

Living Together: Muslims in a changing world



Curricular Connections

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Introduction

Do you have a student, or several students in your classroom who are Muslim? Are you working on building community in your classroom, and/or school? Do you have an ELL student who would benefit from experiencing a connection between his first language and English?

These inquiry activities were created with the intention of developing an understanding of identity and community for both Muslim and non-Muslim students.

The following activities support a cross-curricular inquiry based on the current Program of Studies. When the new competency based curriculum rolls out in Alberta, the following inquiry activities will be transferable.

With the lean towards multi-aged learning, these inquiry activities have been grouped by age in order to take into consideration the levels of learning and understanding. This allows the teacher to work across the grades, or to create projects specific to an age group.

Book Suggestions

A great way to start an inquiry is through books. For example, a teacher could choose a fictional story with specific elements of Muslim culture that will captivate the students' interest. Once the inquiry has begun, the teacher can then introduce the non-fiction books. The teacher can teach directly from these books for specific lessons, but it's a good idea to always have them out on display to use as references. Here is a list of some books to get started:

Non-fiction:

The Genius of Islam: How Muslims Made the Modern World by Bryn Barnard
1001 Inventions and Awesome Facts from Muslim Civilization by National Geographic

DK Eyewitness Books: Islam by Caroline Stone

Growing Up Muslim: Understanding the Beliefs and Practices of Islam by Sumbul Ali-Karamali

What You Will See Inside a Mosque by Aisha Karen Khan

Fiction:

Muslim Child by Rukhsana Khan

Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns: A Muslim Book of Colours by Hena Khan

Night of the Moon by Hena Khan

The White Nights of Ramadan by Maha Addasi

Moon Watchers: Shirin's Ramadan Miracle by Reza Jalali

Nabeel's New Pants: An Eid Tale by Fawzia Gilani-Williams

The Best Eid Ever by Asma Mobin-Uddin

My Name Is Bilal by Asma Mobin-Uddin

Teacher Resource:

In Pictures and In Words: Teaching the Qualities of Good Writing Through Illustration Study by Katie Wood Ray

Lessons and Activities

Muslims and Islam

Class Discussion (all age groups):

Who is a Muslim? What is Islam? - Muslims practice Islam and Islam is a religion.

Activity:

Ages 5 - 6 and 7 - 8

Curriculum Connections: Grade One and Two Social Studies

This would be a great time to pick a book that you think will strike the interest of your students.

Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns: A Muslim Book of Colours by Hena Khan is a great book full of colourful illustrations and simple introductions to key concepts and vocabulary.

First create a KWL chart of what you students think they know, what they wonder, and what they learned.

What We Think We Know	What We Wonder	What We Learned
Before Reading	Before Reading	After Reading

Fill in the first two columns before reading the book.

As you read the book take notes of what the children are discovering and add them to the KWL chart.

At the end, fill in the “What We Learned” column.

Islam Around the World

Class Discussion:

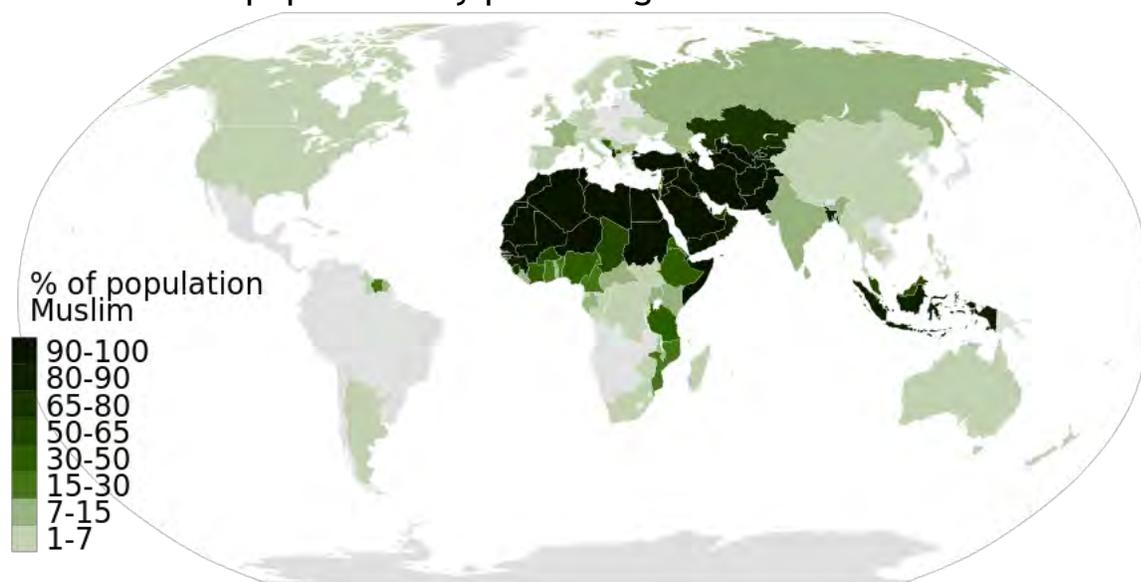
Where is Islam found?

Did you know that Islam is practiced by Muslims all around the world?

What do you notice when you look at the map? Where are we on the map?

Where is the highest population of Muslims?

World Muslim population by percentage



Activities:

Colour the Map

Ages 5 - 6

Curriculum Connections: Grade One Social Studies

Colour in your own world map to show the different populations of Muslims around the world.

Location Grid

Ages 7 - 8

Curriculum Connections: Grade Two Social Studies

Grid activity using correlations to map out population density on the world map - already exists in PDF.

Symbols

Class Discussion:

When Islam began in Arabia, it was too hot to travel during the day, so people moved at night when it was cooler. The moon lit their way and the stars led them. Today, the moon and stars are symbols used on flags in some Muslim countries.

Activities:

Mathematics

Ages 5 - 6

Curricular Connections: Grade One Mathematics - Shape & Space

Recreate various flags of several predominantly Muslim nations using 2D shapes.

Mathematics

Ages 7 - 8

Curricular Connections: Grade Two Mathematics - Shape and Space

Have students create the shapes using only one shape. Example, they can only use a triangle to recreate the whole flag. What kind of triangles would they need?

English Literacy

Ages 5 - 6

Curriculum Connections: Grade One English Literacy

Comic Strip

Illustrate the journey of a young Muslim child between two villages. Why would he/she be making this journey? What would it look like? Feel like? Smell like? And, what would they hear? Remember to think about who, what, where, when, why and how. (reference book mentioned above.)

English Literacy

Ages 7 - 8

Curriculum Connections: Grade Two English Literacy

Story Writing

Write and illustrate the journey of a young Muslim child between two villages. Why would he/she be making this journey? What would it look like? Feel like? Smell like? And, what would they hear? Remember to think about who, what, where, when, why and how.

It is important to keep in mind that children need to visualize before they can begin to write. They will need lots of reference material and from that material they will need to create their own illustrations. Begin with the illustrations first so that they have a well developed idea in mind. Review the illustrations as a class and with peers for the correct and sufficient amount of detail. Are emotions properly depicted? How is distance between places and objects represented? The distance between people gives clues to the kind of relationship between them? Should there be trees? If there are trees, do they resemble the trees found in that region? This takes more time, but your students will have a deeper understanding.

References:

Critique and Feedback - The Story of Austin's Butterfly
In Pictures and In Words: Teaching the Qualities of Good Writing Through Illustration Study by Katie Wood Ray

Islamic Architecture

Class Discussion:

Geometric patterns and arabesques have developed over the centuries in Islamic decoration. Arabesques are linear patterns of scrolling and interlacing foliage, tendrils or plain lines. To Muslims arabesques are ongoing and symbolize the nature of creation by Allah and the Islamic worldview. Islamic art does not have the figurative iconography that other religions do and in fact it is not permitted to recreate living forms because that is considered the work of God. There are two types of Islamic decoration: In the first type each repeating geometric form has a built-in symbolism ascribed to it. The second type is based upon the flowing nature of plant forms. Some argue that Arabic calligraphy is a third type of arabesque art.

Activities:

Stained Glass Window

Ages 5 - 6

**Curricular Connections: Grade One Mathematics: Shape & Space /
Patterns & Relations**

Materials:

- 2D shape manipulatives
- Powdered black tempera paint
- White glue
- Mixing stick
- Pencil and eraser
- Coloured chalk or pencil crayons
- Long narrow strips of white paper

Procedure:

Part One

1. Before the activity, yourself or a volunteer will have to mix the powdered black tempera paint into the white glue bottle.
2. Even if it is gray, it will dry a dark black.

Part Two

1. Have the children recreate their pattern they have practiced in their scribblers onto the white drawing paper with a pencil.
2. Make sure it fills the entire strip of white paper
3. Have them colour in the pattern with coloured chalk or pencil crayon.
4. Once they have coloured in all parts of the pattern, outline the pencil with the black glue.

Mason Jar Lantern

Ages 7 - 9

Curricular Connections: Grade Two Mathematics: Shape and Space / Patterns and Relations

Materials:

- 2D shape manipulatives
- Wire
- Pliers
- Mason Jar
- Coloured tissue paper
- White glue or Decoupage glue
- Wide brush
- Water
- Newspaper (to protect the desk)

Procedure:

Part One

1. Review describing, reproducing, extending and creating patterns using manipulatives, diagrams, sounds and actions.
2. Create patterns using 2D shape manipulatives.

Part Two

1. (You may want a to have a volunteer help you to do this before hand.)
2. Cut a length of wire long enough to go around the neck of a mason jar.
3. Cut another length of wire long enough to make the handle for the Mason jar.
4. Wrap the first wire around the Mason jar leaving enough room to attach the second wire, which will be the handle.

5. Twist the ends of the second wire around the first wire to create the hanger.
6. Twist the first wire till it is snug and tight around the mouth of the Mason jar.
7. Hold it up and give it a shake to make sure it is good and secure.

*There are several videos on YouTube demonstrating how to make a hanging Mason jar.

Part Three

1. Lay down newsprint to protect the desk.
2. Using coloured tissue paper the students will recreate the pattern they worked on earlier.
3. Differentiation -
4. Again, you may want to have a volunteer help cut out shapes from the tissue paper.
5. Students with stronger manual dexterity can cut out their own shapes.
6. Glue the tissue paper pattern onto the glass Mason jar.
7. Set aside to dry when done.

Islamic Calendar

The Islamic calendar is based off of the lunar calendar, which follows the lunar cycle.

In the 9th month Ramadan begins when the crescent moon is in the night sky. Ramadan lasts for 29-30 days.

Activity:

Lunar Cycle - as is in PDF.

Books:

Night of the Moon by Hena Khan

The White Nights of Ramadan by Maha Addasi

Moon Watchers: Shirin's Ramadan Miracle by Reza Jalali

Eid-ul-fitr

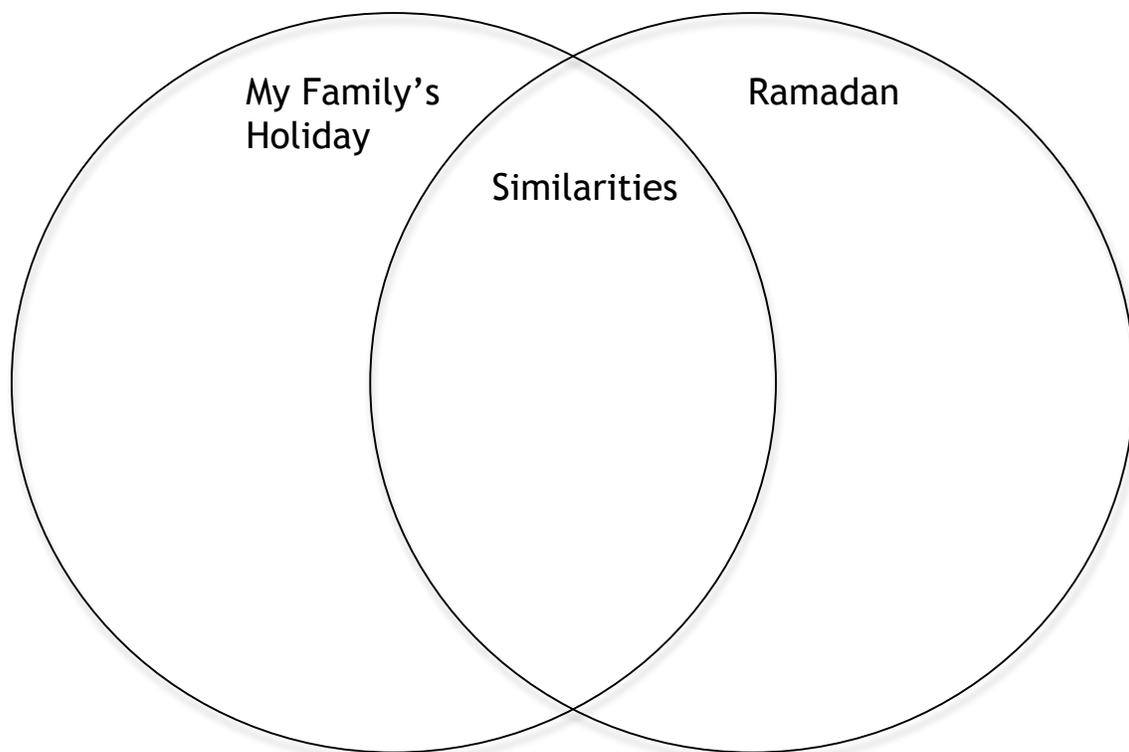
This is a celebration at the end of Ramadan. Muslims attend mosque and wear their best clothing. It is a holiday, and in Arabic, Eid-ul-Fitr means “feast.”

Activity:

Comparative Venn Diagram

Ages 5 - 6 and 7 - 8

Compare and contrast festivals from your own tradition/culture.



5 Senses
Taste

My Family's Holiday

Sight

Touch

Sound

Smell

Hajj

Classroom Discussion (topics):

Islamic New Year

Muslims travel to Mecca

Mecca is the center of Islam. Do you know why?

Muslims try to go to Mecca at least once in their lives.

They wear white.

They used to go on camel or by foot, but now they fly to Jeddah and continue on from there.

Activity:

Have you ever been on a special journey?

Ages 5 - 6

Curricular connections: Grade One Social Studies and Language Arts

My Special Journey

Beginning

Middle

End

Have the children bring in an artifact from their trip that is important and relevant. If they cannot bring in an artifact, ask them to bring in a photo of the artifact. Depending on the child's level of literacy, they may draw pictures, write short phrases or simple sentences to describe the beginning, middle and end.

Tell the children that today is a very special day because they are going to create their own classroom "museum". Display their written work alongside their artifact in the classroom "museum" and invite other classes to come and visit. Have the children stand beside their artifact in order to explain to their "visitors". You may want to have a child address the visiting class first to explain the project and why they are learning about the Muslim culture.

Eid-ul-Adha

Classroom Discussion:

This Eid celebrates the Hajj pilgrimage. Muslims say special prayers. They feast with family and friends and they give meat to the poor. In many countries, the poor do not have meat because it is too expensive.

Activity:

What is a pilgrimage?

Ages 7 - 8

Curricular Connections: Grade 2 Social Studies

How is the Muslim Hajj pilgrimage similar and different to the North American Aboriginal vision quest?

5 W's + H My Personal Pilgrimage/Vision Quest

Who?

What?

When?

Where?

Why?

How?

Clothing

Class Discussion:

Ages 5 - 6 and 7 - 8

Curricular Connections: Grade One and Two Social Studies

Headdress - women wear hijabs and men wear caps.

Why do they wear headdresses?

What is the connection to Islam?

What is the connection to their culture?

Many Muslims live in hot climates so they wear clothing that is lightly coloured, light weight, and protective from the sun.

Material - cotton and linen (from nature), synthetic and wool.

How has globalization changed our clothing?

Where is our clothing made?

What it is made from?

How can we maintain our culture even though the location of manufacturing has changed?

Why is it important to maintain clothing styles? - Religious and cultural reasons

Literacy

Class Discussion:

Ages 5 - 6 and 7 - 8

Curricular Connections: Grade One and Two Social Studies

Read the book, *The Swirling Hijab* with dual language text. If you know the specific language of your Muslim students, then you can choose the book accordingly. If it is possible, ask a parent volunteer to come into the classroom to read the non-English text.

Compare sounds and how letters and symbols represent those sounds. For example, an 's' in English may be represented by a different symbol in Arabic. Talk about the direction of text and whether it is read from left to right, or right to left. How can you tell the difference between a letter, a word, a sentence, and a paragraph? What about the order of nouns and adjectives? Is it red table, or table red?

Make a list of all your discoveries on large chart paper and hang it in a prominent place in the classroom.

Book:

[The Swirling Hijaab by Na'ima Bint Robert & Nilesh Mistry](#) - Dual Language Book in Urdu

[The Swirling Hijaab by Na'ima Bint Robert & Nilesh Mistry](#) - Dual Language Book in Arabic

[The Swirling Hijaab by Na'ima Bint Robert & Nilesh Mistry](#) - Dual Language Book in Panjabi

Activity:

Arabic writing - PDF document.

Family Life

Often in Muslim culture, there are many families under one roof verses just having the immediate family.

Activity:

Family Comparison - as in PDF.

Marriage

Marriage is important in Muslim families. A wedding is a time of great celebration. Some brides decorate their feet and hands with designs using henna. Henna is made from the leaves of the henna shrub. The leaves are dried and then pounded into powder. This powder is then used as red dye.

Review:

Geometric patterns and arabesques have developed over the centuries in Islamic decoration. Arabesques are linear patterns of scrolling and interlacing foliage, tendrils or plain lines. To Muslims arabesques are ongoing and symbolize the nature of creation by Allah and the Islamic worldview. Islamic art does not have the figurative iconography that other religions do and in fact it is not permitted to recreate living forms because that is considered the work of God. There are two types of Islamic decoration: In the first type each repeating geometric form has a built-in symbolism ascribed to it. The second type is based upon the flowing nature of plant forms. Some argue that Arabic calligraphy is a third type of arabesque art.

Activity:

Henna Art

Ages 5 - 6 and 7 - 8

Curricular Connections: Grade One and Two Art - Painting; Grade One Science - Creating Colour

Materials:

- Watercolour paper
- Masking Tape
- Wooden board (or something to the equivalent)
- Primary colours in Tempera Paint - Red, Blue, Yellow
- Water pots (recycled single serving yogurt containers)
- Paint brushes - medium and small detail brush
- Paint tray (margarine lids)

Procedure:

Part One

1. Tape the watercolour paper to the board using masking tape so it does not lift when it is wet.
2. In a small pot of water (single serving yogurt containers work great) add a few drops of tempera paint.
3. Spread the wash over the entire watercolour paper.
4. Let it dry for 10 - 15 minutes.
5. While it dries, teach the children a few simple designs.
6. Keep in mind the use of flowing lines.
7. You could find patterns in a Zentangle book, or you could search Google for Mehndi or Henna designs. (Mehndi means Henna; it's one and the same.)
8. Develop the idea of lines, brush stroke, direction, curvature, thick and thin, etc.
9. Have the students practice in their sketch books with a pencil.

Part Two

1. On paint trays, pour a dollop of the same colour tempera paint that you used for the wash.
2. Do not add water to the tempera paint. It should be thick and rich in colour.
3. Use a small detail brush to recreate the design.

Tip:

After elections, the candidates throw out the signs they used for campaigning. You can call one of the local candidates and see if it is possible to have enough signs per student in your class. You then flip them over and use them as art boards to tape watercolour paper onto, or whatever else you may need.

Other possible resources:

<http://www.letscreatecrafts.com/printable-mehndi-design-book/>

Social Justice

Is Canada a great place to live? Why?

What would make a person want to live in Canada?

Remember to be mindful of a child's connection to their home. The planet is a beautiful place with lots to discover and explore. We share this beautiful world we call home. Countries exist for a purpose and sometimes the people in charge make bad decisions. Entire countries and citizens are not bad, unfortunately a single person's decision, or a group of people's decisions are strong enough to make a person have to leave. How can you celebrate and honor a Muslim child's culture, home and identity while at the same time poignantly explain why they may have had to leave their country.

Fiction books specific to Muslim children:

[Four Feet, Two Sandals by Karen Lynn Williams and Khadar Mohammad](#)

[Listen to The Wind by Greg Mortenson](#)

[Malala Yousafzai: Warrior with Words by Karen Leggett Abouraya](#)

[Everyday is Malala's Day by Rosemary McCarney](#)

Reading books about children around the world will broaden the children's worldview and help them understand the need to protect rights and freedoms as a global issue. Hopefully it will prevent the 'us' and 'them' scenario, as Canada too has been at fault. There are some great books for grade two based on the Inuit and Residential Schools. The objective is not to scare the children, dishearten them, or deflate patriotism, but instead to give them the information they can use when listening to the media or daily conversations. Education is power, and if we are going to mute racism and ignorance, we need to give children the information at an early age that allows them to build values and make sound opinions.

Fiction Books specific to children's freedoms around the world:

[Henry's Freedom Box by Ellen Levine](#) - Underground Railroad

[Composition by Antonio Skarmeta](#) - Chilean Dictatorship

[A Day's Work by Eve Bunting](#) - Mexican-American

[Gleem and Glow by Eve Bunting](#) - Civil War

[Fatty Legs: A True Story by Christy Jordan-Fenton](#) - Residential Schools (Inuit)

[Not My Girl by Christy Jordan-Fenton](#) - Residential Schools (Inuit)

[When I Was Eight by Christy Jordan-Fenton](#) - Residential Schools (Inuit)

[A Stranger at Home: A True Story by Christy Jordan-Fenton](#) - Residential Schools (Inuit)

[I Have the Right to Be a Child by Alain Serres](#) - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Videos:

Unicef has created various videos for each of the points within the Charter and they can be found on Youtube.

Wrap up activity

Crossword puzzle (Great idea for reviewing concepts and vocabulary)
Could do jeopardy as well (more interactive; can be done using PowerPoint).