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 of 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.
2. Give to the poor
3. Live a life of prayer. (Many Muslims pray 5 times a day.)
4. Strengthen your prayer life by observing Ramadan
5. 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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Answers about Islam

What is Islam?

Islam is one of the three main religions that come from the Biblical tradition of Abraham. These religions are: Judaism, Christianity and ________________.

The people who follow Islam are called ________________. Muslims believe in all of the prophets in the Bible, including Jesus. However, they believe that a great teacher followed Jesus. This teacher’s name is _____________________.

The Holy book that Mohammad wrote is called the _____________. This is the Holy book that Muslims follow.

Islam is founded on five main beliefs. These are called the _________________________________.

The Muslim terrorists that are threatening our world ______ ______ represent most Muslims.

Word Choices-

*do not  *Mohammad  *Koran  *Islam  *Muslims  *Five Pillars of Islam
The Five Pillars of Islam

1. There is but one god and his name is Allah. Mohammad is his prophet.

2. Live a life of prayer everyday to increase your faith.

3. Give alms to the poor.

4. Fast during Ramadan, to increase your faith.

5. If you can, make a journey to Mecca, once in your life.

Notes on these beliefs.

Alms means charity. It means having the rich give to the poor. The poor could include the sick, the working poor, the poor without jobs or the poor traveler who is lost and out of place.

Ideally, Muslims are asked to pray five times a day. They usually have a small prayer rug and are asked to turn in the direction of Mecca. Muslims often keep their prayer rugs close by and take them with them when they travel.

Ramadan is a month of fasting between sun up and sun down. Fasting means to go without food or drink. For many Muslims it is traditional to get up at 4:00 AM during Ramadan to have a large breakfast. This long period of fasting is supposed to make each Muslim feel closer to Allah and to remind them of the poor who may not have enough to eat. Groups of Muslims often get together for their breakfast or late evening meal. Young children, the sick and the elderly are not asked to fast during this time. Travelers are also not asked to fast. However they are expected to make up the days that they missed fasting after Ramadan is over.

The journey to Mecca is seen as the highlight of a lifetime for a Muslim. It’s purpose is to increase one’s faith. It is only asked of people who can afford to make the journey financially and are physically able.

The city of Mecca is on the east coast of Saudi Arabia, forty-five miles from the Red Sea. It is the birthplace of Mohammad and Islam. It is also the home of the sacred Mosque of Mecca.