# Islam

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| **General** | **Core Belief**  Muslim belief is centred on one God, **Allah**, in accordance with His 99 names (attributes) as revealed in the **Holy** **Qur’an**, the Muslim holy book. **Allah** is the Arabic for God, who has no child, parents or partner of any kind. His will is communicated through prophets and messengers beginning with **Adam** continuing through numerous prophets including **Abraham**, **Moses**, and **Jesus**, before reaching its completion and perfection through the final **Prophet** **Muhammad** (peace and blessings be upon him, PBUH) in the seventh century. Muslims look to the character of **Prophet Muhammad** (PBUH), when thinking about virtues and dispositions. It is essential for Muslims to believe in **Allah**, His angels, books, messengers, life after death, the day of judgement and divine decree. The **Five Pillars** summarise how Muslims should live well through declaring faith in the Oneness of **Allah** and **Prophet Muhammad** (PBUH) being His messenger (**Shahadah**); offering five daily prayers (**Salah**) alone or in groups, often at a mosque; fasting during the month of **Ramadan** (**Sawm**), also a time to reflect and strengthen one’s relationship with **Allah** and the community; giving of charity (**Zakah**) to encourage justice and care for the community; and going for pilgrimage to **Makkah** (**Hajj**), a once in a life time duty for able bodied Muslims if they can afford it, to celebrate that human dignity, respect and equity amongst human beings, is the essence of Islam. Muslims use their scripture, the **Holy** **Qur’an**, and the sayings (**Hadiths**) of the **Prophet Muhammad** (PBUH) to guide their daily lives  **Living as a Muslim**  The purpose of a Muslim’s life is submission to **Allah**. The essentials of the Muslim faith are encapsulated in what are known as the ‘**Five Pillars of Islam’**. These form the basis of conduct for all practising Muslims and consist of a Declaration of Faith in **Allah** and in **Prophet** **Muhammad** (PBUH) as his messenger, ritual Prayer five times a day, Almsgiving for the service of the needy, annual Fasting during the month of **Ramadan** between dawn and sunset as a spiritual discipline, and pilgrimage to **Makkah** at least once in a lifetime.  Five daily prayer is religiously prescribed, and should take at around dawn, midday, late afternoon, after sunset and late evening.  **Scripture**  Muslims believe that the **Holy Qur’an** was given directly by **Allah** to the **Prophet Muhammad** (PBUH) by revelation and is used as a source of guidance for all aspects of life.  Reference is also, to the **Hadith**, which are generally recognised collections of material containing accounts of the sayings, actions and teachings of the **Prophet Muhammad** (PBUH) during his lifetime.  Because Arabic is the language in which the **Holy Qur’an** was revealed by **Allah** to the **Prophet Muhammad**  (PBUH), Muslim children begin to learn it from young age. Knowledge of Arabic is therefore widespread, both in order to read the **Holy Qur’an** directly and because it is used as the main language of worship.  **Major Annual Events**  **Ramadan** - the ninth month of the Muslim year; a time of fasting from dawn to sunset each day as a spiritual discipline and time to deepen devotion.  **Eid-ul Fitr** - which ends the month of **Ramadan** when the new moon is sighted; a day of celebration and an appropriate family occasion on which to send **Eid** cards or to wish friends a ‘Happy Eid’.  **Eid-ul Adha** - which marks the end of the time of annual pilgrimage; a day of thankfulness, marked by feasting and distribution of food to the needy.  **Milad-un-Nabi** – the birth date of the Holy **Prophet Muhammad** (PBUH).  **Ashura** – 10th day of Muharram when Hussain (PBUH) the grandson of the Holy **Prophet** (PBUH) was martyred on the plains of Kerbala.  **Births**  A child born into a Muslim family is seen as being a gift from **Allah**. Births are joyous occasions.  As soon as possible after the child’s birth, a member of the family will recite the call to prayer (**adhan**) quietly in the baby’s ear, and a boy child will be circumcised as soon as this can be arranged. The new baby is named about seven days later at a ceremony called the **Aqiqah**, where his/her hair is shaven off, an animal is offered for charity and there is a feast for family and friends, with a donation of food or money to the needy.  **Names**  It is usual for Muslims to have several personal or religious names, as many Muslims are named after the **Prophet Muhammad** (PBUH) or women after the Prophet’s wives and daughter (e.g. Khadijah, Fatima, Aisha).  **Diet**    General: Muslims are religiously forbidden to eat pork or any pork by-product, nor should these items come into contact with any other food to be eaten. The consumption of alcohol is totally forbidden. Muslims are allowed to eat poultry, mutton, certain fish and beef, as long as the meat is **halal** which means killed and prepared by a Muslim according to Islamic law.  Specific: **Ramadan** is a month of obligatory fasting for all abled Muslims from age of puberty between the hours of dawn and sunset.  **Dress**  Islam expects everyone to dress modestly. Men should be covered from waist to knee when appearing in public. Many Muslim women wear a head covering and loose fitting long dresses or trousers whilst some cover themselves from head to foot when appearing in public places.  **Places of Worship**  Inside the **Masjid** or **mosque**, which means place of prostration, the floor is generally carpeted. This area is a shoe-free zone. There is also a raised pulpit from which the **imam** teaches. There is a facility to perform Wudhu (ablution) which is required before prayers. The direction to face when saying prayers is indicated by Mihrab (a niche in the wall that shows the **Qiblah**, the direction of **Makkah**).  If there is provision for them, women sit in a separate part of the mosque to men. Worshippers greet each other in Arabic (‘Peace be upon you’) and respond (‘Peace be upon you too’). Worshippers take care that they not to point the feet towards the **Qiblah**.  Mosques act as a centre for community involvement, depending on the size might have space for Muslims to be advise on marriage, legal matters, the study of the **Holy Qur’an** and sometimes even a mortuary. Many mosques are used for outreach work within a community providing food and shelter for the homeless. But every mosque will prioritise prayers.  **The Home**  Prayer also takes place in the home. Ritual washing is still carried out beforehand. | |
| **Classroom Practice** | **Good Practice** | **Things to avoid.** |
| Do stress the Muslim belief that Islam is the perennial faith, which has a long chain of Prophets going back to Adam.  Always treat the **Holy Qur’an** with respect and with clean hands, placing on a clean surface. This would also be true for any extracts or words from the **Holy Qur’an**.  Do use a **Holy Qur’an** stand to hold the book when demonstrating it to pupils.  Do store a **Holy** **Qur’an** away carefully ideally wrapped and placed on a high shelf away from being mistreated.  Do be cautious about the forms of artwork Muslim children are asked to undertake. Patterns, designs, buildings, and landscapes are usually acceptable but representing animate forms like animals or humans might raise difficulties.  Do stress that Muslim society has made important contributions in fields of knowledge like Science, Mathematics, Language, etc.  Do listen to the call to prayer (**adhan**) and prepare pupils for what they are about to hear, explaining that it is sung in Arabic.  Do show pictures of Muslims praying which are not just rear views.  When referring to the **Prophet Muhammad** (PBUH) it is respectful to state ‘peace and blessings be upon him’ afterwards. This is sometimes written in a shortened form as ‘PBUH’. | Don’t describe **Prophet Muhammad** (PBUH) as “the founder of Islam”. **Prophet Muhammad** (PBUH) is the last and final Prophet of Islam. Muslims believe that their faith preceded **Prophet Muhammad** (PBUH) and goes right back to the earliest beginnings of humankind.  Don’t use illustrations, of the **Prophet Muhammad** (PBUH) or his Companions. Many Muslims would be unhappy about this. Companions include Khadijah, Aishah, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali.  For the same reason, don’t cast pupils, or role-play scenes as **Prophet Muhammad** (PBUH) or as one of his Companions.  Don’t ask pupils to create Islamic inspired art with pictures of humans or animals as only **Allah** is regarded as Creator.  Don’t suggest that the killing of a sheep or goat during **Eid-ul-Adha** is a sacrifice to placate God. The ritual is a reminder of the story of **Abraham** and **Ishma’il**. The killing of an animal results in a sharing or giving, a sacrifice of generosity in the feeding of others. |
| **Visits** | **Good Practice** | **Things to avoid** |
| Visitors, both male and female are requested to wear modest clothing, i.e. ankle length skirts or trousers of a loose-fitting kind. Women are also requested to wear long-sleeved and high-necked tops and to cover the head with a scarf. Shoes are always removed when entering the building. This keeps the mosque a clean place for Muslims to pray.  Visitors are welcomed to sit quietly at a place near the back of the mosque whilst prayers are in progress, but are not expected to join in.  When greeted at the mosque with “**Salam Alaykum**” (Peace be upon you) it is customary to respond with “**Alaykum Salam**” (and also with you).  When visiting a mosque remember to switch phones to silent so not to disturb prayer. | Do warn pupils about how they should sit when visiting a mosque. Feet pointing towards the **Mihrab**, in other words in the direction of **Makkah**, should be avoided.  Members of the not related opposite sex do not shake hands. |