

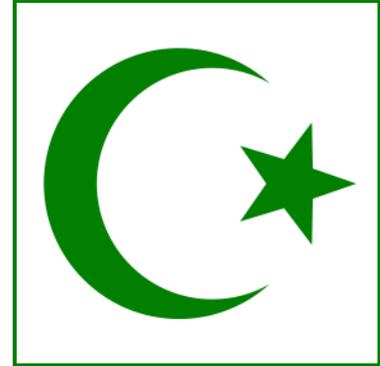
## Islam, an Introduction A Lesson in Tolerance

**Subject:** Any subject; primarily Social Studies or Language Arts (may also be used as part of a Comprehensive Counseling Program)

**Lesson Authors:** Roxanne Taylor  
Jayme Taylor

**Time Allotted for Lesson:** two 45 minute class periods  
(or 1 block period)

**Grade Level:** Grades 6-8



<b>Goals:</b>	The goal of this lesson is to introduce students to the religion of Islam. By providing facts about aspects of the religion, another goal of the lesson is to help dispel the negative views that are often associated with Islam and Muslims since the terrorist events of 11 September 2001.
<b>Overview:</b>	This lesson begins with the basic question: What is Islam? It then explains fundamental concepts of Islam, including the 5 Pillars of Islam, and introduces new vocabulary words to help engage the students in learning about Islam and Muslims. The final section of the lesson addresses who Muslims are in greater detail, dispelling common misconceptions about Islam and providing positive examples of Muslims from both the past and present.
<b>Objectives:</b>	Arizona Academic Standards: Social Studies Standard Strand 2: World History Concept 1-PO 7; Concept 2-PO 5.d; Concept 3-PO1 and PO 3; Concept 9-PO 2
<b>Materials, Resources, and Technology:</b>	This lesson requires technology capable of showing a PowerPoint presentation. Other materials that are recommended but not required include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) a copy of the Qur'an</li> <li>(2) a book of poetry by Rumi</li> <li>(3) <u>Muslim Child: Understanding Islam through Stories and Poems</u> by Rukhsana Khan</li> </ul>

**Instructional Procedures:** Begin PowerPoint presentation...

**Title Slide:** Introduce the lesson as an introduction to Islam and further explain how it is relevant to the subject area it is being taught under.

**Slide #2:** Ask the students the questions presented on the slide: What is Islam? What do Muslims believe? Who are Muslims? Or simply ask them what they think about when they hear the words “Islam” and “Muslim.” Write some of their responses on the board. (This is a good way to go back to the students thoughts when that specific topic in the presentation is covered. For example: “Muslim women have to cover themselves.” – When discussing the slides on *hijab*, go back to the question on the board and cross it out once it is answered.)

**Slide #3:** Begin general explanation of Islam: Islam is the last of the three monotheistic religions. The other two are Judaism and Christianity. Monotheism is the belief that there is only one God. The word Islam in Arabic means both “peace” and “submission to God.” This submission to God means that a person fully and willingly follows the teachings and practices of God.

**Slide #4 and #5:** There are five duties, called the Pillars of Islam, which Muslims follow:

1. The first pillar is called *Shahadah*, or the profession of faith. At least once in their lives, believers must say, “I testify that there is no god but God, and I testify that Muhammad is the messenger of God.” This is the most important pillar, as it is the foundation for all the other beliefs and practices of Islam.
2. The second pillar is called *Salah*, or prayer. Muslims are required to pray five times a day. They pray at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and night fall. The prayers are performed facing Mecca. (Mecca is a city in Saudi Arabia and is the most important city in Islam.) Prayers are meant to be a means of communication between the believer and God.
3. The third pillar is *Zakah*, or alms-giving. All Muslims are required to give to the poor. The amount they are required to give is based on their wealth.
4. The fourth pillar is *Sawm*, or fasting during the month of Ramadan. (Ramadan is a Muslim holiday that takes place during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. It is believed that this is the month in which the Qur’an began to be revealed. The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar which makes the months shorter. This means that Ramadan is not necessarily at the same time every year.) During the month of Ramadan, Muslims must abstain from food and drink from dawn to dusk. This is a way for Muslims to become closer to God.

5. The fifth pillar of Islam is *Hajj*, or the pilgrimage to Mecca. Every Muslim must make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetime if they are able to afford it. It is the largest annual pilgrimage in the world.

**Slide #6:** Introduce the new vocabulary words that the students will be learning throughout the remainder of the lesson: Allah, Muslim, Muhammad, Arabic, Qur'an, Mosque, Hijab, and Jihad. (If desired, ask the students if they know what any of the words mean.)

**Slide #7:** Allah is the Arabic word for God. This is the same God that Jews and Christians worship. The following verse from the Qur'an explains a small portion of who Allah is and his importance to Muslims:

*"He is God; there is no god but He, He is the Knower of the unseen and the visible; He is the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate. He is God, there is no God but He. He is the King, the All-Holy, the All-Peace, the Guardian of Faith, the All-Preserver, the All-Mighty, the All-Compeller, the All-Sublime. Glory be to God, above that they associate! He is God the Creator, the Maker, the Shaper. To Him belong the Names Most Beautiful. All that is in the heavens and the earth magnifies Him; He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise."* (Qur'an, 59:22-24)

**Note:** The image on the slide is the word Allah written in Arabic calligraphy

**Slide #8:** A Muslim is the person who practices Islam. Muslim and Islam come from the same Arabic root meaning peace and submission, so Muslims are the ones who submit to the will of God. There are over 1 billion Muslims worldwide. While the majority of Arab countries are Muslim, only about 1/5 of all Muslims are Arab. The largest population of Muslims is found in Indonesia. There are an estimated 5-7 million Muslims in the United States.

**Slide #9:** Explain the details of the map to the students: This map represents the Muslim percentage of the states' population in the Middle East and Africa. (For example: 86-100% of the population of Egypt is Muslims.) Point out how the largest percentages are in the Middle East and northern Africa, but that there are also high percentages in much of Asia and parts of Europe.

**Slide #10:** Muhammad is the Prophet and messenger of God. He was born in Mecca in 570 A.D. When he was forty years old, the Angel Gabriel appeared to him and revealed the word of God during the month of Ramadan. These revelations were preserved in the form of a book called the Qur'an. Muhammad is extremely important in Islam. Muslims add the phrase "peace be upon him" whenever his name is mentioned. Even in written form this phrase is added after his name.

**Note:** The image on the slide is the word Muhammad written in Arabic calligraphy.

**Slide #11:** Arabic is a language. It is written from right to left. It is the religious language of Muslims. The Qur'an is written in Classical Arabic, while spoken Arabic varies from region to region. Arabic is also the language of the Arabs. There are five major groups of Arabic dialects. They are found in Iraq, the Arabian Peninsula, Syria, Egypt, and North Africa.

- Explain the details of the map to the students: This map shows the Middle East and Africa and highlights the areas in which Arabic is the majority language and the areas in which Arabic is the minority language.
- Also note that Arabic calligraphy is an important form of Islamic art. Many Qur'anic verses are written in Arabic calligraphy on the outsides of mosques. Arabic calligraphy is also found in a lot of secular art. The image on this page is from an artist named Hassan Massoudy. It says, "Woman is a ray of divine light."

**Slide #12:** The Qur'an is the central religious book of Islam (similar to the Bible for Christians). It is composed of the divine revelations received by the Prophet Muhammad. It was delivered in rhythmic Arabic prose and was initially memorized by Muhammad's followers and used in prayers. It is a book of guidance for Muslims. (If desired, pass around a copy of the Qur'an to the students. Note that it opens "backwards," as Arabic is written from right to left.) The Qur'an consists of 114 chapters, also known as suras. The suras are arranged in order of length with the longest in the beginning and the shortest in the end. They are not arranged in the order in which they were revealed.

**Slide #13:** A mosque is a Muslim place of worship where Muslims come together for prayer (similar to churches for Christians or temples for Jews). The person who leads the prayers is called an Imam. Ritual objects, pictures and statues are not allowed inside mosques. Muslims are required to cleanse themselves before entering mosques. Often times there are places attached to or enclosed within the mosque that contain running water for Muslims to cleanse themselves.

The following slides are pictures of mosques from around the world:

**Slide #14:** The Blue Mosque, or the Sultan Ahmet Mosque is found in Istanbul, Turkey. It is an historic Mosque and is known as the Blue Mosque because of the blue tiles that are found in its interior. It was built between 1609 and 1616. It is one of the greatest tourist attractions in Istanbul.

**Slide #15:** The Suleymaniye Mosque is the second largest mosque found in Istanbul, Turkey. Building of the mosque began in 1550 and it was finished in 1557. It was built on the order of the sultan Suleyman the Magnificent (who was the longest reigning sultan of the Ottoman Empire).

The King Abdullah I Mosque was built between 1982 and 1989 in Amman, Jordan. Inside there is an Islamic Museum that has a collection of pottery and photographs of King Abdullah I.

**Slide #16:** The Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca, Morocco is the second largest mosque in the world. There is room for 25,000 worshippers in the mosque and 80,000 can fit into the mosque's courtyard. It was completed in 1993. Almost half of the mosque lies over the Atlantic Ocean.

**Slide #17:** The Islamic Center of Tucson is an Islamic institution that was established in Tucson in 1966. It was founded by students at the University of Arizona who wanted to establish a mosque where they could gather for prayers with other Muslims students.

**Slide #18:** Hijab is the Arabic term for "cover," but according to Islamic scholars, hijab also has wider meanings of "modesty, privacy and morality," and "dressing moderately." It has also come to represent a veil that many Muslim women wear. They wear these veils to cover their hair, ears and throats – but they do not necessarily cover their face. The picture shows a woman wearing a hijab, or veil.

**Slide #19:** Other types of Islamic dress are the *niqab* and the *burqa*. These veils cover most of the face except for a slit or hole for the eyes. The *burqa* covers the woman's entire body and covers their face completely except for a layer of netting over the eyes to allow the wearer to see.

**Slide #20:** These veils are not mandatory in many Islamic countries, but Muslim women are encouraged to dress modestly. In Saudi Arabia, women have been required to cover themselves since its founding in 1932. Also, the veil was also required in Iran after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. While many women do wear the veil, the hijab does not symbolize poor treatment of Muslim women. In fact, wearing the veil has emerged as "an affirmation of Islamic identity and morality." In addition, Muslim women have many rights under Islamic Law. Pakistan, an Islamic Republic, had a woman Prime Minister.

**Slide #21:** The Arabic word jihad is usually translated to mean "holy war," but the full title in Arabic is *jihad fi sabil Allah*, or "Striving in the way of God." It literally means effort or struggle. Jihad can be waged both internally and externally. Internally it is an inner struggle of moral discipline. Externally it is often manifested in the form of an armed struggle by Muslims against nonbelievers.

**Slide #22:** Many of the violent terrorist groups use the word jihad to fight against Christians and Jews, or the unbelievers. One example of a terrorist network is Al-Qaeda, which is headed by Osama bin Laden. Al-Qaeda is responsible for attacks against many civilian and military targets in various countries, including the United States. These

attacks by al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups have ultimately led to the United States government launching a military and intelligence campaign against them called the War on Terror.

**Slide #23:** At this point in the lesson it is to be made clear that not all Muslims are terrorists and only Islamic extremists believe in this violent form of jihad against innocent people. Students should now be asked once again: Who are Muslims? In addition, students may be asked if they can name any prominent Muslims.

The following are some examples of famous Muslims from the present and from history:

**Slide #24:** Kareem Abdul Jabbar is considered one of the greatest NBA players of all time by some people. During his 20 years in the NBA (from 1969 to 1989) he scored 38,387 points – the highest total of any player in league history. He also won a record six Most Valuable Player Awards. He was born Fredrick Ferdinand Lewis Alcindor, Jr. and he changed his name to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar after converting to Islam. He is now retired from basketball and is a successful coach and author.

**Slide #25:** Benazir Bhutto was the first woman elected to lead a Muslim state. She was elected Prime Minister of Pakistan twice (1988–1990 and 1993–1996). She was Pakistan’s first and only female prime minister to date. She was assassinated on 27 December 2007.

**Slide #26:** Muhammad Ali is a three-time World Heavyweight Champion. He is the only man who has won the linear heavyweight championship three times. He was born Cassius Marcellus Clay; he changed his name after joining the Nation of Islam in 1964.

**Slide #27:** Rumi was a 13<sup>th</sup> century Persian poet, Islamic jurist and theologian. His poems have been translated into many different languages and one news outlet has described him as the “most popular poet in America.” His poems focus largely on the spiritual love between people and God. The following is a poem titled “O you who've gone on pilgrimage:”

*O you who've gone on pilgrimage – / where are you, where, oh where? / Here, here is the Beloved! / Oh come now, come, oh come! / Your friend, he is your neighbor, / he is next to your wall - / You, erring in the desert – / what air of love is this? / If you'd see the Beloved's / form without any form - / You are the house, the master, / You are the Kaaba, you! . . . / Where is a bunch of roses, / if you would be this garden? / Where, one soul's pearly essence / when you're the Sea of God? / That's true - and yet your troubles may turn to treasures rich - / How sad that you yourself veil / the treasure that is yours!*

**Note:** the Kaaba is the holiest place in Islam. It is believed to have been built by Abraham and his son Ishmael. It is this site in Mecca determines the direction that Muslims face during their prayers.

**Slide #28: Concluding remarks:** “One cannot judge Islam by looking at those individuals who have a Muslim name but in their actions...” Ask the students what they think this quote means and if they feel it is an accurate statement. Then ask them once again: What is Islam? Discuss their responses and address any further questions they may have.

**Supplemental Activities:**

Additional activities include assigning students the task of researching a famous Muslim (different than the ones mentioned in the presentation). The students would then present a few details to the class about the Muslim they have chosen. A written assignment may be used to replace a presentation if desired.

Another additional activity revolves around Muslim Child: Understanding Islam through Stories and Poems by Rukhsana Khan. While this is a book that is intended for children a little younger than grades 6-8, it is an informational book that tells stories of Muslim children around the world. Pick a few stories and read them aloud to the class. Ask the students to share their thoughts and explain how the stories of the children in the book are similar or different to their own lives.

Submitted August 2008 by:

**Roxanne Taylor**

School Counselor  
St. Ambrose School  
300 S. Tucson Blvd.  
Tucson, AZ 85716  
[roxx948@msn.com](mailto:roxx948@msn.com)  
(520) 882-8678

**Jayne Taylor**

Graduate Student in Near Eastern Studies  
University of Arizona  
Tucson, AZ 85711  
[jaymet@email.arizona.edu](mailto:jaymet@email.arizona.edu)  
(520) 891-0761

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\* images on the PowerPoint slides: the website where each picture was found is noted in the “notes” section of the slide