

Islam

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Prepared by Dara Weller

Goal

Introduce students to the Islamic religion and the spread of Islam. The overarching goal is for students to find the commonality in the monotheisms and gain an appreciation and tolerance for each religion.

Overview

Students in grades 7-12 will learn about the history and culture of Semitic religions (i.e., the similarities and differences) and specifically Islam. Additionally, they will understand and learn the history and geography of the Ottoman Empire with the understanding that at one time the Ottoman Empire was the most powerful empire in the world, the center of which was located in what is now Turkey, and that it was declared the Muslim capital.

Objectives

Students will

Research and present facts about the Semitic religions including Islam.

Read the story of Abraham and discuss how Abraham is the father of all three monotheisms. Discuss the connection between Abraham and Islam.

Read about the life of Muhammad including his marriages, the recitation of the Qur'an, the journey to Medina, and the subsequent establishment of a Muslim community in Mecca; introduce the five pillars of Islam.

Learn about the history and geography of the Ottoman Empire and complete a map.

Materials

Mohammad: Legacy of a Prophet (PBS documentary can also be found on You Tube).

Handout: **MUHAMMAD, THE PROPHET OF ISLAM ca. 570 –632 C.E** ©Council on Islamic Education, 2002 all rights reserved, may be copied by educators for classroom use.

Computer with Internet access.

Encyclopedias and resource books

Resources about the Semitic religions.

A copy of the Shahada.

Calligraphy pens and ink.

Maps of Ottoman Empire using d-maps.com

Procedures

1. Explain that when we talk about Semitic religions, we are referring to Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Features of Semitic religions include a religion originating in the Middle East and monotheism.
2. Read about Abraham. Discuss the role that Abraham plays in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
3. Divide the class into three groups representing Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Each group must research and discuss the role that Abraham plays in that religion. Each group presents their work to the class.
4. Watch the documentary *Mohammad: Legacy of a Prophet*.
5. With students read the handout *Mohammad, The Prophet of Islam ca. 570-632* in **Appendix A**.
6. Divide the class into five groups. Each group will research one of the following and share their findings with the class:
 - Muhammad – the Early Years
 - Muhammad’s Revelation
 - Flight to Medina
 - Life in Medina and Growth of Islam
 - Muhammad’s Last Years
7. After procedures number 4-6, have students complete the *Muhammad Worksheet* in **Appendix B**.
8. See **Appendix C** for extension exercises that accompany discussion of the Five Pillars of Islam.
9. Use the Internet or resource books to study the Ottoman Empire. Complete the map of the Ottoman Empire in **Appendix D**.

Evaluation

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

Three points: Students were active in class discussions; showed strong research skills; gave a concise, engaging presentation; descriptions reflected a clear understanding of the Semitic religions, Abraham, Muhammad, the Five Pillars of Islam and the Ottoman Empire.

Two points: Students participated in class discussions; showed strong on-grade skills; gave a competent presentation; descriptions reflected a satisfactory understanding of the Semitic religions, Abraham, Muhammad, the Five Pillars of Islam and the Ottoman Empire.

One point: Students did not participate in class discussions; showed weak research skills; presented their information with difficulty; descriptions reflected a vague or inaccurate understanding of the Semitic religions, Abraham, Muhammad, the Five Pillars of Islam and the Ottoman Empire.

Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) NCSS has developed national guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of NCSS, or to view the standards online, go to

<http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands/>.

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

Comparative Religion

Culture

Time, Continuity, and Change

People, Places, and Environments

Appendix A

MUHAMMAD, THE PROPHET OF ISLAM ca. 570 – 632 C.E.

MUHAMMAD, THE PROPHET OF ISLAM ca. 570 – 632 C.E.
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Muhammad (son of Abdullah) is known as “Prophet Muhammad” among believers in the religion of Islam. According to Islamic teachings, he was the last prophet, or messenger of God, who received revelation. When Muslims mention Muhammad’s name, they ask God to bless him, as they do for other prophets such as Adam, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. Muhammad was born into the tribe of Quraysh, in the Arabian city of Makkah. Quraysh was the tribe that took care of the sacred Ka’bah, or house of worship, and gave water and food to pilgrims who visited it. Quraysh traced its ancestry to Abraham and his son Ishmael, and believed they founded Makkah and built the Ka’bah.

Muhammad’s father died before he was born and his mother died when he was a child. Muhammad lived with his grandfather, and later his uncle, Abu Talib. Abu Talib was generous but not wealthy, and taught Muhammad to trade on their caravan journeys to Syria. A wealthy Makkan widow named Khadijah employed Muhammad to sell her goods in Syria. She was so pleased with his work that she asked him to marry her. For twenty-five years, Khadijah and Muhammad were happily married. Their four daughters lived to be adults, but two sons died.

Muhammad did not like the idol-worship of the Makkans or the unjust way the rich treated the poor, even members of their own tribe. He often spent time in thought and prayer in a cave outside Makkah. There on the Mountain of Light (Jabal al-Nur), Muhammad first experienced the call to prophethood. Muhammad described how the Angel Gabriel awoke him and told him to read. Muhammad replied that he could not read. Gabriel then said, “*Read (or recite) in the name of your Lord who created, created man from a clinging clot.*” (Qur’an, 95:1- 2) These were the first verses of the Qur’an, the holy book of Islam.

Muhammad was about forty years old then. The experience frightened him, and he hurried home, shivering, to his wife, who wrapped him in a blanket. Khadijah reassured him that his search for truth would not lead him astray. Her cousin Waraqah, a man of faith who knew the Christian holy books, reassured them that Muhammad’s call to prophethood was true. He also warned them that his own tribe would reject him.

After a while, Muhammad experienced more revelations. These new verses told Muhammad to preach to his family. Members of Muhammad's household and immediate family accepted Islam, including his wife Khadijah, the first Muslim woman. Later, he gathered members of his tribe and warned them to believe in one God and turn away from worshipping idols and unjust behavior. All rejected him except for his young cousin Ali, son of Abu Talib. The earliest Muslims were mostly poor people, slaves and women. Some important Makkans joined him, but most powerful leaders of the Quraysh rejected him. His growing influence among the members of Makkan society threatened their prestige and power. They bribed him with offers of wealth and power, but he refused to give up. Quraysh persecuted the Muslims and finally banished them to a dry valley and forbid anyone to trade with them. This was a deadly boycott in a town without farming. Khadijah and Abu Talib both died during the boycott. Muhammad sent a small group of Muslims to Ethiopia to seek asylum, or protection from persecution, which was granted by its Christian king, the Negus. Quraysh feared that Muhammad's preaching against the idols would reach their visitors during the pilgrimage, causing people stop visiting the Ka'bah.

Visitors from Yathrib, a city north of Makkah, did respond to Muhammad's teaching. Seeing the suffering of the Muslims, they pledged to protect Muhammad and his followers in their town. Gradually, the Muslims left Makkah. When Quraysh plotted to kill Muhammad, he and a close companion, Abu Bakr, secretly left Makkah to join the Muslims in Yathrib. Muhammad's journey in 622 C.E.—called the **Hijrah**—marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar. Yathrib was renamed *Madinat an-Nabi*, or "City of the Prophet." The people of Yathrib invited Muhammad to take over leadership of the city. Muhammad drew up an agreement of cooperation among the Muslims and the tribes. To help the refugees from Makkah, who had left all that they owned behind, Muhammad joined each migrant from Makkah (Muhajirun) in brotherhood with a Muslim from Madinah (Ansar). This policy helped the refugees to begin new lives, and helped the new Muslims of Madinah learn Islam from the experienced Muslims from Makkah.

Muhammad's successful escape from the murder plot enraged the Makkan leaders. They had gained the wealth of the refugees, but they saw a greater danger from the Muslims. Muhammad's growing influence among the tribes of Arabia might replace Quraysh's leadership. They tried to weaken or eliminate the Muslims. Throughout his time in Makkah, Muhammad had not

fought against Quraysh's persecution. According to Islamic teachings, a Qur'anic verse now told the Muslims to fight the Makkans. The first battle came at the arrival of a Makkan caravan near the wells of Badr. Although the Muslims were greatly outnumbered, they defeated the Quraysh in the Battle of Badr. The Quraysh sought revenge in a second battle at Uhud, where many Muslims and Quraysh died, but the outcome was a standoff.

Unable to defeat the Muslims as easily as they expected, Quraysh planned to attack Madinah with the help of allied tribes. Instead of going out to meet the attack, the Muslims fortified the city by digging a deep trench around an undefended part of Madinah. The Makkans had never seen such a defense, and were used to quick raids, but not siege warfare. During the Battle of the Trench, Quraysh and their allies camped outside the trench and tried to break through. After many of their allies lost patience and went home, the weather turned bad, and Quraysh broke camp and returned home, humiliated. Their prestige with local tribes was in serious trouble, and their economic power was weakened by the threat to their caravans.

After the Battle of the Trench, Muhammad decided to make the pilgrimage to Makkah. Although the Quraysh had the ancient duty to honor the pilgrims' peaceful intent, they stopped the Muslims at a place called Hdaybiyyah, and denied them the right to visit the Ka'bah. Instead, Muhammad succeeded in getting Quraysh to make a peace treaty. The treaty allowed the Muslims to make pilgrimage the next year, and Quraysh agreed to ten years of peace, at terms that seemed to benefit the Makkans. The treaty was a victory for Muhammad, however, for three reasons: (1) The Quraysh, after trying to exterminate the Muslim community, had been forced to recognize it as a bargaining partner. (2) The Quraysh had failed in its traditional duty by keeping Muhammad away from the Ka'bah, and was already weakened by defeat in battle. (3) The treaty gave both the Quraysh and Muhammad the right to make alliances with other tribes, and allowed Muslim influence to grow unchallenged.

A short time later, the Quraysh broke the treaty. Muhammad marched an army of thousands toward Makkah. Recognizing certain defeat, the Quraysh surrendered the city without a fight. Muhammad granted amnesty, or safety, to any Makkans who stayed in their houses. He removed the idols from the Ka'bah, and the Islamic call to prayer sounded from its roof, as it has every day since. After the conquest of Makkah, many people in Arabia began to accept Islam.

During this time, Muhammad married several women, including 'Aisha, the daughter of Abu Bakr, and Hafsa, the daughter of 'Umar, two important companions. Other wives were mainly older widows, or women who helped to cement relations with their tribes. All agreed to the marriages. His wives spoke of him as a fair and affectionate husband, and passed on the record of his words and deeds to later generations.

Revelation of the Qur'an continued for 23 years, until shortly before Muhammad's death in 632 CE. He recited the final verse during a sermon on his Farewell Pilgrimage. By that time, the Qur'an had already been memorized by many of Muhammad's followers, recited in his presence, and written down by secretaries such as Zayd ibn Thabit. Many also had memorized or recorded Muhammad's words and deeds, which became known as the *hadith*. The pattern of Muhammad's life came to be called the *Sunnah*, the second source of Islamic knowledge after the Qur'an. Muhammad was buried in Madinah in the house where he died, which was connected to the main mosque, or masjid, that had been the gathering place in Madinah. Today, the masjid where he lived is known as the Mosque of the Prophet, or Masjid an-Nabawi.

Study & Discussion Questions:

1. What was the origin of the city of Makkah? How did trade and the pilgrimage make the city important to the Arabs?
2. Describe Muhammad's childhood. At what stage of life did the call to prophethood come, according to Islamic teachings?
3. What response did the Makkans show toward the Qur'an and the teachings of Muhammad? How did the various Makkan groups express their reactions?
4. What was the purpose of the Hijrah, and what did it achieve for the Muslims from Makkah and Yathrib?
5. In your view, what was the most important factor that helped win the victory over Quraysh?

Appendix B

Muhammad Worksheet

MUHAMMAD

What were the major events in Muhammad's life and in the community's development as described in the video?	What are the personal qualities that a Muslim strives to achieve?	How did Muhammad model those qualities in his own life?	How do the American Muslims in the video view Islam?	How is Muhammad an example and model for modern day Muslims?

Appendix C

The Five Pillars of Islam

The Five Pillars of Islam

- 1. The first Pillar of Islam is called shahada. It is a brief prayer proclaiming the oneness of God and faith in Islam. Give students a copy of the shahada. Using calligraphy pens have them write the shahada in Arabic. Note: Arabic is written from right to left.**
- 2. The second Pillar is the Salat. It requires Muslims to pray five times a day towards Mecca. Have students research the bowing positions of Salat. Using a mat, students are to imitate the bowing positions.**
- 3. The third Pillar of Islam is the Zakat or almsgiving. Orally or in writing have students respond to the following question: How do you feel about almsgiving? Should it be a duty or choice?**
- 4. The fourth Pillar of Islam is Sawm or fasting. Discuss the month of Ramadan. Students may wish to try fasting for an entire day or for a meal. Obtain parental permission.**
- 5. The fifth Pillar is Hajj or the pilgrimage to Mecca that every Muslim is expected to make once. Below is a list of the seven stages of the Hajj. Create an illustration of the route of the Hajj. Label all seven stages.**

The Seven Stages of the Hajj

- 1. Walk counter-clockwise seven times around the Ka'bah.**
- 2. Run seven times between the hills of As-Safa and Al-Marwah.**
- 3. Stay overnight at the village of Mina.**
- 4. Hold all day prayer at the Plain of Arafat.**
- 5. Spend the night at Muzdalifah.**
- 6. Return to Mina for ritual of "stoning the devil".**
- 7. Complete seven more circuits around the Ka'bah.**

Appendix D

The Ottoman Empire

A Brief Overview of the Ottoman Empire

- The Ottoman Empire was the one of the largest and longest lasting Empires in history.
- It was an empire inspired and sustained by Islam.
- It replaced the Byzantine Empire as the major power in the Eastern Mediterranean.
- The Ottoman Empire reached its height under Suleiman the Magnificent (reigned 1520-66).
- The Empire began to decline after being defeated at the Battle of Lepanto (1571) and losing almost its entire navy. It declined further during the next centuries, and was effectively finished off by the First World War and the Balkan Wars.
- At its peak the Ottoman Empire included: Turkey, Egypt, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Hungary, Macedonia, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Parts of Arabia, much of the coastal area of North Africa.

**Pose the following research question to students:
WHY WAS THE EMPIRE SUCCESSFUL?**

Answers should include the following:

Highly centralized

Power was always transferred to a single person, and not split between rival princes

The Ottoman Empire was successfully ruled by a single family for 7 centuries.

State-run education system

Religion was incorporated in the state structure, and the Sultan was regarded as "the protector of Islam".

State-run judicial system

Ruthless in dealing with local leaders

Promotion to positions of power largely depended on merit

Created alliances across political and racial groups

United by Islamic ideology

United by Islamic warrior code

United by Islamic organizational and administrative structures

Highly pragmatic, taking the best ideas from other cultures and making them their own

Encouraged loyalty from other faith groups

Private power and wealth were controlled

Very strong military

- Strong slave-based army

- Expert in developing gunpowder as a military tool

- Military ethos pervaded whole administration

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

In 1453, the Ottomans captured Constantinople. They renamed the city Istanbul and declared it the Muslim capital. The Maps below show the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 17th century. Use the Internet, resource books and an atlas to fill in the countries and bodies of water.

