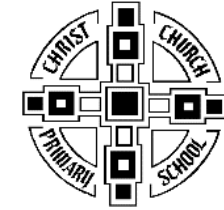




Religious Education



Religion:
Islam

Followers:
Muslims

What do I need to know about Islam?

The word 'Islam' comes from the Arabic root, SLM, which means peace, purity, submission and obedience. It is therefore found in other key words in the religion: 'Muslim' – a follower of Islam – and 'sallam', peace, often used as a greeting.

Islam is a comprehensive way of life, and is based on the Oneness of Allah and the role and status of the Prophet Muhammad* (pbuh) as an example to humankind. [* After the name of the Prophet Muhammad, or any other prophet of Islam, Muslims say or write, 'Salla'llahu alaihi wa sallam' (peace and blessings of Allah upon him – often reduced to 'pbuh')]. It is not required that non-Muslims do this, but it is suggested that teachers, as part of learning about Islam in their classrooms, model this concept of respect to pupils.

The Islamic way of life encompasses all aspects of a person's daily existence, and is best be described as a state of peace attained through willing obedience to Allah's divine guidance. Muslims strive to achieve this by following all the Qur'anic injunctions regarding behaviour and worship, for example the five daily times of salah (prayer), fasting during Ramadan, acts of charity and constant consciousness of their relationship with Allah. Life is shaped by the Five Pillars, which strengthen and support the Muslim community (Ummah).



An important part of Muslim community life for men and women in Europe is the Mosque. Friday is the day for congregational worship, but many Muslims attend the Mosque daily. However, 'mosque' simply means 'place of prostration', so in actual fact, Muslims *can* pray anywhere, as long as it is clean, which is why they might use a prayer mat. The act of praying, in complete submission to Allah, makes the whole world a mosque! Most Muslims will keep one room in their home especially clean for salah.

Whilst images of living beings, and especially any representations of Allah, the prophets or angels *are* forbidden,

there are many other ways in which mosques & sacred texts are decorated, using pattern and Arabic calligraphy, often expressing truths about Allah. The concept of *tawhid* (the oneness of God) is often illustrated through elaborately intricate and interlaced patterns, and in mosque gardens.



*lā 'ilāha 'illā-llāh,
muḥammadur-rasūlu-llāh*

There is no god except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

What do Muslims believe?

Key beliefs in Islam are expressed in the *shahadah*, the Muslim Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah'. A person becomes a by professing belief in that statement and by reflecting it in the practice contained within the call to prayer, the *adhan*, which first states that then continues with the shahadah. The Adhan is the first thing that is whispered into the ear of a newborn baby, and the last that a



declaration of faith: 'There is no god except Muslim not by race, nationality or culture, but of the Islamic way of life. The *shahadah* is also 'God is great' (in Arabic, 'Allahu Akbar') and

Muslim hopes to hear before they die.

Allah is the Arabic name for God. Muslims believe that God is One (tawhid), and has no equal; that his existence is revealed within nature, and through his prophets. Muslims believe that Allah sent many Messengers and Prophets to whom He revealed His divine guidance. These included Ibrahim – Abraham (peace be upon him),

Musa – Moses (peace be upon him), Isa – Jesus (peace be upon him) and the last and greatest prophet Muhammad*, who was born in Makka, Arabia in 570 CE. They therefore affirm the writings of the Tawrah (Torah), the Zabur (Psalms of Dawud, David) and the Injil (Gospels of the prophet Isa, Jesus), but believe them to be corrupted versions of the original revelation.



Muhammad (pbuh) is *not* the founder of Islam, but is the last and greatest of all the Prophets, described in Islam as the ‘seal of the prophets’. Muhammad is revered as the most perfect example of a man, on whom Muslims will model their own lives. Stories about him can be found in the Qur’an, and many other of his wise sayings are collected in texts known as *hadith*. It is important that stories about prophets in Islam, especially Muhammad, are handled appropriately: pupils should not be encouraged to act them out, as this would be considered disrespectful, but there are many other ways of working with Muslim stories, such as reflective storytelling using objects.



The Qur’an is the final revelation of Allah’s that is kept in heaven. The Qur’an was revealed to angel Jibra’il – Gabriel – in 610CE, when known as the ‘Night of Power’ (*Laylat al-Qadr*) and Ramadan: it is believed that prayer on this night is revelations continued over the next 23 years of his life and were learned by heart and dictated to scribes. The revelations were also recited

‘Bismillaah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem’
In the name of God, the infinitely
Compassionate and Merciful.
Qur’an, opening surah

guidance for mankind, and is a copy of a book Muhammad* in a cave on Mount Hira by the Muhammad was 49 years old. This night is one of the last 10 odd-numbered nights of worth 1000 months of worship. The

and proclaimed by him to his companions. The Qur’an gives detailed guidance of moral conduct and family relationships as well as the treatment of animals language of the Muslim, the Qur’an is recited in the Arabic language of its will often attend *madrasah* (mosque school) each day for up to 2 hours after Qur’an and what it means. The Qur’an is divided into 114 *surahs* (chapters) and are treated with the highest respect, because it comes from the highest shelf, covered when not in use, and handled with clean hands. Whilst it is important that pupils get to see a ‘real’ Qur’an (especially if it can be read from by someone who is a Muslim), it is recommended that an English version of the Qur’an is used as the basis for learning about Islam in the classroom. It ensures that the contents are more accessible to pupils, and is less likely to cause any offence within the Muslim community. Suggestions can be found within the Resources section below.

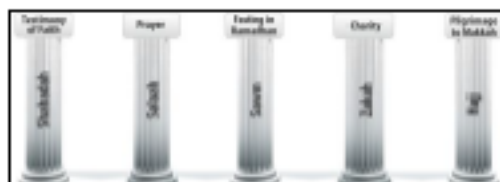
To Him is due the origin of
the heavens and the earth.
When He decrees a matter,
He says to it ‘Be’, and it is.
Qur’an, surah 2:117

on how humankind should behave, in terms and the natural world. Whatever the revelation, in its purest form. Muslim children school, where they will learn portions of the *ayahs* (verses). Arabic copies of the Qur’an authority, which is why it is kept high on a



A window on..... the Five Pillars

What gives strength and shape to our lives? Family?... pillars of their faith: five big concepts that pupils should Islam. The often-misunderstood word ‘*Jihad*’ has two



Friends?Faith?... For a Muslim, it is the five consider in their learning about and from different meanings for a Muslim: the *greater*

believe every moment; pray five times a day; *fast* for a month out of the year; *give* charity once a year when you do your accounts; *travel to Makkah* once in a lifetime if you can

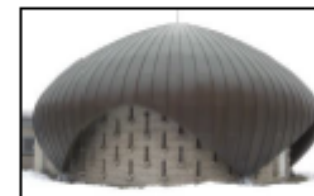
(internal) *jihad*, which is concerned with the struggle every Muslim faces to live out their faith to the best of their ability, and to build a good Muslim society. *Lesser jihad* is the struggle to defend Islam, using warfare only if nothing else has worked. Military *jihad* is permitted in certain circumstances, and as a last resort, but is not a true *jihad* if it forces people to convert to Islam, conquers other nations to colonise them or for economic gain, to settle



Although architectural style may be affected by regional and cultural traditions, most mosques will retain certain features, which include:

1. **An outer courtyard:** with running water, where wudu, ritual washing, will take place
2. **Mihrab:** a niche in one wall (the qibla wall), which indicates the exact direction of Mecca, the location of the ka'bah. Muslims pray facing in this direction.
3. **Minaret:** the tall tower, often domed, from which the adhan (call to prayer) is sung. Whilst purely practical in aiding the broadcast of the adhan, it also serves as a powerful visual reminder of the local presence of Islam.

4. **Qubba:** most mosques will have at least one dome, symbolically representing the vault of heaven, which is sited into the qibla wall. This dome will usually be the most ornately decorated.



Useful web-based resources for teachers and classrooms:

- www.reonline.org.uk Great for background knowledge, with lots of links to classroom resources via a search tool. Use the 'Knowing' tab to find out what you want to know, or try here: www.reonline.org.uk/knowning/what-re/islam/
- REOnline also have some lesson ideas (search for '[RE Banquet](#)'), but ensure you match to the Diocesan Core Knowledge objectives.
- **My Life, My Religion:** There are clips of Muslim worship on the BBC 'My Life, My Religion' website. You can find individual clips, and complete programmes at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05pc1c9> Especially useful are: Islam – Prayer; Islam – the Mosque; Islam – Wudu. There are also clips you can view online from the BBC Pathways of Belief (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zyxn34j>) and Places for Worship DVD sets, many of which would support the Islam units.
- Interfaith Explorers webinars & resources for teachers / pupils esp. [webinars](#) are very useful for teacher knowledge and support.

Virtual mosque tours:

- Shah Jahan Mosque, Woking: www.surreyplacesofworship.org.uk/ and <http://www.shahjahanmosque.org.uk/>; BBC iWonder mosque tour: www.bbc.co.uk/guides/z297hv4#zkw2p39; Bolton Mosque: www.thebcom.org/mosquetour/index.htm; London Central Mosque (KS3 material): www.truetube.co.uk/film/holy-cribs-mosque
- Great photos of [mosques from around the world](#) (Huffington Post is a great resource for pictures!)
- If you want to see / hear what goes on in a mosque as a live broadcast, Wembley Mosque has a facility that enables this: <http://www.virtualmosque.co.uk/>
- Some sacred stories from Islam feature on the British Library website: www.bl.uk/learning/cult/sacred/stories/
- Further suitable stories can also be found on the BBC Schools pages: www.bbc.co.uk/learning/schoolradio/subjects/collectiveworship/collectiveworship_stories
- Pillars of Islam in song! www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7pBGqMvN0o
- Information about Hajj can be found at the BBC iWonder site: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zgymxnb>
- **Muslim charities:** <http://www.islamic-relief.org.uk/>; <https://muslimhands.org.uk/>; <http://www.nzf.org.uk/>
- Eid –ul-Fitr around the world: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-28544591>, also House of One, an interesting concept: www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-27872551
- **Books:** 'Ramadan Moon' by Na'ima B Robert & Shirin Adl (ISBN978-1-84780-206-4) is a lovely book, with beautifully-worded text expressing longings during Ramadan. Also useful is: My First Qur'an Storybook ISBN81-7898-554-3