandfather introduces Rees and Sara to one of the most significant events in Muslim history, the Night of Power which marks Allah's revelation of the first part of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad via the intermediary figure of the Angel Gabriel. Muhammad received subsequent revelations of the Qur'an over 22 years. Muslims believe that the Qur'an is Allah's greatest gift to human beings. This explains why there is a special focus on reading, meditating on, and thanking Allah for the Qur'an.

Activities

Festivals across religious traditions

Work on a calendar or book of festivals from all religions. This would need to be a loose-leaf folder, or pages joined together with treasury tags so that pages can be added as needed in chronological order.

Talk about the importance of organising material well so that people can quickly find the information they need. With the pupils, decide on a useful structure for the book, for example, section headings could include stories, how the festival is celebrated today, recipes, and so on.

A card for every occasion

Collect together different types of cards for different occasions. Ask pupils to divide the cards into different piles using the following category headings:

birthday	bereavement	birth of a baby
general	engagement/wedding	
good luck	congratulations	
Christmas	retirement	

Then, for each card category pupils need to identify some of the things in the cards' pictures which link them to the occasion for which they are intended. Pupils can also consider two further questions.

- Why do you think people send cards?
- How do you think people feel when they receive cards?

Cards are sent for different reasons. Do the

worksheet 'Make an Eid card'. On the worksheet it suggests that the card is decorated with an Islamic-style pattern. Explore with pupils other possible decorations for the card which they can use if they wish. Link this back to the previous work on cards – the Eid (festival) card celebrates the successful completion of the Muslim fast and all that has been learnt from it. How might Muslims feel when they receive these cards?

Design a pattern

Do the 'Scale drawing of a pattern' worksheet. After pupils have completed their pattern, introduce the idea that Muslims believe that only Allah is perfect. Muslims try to do what Allah wants but they make mistakes. People are not perfect. However, the Qur'an reminds Muslims at the beginning of every chapter (apart from one) that Allah is merciful and compassionate. Muslims make a deliberate mistake in a pattern to remind them that they are not perfect.

Ask pupils to return to their pattern and to introduce one mistake in it to illustrate this teaching.

Pupils can reflect further on this by relating it to their own lives and the mistakes that they make. For example, they can think about a time when they made a mistake. How did they feel when they realised that they had made the mistake? What did other people do when they found out about their mistake? How was the situation resolved? What did they learn from their mistake?

Chapter 3 Understanding the Qur'an and Muhammad

Understanding rules

In this chapter the sources of authority in Islam (the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad) are compared with sources of authority in a school (school rules and teachers). Rules are created to help people live together peaceably and constructively. However, understanding and living according to rules is difficult; competent interpreters are required. In school, teachers help children to understand and live according to school rules. In Islam, the Prophet Muhammad helps Muslims to understand and live according to Allah's rules in the Qur'an.

The Five Pillars are five important rules in Islam. A traditional Arabian house was supported by pillars, and without them, the house would collapse. Likewise, the house of Islam is supported by the Five Pillars, and without them, Islam would collapse. The first pillar is the shahadah, which is the Muslim statement of faith: there is no Allah but Allah and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah. This belief is the motivation behind all human action, including the four practical pillars: prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage.

The Qur'an: the source book for rules

Rashid and Fatima treat the Arabic Qur'an with great respect because Muslims believe that it is the word of Allah, and the primary source of Allah's will.

Respect is shown by:

- storing the Qur'an in a place where no other book is higher than it;
- covering the Qur'an with protective material when not in use;
- performing ritual washing (wudu or ghusl) before touching the Qur'an or reciting the Qur'an;
- covering the head before touching the Qur'an or reciting the Qur'an;
- using a stand called a kursi on which the Qur'an sits while it is read;
- ensuring that the Qur'an is never left open, if it is not being read.

The Prophet Muhammad: an ideal interpreter and role model

Rees and Sara consider one of the main problems with rules in the Qur'an: how can you be sure that they have been understood correctly and applied appropriately to people's lives? Muslims believe that the Prophet Muhammad could understand and apply Allah's rules in the Qur'an because Allah revealed the Qur'an to Muhammad. Muhammad is seen as the perfect Muslim and role model.

Muslims believe that throughout human history Allah repeatedly sent prophets to make his will known to human beings. The first prophet was Adam, the first man, and other prophets include well-known figures shared with Judaism and Christianity such as Ibrahim (Abraham), Isma'il (Ishmael), Musa (Moses), Dawud (David), and Isa (Jesus). Some of these prophets were given a book containing Allah's will. For example, Musa (Moses) was given the Taurat (Torah) and Isa (Jesus) was given the Injil (Gospels). All of these prophets are highly respected in Islam, although it is thought that the books that they received (apart from the Qur'an given to Muhammad) have been distorted and changed by the communities to which they were given.

The Prophet Muhammad has a special place in Islam because he is believed to be the final prophet sent by Allah, and he was given the fullest and final revelation of Allah's will – the Qur'an. Muslims believe that unlike the books given to the other prophets, the Qur'an has been preserved accurately. This means that no other revelations and no other prophets are needed.

Following the example of the Prophet Muhammad

Fatima introduces Rees and Sara to the stories about the Prophet Muhammad. These stories are called hadith and they record the speech and actions of the Prophet Muhammad when he was alive. As Muhammad is a perfect role model for Muslims, knowing how he understood and lived out Allah's will is very important. Therefore, the hadith are used by many Muslims to explain things which are unclear in the Qur'an. It is in this sense that the Prophet Muhammad acts as an interpreter of Allah's rules in the Qur'an.

Sara cannot find any pictures of Muhammad in the book that she is reading, and she learns that Muslims do not usually show images of human beings or animals. This is to prevent people from mistakenly committing the most serious sin called shirk – the placing of someone or something on the same level as Allah. This partly explains the distinctiveness of Islamic art, with its focus on patterns and calligraphy centred on Allah.

It is important to remember that the Prophet Muhammad is greatly respected in Islam but never worshipped. Allah alone is worshipped and everything else points towards Allah and depends on Allah.

Activities

Role models

Do the 'Find out about Muhammad' worksheet.

Muslims believe that Muhammad lived like a perfect Muslim, in the way that Allah wants Muslims to live. This means that Muslims believe that Muhammad is a perfect example for Muslims to follow. This is called being a role model. Rees and Sara learn in the story that Muslims have tried to collect all the stories about Muhammad's life to help them follow his example.

Explore with pupils who their role models are (people they look up to and want to be like). What do they learn from their role models? How will this help them in their lives? (It is important that pupils are allowed to choose any type of person and they do not feel that they should give a particular type of answer.)

Exploring rules

Collate different rules for different contexts, for example, a library, airport, beach, and school, and explore them with pupils. In each case, why are they there? What is the point of them? Each context has a different set of rules which is appropriate and meaningful for that context. Religious communities have rules to follow too which are appropriate and meaningful for that religion.

The Five Pillars are rules which are important in Islam. The first Pillar is the most important – the belief in only one God and that Muhammad is the Prophet of God (shahadah). Muslims believe that the other four practical Pillars help them to learn how to live in a way which Allah wants. In groups, pupils could research the four practical pillars of salah (prayer), sawm (fasting), zakah (almsgiving), and hajj (pilgrimage), with the aim of completing the following task.

For your Pillar, write down the things which would

help Muslims do the following (remember that the list is for all the four practical Pillars and some may not be relevant to your Pillar):

- think about the needs of other less fortunate Muslims;
- feel part of a large Muslim family;
- feel in touch with their history and the great Muslim prophets of the past;
- remember that Allah is the source of everything and deserves worship;
- understand that Allah sees all Muslims as equal and no one is greater than anyone else.

Pupils could then complete the 'Write 5 rules' worksheet.

A documentary about Muhammad's life

Plan a short documentary programme about the life of Muhammad. To help with the research and planning, focus on the following areas.

- Make a timeline of his life.
- What were his main teachings?
- Find some interesting stories about Muhammad's life.
- Why is Muhammad important to Muslims today?
- Who would you want to interview about Muhammad's life and teaching? (You might want to include a Muslim.)
- Think about useful props which would make the programme interesting, for example, maps, pictures of Mount Hira and other places in Saudi Arabia, the Qur'an (with a recording of its recitation), stand and Qur'an cover.
- Remember that Muhammad should NOT be portrayed in any form.

Use a camcorder to record the documentary (in small sections). This can be shown to other classes in the school or placed in an assembly context.

Chapter 4 Caring for others and the world

The relationship between people and the natural world

Rees and Sara visit an aquarium with their friends, Rashid and Fatima, where they learn about the complexity and interdependency of aquatic life. These principles can be extended to include the rest of the natural world. Rees and Sara also learn about the capacity of human beings to affect the fragile relationships which exist between living things, often in a destructive way.

The natural world is a very important theme in Islam because the natural world is closely connected with its creator, Allah. The Qur'an repeatedly asks Muslims to reflect on the perfection and wonders of nature, which point towards Allah.

It is He who sends down to you water from the sky: from which you have to drink, and from it are trees, for you to pasture your herds. And thereby He brings forth for you crops, and olives, and palms, and vines, and all manner of fruit. Surely in this is a sign for a people who reflect. And He subjected to you the night and the day, and the sun and the moon: and the stars are subjected by His command. Surely in this are signs for a people who understand.

Qur'an 16:10ff

The most important Muslim beliefs about the relationship between nature, Allah, and human beings are:

- nature points to its creator, Allah;
- Allah has created everything necessary to sustain human life;
- the bounties of nature are a gift from Allah;
- human beings are totally dependent on Allah who provides for their needs;
- the natural world is Allah's;
- human beings are Allah's vice-regents in the world.

This means that they act on behalf of Allah in the natural world to implement Allah's will.

In Islam the beauty, grandeur, and bounty of nature should invoke a sense of immense awe and gratitude, which should be expressed in the natural human response of worship and submission to Allah. The greatness of Allah is always contrasted with the total dependence of human beings on Him.

The story about Muhammad and the camel is an example of how Muslims use stories and traditions

about the Prophet Muhammad for guidance. There are many stories about the Prophet Muhammad and animals which show the Prophet's respect and compassion for them. The story about Muhammad and the camel is particularly useful because it provides an example of human beings in an interdependent relationship with nature, and how respecting this relationship brings mutual benefits to both parties.

The relationship between people

Fatima tells Rees and Sara that it is the duty of Muslims to look after one another. Muslims who have the material means should help those in need. This action is based on the belief that wealth is a gift from Allah, and it should be used for the benefit of the whole community. With wealth comes great responsibility, and Muslims believe that they will be judged by Allah on how well they have responded to this responsibility.

The fourth Pillar of Islam, zakah (obligatory almsgiving), provides an opportunity for these beliefs to be expressed in practice. The Qur'an stipulates that Muslims must give: 'As much as you can spare!' which helps to support:

- the poor;
- needy;
- those collecting and distributing zakah;
- converts to Islam;
- the freeing of Muslim captives and debtors;
- travellers experiencing financial hardship.

This was developed into a more precise system where a certain percentage of one's income is given every year for these causes. In Britain (as in many other countries) zakah is voluntary.

Zakah means 'purification'. If a Muslim gives generously and in the right spirit, it is believed that the person's sins are forgiven. Almsgiving, in addition to zakah, is encouraged at other times as well, especially during periods of celebration.

At the public library Rees and Sara are introduced to an increasingly popular way of giving alms through donating money to Muslim aid agencies. Muslim aid agencies initiate and support many of the same types of activity focused on by non-Muslim aid agencies. Islamic Aid and Muslim Aid are two well-known Muslim aid agencies.

Activities

Our environment

Muslims believe that it is their duty to look after the natural world. They are motivated to do this because of their beliefs about Allah (see teachers' notes for this chapter). Walk around the school grounds and look for ways that you could look after this area where you spend so much of your time. What motivates you to be responsible?

Caring for nature

Do the activity on the 'Write a play' worksheet.

Muhammad taught that animals belong to Allah and people should look after animals for Allah. Animals are there for a reason and they are all part of Allah's plan for the world. If people treat animals well, people and animals can live and work well together.

People and animals do a lot of different things together and animals give a lot of things to people. Ask pupils to think of animals which would fit into the following groups, e.g. guide dogs fit 'helping people' (to differentiate this activity, a list of animals could be given to pupils to place in groups):

pets	food	helping people
clothes	sport	enjoyment of nature

Islam teaches that animals should be treated well because of its beliefs about Allah. What reasons would you give for treating animals well?

Caring for others

Using the internet, learn about a Muslim aid agency in more detail (for example, Muslim Aid or Islamic Aid). The following questions will help to focus the activity.

- Does the aid agency have a mission statement which explains what it tries to do?
- Name the projects in which the aid agency is involved.
- In which areas of the world does the aid agency work?
- How can Muslims support the aid agency?

Some pupils could be challenged with a further question.

- Is there anything on the website which points to the aid agency's religious background (Muslim)?

Pupils can relate this to their own lives by doing the 'Make a money box' activity, and, as a class, choose an aid agency to support.

Chapter 5 Learning about halal and haram

Diversity in Muslim practice

Rees and Sara learn that Muslim practice is influenced by:

- how the Qur'an is interpreted;
- the culture in which a Muslim lives.

Different interpretations of the Qur'an and different cultural influences account for much of the diversity found in Muslim practice. However, whatever a Muslim does, it should be halal (permitted by Allah) and not haram (forbidden by Allah).

Food

Muslims eat many different kinds of foods, which reflect the various culinary traditions from diverse cultures around the world. The dishes prepared by a Muslim from Malaysia are very different from those prepared by a Muslim from Morocco, for example. However, Muslims around the world are linked by one common requirement: they are required to eat foods which are halal under Islamic law. Muslim food laws are based on the food rules found in the Qur'an.

Halal foods include:

- all kinds of fish;
- all kinds of vegetables;
- meat and other edible products from halal animals slaughtered in accordance with Islamic law.

Haram foods include:

- pig meat;
- blood;
- meat from carnivorous animals (excluding most fish and sea animals);
- meat and other edible products from halal animals not slaughtered in accordance with

Islamic law;

- alcohol.

Some Muslims believe that the meat of fish without scales (for example, shellfish) and the meat of amphibians are also haram.

The slaughter of an animal in accordance with Islamic law involves checking the animal for any signs of ill-health, giving it a drink of water, turning the animal to face Makkah, and reciting the words: 'In the name of Allah, Allah is the Greatest.' The animal's main arteries in the neck and its oesophagus are then severed in a single cut with a non-serrated blade. The words, 'In the name of Allah, Allah is the Greatest', recognise that all created things belong to Allah, and that Muslims are allowed to take the life of animals only by using Allah's name.

Finding foods which are halal or haram can be particularly difficult in non-Muslim countries, in a world increasingly dependent on pre-prepared and processed foods. This is why companies distributing clearly labelled halal foods are important.

Dress

Different interpretations of the Qur'an and different cultural influences are found in Muslim dress. The Qur'an stipulates what is halal (permitted), advocating modesty in dress for both Muslim men and Muslim women. However, how this modesty is interpreted varies considerably among Muslims. It is interesting to compare the dress of male and female Muslims from different countries, for example, Indonesia, Pakistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and Muslims wearing Western-style dress.

Activities

Difference in Islam map

Display a map of the world and mark the countries where there is a large population of Muslims. Illustrate the map with pictures from the internet of famous mosques, locations, and statues. You could also show traditional styles of dress in different Muslim countries.

Dress in Islam

In the Qur'an it says that Muslim women and men should dress modestly. Different Muslims understand what this means in different ways.

Use the internet to find out about women's different dress codes in Islam, and answer the following question.

- How do Muslims understand 'modesty' differently?

These search words may be helpful (the information in brackets is for the teacher):

- abaya (outer garment covering the whole body and head, but leaving face visible);
- jilbab (loose outer garments which are usually worn with a headscarf);

- khimar (headscarf);
- niqab and burqa (covers the whole face);
- chador (outer garment worn over clothes covering the whole body);
- Islamic swimwear or Islamic sportswear.

NOTE: It is important that pupils also know that many practising Western Muslims wear modest Western style dress. There are many differences in the way Muslims dress and how they interpret what the Qur'an says about Muslim dress.

A halal shopping list

Buy a selection of different foods. Include a variety of tins and packets with lists of ingredients on them, food with the halal symbol on it, and fresh fruit and vegetables. Give pupils a piece of paper with 'Rashid and Fatima's shopping list' as a heading. Ask pupils to identify foods which could be put on Rashid and Fatima's shopping list.

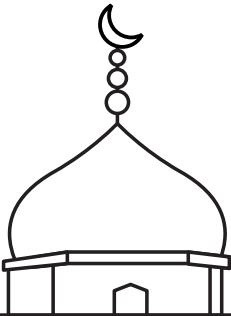


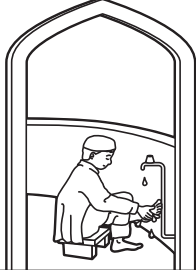

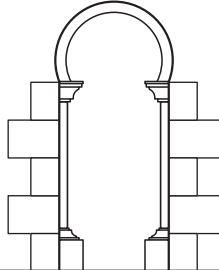
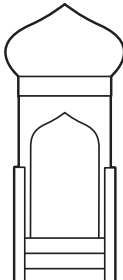


Did pupils find the task difficult? What were some of their problems?

Keywords

adhan	the call to prayer	Muhammad	the prophet who received the Qur'an from Allah
Allah	the Islamic name for God		
Arabic	a Semitic language; the Qur'an is written in Arabic and ritual prayer (salah) is conducted in Arabic	Muslim	person who submits to the will of Allah
		mosque	a place of prostration; it is the Muslim place of worship
Eid-ul-Fitr	the festival which celebrates the end of the fast during the month of Ramadan	Ramadan	the ninth month of the Muslim year; it is the month of fasting
ghusl	a more comprehensive ritual washing than wudu which involves taking a bath or shower before prayer or the recitation of the Qur'an	salah	prayer: the second Pillar of Islam
		sawn	the fast during the month of Ramadan: the fourth Pillar of Islam
hadith	traditions about what the Prophet Muhammad said and did during his lifetime	Semitic	relating to a particular language family including Arabic and Hebrew
halal	permitted or allowed	shahadah	the creedal statement testifying that there is no Allah but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's prophet: the first Pillar of Islam
hajj	pilgrimage to Makkah: the fifth Pillar of Islam		
haram	forbidden	shirk	the most serious sin of placing anything or anyone on the same level as Allah
Islam	the name of the religion followed by Muslims; means submission (to the will of Allah)	Qur'an	the most important sacred text in Islam
Jumah prayer	Friday noon prayer	wudu	ritual washing before prayer or the recitation of the Qur'an; not as comprehensive as ghusl
madrassah	an Islamic school which is attached to the mosque		
Makkah	the most sacred city and pilgrimage site in Sunni Islam	zakah	almsgiving: the third Pillar of Islam.
minaret	a mosque tower from which Muslims are traditionally called to prayer		

Write a story

Imagine you have visited a mosque with a Muslim friend. Write a story about it, giving details of all the places you visited and the things you saw there. The pictures and descriptions below will help you.

<p>dome</p> <p>Most mosques have a round roof. This is often decorated with beautiful patterns.</p> 	<p>minaret</p> <p>Next to the dome there may be a tall tower. The times of prayer are called from here.</p> 	<p>shoe rack</p> <p>To keep the place of prayer clean, all shoes are taken off before entering.</p> 
<p>wash room</p> <p>To show respect for Allah, Muslims must be clean to pray. They wash hands, face, arms and feet.</p> 	<p>prayer room</p> <p>The floor is covered in carpet for people to pray or sit on. Women pray at the back or in a different room.</p> 	<p>mihrab</p> <p>Muslims pray facing Makkah. A hollow in the wall shows them the right direction to face.</p> 
<p>minbar</p> <p>The imam (leader of the mosque) stands on a raised part of the floor so he can be seen when he teaches.</p> 	<p>madrassah</p> <p>Muslims go to school to learn to read Arabic so they can read the Qur'an in its original language.</p> 	<p>library</p> <p>In many mosques you will find study rooms or libraries with books to answer questions about Islam.</p> 

Make a headscarf

Most Muslims keep their heads covered. Men wear caps; women wear headscarfs. Make your own headscarf.

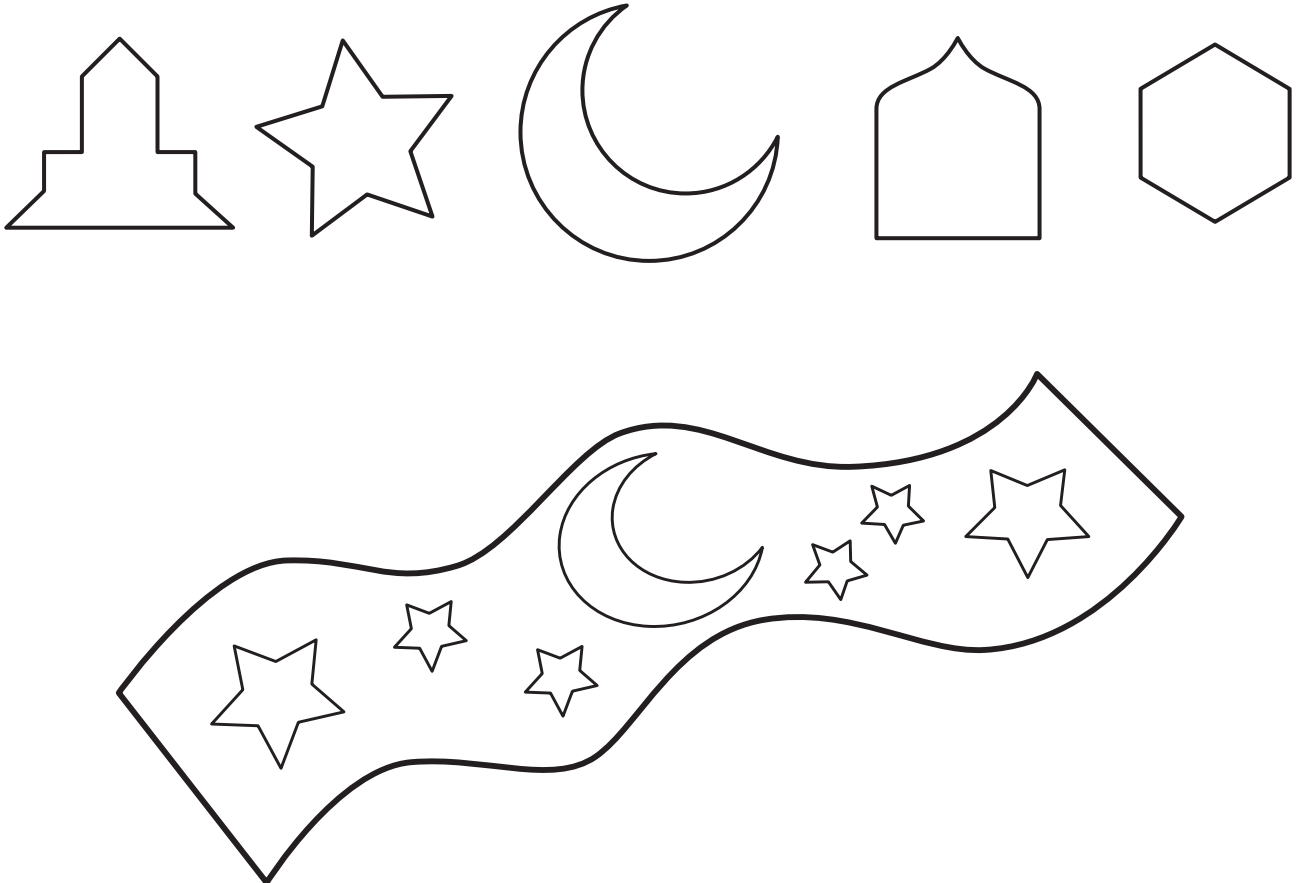
You will need

fabric

dye, fabric crayons or felt tip pens

What to do

1. Cut your fabric in a long strip. (Old white cotton sheets can often be bought cheaply at charity shops. One sheet will make many scarves.)
2. Decorate the fabric by dyeing it or by using fabric crayons or felt tip pens. If you use crayons or pens, choose a pattern that has some meaning for Muslims. You could design a geometrical pattern or a pattern from the moon and stars. Just as the moon and stars show the right path to take at night, so Muslims believe Allah shows them the right way to live. Remember that Muslims do not draw pictures of people or animals.
3. Look at pictures to discover different ways of wearing the headscarf.



Practise Muslim prayer positions

Muslims pray five times a day. Prayer for Muslims is not just in the mind; it involves the whole body. Special words of prayer are said in each prayer position.

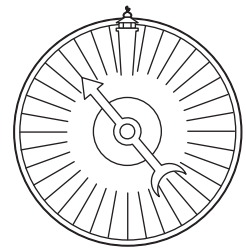
1. Be clean

Before praying, Muslims must be clean. They wash their whole body each day. Before prayer they wash hands, mouth and throat, nose and face, arms, head and ears, feet and ankles. Next they must find a clean place in which to pray.



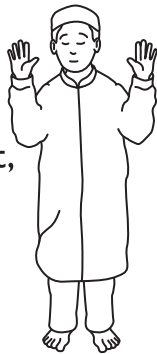
2. Face Makkah

Muslims always face in the direction of Makkah to pray. Mosques show this direction. Many Muslims carry a special compass to help them work out the correct direction for when they pray outside of a mosque.



3. Stand

Stand straight. Raise your hands to your ears. Fold your arms over your breast, right arm over left arm.



4. Bow down

Bow down, placing your hands on your knees. Return to a standing position.



5. Prostrate yourself

Kneel down, then lie forward with your head on the ground. Sit up briefly, then lie forward again.



6. Sit

Sit again and pass the greeting 'Peace on you and the mercy of Allah' to each side of you.



Make an Eid card

1. Fold your card

English and Welsh are read from left to right, and so books and cards open from the right. Arabic is read from right to left, and so books and cards open from the left.



2. Write a caption

This card is to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr.

You could write:

Happy Eid

Happy Festival

an Arabic greeting

عيد مبارك

3. Decorate your card

Muslim patterns are very beautiful and intricate. Copy a pattern from one of the activity sheets, or design your own.

4. Sign your name

Don't forget to say who the card is for and who is sending it.

عيد مبارك

This says EID MUBARAK in Arabic.

This means Blessed festival.

Trace over it, copy it underneath, then write it on your card.

Plan some fasting activities

For this activity you will need to work with some friends, thinking, discussing and writing.

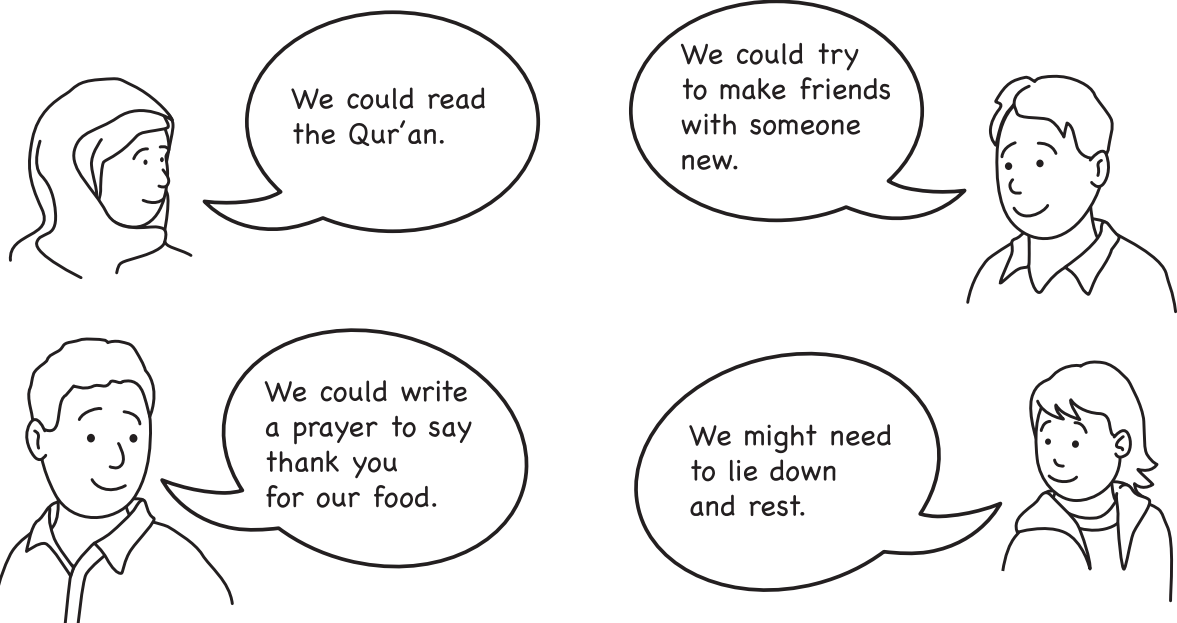
Fasting in Ramadan

Every year during the month of Ramadan, healthy adult Muslims fast during daylight hours. This means that for twenty-nine days they do not have anything to eat or drink between sunrise and sunset. It is a time when they learn how it feels to be hungry and thirsty and remember how lucky they are to have food and water. It is a time for them to thank Allah.

It is a time to think of other people. During Ramadan Muslims give money to poor people who do not have enough food all year round. During the fast they try to live good lives, not arguing or being angry or telling lies.

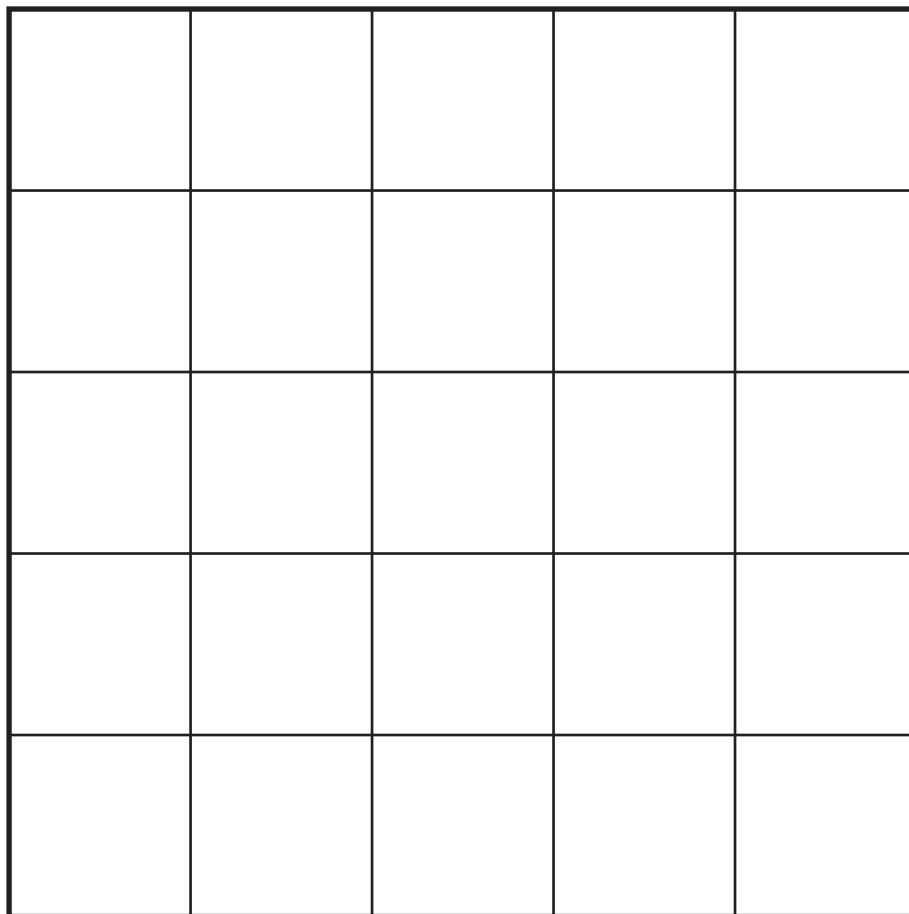
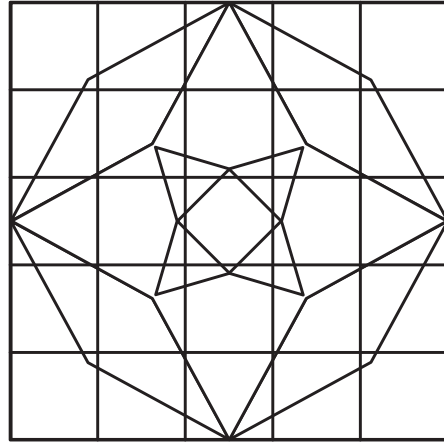
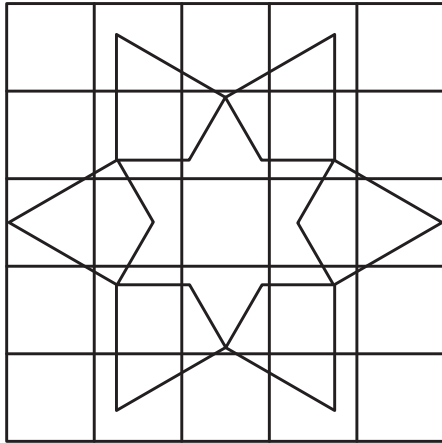
It is a time when Muslims need to rest more than usual. Without food and water for the long daylight hours, they cannot work as hard as they do during the other months.

If you were Muslims, fasting during the month of Ramadan, what could you do at meal times instead of eating? How could you use the time in a positive way? **Plan some activities for a week.** You would need a mixture of activities, some to help you learn more about Allah, some to help other people, and some to help you become a kinder person.



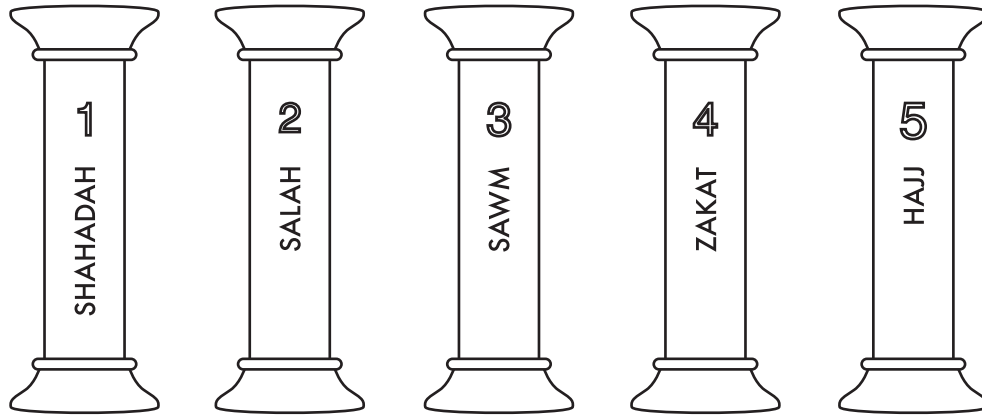
Scale drawing of a pattern

Muslim patterns are very beautiful and intricate. This type of artwork is found in Muslim houses and mosques. Use the large grid to copy and enlarge a pattern. Do the copying section by section.



Write 5 rules

Muslims have five important rules to follow. These are called the Five Pillars. Muslims believe that the Five Pillars were given to them by Allah to teach them how to live.



Imagine you have the job of deciding five rules for a group to which you belong. (This could be your family, school, class, club or a friendship group.) Write the rules you would choose, along with your reasons for choosing them.

Rule 1	
Reason	
Rule 2	
Reason	
Rule 3	
Reason	
Rule 4	
Reason	
Rule 5	
Reason	

Find out about Muhammad

Muhammad is very important to Muslims. They believe that Allah taught the Qur'an to him and he then taught it to those around him. He understood what the Qur'an was about and he lived like a perfect Muslim.

Use the story book *Exploring Islam* to answer these questions about Muhammad. Look in other books or on the internet to find out some more information to write, in the bottom two boxes.

*When and where was
Muhammad born?*

*What task was
Muhammad given?*

*Why do we not know
what Muhammad
looked like?*

Muhammad

Write a play

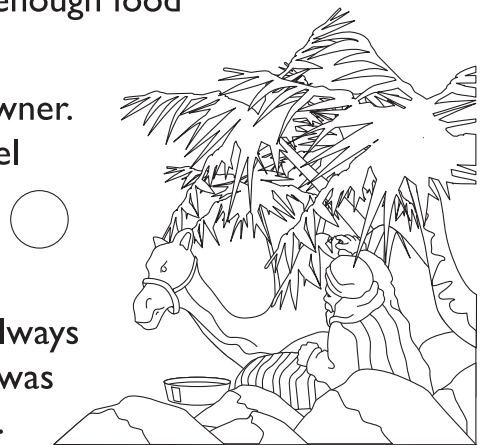
Read the story of Muhammad and the camel, and work with three friends to write it as a play. Begin to write on this sheet, adding as many other pages as you need.

Muhammad and the camel - a story

Muhammad was walking in a garden in Madinah. It was a very hot day. Both humans and animals were feeling the heat. He saw a man trying to keep cool under a tree.

Muhammad heard a camel nearby making a dreadful sound. Muhammad went over to it and gently stroked it. The camel was crying. The camel was far too thin. It worked hard, but it was not given enough food and water.

The man sitting under the tree was the camel's owner. Muhammad told him that Allah had made his camel and he was being cruel to it. It was his duty to look after the camel. If the camel had enough food and water, it would work better. The owner felt ashamed and very sorry. After this, the man always looked after his camel properly. And Muhammad was right! He did get a lot more work from the camel.



Muhammad and the camel - a play

Characters: _____

Scene: _____

Narrator: _____

Camel: _____

Muhammad: _____

Make a money box

Muslims believe they have a duty to look after one another. As one way to do this, they give money to aid agencies to provide clean water, education and health care for people around the world. You can help people in need too. Make a money box for loose change and start collecting for an aid agency of your choice.

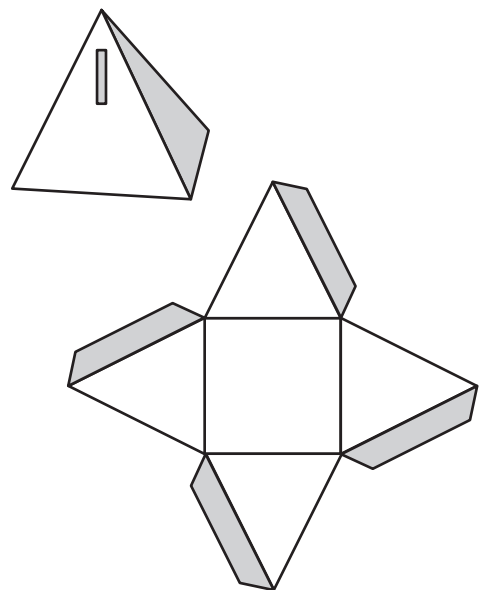
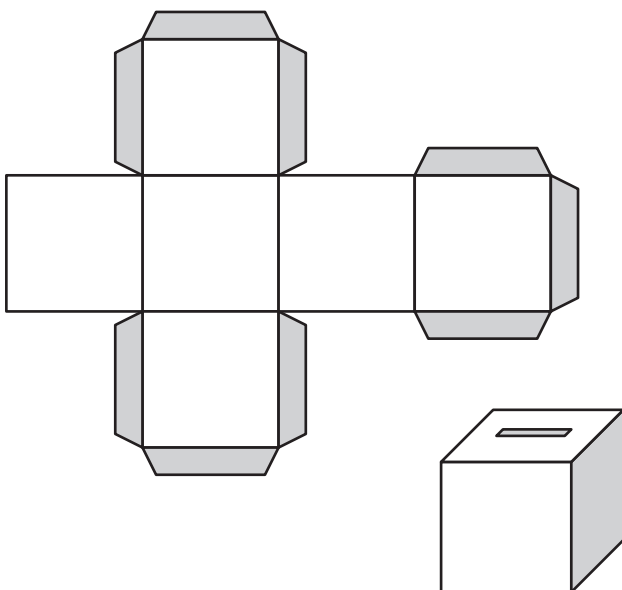
You will need

construction set such as Polydrons
card
scissors
decorations or coloured pens

ruler
pencil
glue or tape

What to do

1. Select a shape for your money box. You could choose a pyramid, a cube, a cuboid or a prism.
2. Make that shape from a construction set such as Polydrons.
3. Open up the shape to form a flat net of the object. This will show you how to draw it yourself.
4. Draw the net on card. You will need to measure carefully to get each face the correct size.
5. If you intend to glue your box together, add tabs to each face to be joined.
6. Cut a money slot on one face.
7. Cut out the net, decorate it and assemble it with glue (on the inside) or tape (on the outside).



Write a shopping list

Fatima and Rashid were given the task of shopping for the family. What do you think they bought? Write a shopping list for their family. Look in recipe books from the local library to find out the ingredients used in Indian food and put these on the list.

If you were shopping for your family, what would you need to buy? Write a shopping list for yourself. Compare the two lists.



Fatima and Rashid's shopping list

My shopping list

Fatima and Rashid went to a special shop which sold halal food. Where would you go to shop?

I shop at _____

Make date sweets

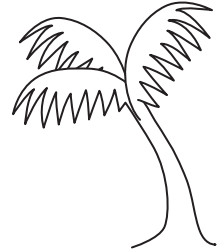
Eid-ul-Fitr is the celebration at the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting. As part of the festival, children have a day off school. They are given new clothes to wear. In the morning they go to the mosque to pray. After this they visit friends and family, perhaps taking gifts and cards. They may go to a party or eat special sweets.

Date palms are common in Arabia, the home of Muhammad. Here is a recipe for date sweets.

You will need

dates (without stones)
nuts or seeds

water



What to do

1. Place the dates in a saucepan and just cover them with as little water as possible.
2. With the help of an adult, cook the dates slowly on a low heat until they are soft and like a cream. You will need to stir them often with a wooden spoon so that they do not stick to the saucepan.
3. Leave the date mixture to cool.
4. Wash your hands! Take spoonfuls of the date mixture and roll it into balls.
5. Roll the date balls in chopped nuts. (If you are allergic to nuts, roll them in sesame seeds.)



My dictionary

You will meet many new words in *Exploring Islam*. Some of these will be English words and some will be Arabic words. Keep a record of them, along with their meanings.

mosque	the place where Muslims worship Allah, learn how to be good Muslims, and get together with Muslim friends
madrassah	mosque school
wudu	washing arms, feet, faces and heads before entering the mosque

Search the internet

The internet has a lot of information, but you need to know how to find it. Here are some guidelines.

1. Some companies provide **search engines** to help you with this, such as 'google' (www.google.com) or www.yahoo.co.uk or www.msn.co.uk. Ask your teacher which one he or she prefers.
2. On the internet page you will find a box in which to type **keywords**. If you type in a general word (for example, Islam) you will find thousands of articles. If you type in more specific words you will find fewer articles to work through.
3. Next you will find a description of the articles containing your keywords. You will see that many of them do not seem to be what you want. You could make your search more clear. For example, instead of typing words like **parts of a mosque pictures**, try "**parts of a mosque**" pictures and then you will only be shown articles that contain the words **parts of a mosque** as a phrase instead of as separate words. Even better would be to name a part of the mosque and use it as a key word, like **mihrab pictures**.
4. Click on the section that seems most helpful. If it is not what you want then click the 'back' button (top left of your screen) to go back to the previous page and try another article.
5. If you find a picture you want to copy for further work, move the cursor over it and click the right button. Next click on 'copy' and select which file to copy it to.

Here are some keywords to get you started. Choose some more of your own

- mihrab pictures
- Islamic art pictures
- Muslim clothes pictures
- Muslims "how to pray" pictures
- Muslim aid agencies



Keywords I have tried

World Faiths Today

teachers' handbook

The teachers' handbook is part of the *World Faiths Today Series*, which includes seven story books for 8- to 11-year-old learners. In the series, both learners and teachers are invited to join two children called Rees and Sara who are learning more about their friends from religious traditions:

- Anglican Church
- Buddhism
- Eastern Orthodox Church
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Judaism
- Sikhism

The teachers' handbook provides:

- In-depth background information about the seven religious traditions
- Classroom activities
- Photocopiable worksheets
- Keywords



Bear Lands Publishing

