

ISLAM

Activity Based Lessons for Upper Elementary Students

Written by
Rachel Brown

Made possible by a grant from the Unitarian Sunday School Society
First taught by Rachel Brown and Becky Richardson,
at the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis, Winter 2000

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Introduction

CURRICULUM PURPOSE

Islam is one of the fastest growing religious communities in our country. As a major world religion, it shapes the politics and lifestyles of millions of people around the world. Yet, though it is a religion of rich tradition, structure, discipline and beauty, Islam is often represented by Western media only in its most extreme and violent manifestations. The events of September 11, 2001 and those that have followed have made true understanding of this religion more important than ever. This curriculum is intended to introduce students and their teachers to the basic teachings and traditions of Islam.

A study of Islam is intended to fulfill the following Religious Education goals:

- to help students develop an awareness and sensitivity to other cultures and religions, and
- to expose students to different religious experiences they may later use as they shape their own spiritual path.

USING THE CURRICULUM

Lessons are designed for people new to both Islam and the religious education classroom and provide a fairly high level of structure for each session. It is expected that teachers (particularly those with more experience in classroom teaching and/or with Islam) will modify and adapt as needed/desired.

Intended class time is an hour. This includes a three-minute gathering time such as a chalice lighting ritual.

An effective way to present the curriculum to teachers is through the use of a three-ring binder, with pockets. Divide lessons with tabbed dividers and provide photocopies of any additional information and resources related to each lesson from your own RE and public libraries. (Note: teachers may sign up to teach a unit because it is a topic they are interested in. Consider providing teachers with additional information for their own use, covering topics in greater depth than they may address with the students. In addition to getting background information helpful for the lesson then, teachers may have some of their own religious education needs met.)

Also, for each lesson, consider including feedback forms on which teachers may make comments and suggestions for improvement.

Feedback on the curriculum is welcome. Please see the contact information below.

DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

The initial development of this curriculum was made possible by a grant from the Unitarian Sunday School Society, awarded to the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis in 1999. First taught by Rachel Brown and Becky Richardson with a wonderful group of 6th graders at the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis, Winter 2000, this curriculum was then pilot-tested by four other churches. Thanks to those teachers and RE Directors who provided valuable input and feedback. And special thanks to Jan Devor, Religious Education Director at the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis for her valuable encouragement and support for the development and piloting of this curriculum guide.

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CONTACT INFORMATION

For information about the development of this curriculum, to order additional copies, or to give feedback/critique on the lessons, please contact: Rachel Brown, at rachel-brown@attbi.com or 612-710-2214 or Jan Devor, Director of Religious Education, First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis.

UNIT GOALS

1. Students will develop an awareness and sensitivity to other cultures and religions.
2. Students will be exposed to different religious experiences they may use as they shape their own spiritual path.

CONTENT

Throughout the course of the unit, students will be exposed to and work with the following topics/content:

- Basic teachings of Islam, including the Five Pillars: Shahadah, declaration of faith; Salaat, prayer; Zakaat, giving to charity; Sawm, fasting; Haj, the pilgrimage to Mecca.
- Prophets of Islam and their connection to the Judaic and Christian traditions.
- History, structure and writings of the Quran (Koran).
- Story of the life of the Prophet Muhammad.
- Cultural and artistic expressions of Arabic Islam.
- Geographical location of Muslims around the world, including, if possible, a local mosque.
- Design elements and the functions of mosques.
- History of Black Muslim movement in America.
- Church/society/community members who are practicing Muslims.
- Media bias against Muslim people.
- Differences between Islamic teachings/beliefs and the groups of people who follow these teachings/beliefs.
- Connections and differences among Unitarian Universalism, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism.

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Review the curriculum as a whole. Decide what will fit best with your timeframe, student needs, teachers' interest and expertise, and overall goals for the unit. This will help you be able to briefly describe to students the overall plan when you begin.
- Modify the sample schedule to tailor the curriculum to your own students' needs and to your church schedule. For example, knowing students are interested in a particular topic or instructional method, you may decide to extend a particular lesson over two weeks. If your class time varies because of a children's time in your main assembly/service, identify which lessons you would be best able to shorten or modify. Lesson 6, the role play of the Haj is one for which you will want a full hour.
- Gather a variety of supporting materials from your RE library, local public and university libraries, book stores, newspapers, or online sources.
- Begin to arrange for a Muslim person to visit your class and to tour a local mosque, if possible. It is best to start planning ahead for these events and to arrange the other lessons around these important dates.

USING FILM/VIDEO CLIPS IN THE CLASSROOM

There are two main reasons why video clips rather than full films/videos are suggested within this curriculum guide. First, classroom time is limited (and precious!). So video clips have been selected to enhance and support the learning objectives and lesson topics in the most efficient way. Second, students learn and remember more when they have an opportunity to interact with and respond to new information. Breaking up a lesson with a variety of formats, including video clips, will hopefully make the class period more engaging and interactive for students than if a single instructional strategy was used for the lesson.

COPIES OF CURRICULUM

Permission is given to make multiple copies for use within your church or society. It is recommended that you make a master copy and create a teacher copy in which they can write notes. Consider providing teachers with feedback sheets for each lesson. These notes can be a valuable resource for the next teacher(s) who uses the curriculum.

TIMING OF CLASS SESSIONS

Lessons are written to be a full and active hour. Cut and modify as needed, selecting the specific content and activities that will work best for your student population.

ADAPTING FOR YOUTH OR FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

This curriculum was created to be developmentally appropriate for upper elementary students (grades 4-6). With minor modifications, most lessons can also be used with junior high students (grades 7-9) as well. In general, provide more time for discussion and reflection with older students, including more connections to current events.

If using the curriculum with younger students, select the most active components of the lessons. Lessons 1-6 would provide the most appropriate content and activities for younger students.

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SAMPLE SCHEDULE

	Title	Topics/Content	Activities
1	Introduction: The Five Pillars	Basic teachings of Islam, including the Five Pillars: Shahadah, declaration of faith; Salaat, prayer; Zakaat, giving to charity; Sawm, fasting; Haj, the pilgrimage to Mecca.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: Why Study Islam? • Know, Want to Know, Learn • Five Pillars: Charades and Discussion
2	The Prophets	Basic teachings of Islam, including the Five Pillars. Prophets of Islam and their connection to the Judaic and Christian traditions. History, structure and writings of the Quran (Koran).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five Pillars: Review & Hand Motions • Mystery Prophets • Discussion: Historical relationship among Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Unitarian Universalism
3	Muhammad	Story of the life of the Prophet Muhammad. History, structure and writings of the Quran (Koran).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enact scenes from the life of Muhammad • Positions of Prayer
4	Arabic & Islamic Art	Cultural and artistic expressions of Arabic Islam. Design elements and the functions of mosques.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video and photos of mosques and other art works • Tile work with mosaic designs
5	Rules of Conduct; Preparation for the Haj	Cultural and artistic expressions of Arabic Islam. Geographical location of Muslims around the world, including, if possible, a local mosque.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: Rules of conduct • Prepare for the role play of the Haj
6	Haj: to Mecca	Basic teachings of Islam, including the Five Pillars.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role-play of the Haj, the pilgrimage
7	Visit with a Muslim	Church/society/community members who are practicing Muslims.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit with a Muslim
8	Mosque Visit	Church/society/community members who are practicing Muslims. Design elements and the functions of mosques.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mosque visit
9	Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam	Black Muslim movement in America—its history and current status.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story of Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam • Reflection on the unit

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RESOURCES

Note: if on a limited budget (and who isn't) and just starting to collect Islam related materials, consider beginning with the starred (*) items below.

Books for Students

Hegedus, Umar (date not listed). *Muslim mosque*. London: A & C Black.

Hoad, Abdul Latif Al (1986). *Religions of the world: Islam*. East Sussex, England: Wayland Publishers, Limited.

* Husain, Sharukh (1995). *What do we know about Islam?* New York: Peter Bedrick Books.

The Koran (get different copies and versions for students to look at, preferably including one in Arabic).

Videos

- * *A Visual Guide to Hajj & Umrah*, a 15 minute video available from <http://IslamiCity.com>. Click on "Bazar and Shopping" and then do a keyword search for Haj. This short video appears to be created as a visual tour for those who will be making the Haj. It costs \$6.95 + shipping and you are able to preview the video for free via the Web site.
- *Smithsonian world: Islam* (1987). PBS Video. Available in public libraries.
- *The world of Islam: Islamic art* (1988). Films for the Humanities. Available for approximately. \$90. Phone: 800-257-5126 Web site: www.films.com
- *Malcom X* (1992). Directed and written by Spike Lee. (PG-13 for violence and drug use. Clips suggested for use with curriculum do not contain such material.) Available from video rental stores and public libraries.

Web Sites

- CIA World Factbook, used to gathering comparative information about countries in which Muslims live for Lesson # 5. URL: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>
- * IslamiCity in Cyberspace. This extensive site has a wealth of information about Islam and the Five Pillars. There are images of Mosques and detailed information about the various steps of the Hajj. URL: <http://islam.org/>

Additional Background for Adults

* Lippman, Thomas W. (1982). *Understanding Islam: An introduction to the Muslim world*. New York: Penguin Books.

Curriculum Guides Used as Sources for this Curriculum

Bentley, Sid. (1988). *Islam: Religions of our neighbors, volume 7*. Coquitlam, British Columbia: Bentley West Publishing Co.

von Denffer, Ahmad (1981). *Islam for children*. Markfield, U.K.: The Islamic Foundation.

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Lesson #1: The Five Pillars

TOPICS/CONTENT

- Basic teachings of Islam, including the Five Pillars.
- Differences between Islamic teachings/beliefs and the groups of people who follow these teachings/beliefs.

MATERIALS

- Large sheet(s) of paper for K-W-L Chart; prepare as described in Part 2, Step 1
- Markers
- Descriptions of the Five Pillars (**Charades Cards: The Five Pillars**), cut into individual cards
- A copy of the **Discussion Aide: The Five Pillars**

PREPARATION

- Preview the Unit curriculum as a whole so you can briefly describe to students the overall plan. See the Before You Begin section of this curriculum for more ideas of ways to prepare for the unit as a whole.
- If you are new to the study of Islam, read/view some of the various materials supplied to build your own background knowledge. (Note: do not, however, feel that you must have an immediate answer to all student questions. Know that you can learn along with them.)
- Get/prepare the materials listed above.

ACTIVITIES

Part 1 **Discussion: Why Study Islam?** **5-10 minutes**

Discuss with students how the study of Islam fits within the larger Religious Education goals of your church/society. This discussion can be a good way to start to get to know the students and learn what they have been studying. Then, briefly describe the overall plan for the unit. Here are some questions to guide the discussion:

- What other units have you studied in the past couple of years? What have been your favorite units or specific activities? What do you like to do in RE? What do you not like to do?
- What have you learned about other religious traditions? Why do you think Unitarian Universalists study other religious traditions?
- Who do you know who is Muslim? Who in our community is Muslim?
- Islam is one of the fastest growing religious communities in our country. As a major world religion, it shapes the politics and lifestyles of millions of people around the world. How will understanding Islam help us understand more about the world? Why is this important?
- What happened in New York on September 11, 2001? How is Islam related to the events of that day and beyond? (Discuss the difference between extremists such as Osama Bin Ladin and the Taliban and the majority of peaceful Muslims in the world or the basic teachings of Islam.)

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Note: “Islam” is the religion; a “Muslim” is a person; “Islamic” and “Muslim” are both used as adjectives (e.g., a Muslim mosque, Islamic art).

Part 2 K-W-L Chart (Know, Want to Know, Learned) 15 minutes

Step 1

Create a three-column chart on a large piece of paper. At the top of the columns, list these three headings: Know, Want to Know, Learned. (Note: this can be done in advance).

Step 2

As a group, list all the things that students currently know about Islam and Muslims. List these things in the “Know” column. This may be knowledge gained from the media, from other studies, or from people they know. Rough notes are fine. Students may need coaching to get started. Negative and stereotypical material may arise in this discussion (e.g., All Muslims are violent people). Include it in the list with a question mark.

Step 3

As a group, list all the topics/issues students want to learn through the unit of study.

Step 4

Hang the chart in a prominent place in the classroom. Periodically, throughout the unit and as you have time, stop to review the chart. Have students list what they are learning in the “Learn” column. In addition, check in to see that questions in the “Want to Know” column are being answered. At the final session, review the chart as a whole and verbally list all the things that students have learned.

Teaching Note: By creating the list in the “Know” column, students activate their previous knowledge about Islam, allowing them to place new knowledge within an existing frame of reference. Ideally, this helps increase students’ comprehension and retention of the new information and concepts. The “Want to Know” column can help you identify specific areas of interest so you may tailor the curriculum to meet students’ needs and interests. The “Learned” column can serve as a record of on-going progress and review of covered material. It can also be helpful for reviewing information with students who have been absent.

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Part 3

Five Pillars Charades & Discussion

25 - 30 minutes

Step 1

Explain to students that while there may be differences among Muslim cultures in terms of cultural traditions, rules of conduct, and interpretations of the Quran, all Muslims believe in the Five Pillars of Islam. Muslims believe that these are the five duties given by Allah (God) through the Prophet Muhammad.

Step 2

Divide the class into five groups. Give each group a card with one of the pillars briefly described on it (see **Charade Cards: Five Pillars**). Give the students no more than two-three minutes to develop a quick charade that explains the pillar to the rest of the class. This will simply be a short pantomime explaining, without words, the key concepts or ideas of the pillar; it is not a word by word portrayal of what's on the card.

Step 3:

Reconvene the class, preferably in a circle on the floor to see the charades and discuss the pillars. Have the first pillar group present their charade while the rest of the class watches and identifies the key concepts of the pillar. Don't take much time for each charade to be fully identified. Rather, use the charade as a launch pad for more explanation and discussion.

After students have seen the charade demonstrated and guessed the main content, have one student read the description from the card. Then, use the information and questions from the **Discussion Aide: The Five Pillars** to explain the pillar more fully. Continue in this manner with the other four pillars. If you get short on time, go through each of the pillar charades more quickly, and save the more involved explanations for the following week.

Teaching Note: Why use the charades? Recent educational research has shown that some students will remember more about a topic if they have a physical experience related to it. Plus, it helps liven up the session a bit!

SOURCES

Husain, Sharukh (1995). *What do we know about Islam?* New York: Peter Bedrick Books.
Lippman, Thomas W. (1982). *Understanding Islam: An introduction to the Muslim world*. New York: Penguin Books.

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Charade Cards: The Five Pillars

Copy this page before cutting!

Pillar 1: Shahadah, the word. Believe, say, and live out this statement: “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad, peace be unto him, is his messenger.”

Pillar 2: Salaat, prayers. Say the prayers five times a day while facing the Kaaba in Mecca. Prayers follow 10 prescribed postures/positions.

Pillar 3: Zakaat, charity. Give money to feed the poor, take care of orphans and widows, and others in need. Give at least 2.5% of your savings each year.

Pillar 4: Sawm, fasting. Do not eat or drink from dawn to dusk for the month of Ramadan. (If you are ill or pregnant you do not need to fast.)

Pillar 5: Haj, pilgrimage to Mecca. Travel to Mecca and perform a series of sacred actions that take three days.

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Discussion Aide: The Five Pillars

Shahadah, the word. Believe, say, and live out this statement: “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad, peace be unto him, is his messenger.”

- Allah = God; there is only one God
- “Peace be unto him” is a phrase used every time the name of the Prophet Muhammad is said or written. It is sometimes abbreviated as pbuh. Note the difference between prophet and profit.
- Note that Muhammad is messenger, not the son of God. This is a very important distinction.

Questions: Why is the stating of belief so important? How do people of other faiths do this?

Salat, prayers. Say the prayers five times a day while facing the Kaaba in Mecca. Prayers follow 10 prescribed postures/positions.

- Mecca, Saudi Arabia is the most holy of cities for the Muslims. It is where the Prophet Muhammad was born. The Kaaba is a large shrine built by Abraham (patriarch and prophet of Jews, Christians, and Muslims) that stands in the center of Mecca. It is very important for Muslims to know the direction of Mecca.
- The cycle of prayers is very ritualized, with everyone saying the prayers in Arabic in the same way and with the same movements.

Question: What would it be like knowing everyone around the world who shared your faith was doing the same thing, facing the same direction, five times a day?

Zakat, charity. Give money to feed the poor, take care of orphans and widows, and others in need. Give at least 2.5% of your savings each year.

- The Zakat is like a tax that is used by a national committee to help people in need.
- The church and the state (government) are often one and the same in Muslim countries.

Questions: Giving to others in need can be seen as a form of worship. How is this principle expressed in other religions? In Unitarian Universalism?

Saum, fasting. Do not eat or drink from dawn to dusk for the month of Ramadan. (If you are ill or pregnant you do not need to fast.)

- Fasting is done to show that you are following God’s will, and is intended to bring you closer to God. It teaches you to sympathize with those who are poor and hungry.
- The month of Ramadan is based on a lunar calendar, and so does not fall on the same dates of a 12-month calendar each year. Note that location and time of year effects the length of time in a day for fasting.

Haj, pilgrimage to Mecca. Travel to Mecca and perform a series of sacred actions that take three days.

- The Haj is considered to be life-changing. It is not just a sight-seeing trip but a powerful and sacred set of rituals signifying a submission to the will of Allah.
- It provides a connection to history of Islam. It is unifying, in that it is performed by people of all ages, ethnic heritages, and economic and social status.
- Millions of people from all over the world gather in Mecca, Saudi Arabia for the Haj each year.

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Lesson #2: The Prophets

TOPICS/CONTENT

- Basic teachings of Islam, including the Five Pillars.
- Prophets of Islam and their connection to the Judaic and Christian traditions.
- History, structure and writings of the Quran (Koran). (Brief introduction.)

MATERIALS

- Descriptions of the Five Pillars (**Charades Cards: Five Pillars**), cut into individual cards from Lesson 1
- A copy of the **Discussion Aid: The Five Pillars**: from Lesson 1

PREPARATION

- Review the Five Pillars and the stories of the four prophets used in the activity

ACTIVITIES

Part 1 Five Pillars: Review & Development of Hand Motions 10 minutes

Step 1

Review each of the Five Pillars. Or, continue to discuss and explain each pillar if you didn't have time to do so in the last session. See the **Discussion Aide: The Five Pillars**.

Step 2

Create hand motions to symbolize and help students remember each of the five pillars. Break into five small groups and assign each group one of the pillars. (Use the **Charade Cards** from the last lesson to assign pillars and give students definitions.) Have each group create a draft symbol for one of the pillars. These symbols are to be shown without use of words.

For example, one class decided to show the first pillar, Shahadah (Believe, say, and live out this statement: "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad, peace be unto him, is his messenger.") with the following set of motions: 1) Pointing an index finger upwards, bring it to your chest to show "believe"; 2) to your mouth to show "say"; 3) out in front of you, in a circular motion to show "live"; and 4) and then upwards to show "one god, Allah." Another group simply pointed up to the sky with one finger symbolizing only one god, Allah.

Then, return as a group to present, discuss, and decide upon a "final draft" of the hand motions for each of the five pillars.

Note: If you anticipate a time crunch, do the above step as a full group.

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Step 3

Put the hand motions of the five pillars together. First, do them slowly with you or one of the students narrating or interpreting the hand motions. Then, when everyone has them fairly well memorized, go through all five without speaking.

Part 2

Mystery Prophets

20-30 minutes

Introduction to Teachers

The purpose of this next activity is to have students find some of the connections among the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions. Islam grew out of and in response to the Jewish and Christian movements of the 7th century, focusing on a return to the core beliefs that some felt were being lost within the other two traditions.

This activity presupposes that students have some familiarity with key Biblical figures, namely Adam & Eve, Moses, Jonah, and Jesus.

Step 1

Establish the context for the activity. Explain that the Islamic tradition has many important prophets in it. Muhammad, the messenger of God described in the first of the five pillars, was an illiterate man who Muslims believe received the word of God through revelation. According to Muslims, the angel Gabriel revealed the word of Allah to Muhammad. The Koran, the holy book of Islam, is said to be these words of Allah given through Gabriel to Muhammad. Because Muhammad could not write, others wrote down what he recited. In addition to the stories of the prophets, the Koran includes detailed instructions about how Muslims should live.

What you will be exploring in this activity are stories of four of the prophets described in the Koran. Note that there are many prophets described but that you will be addressing only four of them. Ask students to listen to the descriptions of the prophets to see if they sound familiar.

Note: do not mention yet the connection to Judaism and Christianity.

Step 2

Read aloud (or have a student read aloud) each of the descriptions for the four prophets. See **Mystery Prophets Descriptions**. Ask students to pay attention to whether they have heard of this person before. Discuss each prophet using the following set of questions to help guide the discussion. (Note: you may want to clarify the difference between a prophet and a profit.)

Questions to use for all the mystery prophets:

- Who does this prophet remind you of?
- In what other tradition have you heard about this prophet?
- What were the clues that helped you make connections between the Muslim prophet and the one from another tradition?

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Questions for specific prophets:

#	Islamic Name	Judeo Christian Name	Additional Questions for Discussion
1	Adam	Adam	Who is Iblis? And who is the wife?
2	Musa	Moses	What is the “Taurat” that Allah/God revealed to Musa/Moses?
3	Yunus	Jonah	What is the most important message that Yunas/Jonah brings to the people? What Islamic pillar does this remind you of?
4	Isa	Jesus	What are some of the differences between the Islamic and the Christian versions of the story? Connect this statement with the first pillar of Islam: “I am only a man and a prophet.” What major difference between Islam and Christianity does this statement address?

Step 3

Discuss the historical and philosophical connections between Islam and Judaism, Christianity and Unitarian Universalism. First ask students to summarize what they learned through reviewing the mystery prophets. What can they say about the apparent connections between the three traditions? Explain that Islam grew out of and in response to the Jewish and Christian movements in the 7th century. Early Muslims focused on a return to the core beliefs that some felt were being lost within the other two traditions.

Step 4

Discuss the Koran and how it was written. Muslim people believe that Allah told the stories and the lessons of the Koran to Muhammad so that he would share them with the world. Muhammad was an illiterate man who could not have read the early biblical scriptures, even if they had been published in Arabic at the time. So, they argue, the Koran was revealed to Muhammad by God and, as such, is a sacred and holy text.

But others who believe that the Koran was written by humans and not by God argue that Muhammad would have learned about the teachings and prophets of the two religions through his interactions with the Jews and Christians he met in his travels.

This can lead to a discussion of larger issues of belief and faith. The discussion should be handled with great respect for difference of opinion of people of the various traditions and of students in the class. Some questions: Who wrote the scripture of the various traditions being discussed (Judaism, Christianity and Islam)? Were they written by God, by humans inspired by God, or by humans alone? What do people of Judaism, Christianity and Islam think? What do you (the students) think?

Part 3

Five Pillars of Islam: Review

5 minutes

Review: In the final few minutes of class, repeat the hand motions created to symbolize the five pillars of Islam. Do the set of pillars a couple times through without talking and finish with someone narrating.

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Mystery Prophets Descriptions

Copy this before cutting!

Mystery Phrophet #1

I was the first man created by Allah. Iblis, who is made of fire and lived with the angels, did not like that I was created. My wife and I lived in paradise where we were never hungry nor thirsty. Iblis didn't like this either.

Iblis kept bugging us to eat from a certain tree. Allah had told us not to listen to Iblis, but we did.

We ate from the tree. We quickly regretted our weakness and our disobedience to Allah. We asked for his forgiveness, which he gave. But Allah made us leave paradise and go down to live on earth. Allah promised that we could return to paradise if we obeyed him. He also said that I would be the first prophet.

SOURCE

von Denffer, Ahmad (1981). *Islam for children*. Markfield, U.K.: The Islamic Foundation (pp. 31-32)

Mystery Prophet #2

I was born in Egypt at a time when the wicked Pharaoh lived and ruled. I was born right at the time he decided that all descendants of Joseph (the Jews) should be killed. To save my life, my mother placed me in a basket and sent me down the river. The Pharaoh's wife found me in the reeds; she and her husband raised me as a son, not knowing that I was a Jew.

I left the Pharaoh's palace to marry and live with my wife's family. One day, I saw a great fire and heard the voice of Allah. Allah told me to go to the Pharaoh, tell him about the power of Allah, and to have him set my people free. He would not. We left anyway.

The Pharaoh sent his soldiers after us. We escaped when Allah divided the sea so we could cross. Then Allah brought the waters together again to drown the Pharaoh's soldiers.

We wandered in the dessert for many years. I climbed a mountain and prayed to Allah for 40 days and nights. It was then that Allah revealed the Taurat to me, the book that states what men should and should not do.

SOURCE

von Denffer, Ahmad (1981). *Islam for children*. Markfield, U.K.: The Islamic Foundation (pp. 58-64)

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Mystery Prophet #3

I was sent by Allah to remind people to believe only in him. The people did not want to listen to me and I lost patience with them. I left the town in anger. As I sailed away, I was thrown off my ship and into the sea. A large fish swallowed me.

As I sat in the stomach of the fish, I thought about what had happened in the town. I realized that I should have been more patient. So, I prayed to Allah with all my heart. I confessed what I had done wrong and asked for forgiveness. Allah forgave me.

He took me out of the stomach of the fish and had waves sweep me to the shore. He then returned me to the town. This time the people listened to me when I told them to worship Allah alone.

SOURCE

von Denffer, Ahmad (1981). *Islam for children*. Markfield, U.K.: The Islamic Foundation (pp. 65-67)

Mystery Prophet #4

Before I was born, an angel came to my mother and told her that she would have a son. She had no husband. But the angel told her that Allah was almighty, and that if He wished her to have a son, she would. The angel also told her that I would be a great prophet.

When I was born, my mother was all alone, sad, and hungry. Allah helped her by making a stream flow by her and a tree with nourishing fruit grow for her.

When my mother returned to her family, they wondered how she had gotten me. To their amazement, I spoke from my cradle. I told them that I was a servant of Allah and a prophet. Allah wanted me to share His scripture. I was to teach people to worship only Him and to help the poor.

I spent my life teaching others about Allah and about the other prophets. Some people say that Allah is my father. This is not true. I am only a man and a prophet.

I did perform many miracles. These were to teach people that there is only one god, Allah. I also told people about another prophet who would follow me. He would be named Muhammad.

Some people refused to listen to me and thought I was dangerous. (Many of Allah's prophets suffered persecution like I did.) Just before the evil people were about to kill me, Allah rescued me, just as he had rescued other prophets before me.

SOURCE

von Denffer, Ahmad (1981). *Islam for children*. Markfield, U.K.: The Islamic Foundation (pp. 79-81)

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Lesson #3: Muhammad, the Last Prophet

TOPICS/CONTENT

- Story of the life of the prophet Muhammad.
- Connections and differences among Unitarian Universalism, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism.

MATERIALS

- Copies of the handout, **Positions of Prayer**
- Copies of the handout, **Muhammad, The Koran, & Prayer**
- One enlarged copy of the **Quiz Show** questions and of the cover sheets

Video Option

- VCR and TV monitor
- Video: *Smithsonian World: Islam*. PBS Video, 1987

PREPARATION

- Make copies of the handouts (POSITIONS OF PRAYER; MUHAMMAD, THE KORAN, & PRAYER)
- Prepare for the QUIZ SHOW at the end of the lesson: Use a copy machine to enlarge the QUIZ SHOW question board and the cover sheets. Cut up the cover sheet and use each square to cover up the questions on the main QUIZ SHOW sheet. (For example, a #1 cover sheet covers a #1 question). Have the answer key handy for you to use.

Video Option

- Cue the video to the section that begins “Somewhere between the zealots’ fury and the...” with a set of visual images of Muslim men at prayer, at 6:00 in the film. (Note: time may be slightly different depending on the tape used.)

ACTIVITIES

Part 1

Positions of Prayer

5 - 10 minutes

Review the Five Pillars, using the hand motions developed in lesson #2. Note that you will be focusing on the second pillar, prayer.

Have students go through the physical postures of the Muslim prayer cycle. (See **Prayer Postures** sheet.) Talk through and demonstrate the postures slowly as students follow along. Repeat the cycle a few times so students get the pattern of it. If space is limited for the class size, have one half of the class do the prayers at a time or have one volunteer demonstrate for the class.

Note that the intent is to gain some experience of what the physical postures and ritual of the prayer would feel like, not to actually do the prayers. Saying the prayers and believing in them is one of the five pillars of Islam, the requirements of Allah. Learning the prayers in Arabic would take a considerable amount of time and would require a belief in Allah/God. Discuss what it might be like or feel like to go through this type of ritual five times a day, particularly knowing that other people around the world who shared your belief system were doing the exact same thing.

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Part 2 **Three Topics: Muhammad, Koran, Prayer** **15 - 20 minutes**

Read aloud the information sheet, MUHAMMAD, KORAN, & PRAYER. Have students take turns reading aloud. Discuss questions as they arise and add additional information or insight as you see fit.

Part 3 (Optional) **Video Clips & Discussion** **10 minutes**

If you are able to find the *Smithsonian World: Islam* video or another similar film in your local library, consider showing brief clips that demonstrate the call to prayer and people at prayer (noting how all move and pray together.) Have students watch for and then discuss the details that they saw in the clip that connects with what they had been learning.

Smithsonian World: Islam video clip from the section on prayer that begins “Somewhere between the zealots’ fury...” at 6:00 (approximate time) and ends with the description of how the Koran was written down by others because Muhammad was illiterate, at 11:10.

Part 4 **Quiz Show** **15-20 minutes**

Preparation

Use a copy machine to enlarge the QUIZ SHOW question board and the cover sheets. Cut up the cover sheet and tape a square over each of the questions, matching up the numbers. For example, a #1 cover sheet covers a #1 question. Have the answer key handy for you to use. Also, select one person to be the scorekeeper. (Note: this might be a good job to give a student who might otherwise lose attention during the activity.)

Step 1

Arrange students in two teams and have them select the order in which the members of the team will take turns (like a batting order.) Give a different colored marker to each team. Somehow have them select which team will go first.

Step 2

Have the first person from the first team select a category. That person pulls the cover sheet off the first question from that category, reads the question, and attempts to answer it. If they get the answer correct, they can write the answer in the space below the question and their team gets one point. If, however, the person gets the answer wrong, the other team may make a guess. If they get it correct, they get to write in the answer and the point goes to their team.

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Step 3

The next turn goes to the second team (even if they got the first answer). The first person selects a category and takes the lowest question from that category (i.e., they can't jump ahead to the five point questions without someone answering the previous questions in that category.) Again, if they get the answer correct, they get the point(s) for their team and get to write the correct answer in their marker color on the sheet.

Continue on in this manner until all of the questions are correctly answered, alternating teams to have the first chance at the question.

Briefly discuss answers as you go, making connections with what students read, (saw in the video, if used), or discussed earlier.

Step 4

After all the answers are filled in, have students list other things that they had learned from the reading (and video, if used) but were not addressed in the quiz. Also, discuss in greater depth any of the questions that interest students.

Congratulate the winning team—perhaps all can get a prize for participating—and hang the complete QUIZ SHOW sheet up for later reference and review.

Some Modification Ideas:

- With a larger class, divide the class into three or four teams.
- Make the activity less competitive by not awarding points, by letting groups give a team answer, or by answering the questions as a full group.
- Divide the class into three groups and have each group answer the questions for one category (prophet, holy book, or prayer), using the reading handout as a guide.
- If you have student who may need guidance to keep focused on the reading portion of the lesson, share the questions with them before the reading. Then, have them listen for the answers to the questions as you or other students read.
- Enlist the help of a student (possibly one who would otherwise have attention issues) to be the game show host, scorekeeper, reader of questions, etc.
- Adjust the game rules to fit the format of a contemporary game show (e.g., Who Wants to be a Well-Informed UU? The Strongest Link, etc.).

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Prayer Postures

	Posture	Statement and/or Name
1.	Stand tall, facing forward, shoulders back.	Declaration of Intent
2.	Put both hands to your ears, palms facing out.	"God is very great."
3.	Stand with both hands folded in front of you.	Supplication: recite the first chapter of the Koran
4.	Bow down at the waist, looking at the ground, hands to the knees, back straight.	Praise of Allah's majesty
5.	Stand tall and straight again.	Standing
6.	Kneel down, and bend forward with forehead to the ground, both arms out along side your head.	First prostration
7.	Kneel but sit up straight, hands and lower arms resting on your thighs.	First sitting position
8.	Kneel down, and bend forward with forehead to the ground, both arms out along side your head.	Second prostration
9.	Kneel but sit up straight, hands and lower arms resting on your thighs.	Second sitting position; prayers for Muhammad, Abraham, family and self
10.	Remain kneeling, sitting up straight with arms on your thighs. Look to the right.	First salam: "Peace and mercy unto you."
11.	Remain kneeling sitting up straight with arms on your thighs. Look to the left.	Second salam: "Peace and mercy unto you."
12.	Remain kneeling sitting up straight. Bring your arms up, elbows at your side, palms facing upwards.	Prayers of supplication, including personal ones.

SOURCE

Bentley, Sid. (1988). *Islam: Religions of our neighbors, volume 7*. Coquitlam, British Columbia: Bentley West Publishing Co. (p.39).

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Muhammad, The Koran, & Prayer

Muhammad was born in 570 A.D in Mecca, a city in Arabia. Both of his parents died when he was small so he was raised by his grandfather and by his uncle. Muhammad's uncle, Abu Talib, was a trader. Muhammad spent his childhood working as a shepherd. He also traveled in camel caravans with his uncle. Through these trade trips in Arabia and Syria, Muhammad met many interesting people from different cultures. Around the evening campfires he would listen to their stories and teachings.

As a young man, Muhammad became known as a good problem solver. People who were having disagreements would come to Muhammad for advice on how to settle their differences. He also became a smart and wealthy trader. Khadijah, a 40 year old widow proposed to Muhammad because she thought he would be a fair and smart man to run her family's business. Muhammad and Khadijah had a happy marriage together. Khadijah was a strong supporter of Muhammad when he later began his life as a religious prophet and leader.

Muhammad had always been interested in spiritual matters. Even as a young man, he was troubled by the behavior of people in his society. He did not think it was right that people worshiped more than one god or treated women as poorly as they did. After his wife's family business was running smoothly, Muhammad began to spend more and more time alone in a cave thinking and praying about the world in which he lived. While in the cave, Muhammad was visited by the Angel Gabriel with a series of revelations from Allah (God). Angel Gabriel told Muhammad that he had been chosen to be the last of Allah's prophets. Allah chose Muhammad to bring His message to the people. Like the other prophets before him such as Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, Muhammad was to tell people that there was only one god, Allah.

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Muhammad took this message and others that Allah gave him to the people around him. Some people followed him but many others thought he was crazy and dangerous. After his wife and uncle both died, Muhammad left Mecca to go to Yathrib, a city 200 miles away now known as Medina. Many people of Medina believed in Muhammad's message and were Muslims.

But there were other people from Mecca who wanted to kill Muhammad. These people traveled to Medina time and time again, trying to kill Muhammad and the Muslims. They were not successful. Eventually Muhammad and his followers were able to return to Mecca, claiming victory for their cause and for their religion.

When he arrived home in Mecca, Muhammad reclaimed the shrine at the center of the city, the Kaaba. He cast out the pagans who had worshiped many gods there and proclaimed that there was only one god, Allah. Because of this history, Mecca, (and the Kaaba) is the central and most holy place of Islam. All Muslims must travel on a pilgrimage to Mecca once in their lifetime.

Muhammad spent the rest of his life teaching and leading the Islamic religious movement. By the time of his death in 632 AD, there were approximately 120,000 Muslims.

Muhammad had never gone to school and did not know how to read or write. Supporters use this information to prove that Muhammad's teachings came from Allah directly, not from other men's writings or teachings. (Other non-Muslims argue that Muhammad would have heard the Jewish and Christian stories and teachings through his many evenings around the campfires when he traveled as a trader. There are many connections between the Jewish and Christian stories and those of Islam.)

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In any case, Muslims believe that the revelations given to Muhammad from the Angel Gabriel were from Allah. Because Muhammad could not write, others wrote down what he said. These writings became the Koran (also spelled Qur'an), the holy book of Islam. Written in Arabic, the Koran gives Muslims all of the teachings and rules to live by, including directions on how to pray to Allah.

Muslims are to pray in Arabic five times a day. In Muslim cities the Call to Prayer is sung out from tops of the Mosques, the buildings in which Muslims gather to pray. In many places, the Call to Prayer is done using microphones so that people can hear it from a long distance away. The prayers are to be said while facing the holy city of Mecca and the Kaaba. Muslims all pray with the same Arabic words and with the same movements or postures. It is very important to remember that their prayers are not to Muhammad, who was just a man who served as a messenger and prophet, but to Allah, the one true god. This message was at the heart of Muhammad's teachings.

SOURCES

Bentley, Sid. (1988). *Islam: Religions of our neighbors, volume 7*. Coquitlam, British Columbia: Bentley West Publishing Co. (p.16-24).

Husain, Sharukh (1995). *What do we know about Islam?* New York: Peter Bedrick Books.
von Denffer, Ahmad (1981). *Islam for children*. Markfield, U.K.: The Islamic Foundation (pp. 13-22).

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QUIZ SHOW

PROPHET	HOLY BOOK	PRAYER
1) Who was the final prophet of the Muslims?	1) How did the prophet Muhammad receive the word of Allah (God)?	1) How often do Muslims pray?
2) List three things about Muhammad's life as a child and young man.	2) Why didn't Muhammad write down the words of Allah, brought by the Angel Gabriel?	2) In what direction do Muslims face when they pray?
3) What did Muhammad do when he received the revelations from Allah?	3) What is the name of the Muslim's holy book containing the words of Allah, given to Muhammad through Gabriel?	3) In Muslim cities, what will you hear to signal that it is time for prayer?
4) What belief or lesson was most important to Muhammad?	4) In what language is the Koran written?	4) In what language are all Muslim prayers said?
5) Do Muslims worship Muhammad or consider him the son of God? Why or why not?	5) The Koran contains stories and lessons that are important in what other two religions?	5) How are the Muslim prayers performed?

Bonus Question: What are the buildings called where Muslims gather for prayer, education, support, and fellowship?

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QUIZ SHOW: Cover Sheets

Cut and use to cover up the questions.

1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4
5	5	5

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QUIZ SHOW: Answer Guide

PROPHET	HOLY BOOK	PRAYER
1) Who was the final prophet of the Muslims? Muhammad	1) How did the prophet Muhammad receive the word of Allah (God)? He heard the words from the Angel Gabriel.	1) How often do Muslims pray? Five times a day
2) List three things about Muhammad's life as a child and young man. Muhammad: was an orphan, raised by his uncle; was a shepherd and a trader who traveled with his uncle; did not go to school and did not learn to read or write; was interested in spiritual things; was known as a good person to help settle disagreement, etc.	2) Why didn't Muhammad write down the words of Allah, brought by the Angel Gabriel? He didn't know how to read or write so he had others write it down.	2) In what direction do Muslims face when they pray? They face the Kaaba in the city of Mecca
3) What did Muhammad do when he received the revelations from Allah? He told others, had people write it down, taught people the lessons he had heard, led people to a new way of life, etc.	3) What is the name of the Muslim's holy book containing the words of Allah, given to Muhammad through Gabriel? The Koran	3) In Muslim cities, what will you hear to signal that it is time for prayer? The call to prayer.
4) What belief or lesson was most important to Muhammad? There is only one god, Allah.	4) In what language is the Koran written? Arabic	4) In what language are all Muslim prayers said? Arabic
5) Do Muslims worship Muhammad or consider him the son of God? Why or why not? No. For Muslims, there is only one God	5) The Koran contains stories and lessons that are important in what other two religions? Judaism and Christianity	5) How are the Muslim prayers performed? Through a series of prescribed movements and postures.

Bonus Question: What are the buildings called where Muslims gather for prayer, education, support, and fellowship? **a mosque**

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Lesson #4: Arabic and Islamic Art

TOPICS/CONTENT

- Cultural and artistic expressions of Arabic Islam.
- Design elements and the functions of mosques.

MATERIALS

- Collect any resources you can find that have images of traditional Islamic art. See a list of possible sources at the end of this lesson. Consider books, photographs, videos, magazines, or postcards. Make the most of whatever resources are available in your area such as the following: a mosque; art museums; well-traveled church members who might have slides to share; librarian (public or university), using the Inter-Library Loan options if necessary.
- Various art supplies including some or all of the following (depending on how you choose to structure the activity):
 - Stencils
 - Compass
 - Colored pencils or markers
 - Plain white paper or drafting/graph paper (with lines going both ways)
 - Glue or glue sticks
 - Construction paper of various colors (or other tile-like objects), particularly reds, greens, and blues. If you are concerned about time, consider pre-cutting the construction paper into small shapes (squares, triangles, circles, diamonds, etc.) so students can work more on arranging the shapes than creating them.

PREPARATION

- Prepare the supplies for the art activity
- If you use a video: preview the video to find appropriate clips, set up the VCR and TV monitor, cue the video to clips to be used.

ACTIVITIES

Note: You may need/want to do the QUIZ SHOW activity from the previous lesson this week, given the full schedule last week. If so, adjust this week's art activity in terms of time and complexity.

Part 1

Reflection on Art

5-10 minutes

Discuss with students what "art" is in Western culture. Here are some questions to guide the discussion:

- What does it mean to be an artist? Describe the stereotypes of an artist in Western culture. What does one need to be considered a good or great artist in American and European culture?
- How important is individuality in art work?
- Are there connections between art and religion? How are they connected?
- Describe some art works that you know of with Christian themes. What are some of the common elements that you see in these works?

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Part 2**Introduction to Islamic Art****10-15 minutes**

Watch a video clip (see two options listed in the resources section below) or have students browse through whatever images of Islamic art that you have found. After allowing student to make some initial observations on their own, discuss some or all of the following key ideas:

- The three main types of design are arabesques, calligraphy, and mosaics.
- Particularly in early Muslim art, artists were to “praise Allah’s creation without defining or depicting it.” This meant there were to be no representations of any living things, including people, animals, or other elements of nature. Look for examples of this in the resources you have collected, including all three design types, arabesques, calligraphy, and mosaics. Discuss both the limitations and the benefits an artist faces if he or she is told not to show human or animal figures in the artwork.
- Muslims do not depict images of Allah or of Muhammad. How is this different from Christianity or from other religions?
- Artists used elaborate calligraphy to decorate The Koran (also spelled Qur’an), the holy book of Islam. Written in Arabic, the Koran gives Muslims all of the teachings and rules to live by, including directions on how to pray to Allah. The written word was (and is) very important, particularly given the requirement to not show living creatures in the artwork. You can see the use of calligraphy in many art works including in mosques.
- In early Islamic art, the role of the individual artist was less important than the work itself. What was valued most was not subject matter or new developments in form but the use of the traditional materials and designs to create patterns. Look for images of mosques, mosaics, and arabesques to find evidence of the importance of patterns.

Teaching Tip: If you are pressed for time and really want to get to the hands-on part of the lesson, start students on the tile project work and discuss the above questions while they are working. (This may work well for some students who have better attention in discussions when their hands are busy. Students who prefer to focus on one activity at a time, however, might find this to be a challenge.)

Part 2**Tile work with Geometric and Arabesque Designs****20-30 minutes**

Have students explore the concept of working with a limited set of materials to create patterns and images in the Islamic style.

Option 1:

If you have a group that needs more direction and focus, select specific materials and patterns for them to work with and create a sample mosaic for them to replicate or modify.

Option 2:

If you are working with a group that would enjoy more choice and creativity, simply provide them with a variety of tools and materials with which to create some form of mosaic or tile-like product. Then see what they come up with!

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Possible Ways of Creating the Mosaics:

- Draw the patterns using stencils, a compass, colored pencils or markers. Use blank white paper or drafting/graphing paper (with lines going both ways)
- Glue “tiles” in patterns. Tiles could be made out of construction paper or any other flat objects you think would be effective. (Creativity and resourcefulness is a plus here). Note: If you are concerned about time, consider pre-cutting the construction paper into small shapes (squares, triangles, circles, diamonds, etc.) so students can work more on arranging the shapes than creating them.

This activity is more about trying on the process of making complex images and patterns out of limited materials than it is about creating a final product. Encourage students to really work with creating a pattern in their work. As you view each other’s work, notice the patterns that are created and the differences among them.

RESOURCES

Book: *What do we know about Islam?* by Sharukh Husain. See pages 38-39. This provides a very concise summary of the three traditional designs.

Video: *The World of Islam: Islamic Art* (1988). Films for the Humanities. Available for app. \$90. Phone: 800-257-5126 Web site: www.films.com This particular video is very visual and shows both the final products and some of the steps used in creating some of the works. It also does a good job of explaining some of the philosophical and religious components of the art forms. Watch the following clips in the video:

- From the beginning to 14:00 (time approximate), the sections on arabesques, calligraphy, and mosaics.
- From 24:00 to 26:00, the section on mosques.

Video: *Smithsonian World: Islam*, PBS. This video is more academic than *Islamic Art* but is more likely to be available in public libraries. View the first six minutes of the video.

Museum: Consider arranging a special tour of a local art museum that has a collection of early Islamic art.

People: invite someone with expertise in this area to share slides of Islamic art they have studied or seen in their travels.

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Step 3

Discuss other more specific rules that Muslims must follow. See **Rules of Islam** for a list of rules for discussion. Note that these expectations vary by ethnic and cultural group. For example, some Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia base their entire constitution on the Shariah law, the rules of law described in the Koran.

Discuss each rule. Talk about what it would be like to follow these rules. Are there some that would be more difficult than others to follow?

Another thing to keep in mind is that Islam is a complete way of life—spiritual, social, moral, political, economic and cultural. See how that is played out in the rules that are described.

Part 3

Prepare for the Haj Role Play

30 - 45 minutes

In preparation for the role play of the Haj in the following lesson, explore various countries from which Muslims will travel for the Haj.

Step 1

Introduction to the Haj. Ask students to describe again the fifth pillar. Explain that the Haj, the pilgrimage to Mecca that every Muslim must make at least once in his or her lifetime is one of the most significant times in a Muslim's life. They join in a ritual that their prophet Muhammad took part in about 1,400 years ago.

Mecca, and the Kaaba that sits at the center of it, are believed to be built on the site where Abraham built a place of worship. Muslims also believe that this site was where Abraham was commanded by Allah to kill his son Ishmael. Abraham was about to do so, but God spared Abraham when he proved that he was willing to submit himself (and the life of his son) to God's will.

While Muslims may visit the city of Mecca for pilgrimages throughout the year, the main Haj is the one that takes place once a year, in the month of Dhul-Hijah. The Haj brings over 2 million people to the city each year.

See pages 30 and 31 of Sharukh Husain's *What Do We Know about Islam?* to give students a visual image of some of the main features of the Haj. Or use other resources listed at the end of lesson #6. Some things to note:

- Mecca: the holy city in Saudi Arabia is banned to non-Muslims; the courtyard of the Grand Mosque in Mecca is the beginning and ending point for the Haj
- The Kaaba: a square stone building built on the site where Abraham built a house of worship to God; the black rock in the western corner is said to be the only remaining piece of the original structure that Abraham built
- Kiswa: the huge black cloth embroidered with gold that is used to cover the Kaaba
- Clothing: plain white clothes to show that all Muslims are equal in the eyes of God

Let students know that during the following week's lesson they will be going on a simulation of the Haj to learn about the different components of it.

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Some Basic Rules of Islam

- Do not eat pork or any food cooked in pork fat.
- All other meats must be prepared in a certain way, called halal. The meat is blessed after it has been killed.
- Do not drink alcohol.
- Do not fight, except for Islam.
- Do not gamble.
- Wash and say prayers before and after meals.
- Do not be stingy and be kind to strangers.
- Do not let the Koran touch the ground or get dirty.
- A man must cover his bodies from the waist to the knee. A woman must cover herself from her head to her feet, except for her hands and face. Muslims can wear the clothes of the culture in which they live, as long as they are covered as described.
- No pictures of living things are allowed in Mosques. This is so that people will think only of God.
- Women do not pray in the same area as the men.

Other Types of Rules

There are many other rules in a variety of categories. Here are some examples:

- Personal finance: There are rules about how dispose of a person's estate when they die.
- Business: no interest may be charged on loans.
- Family issues: you are to show kindness to your parents and tend them in their old age.
- Greeting: the first person says "The Peace be upon you." The second person says, "And upon you the Peace." Follow this order for the first and second person: The person entering a room to a person already in the room; The younger person to the older person; The rider to the walker.; The walker to the one standing; The one standing to the one who is sitting.

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Lesson #6: Haj, the Pilgrimage to Mecca

TOPICS/CONTENT

- Basic teachings of Islam, including the Five Pillars. (Focus on the Haj)

MATERIALS

Don't panic. The materials list will make more sense once you've read through the directions!

The various places encountered through the Haj will be represented with common materials. Use video clips or pictures in books to give students an opportunity to see some of the real buildings and geographical features. For the role-play, rough, symbolic representations are enough. For the most part, you can simply use existing supplies and furniture. Creativity and resourcefulness may be needed!

Basic Materials

- White sheets. If possible, two per person.
- Safety pins (to pin the sheets on)
- Scarves for the girls to cover their heads.
- Copies of the short script to be placed at each station (see scripts provided)
- Signs with place names (provided) (note: you may need extra chairs on which to hang signs)
- Tape (to hang the signs)
- Treats for the "The Festival of Sacrifice" (optional)

Materials to show images of the real Haj

Book, videos and even the Web can be used in this lesson to give students images of the Haj geography and events. See the list of Resources at the end of this lesson. A great source is the *Visual Guide to Hajj & Umrah* video but if that is not available to you, use whatever resources you can find!

- VCR & TV monitor and video
- Books that show pictures of the Kaaba and the Haj
- Computer with Internet access to show images from the Web (see <http://www.islamicity.com>)

Material List for Each Station (see sketch of layout for the stations)

Station 2 & 9: Entry into Mecca

- Sign for Mecca and the Great Mosque

Station 3: The Kaaba

- Kaaba and Black Stone signs
- A large square structure to represent the Kaaba (ideas: a large box, cardboard sheets put together, benches stacked together)
- A dark cloth to spread over the Kaaba (black cloth, black garbage bags cut open)
- A black rock to attach to one corner of the Kaaba (a circular shape cut out of black construction paper)

Station 4

- Something to symbolize the two hills (benches, chairs)
- Signs for as-Safa and al-Marwah, the two hills that Hagar ran between

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Station 5 & 8

- Sign for Mina
- Three stone pillars (three chairs, one of which with a garbage can on it to throw the pebbles into something)

Station 6

- Sign for the Plain of Arafat

Station 7

- Sign for Muzdalifah
- Pebbles (dried beans work great!)

PREPARATION

- Read through the whole lesson to get a sense of the overall flow of the role-play.
- If you are teaching alone, enlist the help of another teacher. The activity works best if the “Guide” can stay in character and focus on the process of the pilgrimage.
- Reserve a space to be Mecca. An open, all-purpose room works well. It is important to have a space (the classroom) where students get into their robes, review the purpose of the activity, and can be themselves to prepare for the role play. The act of moving to a new space, then, signals the start of the role-play. If you only have one room available, at least separate the space so it is clear when Mecca has been entered. Weather permitting, the role-play could be done outside as well. Do so only if the activity will not draw an audience which would distract students from the role-play.
- Copy and cut apart the scripts for the stations.
- Gather the necessary materials.
- Set up Mecca (see Materials list and the layout sketch). If possible, do this without students seeing it beforehand. With all of the supplies in hand and a plan for layout, the set up itself can take about 10-15 minutes.
- If using a video, set up the VCR and cue the video to the appropriate spot. Two good options:

A Visual Guide to Hajj & Umrah, a 15 minute video available from <http://IslamiCity.com>. Click on “Bazar and Shopping” and then do a keyword search for Haj. This short video appears to be created as a visual tour for those who will be making the Haj. It costs \$6.95 + shipping and you are able to preview the video for free via the Web site. The first few minutes of introductory information on the words used may be too technical; instead begin with the section in which they show the beginning steps of the Haj.

Smithsonian World: Islam). Use the short section on the Haj, beginning with the shot of people’s legs and feet as they walk to Mecca and ending with the scene of the masses around the Kaaba and the words “reaffirmation of personal relations with God”. This section begins at minute 21:50 on the tape and runs through 23:15. (Note: precise timing may be different based on the particular copy of the video used).

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Books and photos: Have students browse through the books, looking at images and reading text and then showing each other what they find.

Video: Watch the short clip(s) of whatever video used 2-3 times to see as much detail as possible.

Step 3

Close with a discussion about what students think about the Haj and its importance to Muslims. Also include a discussion about the importance of Mecca to Muslims.

SOURCES

Videos

A Visual Guide to Hajj & Umrah, a 15 minute video available from <http://IslamiCity.com>. Click on "Bazar and Shopping" and then do a keyword search for Haj. This short video appears to be created as a visual tour for those who will be making the Haj. It costs \$6.95 + shipping and you are able to preview the video for free via the Web site. The first few minutes of introductory information on the words used may be too technical; instead begin with the section in which they show the beginning steps of the Haj.

Smithsonian world: Islam (1987). PBS Video. Available in public libraries. Cue to the short section on the Haj, beginning with the shot of people's legs and feet as they walk to Mecca and ending with the scene of the masses around the Kaaba. This section begins at minute 21:50 on the tape and runs through 23:15. Precise timing may be different based on the particular copy of the video used.

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Lippman, Thomas W. (1982). *Understanding Islam: An introduction to the Muslim world*. New York: Penguin Books.

Web Site

IslamiCity in Cyberspace. This extensive site has a wealth of information about Islam and the Five Pillars. There are images of Mosques and detailed information about the various steps of the Hajj. URL: <http://islamicity.org/> Click on "Mosque and Religious" and then click on "Hajj Information Center" to view images of the Haj. (Enlist the help of a tech-savvy church member if necessary.)

ISLAM

Station 1: Preparations

Step 1

As students arrive, have them put on their cotton cloths. Pilgrims put on their pilgrimage cloths either before they leave their homes or before arriving in Mecca. Briefly discuss that the reason all wear the same type of garb is to show that all are equal in God/Allah's eyes. Men wrap one around the waist and pin at the side. Then wrap the other over one shoulder and across the body, pinned together at the side. Women usually wear simple white dresses. Their heads must be covered, but their faces must be exposed, even if their cultural tradition is to be veiled. For this activity, consider having the girls dress in the sheets as the boys do.

Step 2

Review the five pillars, both verbally and using the hand motions.

Step 3

Focus on the fifth pillar—the Haj, the pilgrimage to Mecca—in more detail. Particularly note that it is expected that all Muslims make the pilgrimage at least once in their lifetime, if they are able to financially, mentally and physically.

Step 4

Discuss why we are role playing this tradition that is so important to Muslims. Stress that this is to be done respectfully. It will, in no way, be equivalent to a real pilgrimage, which is a highly spiritual act. The intent is to learn some of the ritual acts involved in the pilgrimage, and to try to understand its power and importance to the Muslim people.

Step 5

Briefly review the students' countries of origin from the previous week's lesson. Have students note on the map again where they are traveling from to get to Mecca.

Step 6

Have students complete the ritual washing. This may be done in pantomime.

- Wash hands with water
- Rinse the mouth and nose and wash the face
- Wash arms, starting from the elbows, first the right, then the left
- Wet hair by patting down your hair with your wet hands
- Wash feet, first the right, then the left

Step 7

Travel to Mecca to be met by the guide.

ISLAM

Station 2: Entry into Mecca

Guide: Welcome to Mecca. I will be your guide for your Haj, your pilgrimage. Because of the huge number of people who arrive here in Mecca for the annual pilgrimage, the Saudi Arabia government has developed many services and structures to make the pilgrimage go smoothly for you. Guides such as I are hired to translate for the pilgrims, and to take people through the rituals of the pilgrimage.

So, where are you all from?

[Wait for responses]

So, you have come from many different countries and different parts of the world. This, you will find, is one of the powerful elements of the Haj—uniting with people of all countries, regardless of their status, wealth, education, or family. But now you may lay your differences aside. We are all equal to Allah.

It will be very crowded here. Some people will come to Mecca throughout the year on the Umrah, the lesser pilgrimage. You are here for the Haj, the greater pilgrimage during the month of dhu’-Hijah, three months after Ramadan.

Millions of people come to this city, for the Haj. Please be patient. Know that everyone here, like you, is on the most powerful and important journey of his or her lifetime. You are not tourists; you are on a deeply spiritual exploration for which you have hoped and planned your whole life. When you leave here, you will be different.

Are there any questions?

Please follow me as we go then to the Great Mosque and the Kaaba.

ISLAM

Station 3: The Kaaba

Guide: Let us enter through the Gate of Peace. Here we are in the Great Mosque, with the Kaaba standing before us in the great open space. The Kaaba is about 48 feet high, about 35 feet wide, and 52 feet long. It is covered in a black silk cloth, made each year by the same family. The Kaaba is made of stone. There is nothing in the inside. As you may remember, Abraham—the patriarch of the Muslims, and the Jews—built the original Kaaba and a house of worship here.

Over time, however, pagans used this space to worship their many gods. Muhammad, peace be unto him, was the one who removed the pagans, and restored the Great Mosque as a place dedicated to the one and only true god, Allah.

How many times have you faced the Kaaba in your prayer, from wherever you live in the world?

[Response: Five times a day, every day.]

What then do you think is the first thing pilgrims do when they finally see the Kaaba.

[Response: pray]

Yes, it is prayer. Let us do so.

[Do a series of the prayer. See Lesson 3 for directions.]

Note the Black Stone which is located on an exterior corner of the Kaaba. It is said to be the only stone remaining from the original house of worship created by Abraham and may date back to the time of Adam. As we pass the Black Stone, you may want to kiss or wave to it. It is important to remember that we are not worshipping the stone. Why not?

[Response: There is only one God, Allah. Muslims do not worship anything but Allah.].

This kiss or wave is just a gesture of love and respect for the prophet Abraham and for the love and mercy Allah showed to him.

Now, we will walk seven times around the Kaaba, counter-clockwise, as we are instructed in the Koran. This is to remind us of the message that both Abraham and Muhammad taught—there is only one god, Allah.

We will walk around three times slowly, then four times more quickly. Notice how many people are here.

Action: Walk around the Kaaba seven times (three slowly and three quickly).

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Station 4: Hagar's Run

Pilgrim 1: Abraham had a relationship with a concubine (a woman who was not his wife) named Hagar. Hagar and Abraham had a son named Ishmael. Sarah, Abraham's wife, was jealous of Hagar and so forced her and her son Ishmael to leave the Jewish community.

Hagar found herself alone with her son, with no food or water, between the hills of as-Sata and al-Marwah. She ran between the two hills, searching for water. Because she believed in the one true God, Allah took care of her. Where she returned to Ishmael, there was a spring of water gushing at his feet. This spring is known as the Well of Zam-Zam.

To remember Hagar and the love Allah bestowed on her in her time of need, we will run seven times between the hills of as-Safa, and Al-Marwah.

Action: Run between the two hills seven times.

Station 5: Mina. In Community with Others

Pilgrim 2: We have arrived here at Mina a little early. We will rest for awhile, before the noon prayers begin. During times such as this, when there is no ritual act of the pilgrimage, we talk with our fellow pilgrims. We talk about the teaching of the Koran. We also learn about the many countries of the fellow pilgrims.

Tonight we will stay here in Mina. Many will pray throughout the night. Early tomorrow morning we will begin our migration to the Plain of Arafat.

Action: Sit. Rest. Talk with each other about your home countries.

Station 6: An Afternoon of Prayer

Pilgrim 3: Today will be the most physically challenging time of our pilgrimage. We gather here for noon prayers and for a sermon. The sermon is delivered from the same place where Muhammad gave his last sermon.

Then, we will stand here all day, facing Mecca, and praying. All afternoon, in the hot sun, we will stand and read the Koran and pray, saying, "Here I am, O God. Here I am!"

**Action: Face Mecca. Go through a series of prayer.
Stand for a minute imagining the hot sun.**

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Station 7: Gathering Pebbles

Pilgrim 4: We will stop here and sleep here on this open plain of Muzdalifah. After we awake, each of us will gather seventy small pebbles.

Action: Lie down to rest. Then awaken to gather pebbles.

Station 8: The Ritual Stoning

Pilgrim 5: Back in Mina, we will now go to the three pillars. This is the site at which it is believed Abraham was tempted by Satan. He rejected Satan and drove him away by throwing stones at him.

We will throw the pebbles that we collected at one of these three pillars. This symbolizes Abraham's and our own rejecting of Satan.

Action: Throw pebbles at one of the pillars.

Station 9: Return to Kaaba

Pilgrim 6: We now return to Mecca and to the Kaaba. Here again we will walk around the Kaaba seven times, remembering the lessons taught through the life of Abraham—that Allah is merciful and good to those who believe in only Allah.

**Action: Quietly walk around the Kaaba seven times.
Kiss or wave to the Black Stone as you pass it.**

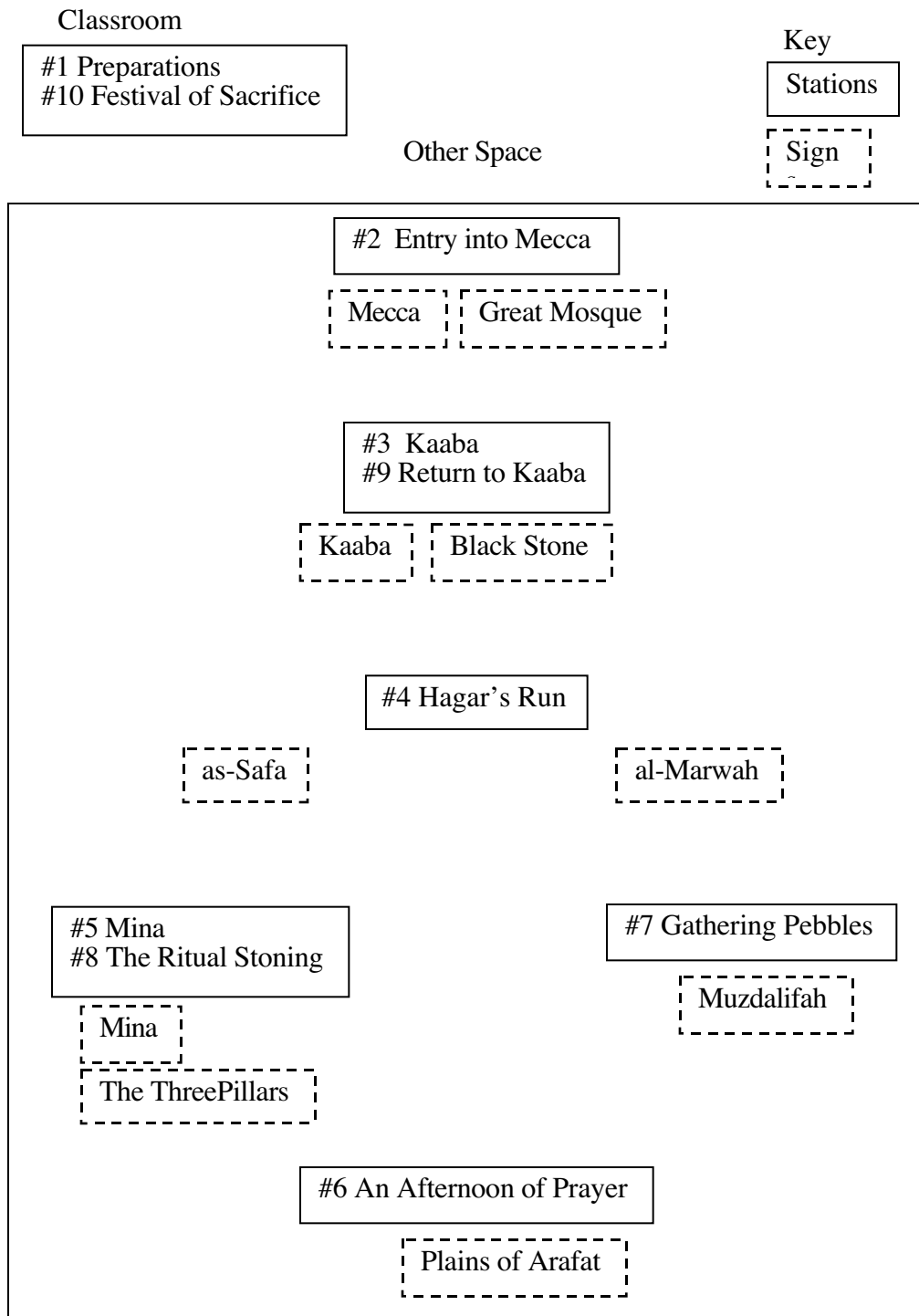
Station 10: Festival of Sacrifice

Guide: We come now to the end of our pilgrimage. All around the world, Muslims will celebrate Eid al-Adha—The Festival of Sacrifice. This marks the end of the pilgrimage. It is a time of rejoicing throughout the Muslim world. We now will make donations to charity and exchange gifts with our family and friends.

Action: Quietly return to the classroom.

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Layout



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Lesson #7: Visit with a Muslim

TOPICS/CONTENT

- Church/society/community members who are practicing Muslims.
- Connections and differences between Unitarian Universalism and Islam.

MATERIALS

Encourage your visitor(s) to bring whatever items/materials they use in their Islam practice.

PREPARATION

Find a practicing Muslim who would be willing to come and talk about their experiences with the class. Share with the visitor what the students have learned so far.

Talk with the visitor about what they are willing to share and do with the class. Some people may be comfortable using the whole hour and will be able to structure the hour themselves. Others may feel they can only spend part of the class time and will want more direction from you. Let them know of the routines established in the class and what you have covered so far in the unit.

If your guest will not use the whole session, use the time to review content from previous lessons or to complete activities that you may not have fully finished in other weeks.

ACTIVITIES

Part 1	Before the Visit	10 minutes
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If possible, meet with students before the visitor arrives to develop questions for the visitor.

Review the K-W-L chart started in Lesson 1. What questions are still in the W (Want to Know) column? What information is in the K (Know) or the L (Learned) columns that students would like more explanation about or clarification on?

AND/OR

Create a list of questions that students and you would like to have the visitor answer. These questions may be written on note cards and distributed to students or written on a blackboard or large sheet of paper so that everyone can see them. Here are some sample questions.

- How did you learn about and become a Muslim?
- What does it mean for you to practice Islam? What do you do in your practice?
- What is Islam to you? What are the most important parts of the teachings of Muhammad? What particular stories or lessons do you think of or refer to in your own understanding of Islam?
- What do you get out of practicing Islam? Why do you do it?
- What are some of the rules that you follow?

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- How do you feel about the role of women in Islam?
- What are some of the challenges of being a Muslim in the United States?
- Have you ever been on the Haj? What was it like?
- What is it like being both a Muslim and a Unitarian Universalist (if they are)? Are there any conflicts between the two traditions or the different communities? What are the similarities between the traditions and communities?
- What are the most important things to know about Islam?
- How do you want to be treated as a Muslim?

Part 2**During the Visit****30-50 minutes**

The Visit. Have the visitor(s) meet with the students to tell students about their life as a Muslim and to answer the questions and others you and the students have developed.

Part 3**After the Visit****10-20 minutes**

Post-Visit Discussion. Talk about the visit either just after the visitor(s) has left or the following week. Ask students to describe what they found as most interesting or surprising in the visitor's comments. Consider having students write a group thank you note to your visitor(s).

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Lesson #8: Visit to A Mosque

TOPICS/CONTENT

- Church/society/community members who are practicing Muslims.
- Design elements and the functions of mosques.

MATERIALS

None

PREPARATION

- Find a local mosque or Islamic center and arrange for a visit. You may need to do so well in advance and may need to be flexible about dates and/or times. Make sure that there will be someone who can meet with you and the students, give a tour of the space, and answer questions. Let the person guiding you know a bit of what students have been studying. Also, remember to factor in travel time in your plans.
- Ask the person coordinating the visit if there are any expectations for visitors in terms of attire. Out of respect for the community, encourage students to follow the suggestions of the guide. This will likely be an expectation of modest dress, rather than adherence to their specific rules (e.g., spaghetti strap tank tops would not be appropriate but scarves or veils may not be expected).
- Write a letter to the parents of all class members alerting them to the field trip at least a week in advance of the trip. Consult with the RE Director regarding permission slip procedures. Inform them of any clothing requests.
- Plan to have a student-adult ratio of about 5:1 and to have an extra adult or two available as a back-up. (Field trips tend to bring out higher attendance). If there are any students in the class whose behavior may disrupt the field trip experience, consider asking the student's parents/guardians to be one of the chaperones. See the RE Director for help with such concerns.

ACTIVITIES

Part 1

On the Tour

Before entering the mosque and before meeting your guide(s), stop the students for a reminder that as guests, they need to act respectfully. This little moment can help students focus after the car trip. This pep talk may include directions to:

- listen quietly to the guide.
- follow any directions or requests the guide has (such as taking off shoes).
- touch things only after asking permission.
- ask questions without making judgments.

Encourage students to ask questions and to make connections between what they see and what they have studied.

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Part 2

After the Visit

The week after the field trip, have students talk about the experience. If there are students who missed the trip, you can frame the review as a chance to tell them what you all saw and experienced. Ask students to talk about anything that surprised or interested them. As a class write a thank you letter to your guide.

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Lesson #9: Malcolm X & the Nation of Islam

TOPICS/CONTENT

- History of the Black Muslim movement in America.

MATERIALS

- *Malcolm X* (1992). Directed and written by Spike Lee. (PG-13 for violence and drug use. Clips suggested for use with curriculum do not contain such material.) Available from video rental stores and public libraries.
- VCR and TV monitor

PREPARATION

- If you have time, preview the full movie of *Malcolm X*.
- Cut out the **Groups and Individual Cards**
- Cue the movies (it comes in two videos) to the following spots:

Part 1: The very beginning when the sound track begins, right when the Warner Brothers image is on screen. (Note: pull the video out, then put it in again so the counter is set at 0:00 at the very beginning. This will help in getting to the second clip.

Part 2: At 4:00, just as the news that Brother John has been beaten and is being held by the police.

ACTIVITIES

This session uses interplay between discussion, lecture/story telling, and video clips to tell the story of Malcolm X, Nation of Islam and orthodox Islam. Given time restraints, the story is told in rather broad strokes. Fill in detail as you know it and see appropriate.

Set Up and Format:

- It works well to do this lesson seated on the floor with the VCR clips cued up and close at hand. This allows for a more seamless movement among the different formats— discussion, story telling and video clips.
- The **Groups and Individual Cards** are intended to give students something visual to help keep straight the various groups and individuals and to show the changes in philosophy undergone by Malcolm X. Just spread them out on the floor before you as you tell the story.

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Story

Cards: Lay out the *Christianity* card. Under it place the *Malcolm X* card.

Malcolm X was raised in a Christian family. His father was a minister who argued for the rights and power of Black people, even though this meant threats to him and his family. Their home was burned by KKK members. Soon after this, white Klan members killed Malcolm's father, though the white police claimed that the murder was a suicide.

Because the death was considered a suicide, Malcolm's mother could not collect on the life insurance policy and was faced with raising six small children on her own and with no money. A social service agency took Malcolm and his siblings away from their mother and shipped them off to various foster homes. Malcolm was then raised in a community in which he was the only black child.

Once Malcolm finished school, he headed north to Boston and New York. There he became immersed in the wild life of jazz, dancing, liquor, drugs and gambling. He was no longer a practicing Christian. Eventually he was arrested for robbery and was sentenced to 8-10 years in prison.

Cards: Move the *Malcolm X* card away from the *Christianity* card.

Discussion

- How do you think Malcolm felt about white people?
- How much power do you think he felt he had at this point in his life?
- What do you think he felt about himself and about his future?

Story

Cards: Lay out the *Orthodox Islam* card. Under it place the *Immigrants* card.

Most of the Muslims in America at this time were immigrants who had come from other countries. What countries do you think Muslims would have come from? (Refer back to the Lesson 5).

Cards: Lay out the *Nation of Islam* card. Under it place the *Elijah Muhammad* card.

Elijah Muhammad had started a new version of Islam in America. He claimed that he was another prophet, sent by Allah to tell people of the ways of Islam and to bring order back to the lives of black people in America. He believed that white people were the main cause of most of the blacks' problems and argued that black people should separate themselves from the whites to gain power and strength.

Cards: Move the *Malcolm X* card to under the *Nation of Islam* card.

While Malcolm X was in prison, he learned about the teachings of the Nation of Islam and became a convert. He learned to read the Koran, to pray toward Mecca and the Kaaba, and to follow the strict rules of behavior laid out in the Koran and by Elijah Muhammad. He immersed himself in the teachings of Islam.

ISLAM

Discussion

- What do you think was appealing to Malcolm in Islam? Why might he have become a Muslim at that point in his life?

Story

When Malcolm X left prison, he became a minister for the Nation of Islam. Here is one of his speeches, played by Denzel Washington in the movie, *Malcolm X*.

Video

Start at the very beginning when the sound track begins, right when the Warner Brothers image is on screen. (Note: pull the video out, then put it in again so the counter is set at 0:00 at the very beginning of the movie—after the ads and/or the copyright notice. This will help in getting to the second clip later). You can also have the video turned away so that the students focus more on the words than on the images.

Discussion

- What were the main messages of this speech? What is the tone?
- What is going on in America at this time that would help explain the tone and message?
- Review some of the rules and expectations of Islam. Why do you think this religion was so appealing to black people, particularly in this period of American history?

Video (Note: if you are short on time, consider cutting this clip.)

Part 2 (second of two videotapes), from 4:00 – 10:17. Start at the point in which the people on the street are telling Malcolm about Brother John being beaten by the police. End when after they have marched from the hospital and the police officer says, “That’s too much power for one man to have.”

Discussion

- What does this clip show?
- Who was another famous black leader of this time? (Martin Luther King, Jr.). In what religion was he a minister? What type of protests did he promote?

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Story

Malcolm X had become the most visible and famous minister in the Nation of Islam. He was a strong speaker who could energize crowds and gather much attention to the movement. Some other leaders in the movement, including Elijah Muhammad, were worried that Malcolm X was getting too powerful. Then Malcolm X learned that there was corruption in the leadership and that Elijah Muhammad himself was not following the rules of Islam. This led to great internal and political struggles within the movement.

Remember that this was a time of great racial violence and strife. While Martin Luther King Jr. was preaching tolerance and non-violence, the Nation of Islam was calling for separatism. Whites were very threatened by this.

When President Kennedy was assassinated, Malcolm X made strong statements about the violence in America that outraged many people. He essentially said that the whites were the ones who were caused the violence in this country and abroad. He said that Kennedy was the leader of this violent society and hence, had the violence turned back on him. It was like saying that Kennedy had deserved to be shot.

Elijah Muhammad “silenced” Malcolm X for making such a strong statement that would cause trouble for other Muslims. This meant that Malcolm was not allowed to speak in public. Malcolm then left the Nation of Islam to begin a new Muslim mosque and tried to separate himself from the Nation of Islam. He began to soften his position on separatism, reaching out to leaders of other faiths and cultural groups. For example, he said that white people could help them in their fight for racial justice, though they still could not join them as Muslims.

Cards: Move the Malcolm X card from under the *Nation of Islam* to under the Orthodox Islam card.

Story

In order to learn about orthodox Islam and because it was his duty to do so once in his lifetime, Malcolm X made the pilgrimage to Mecca. This was a life changing experience for him. What do you think happened?

Video

Part 2 from 59:00 to 1:03:00. Start at the point in which Malcolm X goes to the Holy City of Mecca and go through the letter he sends home telling about his change in beliefs. Have students point out the parts of the Haj that they recognize from previous lessons.

Discussion

- What did Malcolm X learn from his Haj? What beliefs changed for him?

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Story

Soon after his return from the Haj, Malcolm X was assassinated. Some argue that the violence and harassment he and his family received came only from the people in the Nation of Islam. Others argue that there were other forces such as the FBI behind the attacks and murder. Some say Malcolm X was a dangerous and violent man who made the racial relations worse with his inflammatory words and actions. Others argue that Malcolm X was a real reformer, a man who was committed to the cause of racial justice, who never called for physical violence, and who led through example.

Since Malcolm X's death, the Nation of Islam has moved more towards orthodox Islam, though there are still people such as Louis Farrakhan, who have a more separatist perspective.

Discussion

- What have you learned about Islam, both today and throughout the whole unit? What do you think you will remember most about Islam?
- How can you use what you've learned about Islam in your own life?

 ISLAM

GROUPS AND INDIVIDUAL CARDS

Copy before cutting!

Christianity	Nation of Islam	Orthodox Islam
Elijah Mohammad	Malcolm X	Immigrants
Some black Americans	Many black Americans	Some black Americans
Martin Luther King Jr.	Louis Farrakhan	