

- Divide the students into groups to research Muslim groups in the United States and in Islamic countries such as Egypt or Jordan. Have each group compile their findings in a written or oral report. Compare and contrast these reports to analyze whether or not there are significant differences between Muslims in the United States and abroad.
- The architectural style of the mosque is highly distinctive and very representative of Islamic artistic expression. Ask students to explore the origin of this architectural style as well as gather information and images of some of the most historically significant mosques.
- Throughout history, there have been many influential Muslim leaders. Using the Internet or traditional print resources, have students identify some of these figures and their historical significance and present their findings to the class.
- Have the students complete a map of countries that have significant Islamic populations. Attach pie charts showing the composition of each country with regard to members of different faiths, particularly Islam. Use these statistics to spark discussion about their implications on the social and political practices of the country.

Internet Resources

www.rci.rutgers.edu/~religion/links/vrindex.html

Virtual Religion Index — Maintained by Rutgers University, this site offers an academic approach to the study of the world religions with emphasis on archeology and anthropology. This site is also a great starting point for quick overviews, journal articles and links to other sites.

www.arches.uga.edu/~godlas/

Islamic Studies, Islam, Arabic, and Religion — This Islamic Studies web site covers the areas of Islam, Arabic and religion. Created by Dr. A. Godlas, Associate Professor at the University of Georgia, this site is intended for students and teachers at all levels.

www.ummah.org.uk/what-is-islam/index.html

About Islam and Muslims — Provides a wealth of information about Islamic beliefs, history and civilization for Muslims and non-Muslims.

www.islamicart.com

Islamic & Arabic Arts & Architecture — This site explains in detail the historical and cultural significance of hundreds of Islamic and Arabic artifacts. It contains photos and descriptions of architecture, calligraphy and decorative arts as well as time line pages for historical events and figures.

www.fordham.edu/halsall/islam/islamsbook.html

Internet Islamic History Sourcebook — Extensive information about Islamic history provided by documents and direct links.

Suggested Print Resources

- Al-Faruqi, Isma'il R. & Lois Lamy al-Faruqi. *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*. KAZI Pubns. 1996.
- *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the Islamic World*. Cambridge University. 1996.
- Child, John. *The Rise of Islam*. Peter Bedrick Books. 1995.
- *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an: New Edition With Revised Translation, Commentary and Newly Compiled Comprehensive Index*. 9th ed. Amana. 1998.
- *The Muslim Almanac: A Reference Work on the History, Faith, Culture, and Peoples of Islam*. Gale. 1996.
- Sabini, John. *Islam: A Primer*, 5th ed. Middle East Editorial Assoc. 1997.

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ISLAM

The study of world religion is the examination of the specific beliefs, customs and traditions of a particular religion as well as its impact on world culture and history. The *Religions of the World* video series and its accompanying Teacher's Guides are designed to supplement World Cultures and History curriculum. These teaching aids are meant to invite classroom study and dialogue and challenge students to make connections between the past and the present. Questions and insights are likely to develop and will reveal striking similarities and vast differences among the world's major religions as well as the unique perspective of its many individual cultures.

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Historical Overview

Islam is one of the three great monotheistic faiths and the second largest religion in the world. Its emergence can be directly traced to the divine interactions of the Prophet Muhammad with Allah in the 7th century C.E. In the 9th-12th centuries, Islam rose to great world prominence with a profound influence on art, history, politics and science. Today, Islam is commonly practiced in countries spreading from western North Africa into Europe through southeast Asia to the United States. Islam continues to be a vital and growing religion not only in number but also world importance.

Time Line

570 C.E. — Muhammad is born in Mecca, Arabia.

610 C.E. — Islam begins as an organized religion when Muhammad returns to his tribe with the announcement that he has spoken to Allah through the angel, Gabriel, and has received the divine revelation.

621 C.E. — The beginning of the Islamic calendar marked by the Hijrah, or flight of Muhammad's followers to the town of Yathrib to escape persecution from the people of Mecca.

630 C.E. — Muhammad and his followers take control of Mecca and purge the Ka'bah of all idols. Islam is established as the religion of the region.

632 C.E. — Muhammad dies at age 62.

800–1100 C.E. — The age of cultural brilliance for the Islamic world and the start of Sufism.

1400–1600 C.E. — Persia, Turkey and India emerge as militarily powerful, culturally rich and economically strong Muslim nations.

1700–1940 C.E. — Islamic countries are colonized by Western civilizations. Islamic countries go into decline.

1948 C.E. — Islamic countries from the coast of western North Africa to Indonesia adapt to Western culture and gain prominence using oil and other natural resources, beginning a resurgence in power and influence.

Vocabulary

Arabia — The Arabian peninsula, located east of modern Egypt and south of Israel, is mainly Saudi Arabia today; the homeland to Muhammad and the birthplace of Islam.

Allah — The Arabic word for God.

Islam — The Arabic word for peace, soundness or security. It also means submission or surrender to the will of Allah.

Muslims — Followers of Islam, the will of Allah.

Muhammad — The prophet of Allah, born approximately 570 C.E.

Mecca — The birthplace of Muhammad and one of the most sacred cities to Islam.

Gabriel — The angel who brought Allah's revelation to Muhammad.

Ka'bah — The most sacred shrine of Islam, originally built by Abraham and located in the center square in Mecca. *(Continued)*

Abu Bakr — The first adult to convert to Islam, he was the chosen successor to Muhammad and the first leader of the Sunni Muslims.

Khalifahs — Successors to Muhammad, they led Muslims through the 7th century C.E. and collectively published the sacred texts known as the Qur'an.

Qur'an — The sacred scriptures revealing Allah's will for the conduct of people; also the Arabic word for something to be recited.

Shari'ah — The moral code and rules of etiquette Muslims adhere to in daily life.

Pillars of Islam — The five tenets of Islam are profession of faith, prayer, alms, fasting and pilgrimage.

Muezzin — The person who calls Muslims to prayer five times a day.

Minaret — The Islamic prayer tower used to call the faithful to prayer.

Mosque — The Islamic place of worship.

Ramadan — The ninth month of the Islamic lunar year in which all Muslims (except the young, elderly and sick) are expected to fast from sunrise to sunset. 'id al-Fitr is the festival that celebrates the end of Ramadan.

Hadj — The pilgrimage all Muslims are expected to make to Mecca at least once in their lives; thereafter, they are called hadji.

Sufism — The mystic branch of the Islamic faith whose goal is to see Allah directly and clearly with purity of heart.

Sunni — One of the two major sects of Islam to which the majority of Muslims belong; considered the orthodox path of Islamic belief.

Ali — Muhammad's cousin and brother-in-law who led the Shi'ah faction, a sect of Islam that accounts for 10% of Muslims today.

Ottoman Empire — The reigning Muslim dynasty of the 17th century C.E. in what is present-day Turkey.

Pre-viewing Discussion

- Engage students in a conversation about what they already know, or think they know, about Islam and Muslim culture. Generate lists of concepts as well as questions students hope will be addressed in the show. It will be helpful to return to these after viewing the video.
- In which countries would students expect to find the majority of Muslims? Where are most Muslims actually located? Have the students locate the major Islamic nations on a world map.

Focus Questions

1. Who is the founder of Islam?
2. What does the word Islam mean?
3. Approximately how much of the world's current population is Muslim? Where does the religion rank in terms of followers with other religions of the world?
4. Whom do the Muslims worship?

(Continued)

5. Where can one find the revelations of Allah as received by Muhammad?
6. Why was Muhammad not warmly received in his own city when he returned with his divine revelation?
7. Why was Muhammad's flight to Medina so important to the future of Islam?
8. What is the Qur'an, and why should it be read in Arabic?
9. What is Shari'ah? How does it relate to Muslim daily life?
10. Why is it common for Muslim women to wear scarves on their heads in the mosque or in public?
11. What are the five Pillars of Islam?
12. Name two examples of actions forbidden by Islamic law.
13. Describe some of the key rituals and festivals associated with the pilgrimage to Mecca.
14. What are the distinguishing features of each major Islamic sect?
15. How have Islamic peoples recovered power and independence in the last four decades?

Follow-up Discussion

- How would life be different in the United States if everyone were Muslim? Take into account the Muslim concern of placing every activity of life in the hands of Allah. Would there still be separation of church and state as stated in the Bill of Rights?
- Compare and contrast the role of Christ in Christianity with that of Muhammad in Islam.
- How does the mission of Islam, a divinely inspired unity of mankind, compare with the beliefs of other major faiths?
- Of all the many accomplishments of Muhammad during his life, which one is the most influential for Islam? Explain your reasoning.
- Christianity, Judaism and Islam share similar principles of love, respect for human life, peace and high moral principles. What then might explain the animosity and violence between the groups throughout history? (i.e. the Crusades, the creation of the country of Israel, Bosnia, the Muslim-Christian conflict in the Balkans, the European colonization of the Middle East and the rise of the Islamic fundamentalists.)
- What effect have the last three hundred years had on the Islamic religion in its relations and teachings about the West?

Follow-up Activities

- Generate a list of questions that still remain or have developed from further discussion and have students invite a local Muslim leader into class or contact an Islamic Center through the Internet to find answers to these questions. *(Continued)*