

Notes on Pictures – and the Muslim religion

****You may select any of the slides according to the age of your students and goals for the lesson.**

Note: Arabic is very hard to transliterate into English letters, especially as Arabic doesn't have letters for most vowel sounds. Therefore, you have to use your imagination. Muslim can be spelled Moslem. Muhammad can be spelled Mohammed or even Mehmed. Quran and Koran are two spellings for the same book.

Where do Muslims live? **Slide 1 - Map:** Point out to the students that although the countries normally associated with the Middle East (north Africa, southwest Asia) are more than 80% Muslim in population, they are not the only Muslim countries. There are very large Muslim populations in central Asia, southeast Asia (Indonesia is the country with more Muslims than any other country in the world.), and sub-Saharan Africa. There are 5 – 8 million Muslims in the North America, most of them in the U.S. Note: Only 1 out of 5 Muslims are Arabs.

Basic vocabulary: **Slide 2:** Kids (and adults) often get the terminology wrong. The religion is called Islam, while the followers of that religion are called Muslims. (The adjectival form is Islamic or Muslim.) Also, it is important to note that Arabic is a language, not a religion. It is the “official” language of Islam (like Latin used to be for Catholicism), but the vast majority of Muslims (80%) do not speak Arabic at home.

Do all Muslim women cover their face? **Slides 3-8:** You can see the Muslim dress varies by culture and custom. The traditional Arab view of modesty is that a woman should cover her hair – other areas have adopted some aspect of this. Even in Iran under the Islamic government, women don't cover all their hair. (Remember that most Iranians are NOT Arabs.) You'll also notice from the picture of an Iranian women that women there drive cars and have all the modern amenities. Afghanis aren't Arabs either, but you notice that women there often wear a burqa that covers the entire face.

What do Muslims believe? **Slides 5-15:** The Five Pillars of Islam.

Faith. Note that Muslims worship the same God that Christians and Jews do. ('Allah' is the Arabic word for 'God.')

Mohammad is a PROPHET and not God. (They also respect Jewish and Christian traditions, and name their children after Jewish prophets – like Abraham, Solomon, or Moses – or Christian figures – like Jesus and Mary.)

Prayer. Muslims pray five times a day, facing Mecca, Saudi Arabia (where Muhammad started the religion). They kneel and touch their foreheads to the ground. Usually, they pray on prayer rugs for padding and for sanitary reasons.

Alms. Giving to the poor is required.

Fasting. Fasting during Ramadan is very important. See the notes on Ramadan for more specific information.

Pilgrimage (visit to a holy place). Muslims try to make a pilgrimage to holy sites in Saudi Arabia at least once during their lives.

Where do Muslims worship? **Slides 16-21:** mosques. These are just a few pictures of mosques in many different places (from Indonesia to Phoenix). Look at the picture of the inside of a mosque (Slide 18), and ask the kids how it is different inside than a Christian church. You may want to point out that there are no pews or seats of any kind. People kneel on the carpets. (Everyone takes off their shoes and leaves them in shoe racks outside as a sign of respect – and to keep the carpets clean.) Notice also that there are no pictures or statues. Muslims didn't want anyone to get confused and worship idols. There is no picture of Muhammad since Muslims do not worship him. To decorate their mosques, they use geometric designs and fancy writing in carpets, stained glass windows, mosaics, and painted areas.

What is the Muslim 'Holy Book'? **Slides 22-23.** Muslim scripture is called the Quran, which Muslims believed is God sent the Angel Gabriel to Mohammad and revealed God's word to him. What do you notice about the book in the picture? (It opens "backwards." That's because Arabic is written from right to left, the opposite of English.)