

# What is Islam?

## Grades 3-5

The learner will gain the basic concepts behind Islam as well as the 5 pillars of Islam. After brainstorming about the different religious groups that comfortably co-exist in our community, the children will learn that there are two basic groups if Muslims.

**Time –**  
Around one hour

### Materials needed

Chart paper or white board for brainstorming activity  
Overhead or white board for writing down primary ideas introduced  
Student handouts for this lesson

**Step One** – Ask children if they are curious about Islam or people who are Muslims. Tell them that we will be learning some basic facts about Islam and also the 5 basic pillars or beliefs of all Muslims

**Step Two** – Brainstorm the different churches and religious groups that are in your town and community. Accept all answers and list them. Ask if they have heard if trouble between these groups. Emphasize that we have many different groups and religions in our community that respect each other and get along well.

**Step Three** – We will learn some facts about Islam. Using the handout, students can take notes about Islam.

1. Islam is one of three traditional branches of Abraham. The other two are Judaism and Christianity. People who practice Islam are called Muslims.
2. Muslims believe in all prophets that Jews and Christians believe in, including Jesus. BUT, they believe that there was an additional prophet named Mohammad.
3. Islam is based on the Koran – a holy book that is very similar to the Bible.
4. There are many groups of Muslims – the branch that are terrorists do not represent Muslims as a whole.

**Step Four** – Muslims believe that there are five basic pillars that “hold up” their faith.

Use the handout that is included for students to make notes about the pillars.

1. There is only one God. He is Allah. Mohammad was his prophet.
3. Give to the poor
4. Live a life of prayer. (Many Muslims pray 5 times a day.)
5. Strengthen your prayer life by observing Ramadan
6. If you can afford it, make a pilgrimage to Mecca.

### **Step Five**

What is Ramadan?

Muslims strengthen their faith by fasting for one month. During this holy month in their faith, they do not eat between sun-up and sun-down. This lack of food helps Muslims to feel stronger in their faith as they sacrifice eating at the same time. It also helps them to remember the poor, who may be hungry at all times of the year.’’

### **Optional** – Step six

Tell children that the next lesson, they will learn about Muslims in Africa and what the two main branches of Islam are.

**Extension:** Use *If The World were a Village* by Smith and Armstrong to illustrate the number of Muslims in the world. Students could also be asked to interview a Muslim if one is known in the community. This person would possibly make a great guest speaker for the class.

### **NC Standard Course of Study**

K-12 – Global Connections, Appreciation of different cultures.

Grade 4 – What are special holidays and traditions in North Carolina?

Goal 6 – 6.08 Interdependence if NC’s relationships with other countries

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