

## MUSLIM BELIEFS AND LIFESTYLE

AT1:

*Pupils will:*

- *Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions represented in Great Britain and their associated beliefs, experiences and practises.*
- *Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of some of the influences of life experiences, beliefs, values and faith traditions upon individuals, communities, societies and cultures,*

AT2:

*Pupils will:*

- *Respond to core questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions, and to their own understanding and experience.*
- *Develop positive attitudes of respect towards other people who hold views and beliefs that are different from their own.*

*Pupils will be enabled to:*

- *Consider their own beliefs about God's character and understand Muslim belief and teaching about Allah.*
- *Know and understand Muslim belief about the Qu'ran, how it should be treated, and the importance of its teaching. Know about the significance of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).*
- *Know and understand what the 5 pillars of Islam are, and the significance they hold for Muslims. Understand that Muslims practicing the 5 pillars of Islam do so out of obedience to Allah.*
- *Appreciate what Islam teaches about following Allah through family life.*

## **SESSION 1: Introduction to Islam**

### **1. Explore children's knowledge and understanding about Islam.**

- *What do you already know about Islam?*
- *What is the Muslim word for God?*
- *How do Muslims describe Allah and why?*
- *Who was Muhammad (pbuh)?*

### **2. Give a brief explanation of the religion:**

- *Islam means obedience to the will of Allah (God). Followers of Islam are called Muslims, which means 'obedient ones'.*
- *Muslims believe that God's word was revealed to a man called Muhammad (pbuh) in the early seventh century CE. Muhammad (pbuh) became known as the Messenger of God, or the Prophet and whenever his name is said, Muslims always say (or write) 'peace be upon him' or 'pbuh'. This is also said after any other Islamic prophet's name, as a sign of respect.*
- *One Islamic greeting is "As-Salamu-Alaykum" and it means 'peace be upon you'. Discuss what this greeting tells us about the religion of Islam – peace is at the heart of it.*
- *There are about one thousand million Muslims in the world today, mainly in the Middle East, North Africa and parts of Asia.*

### **3. Produce this information in written / diagram / poster / mind map form, as a title page to the work on this topic.**

## **SESSION 2: Shahadah and Muhammad (pbuh)**

### **1. Discuss the 5 pillars of Islam.**

*Briefly look at the school Code of Conduct and other rules that are relevant to family, friends, school and society in general. Discuss what 'rules' Christians try to live by; eg; 10 Commandments.*

- *What is a pillar? What does a pillar do?*
- *Why do Muslims call their rules and values pillars?*

### **2. Focus on the first pillar of Islam – Shahadah**

- *This is fundamental to the Islamic religion and is their declaration of faith: "There is no God except Allah. Muhammad is the prophet of Allah.*
- *Explain what Muslims believe about prophets; ie; there were others before Muhammad (pbuh), who was the final prophet sent by Allah.*

### **3. Question knowledge about Muhammad (pbuh)**

- *What is a prophet?*
- *How did Muhammad (pbuh) receive and pass on Allah's message?*
- *How was Muhammad (pbuh) chosen by Allah?*

### **4. Draw a pillar and write this belief in it, then add to the drawing with other information gleaned from this session.**

### **SESSION 3: Salah**

#### **1. Focus on the 2<sup>nd</sup> pillar of Islam – Salah**

- *Salah is all about 'prayer'. Discuss how Muslims prepare for prayer (wudu-ablution), positions, frequency of praying, prayer mats and patterns and their orientation to Makkah.*
- *Look at and discuss a range of artefacts used in Islamic worship; eg; Qu'ran, mat, compass.*
- *Discuss the importance of Friday prayers and discuss the Friday prayers at a Mosque.*
- *Discuss what a mosque is.*
- *Give an overview of the role of the Islamic 'Imam' (key figure, leader of prayer) and discuss the minaret – the tower at a mosque from which the prayer call is made.*
- *Consider the role of prayer for the children and discuss the prayers they know.*
- *Discuss why people pray, when they pray and who to.*
- *Discuss why others do not pray.*
- *Discuss why they think Muslim people pray.*
- *Look at a Qu'ran and its stand and demonstrate the respect given to it.*
- *Discuss the value that a Bible is given in Christianity and compare with the value given to a Qu'ran.*
- *Discuss how such special books are treated.*
- *Look at some short passages from the Qu'ran and discuss why they think they would be important to Muslims.*

#### **2. Draw a pillar and write this belief in it, then add to the drawing with other information gleaned from this session.**

### **SESSION 4: Zakah**

#### **1. Focus on the 3<sup>rd</sup> pillar of Islam – Zakah**

- *Zakah is all about Muslim charity or almsgiving. Discuss the ways in which Muslims help and care for the worldwide Muslim community (Ummah).*
- *Discuss why and how is Zakah performed and who benefits.*
- *Discuss ways in which the children or their families or friends help others in the community.*
- *Discuss ways in which the children could 'help others in the school'.*

#### **2. Draw a pillar and write this belief in it, then add to the drawing with other information gleaned from this session.**

#### **3. Focus on the 4<sup>th</sup> pillar of Islam – Sawm**

- *Sawm is all about obedience to Allah through abstention and fasting during Ramadan.*
- *Discuss why Muslims fast.*
- *Discuss how Muslims celebrate the end of Ramadan.*
- *Discuss what 'fasting' festivals Christians follow; eg; Lent.*

#### **4. Draw a pillar and write this belief in it, then add to the drawing with other information gleaned from this session.**

## **SESSION 5: Hajj**

### **1. Focus on the 5<sup>th</sup> pillar of Islam – Hajj**

- *Hajj is the pilgrimage to Makkah. Discuss why Muslims place such value on the Hajj and why they visit it.*
- *Discuss what happens during the Hajj, including the festival of Il-ul-Adha.*
- *Discuss the preparation for the Hajj and how clothing at Hajj symbolises equality for all humans before Allah.*
- *Discuss how it would feel to be at the Hajj.*
- *Discuss what pilgrimages Christians would go on and why.*

### **2. Draw a pillar and write this belief in it, then add to the drawing with other information gleaned from this session.**

## **SESSION 6: What have we learnt?**

### **1. Look back at the work carried out on this topic and discuss what we can learn from Muslim beliefs and lifestyle.**

- *How do Muslim beliefs compare with their own beliefs and Christian beliefs?*
- *How does belonging to a Muslim family influence a Muslim's life?*
- *What groups for pupils belong to and what are their roles? How does this compare to Muslim lifestyle and roles?*

### **2. Imagine you are interviewing a Muslim child about 'what my faith means to me'.**

- *Discuss what you think a Muslim child would say – relate to all knowledge learnt about Muslim beliefs and lifestyle.*

**Write (and illustrate) what answer you think a Muslim child would give.**

## INFORMATION ON MUHAMMAD

The Prophet Muhammad was born in Makah, in the area known today as Saudi Arabia, around AD 570. Muslims believe that he was the final prophet, or messenger, sent by God to humanity. They believe that God had also sent other prophets, including Ibrahim (Abraham) and Isa (Jesus), but that the complete and final message from God was given to Muhammad. Because of this they give great honour to Muhammad, and when they say or write his name, they always add the words. 'Peace be upon him'. But Muslims do not worship Muhammad, they only worship God.

When Muhammad was a young man he went to work for a rich widow, Khadijah, whose camels and caravans he looked after. The city of Mecca was home to the Ka'ba, the 'sacred house' said to have been built by Abraham and his son Ishmael. In Muhammad's time it was filled with pagan idols worshipped by Arabian tribes who visited Mecca on pilgrimage. The merchants were happy with this arrangement because the pilgrims were a source of income. When he was 25, Muhammad married Khadija and had several children by her. He became rich and highly respected in the city, but was uneasy with the pagan worship around him and sought solitude in the deserts and mountains.

One day when he was 40, he was meditating in a cave outside Mecca when the Angel Jibril (Gabriel) appeared. Jibril ordered Muhammad to read but when he replied that he could not, the Angel squeezed him tightly and insisted "Read", he said "read in the name of your Lord who created you from a drop of blood". This was the first message that he received directly from Allah (God).

In about the tenth year of his ministry, Muhammad is said to have undergone a miraculous experience. In what has come to be called the Night Journey, he is said to have been taken up into the sky in the company of angels. From Mecca he was taken to Jerusalem, where he prayed with the earlier prophets including Abraham, Moses and Jesus. After this, from a rock now contained in the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, he is believed to have ascended to heaven into the presence of Allah Himself, who told him to institute prayers five times a day.

Forced out of Mecca by persecution, Muhammad became the ruler of Medina, which was the target of hostilities by the people of Mecca. When Muhammad took Mecca in 630CE, he behaved with such generosity and tolerance that many of his former enemies became Muslims themselves. Two years after he had cleansed the Ka'ba of its pagan worship and restored it to the one god, Muhammad gave his last sermon to the people and declared that his aim in life was complete – he had delivered the word of Allah, which would remain true for all time. At the age of 63, Muhammad died in Medina, where he was buried.

## **THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM**

Just as the pillars in a mosque support the building that rises above them, so the Pillars of Islam support the beliefs and practices of the Islamic faith.

### **THE SHAHADA**

The first pillar is the statement of faith. It says: "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah". In reciting these words of faith, devout Muslims proclaim their belief in one God and their conviction that God's teaching has been revealed to Muhammad. This simple statement is the basis of all Muslim belief. It is the first thing whispered into a child's ear when he or she is born, and the last thing a Muslim hopes to utter at the moment of death.

### **SALAT**

The second pillar of faith is involved with daily worship. Prayers are said five times a day – at dawn, midday, afternoon, evening and night. Muslims use a special prayer mat and always worship in the direction of Mecca. They always wash themselves carefully before praying in a particular order – hands, arms, face, head, legs and feet. Muslims see this as a way of preparing for prayer and showing respect to Allah.

When they pray they use the words and movements that Muhammad taught them – they stand up, bow, kneel and then kneel with their face towards the floor. On Fridays, Muslim men meet in the mosque to make their midday prayers together.

### **ZAKAT**

The third pillar is involved with giving to charity. There are two reasons for this, the first is to copy the generosity that Allah shows towards his people and the second reason is to show kindness in a practical way to those less well off. Zakat comes from a word meaning 'to purify'. Under Islamic law, to retain Zakat is considered to be theft, as wealth has to be acquired lawfully and all Muslims are expected to share a percentage of their wealth with less fortunate people.

### **SAWM**

The fourth pillar is fasting. This means going without food and drink during daylight hours throughout the holy month of Ramadan. For people with jobs, and children who have school to attend, total abstinence is not easy, but it does bring spiritual reward. The end of Ramadan is celebrated with the festival of Eid ul-Fitr, when presents are exchanged.

### **HAJJ**

Mecca is the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), so is considered by Muslims to be a very holy city. Mecca has become a place of pilgrimage for over two million Muslims every year. All healthy Muslim men and women are expected to make at least one pilgrimage to Mecca during their lives. This pilgrimage is called Hajj, and it is the fifth Pillar of Islam.

## **INFORMATION ON THE HAJJ**

The city of Mecca / Makkah is revered because it is where Muhammad was born and where he first preached God's message. But what is also important to Muslims is the Ka'ba – the first house of God on earth. Muslims believe that it was built by Ibrahim and his son Ishmael, and it is the direction they face when they pray.

The Ka'ba is a large square building, kept covered in black cloth which is richly embroidered in gold. In one wall is the Black Stone, a meteorite which they believe Ibrahim used when he first built the Ka'ba.

Every year, Mecca / Makkah is crowded with over a million people pilgrims from all over the world. They walk seven times anti-clockwise round the Ka'ba and visit other sites associated with the prophets. It is a time when Muslims from all over the world come together. All healthy Muslim men and women are expected to make at least one pilgrimage to Mecca during their lives. This pilgrimage is called Hajj, and it is the fifth Pillar of Islam.

## **INFORMATION ON THE QUR'AN / KORAN**

The Koran is the holy book of the Muslim world. The word means 'reading' and is taken from the instruction the Angel Jibril gave Muhammad that he should read the word of God.

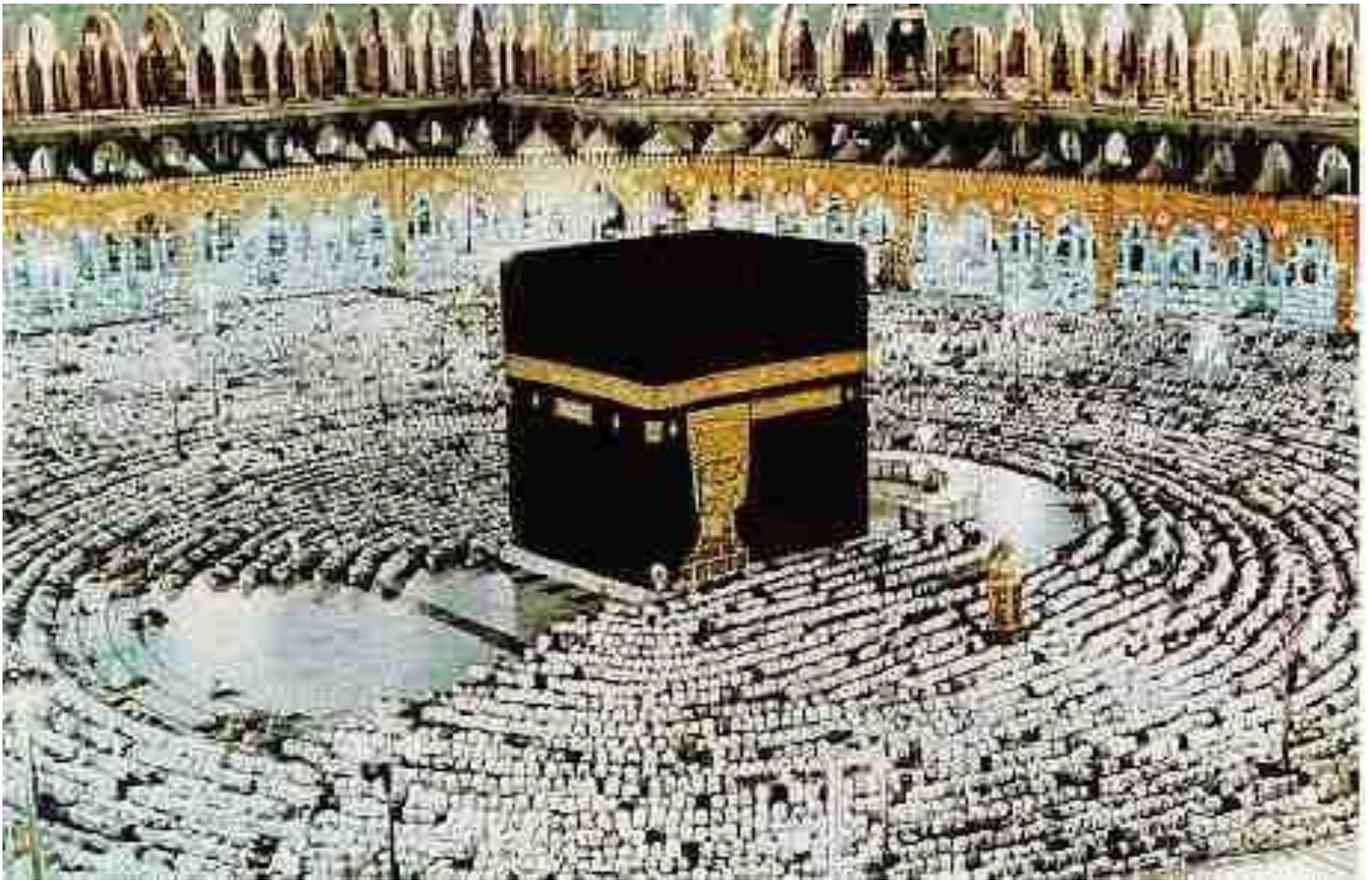
Because the revelation was in Arabic, Muslims have always studied the Koran in its original language. Very often, for boys and girls starting out on study, this means reciting the words while not fully understanding what they mean. However, since the words are believed to be the actual words of Allah, merely reciting them is seen as an act of worship in itself. Students are encouraged to learn as much of the Koran as they can by heart and in 1998, a six-year old Muslim girl in South Africa became the youngest girl ever to have memorized the whole text in Arabic – 114 suras (chapters) in all, divided into verses.

The text is treated with great care and touched only by those who have ritually cleansed themselves beforehand (a ritual called Wudu). It is often wrapped in ornate cloth and kept in a special place in the home or mosque. Unlike the Ten Commandments, the Koran was not handed over at one single event in history, but over a period of 23 years. As a result it contains different styles of writing that deal with all aspects of life. There are instructions on how to pray, how to organize society and how to apply the law. It lists rules for the structure of family life, the duties of individuals to behave well, and penalties for sinners on Judgement Day. Above all, it stresses the 'Oneness' of Allah and the need to obey Him.

Because Muhammad is believed to have led an exemplary life, his actions and sayings are considered to be of importance to Muslims. Stories of the Prophet's life are taken as practical examples of how devout Muslims should try to lead their own lives. Consequently, the traditional customs and practices of the Prophet (the Sunna) and his words and sayings (the Haddith) are consulted alongside the Koran and, with it, provide the faithful with a complete guide book to a godly life. Although there are divisions within Islam and scholars from different traditions around the world may interpret the text in different ways, all Muslims accept the ultimate authority of the Koran over their lives and try to live by its rules.



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