

Islam: Need to Know for Educators

Importance of Education

The first verses of the Quran began with the word...read.

"Read. Read in the name of thy Lord who created; Allah created the human being from blood clot. Read in the name of thy Lord who taught by the pen: Allah taught the human being what he did not know." (96: 1-5).

Worship

- Muslims pray 5 times each day.
- Holy day is Friday.
- A mosque is a place of worship.
- An imam is a religious leader.
- Muslims wash before they pray.
- Women cover their hair during prayer.

Islam is monotheistic.



Muslims believe in one God, Allah. Allah is a deity who is too great to be depicted, so there are no pictures of God in Islam as there are in other religions. Instead, homes and mosques may have words praising Allah posted (above).

Holy Text

The Quran, or Koran, is the Islamic sacred book, believed to be the word of God, dictated to the Prophet Muhammed by the angel Gabriel. It was originally written in Arabic.

Food

Muslims don't eat pork or any pork products. It is considered **haram**, or unlawful. **Halal** refers to food and drink that is permissible for Muslims.

The Five Pillars of Islam

- 1. Faith:** A testament of faith that Allah is the only one true God and no others should be worshiped; also, that Muhammed is God's messenger.
- 2. Prayer:** Muslims pray five times each day, facing Mecca, at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and night.
- 3. Charity:** Money should be set aside and given to those in need.
- 4. Fasting:** Every year for one month (Ramadan) Muslims fast from sunup to sundown, as a spiritual "reset" while abstaining from worldly comforts.
- 5. Pilgrimage to Mecca:** Once in a lifetime Muslims who are financially and physically able to, travel to the holy city of Mecca, where the Prophet Muhammed was born and received the first revelation of the Quran.

Holidays

Islam has two official holidays:

- 1. Eid Al-Fitr:** celebrating the end of Ramadan
 - 2. Eid Al-Adha:** commemorating the sacrifice of Abraham and his willingness to obey God
- Both follow the lunar calendar.

Who was Muhammed?

Muslims believe that the Islamic faith has always existed, but was just gradually revealed to humanity by different prophets. The last prophet who made a complete revelation of the faith was Muhammed, in the 7th century. He is highly revered as the Messenger of God.

Gender Separation

Whether males and females should pray separately is a source of great debate; however, common practice within Islam is that mosques have areas for men and women.

Some Muslims believe that girls/women and boys/men that aren't family members should be segregated in daily life, in order to uphold propriety and to discourage unmodest behavior.

Hijab

Hijab translates to "veil" or "cover." Many Muslim women around the world choose to wear a headscarf (or other forms of covering such as a niqab or burqa) as a way to show their faith, dress modestly, and remind themselves to uphold their religious beliefs in everyday life.