



*Soul Matters*

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# Crossing Paths

Walking the Path of  
Islam

March 2019 - Journey

# CONTENTS

<a href="#"><u>Welcome</u></a>	Page 2
<b>Weekly Sessions</b>	
<a href="#"><u>Map Sunday</u></a> Getting a View of The Terrain - Islam	Page 3
<a href="#"><u>Tack Sunday</u></a> Islam & Journey	Page 14
<a href="#"><u>Summit Day</u></a> The Visit	Page 25
<a href="#"><u>Lake Sunday</u></a> Reflecting on The Visit	Page 29
<b>Handouts</b>	
<a href="#"><u>Handout #1</u></a> - Arabic Letters	Page 34
<a href="#"><u>Handout #2</u></a> - Guessing Game	Page 35
<a href="#"><u>Handout #3</u></a> - 8 Practices	Page 37
<a href="#"><u>Handout #4</u></a> - Interview Questions	Page 39

## ***Welcome***

Welcome to the Crossing Paths packet for March and our exploration of Islam. In addition to exploring Islam, this packet engages our youth with March's theme of "What Does it Mean to be a People of Journey?"

As we developed the packet, we especially appreciated the opportunity to understand the contributions of Islam to Western Civilization during its Golden Age during the 8th - 14th centuries. We hadn't realized how the Moors introduced hospitals, universities, surgery, optics and more to Europe. Islam and its gifts were a major force that helped Europe out of the Dark Ages. While it's not as well-known as it should be, Islam kickstarted the Renaissance! We feel grateful to pass on this learning to our youth since it powerfully challenges the negative stereotypes about Islam as a force "out to destroy culture."

A major part of this month's session focuses on the Five Pillars of Islam. This provided us with a wonderful opportunity not just to connect with our monthly theme but also to explore the fascinating similarities between Islam and UUism. We hope that, like us, these similarities help you see our faith in a new and deeper light.

Thanks, as always, for letting us be your partners and walk these journeys with you in spirit!

***Katie, on behalf of the entire Soul Matters team***

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# Week 1

## Map Sunday

### *Purpose*

- Introduce youth to some of the basic beliefs and practices of Islam, using our Crossing Paths' binoculars/lenses

### *Leader Preparation & Notes*

#### **Remembering Humility**

As always, remember that the aim of Map Sunday is to “get a glimpse” of each religion. There is no way to capture the fullness of these rich religions in a session or two. So as a leader, you will need to help your youth remember that there is still a lot about each religion left to explore and we need to be humble about what we are learning. It might be helpful to remind your youth about our second practice of welcoming: “always be curious” - i.e. always be open and never assume you understand something fully.

#### **Islamic Contributions to Civilization**

This month provides an opportunity to counter messages about Islam as a religion of destruction. Muslims continue to endure the painful injustice of being labeled terrorists and having their religion painted as violent and wanting to destroy other ways of life and “civilizations.” This session provides an antidote to this unfair characterization. In contrast to the negative images out there, we explore the tremendous creative contributions of Islam to western civilization. The Islamic “Golden Age” was an amazing time of creativity in the arts and sciences.

#### Background:

#### **Top Two**

- British Muslims condemn London attack  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTKfBMWebGE>
- Creativity and Islam  
<http://mvslim.com/weve-all-got-talents-creativity-in-islam/>

#### **Digging Deeper**

- This Ramadan See without Labels (creative Coke ad)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84OTONLlqfM>
- Clever Pepsi Ad for Ramadan (not to be outdone!)  
<http://www.adweek.com/creativity/pepsis-clever-multiscreen-ramadan-ad-unfolds-across-3-phones-at-once/>

## Background Resources

These short videos and articles are recommended background information for leading the session and grounding yourself in Muslim history and core beliefs. If you want an even broader exposure to the tradition, you can read ahead and explore the Leader Background Resources in the other sessions.

### Top Two

- A Successful Day at a Mosque with Zach Anner  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8irL7tDORXY>
- Introduction to Islam/Belief/Oprah Winfrey  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgP\\_OSOS3IA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgP_OSOS3IA)

### Digging Deeper

- How Islam Began - in 10 minutes  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDxKxnVZtgo>
- Islam - with Stephan Prothero  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FfKN2Sf7Ac>
- FTD Facts: 11 Surprising Fact about Islam  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPu4NL43jXI>
- Exploring Islam with Children  
<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/exploring-islam-children>

## Dinner and Drive Time Tip (Email to parents ahead of time):

### Before:

- Watch the below video with your youth and discuss your reactions. What did you learn? What surprised you about the Muslim religion? How were you challenged or intrigued?
  - A Successful Day at a Mosque with Zach Anner  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8irL7tDORXY>

### After:

- In our worship time this week, we will explore how Muslims invite Allah(God) to guide and be present in their actions using the phrase “Bismillah” before those actions. It’s a means of acting more intentionally and with your values front and center. Learn more here ( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oimOhjmyyOI> -minutes 1:50-3:13) and here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kdt-miOhGwI>) . Engage your youth in a discussion about the ways you’ve centered yourself before important actions or decisions. Ask them what they thought of the practice of reciting Bismillah.
- Invite your youth to share some of the Islamic contributions to Western civilization we learned about. They will play a Guessing Game. We’ve invited them to play it with you. Ask if they brought home the game page and have them lead you through the guessing game.
- Learn about the life of Muhammad. Each of these cartoon biographical stories about Muhammad is about 10 minutes long. The group will watch the first with suggestions to watch the remaining ones at home if they were interested. Or find the book [Muhammad](#) by Demi to read.
  - Prophet Muhammad (saw) Part 1: <https://youtu.be/WEEORXFj-lo>
  - Prophet Muhammad (saw) Part 2: <https://youtu.be/LO3WUk1b7fk>
  - Prophet Muhammad (saw) Part 3: <https://goo.gl/mtzZ8Z>
  - Prophet Muhammad (saw) Part 4: <https://goo.gl/iA1uED>

### For You:

Spend some time expanding your own understanding of Islam. Here are some great places to dig in:

- FTD Facts: 11 Surprising Fact about Islam  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPu4NL43jXI>
- Introduction to Islam/Belief/Oprah Winfrey  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqP\\_OSOS3IA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqP_OSOS3IA)

### Digging Deeper

- Watch the PBS special “The Life of Muhammad” <https://rmpbs.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/de01fec8-ead4-44ad-956d-264199688ba5/the-life-of-muhammad/>
- Islam - with Stephan Prothero  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FfKN2Sf7Ac>

## Pre-Session to Do List:

- Send out the Dinner and Drive Time Tip. See above.
- Create this week’s graffiti board. Core question: What is Islam?
- Make sure you have the technology needed to play the videos that are part of this session.
- Make copies of Handout #1- Arabic letters, one for each pair to share.
- Locate supplies for the games you choose, such as soap, oranges, rice, chess, paper.
- Make copies of Handout #2 - Guessing Game, one for every pair, plus extras to send home so the parent(s) can try it.

## Session

# **Getting a View of the Terrain: Islam**

### **Entering - Graffiti Board Writing**

As youth enter the room invite them to engage the graffiti board. Encourage symbols, words, drawings. These can be words or images, anything that represents what youth know of Islam or experiences youth have had with Islam.

*This Week's Core Question:  
**What is Islam?***

***Optional Variation - Weave the Graffiti Board into Worship instead.** If you want a sensory component to worship, you can move the Graffiti Board activity, as above, to the reflection portion of the worship below. You will need to set up the graffiti board and markers in the center of the circle ahead of time.*

### **Gathering & Centering - Worship (10 min)**

#### **Centering Sound**

Invite everyone to calm and center themselves. Use whatever ringing vessel you have chosen (chimes, bowl, bell). Ring the bell/bowl/chimes. Once the sound ends, pause for a moment of silence and then end by saying "Amen" or blessing words of your own.

#### **Lighting the Chalice**

*We light this chalice in gratitude for the path we share, a path that guides us  
back to our deepest self,  
back to each other,  
And back to life's gifts and joy.*

#### **Welcome & Lead-In to Centering**

Leader talking points, in script form:

- Welcome to Map Sunday and our exploration of this month's religion: Islam.
- Map Sunday is when we "survey" the religion and use our "binoculars/lenses" to get a glimpse of it before we make our visit and experience it directly, and more fully.
- A core belief of Muslims is living by the will of Allah (God) and living in a way that keeps them close to Allah (God) at all times.
- One way some Muslims remind themselves of this is by using the phrase "Bismillah" ("In the name of God") before or during actions they take. Here's how it is explained: "The central idea here is that whatever we do, every step that we take, every breath that we breathe, is done for, because of, and through the essence of, the One who has created us... Thus, this beautiful word bismillah is a magnificent reminder of our relationship to our Creator and our relationship to all of creation." - <https://wahiduddin.net/words/bismillah.htm>

- (Leaders can also check out <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oimOhjmyyOI> (minutes 1:50 - 3:13)
- The core idea here is that God is there to help and guide them.
- To honor this, we will listen to a song celebrating “Bismillah.”
- To connect with the idea, while we listen to the song, let’s think of a time when we needed extra help to get by. Perhaps it was a time when you received help from a friend or family member. Or maybe it was something in a book or song. Let’s listen and reflect.
- **[If you are doing the Graffiti Board inside worship rather than at the beginning of the session, use these words to introduce that component]** “ As you listen and reflect on the time you received help, take turns going up to the graffiti board to add words, drawings and symbols of what you know about Islam.”

### ***Music for Centering***

Bismillah: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kdt-miOhGwI>

### ***Thematic Check-in***

Invite the group to share, in a few sentences, when they needed extra help to get by and a friend, family member, book or song helped them. It could be a time when something was stuck for them and they benefited from a friend’s insight. Or when a parent helped sort out a fight with a sibling. Or when they could only focus on the half-empty part of a situation and someone helped them widen their eyes to the half-full side of things. After the sharing, leader expresses gratitude for everyone’s sharing.

### ***Closing***

“In the rest of our time together and in the days ahead, **May the ropes be with you.** May we stay close to our deepest and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. And may we remember to lean into life’s joy. Blessed be. Amen”

### ***Extinguish the Chalice***

Leader note: If you use a real flame, our advice is to extinguish it now to prevent accidental tipping over or pyro play with hot wax. If you use a tea light, you may wish to extinguish it at the end of the session during the closing words.

# Taking in the Terrain

## A Glimpse of Islam through the Crossing Paths Binoculars

### Introduction

Explain that the focus of today is to “get a glimpse” of the world of Islam. Stress that there is no way to capture the fullness of these rich religious traditions in a session or two. So today is about impressions and partial views and learning a bit about the Muslims before our visit. Remember our second practice of welcoming: “always be curious” - i.e. always be open and never assume you understand something fully.

### *Sizing Up the Terrain (5 min.)*

#### The Origin and Size of Islam

You can keep this simple or get creative. The easiest and most time-efficient approach is to share the basic facts verbally. If you want to take it to the next level, consider placing a large sheet of paper on the wall and writing the basic stats on it. This will allow the youth to visually compare the size and location of the various religions. Also consider getting a map for your room to capture and compare the size and location of the various religions.

#### When

“The origin of Islam can be traced back to 7th century Saudi Arabia. Islam is thus the youngest of the great world religions. The prophet Muhammad (circa 570-632 A.D.) introduced Islam in 610 A.D. after experiencing what he claimed to be an angelic visitation. Muhammad dictated the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, which Muslims believe to be the preexistent, perfect words of Allah.”

- <https://www.allaboutreligion.org/origin-of-islam.htm>

#### How Many?

“Adherents of Islam constitute the world's second largest religious group. According to a study in 2015, Islam has 1.8 billion adherents, making up about 24% of the world population. Most Muslims are either of two denominations: Sunni (80-90%, roughly 1.5 billion people) or Shia (10–20%, roughly 170-340 million people).”

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam\\_by\\_country](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_by_country)

While second largest, Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world, with it growing in the last century from 12% to 22% of the world's population. In contrast, Christianity declined in the last century from 35% to 33% of the world's population.

In comparison, there are about 200,000 UUs in the U.S.

#### Where

“Islam is the dominant religion in the Central Asia, Indonesia, Middle East, South Asia, North Africa, the Sahel and some other parts of Asia. The diverse Asia-Pacific region contains the highest number of Muslims in the world, easily surpassing the Middle East and North Africa.”

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam\\_by\\_country](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_by_country)

Check out this map that shows the population of Muslims around the world:

<http://www.pewforum.org/2009/10/07/mapping-the-global-muslim-population/>

## Symbol (5 min.)

### Explain

**Leader Resources (Background and support for leaders so they can explain in their own words):**



The star and crescent is the best-known symbol used to represent Islam. The symbol is not Muslim in origin, it was a polytheistic icon adopted during the spread of Islam, and its use today is sometimes controversial in the Muslim world. The crescent and star are often said to be Islamic symbols, but historians say that they were the insignia of the Ottoman Empire, not of Islam as a whole.

- <http://religious-symbols.net/islam-symbols.html>
- <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-crescent-moon-a-symbol-of-islam-2004351>



The words "Allah" in Arabic script or characters can be regarded as visually representing Islam as a symbol.

- <http://religious-symbols.net/islam-symbols.html>

### Top Two

- The Art of Arabic Calligraphy  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLqP9ZLVmbQ>
- Why is Writing So Important in Islamic Art - Metropolitan Museum of Art  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nx6Cm1DdW0>

### Digging Deeper

- Why Islam forbids images of Mohammed - CNN  
<https://www.cnn.com/2015/05/04/living/islam-prophet-images/index.html>
- Islam - Religious Studies  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FfKN2Sf7Ac> (minutes 8:25-9:47)

## Engage

### Your Arabic Name

The Quran is written in Arabic. It is written from right to left, instead of left to right. The calligraphic symbol of Allah is one of the main symbols of Islam. Try your hand at Arabic calligraphy by writing your name:

Use this online translation form making a name into Arabic calligraphy then copy it onto paper.

<http://www.firdaous.org/write-name-arabic-calligraphy.htm>

or

Write your name in Arabic, using Handout #1, at the end of this packet:

1. Write your name from right to left: i.e. SCOTT becomes TTOCS; KATIE becomes EITAK.
  2. Write your name according to the sounds in your name instead of just the letters because there are no Arabic letters for C, G, I, O, P, Q, V, and X. i.e. TTOCS becomes TTAKS; EITAK becomes YTAK.
  3. Match the Arabic Letters in Handout #1 to the letters in your name.
- Adapted from "Holidays and Holy Days" by Charlene Brotman and Barbara Marshman

## Activities - Exploring Islam (40 min)

### Activity #1: The Prophet Muhammad

#### Explain

Introduction for Leaders

The Prophet Muhammed is the prophet of Islam. He is not revered as a son of God, but as God's messenger. The Prophet Muhammed is not pictured in art, in contrast to Christianity, where artists have drawn imagined images of Jesus.

"... there are no specific drawings of the prophet and his family. This is because the Islamic tradition, like the Jewish tradition, has always followed the ten commandments, in particular, "Thou shalt not create graven images." As a result of following this commandment, Islamic art developed avenues of artistic expression other than the human form, taking numbers and geometry, plant and animal life to their highest form of human expression." - from the Introduction to "Muhammad" by Demi

Muslims say "Peace Be Upon Him" after his name. The letters you sometimes see after the prophet's name, like "saw" or "PBUH" mean "Peace Be Upon Him" in Arabic or English and is a shortcut indicating that a Muslim should repeat them after saying the prophet's name as a sign of respect. Non-Muslims are [not required to say it](#). It is a sign of respect to say "The Prophet Muhammad" because Muhammed is also the most common Arabic name.

- Bio of the Prophet Muhammad <https://www.biography.com/people/muhammad>
- Top Ten Things You Should Know about the Prophet Muhammad <https://stepfeed.com/10-things-you-should-know-about-prophet-muhammad-3272>

## Engage

Tell the story of the life of the Prophet Muhammad using the video or the book, below.

### Prophet Stories For Kids in English | Prophet Muhammad (saw) Videos

Each of these videos is about 10 minutes long. Watch the first to begin the story of Muhammad. Suggest that they watch the remaining three at home. Or read the book, following.

Prophet Muhammad (saw) Part 1: <https://youtu.be/WEEORXFj-lo>

Prophet Muhammad (saw) Part 2: <https://youtu.be/LO3WUk1b7fk>

Prophet Muhammad (saw) Part 3: <https://goo.gl/mtzZ8Z>

Prophet Muhammad (saw) Part 4: <https://goo.gl/iA1uED>

### Muhammad (Book)

by Demi (Author, Illustrator)

[https://www.amazon.com/Muhammad-](https://www.amazon.com/Muhammad-Demi/dp/0689852649/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1544217007&sr=1-1&keywords=Muhammad+demi)

[Demi/dp/0689852649/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1544217007&sr=1-1&keywords=Muhammad+demi](https://www.amazon.com/Muhammad-Demi/dp/0689852649/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1544217007&sr=1-1&keywords=Muhammad+demi)

“Born in Mecca in the year 570, Muhammad grew into a sensitive and thoughtful man who believed deeply in the worship of one true god.

In his fortieth year, Muhammad experienced a revelation from the angel Gabriel that he, Muhammad, was the messenger of God. Over the next twenty-three years, he received many such revelations, all of which were written down by scribes at the time of revelation to become the Koran, the sacred scripture of Islam, a religion that is practiced by nearly one-quarter of the world's population and holds as its most sacred tenet that there is no god but God.

Through a clear text and stunning illustrations based upon those of traditional Islamic expression, the award-winning artist Demi here introduces the remarkable life of the Prophet Muhammad for young readers.” - Amazon. Great book!

### Prophet Muhammed saw Coloring Page (possible craft to use while reading the book, above).

<http://coloringkids.org/islamic-coloring-pages/prophet/>

Create some calligraphic art of the name of the prophet.

## Activity #2: Islamic Contributions to Civilization

How can we counter the inaccurate negative messages that violent terrorists represent all Muslims? To address this, we offer the creative contributions to civilization by Islam, during the Islamic “Golden Age.” We offer this amazing time of inventing and creating hospitals, universities, science and philosophy as a way of understanding Islam besides what is in the news about terrorists.

## Explain

Introduce the creative contributions as an antidote to the perception of Islam as a religion of terrorism and violence.

### Leader Background

- Top 10 Islamic Contributions  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e6SicHMF9Y0>
- Overcoming Historical Amnesia; Muslim Contributions to Civilization  
[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/craig-considine/overcoming-historical-amnesia\\_b\\_4135868.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/craig-considine/overcoming-historical-amnesia_b_4135868.html)

### Digging Deeper

- Contributions of Muslims to World Civilizations  
<https://www.manvilleschools.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=8384&dataid=4775&FileName=Chapter%2010%20-%20Muslim%20Contributions%20to%20World%20Civ.pdf>

## Engage

### Guessing Game - Creative Islamic Contributions to Civilization

Invite the group to divide into pairs. Pass out Handout #2 Guessing Game, at the end of this packet, to each pair, asking them to identify the items they think came from Islamic culture. There is a surprise catch which you can unveil after they've made guesses: every item, except one, comes from Islamic Empire during its Golden Age, 8th c. to the 14th c. The only exception is Chocolate. Chocolate is credited to the Olmec people of Latin America.

Leader note: Make extra copies of the Handout so the middle schoolers can take it home and try it out on their parent(s). This suggestion is included in the "Drive Time Tips" for Parents.

### Watch a Rap about Contributions to Western Civilization

- **Muslim Contributions to Civilization RAP**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Udi8bek3s7c>

### Games to Play to Celebrate Islamic Contributions to Western Civilization

Play any of several games dedicated to the Islamic inventions and contributions:

- **Soap bowling, Soap Relay**  
<http://www.youthwork-practice.com/games/Soap-Games.html>
- **Soap fishing, Squeezing the soap, Soap consumption, Soap Relay, Cling wrap track.**  
<http://www.games4youthgroups.com/games-with-less-material-12.html>
- **Games with oranges**
  - **Knee Trembler**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjybTSnlWfl>
  - **Orange Relay**  
<http://stumingames.com/2014/09/orange-relay/>
- **Other Games/Activities with Islamic inventions and introductions**
  - Rice Game  
<https://youthgroupgames.com.au/games/254/rice-model-competition/>
  - Chess

### **Graffiti Board - Filling in the Gaps (3 min.)**

Invite the youth to add a picture or word to the graffiti board, picking one thing that engaged them most about today's session. What did they learn about Islam that they think is most important to add.

Remember to use markers that are a different color than was used to fill or the board at the start of the session, so you can continue to track learning over the sessions.

### **Looking Ahead - What to do ahead of time or expect (2 min.)**

Thank the youth for their participation this week. Note one thing that you particularly appreciated or enjoyed about the session you just did with them.

Remind the youth what is happening next week and make sure they know what they have to do ahead of time. Note one thing that you are particularly looking forward to.

### **Closing Words (1 min)**

"In the days ahead, **May the ropes be with you.** May we stay close to our deepest and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. And may we remember to lean into life's joy. Blessed be. Amen

# Week 2

## Tack Sunday

### *What does it Mean to be a People of Journey... from a Muslim Perspective?*

#### **Purpose**

- Explore the connection between our monthly theme of Journey and Islam.

#### **Dinner and Drive Time Tips (Email to parents prior to the meeting):**

##### **Before:**

- Watch a movie with your youth with an Islamic theme:
  - *The Kite Runner* (PG-13) <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0419887/>
  - *Wadjha* (PG) [www.imdb.com/title/tt2258858/](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2258858/)
  - *Children of Heaven* (PG) <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0118849/>
  - *He Named Me Malala* (PG-13) <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3065132/>

##### **After:**

- In our worship, we will talk about Islam and our monthly theme: journey. We will lift up the Fifth Pillar of Islam: Hajj, which is a pilgrimage that all Muslims are required to take once in their lifetime. We will explain that it is an outward journey that enables one to take a powerful inward journey. With this in mind, we will ask the youth to think of a journey they took that wasn't just about sightseeing but made them see life or themselves in a new way. Ask your youth about what journey they thought about and share a similar transformative journey or pilgrimage of your own.

##### **For You:**

- As an antidote to the negative stereotyping of Muslims, become familiar with the story of Malala Yousafzai:
  - *Malala Yousafzai, 16, and Her Miraculous Story of Surviving Being Shot by the Taliban* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXvs1vwi>
  - *Top 5 facts about Malala* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDF2jlbSgn8>
  - *BBC - Malala's Story* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnloKzEAX7o>

#### **Pre-Session to Do List:**

- Send out the Dinner and Drive Time Tip. See above.
- Make sure you have the technology needed to play the YouTube videos that are part of this session.
- Paper and pens for doodling during worship reflection time.
- Poster or Whiteboard with markers for creating the five pillars board
- Prepare for any of the optional suggestions for games and activities at the end of each pillar, if you have time.
  - Food for the little fast.
  - A youth who has been on a UU Pilgrimage to Boston.

## Session

# ***What Does It Mean to be a People of Journey...? from a Muslim Perspective?***

### **Entering - Graffiti Board Writing**

*Same Core Question: **What is Islam?***

As youth enter the room, direct them to check out the graffiti board as a way to remind themselves of what they've been learning. Using a new color for the markers, invite them to add a new item or embellish an item they've already put up.

### **Gathering & Centering - Worship (10 min)**

To Prepare: Paper and Pen for doodling during reflection time

#### ***Centering Sound***

Invite everyone to calm and center themselves. Use whatever ringing vessel you have chosen (chimes, bowl, bell). Ring the bell/bowl/chimes. Once the sound ends, pause for a moment of silence and then end by saying "Amen" or blessing words of your own.

#### ***Lighting the Chalice***

*We light this chalice in gratitude for the path we share, a path that guides us  
back to our deepest self,  
back to each other,  
And back to life's gifts and joy.*

#### ***Welcome***

##### Suggested Script/Talking Points:

- Welcome to Tack Sunday and to our continued exploration of this month's religion: Islam. Today we are going to explain - or "tack up" with - how Muslims think about the monthly theme we are exploring here at our church: Journey.
- One of the major ways journey shows up in Muslim spirituality is through the fifth pillar of Islam, "Hajj," which can be translated into English as pilgrimage. Muslims promise to Allah and each other to make this journey at least once in their life.
- The journey is to holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. It is physical or "outward" journey that enables one to go on an inward journey. While on this journey, a Muslim engages in multiple core Muslim spiritual practices and visits various holy sites. This causes the journey to one of deep reflection - a profound inner journey!
- To get a sense of how important and transformative this is for Muslims, our worship today will focus on a song called Waiting For The Call, about the kind of inner thoughts that happen while walking the Hajj.
- As you listen, think about a journey you've taken that wasn't just about sightseeing, but made you see life or yourself in a new way. While you are thinking about it, here's some paper and pen for you to doodle the journey you took.

## ***Music for Centering***

### **Waiting For The Call - Irfan Makki**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fa5FSEZJzYo>

### ***Thematic Check-in***

Invite the group to share, if they are comfortable, the journey they took that wasn't just about sightseeing, but made you see life or yourself in a new way.

After the sharing, leader expresses gratitude for everyone's sharing.

### ***Closing***

"In the rest of our time together and in the days ahead, **May the ropes be with you.** May we stay close to our deepest and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. And may we remember to lean into life's joy. Blessed be. Amen"

### ***Extinguish the Chalice***

Leader note: If you use a flame, our advice is to extinguish it now to prevent accidental tipping over or pyro play with hot wax. If you use a tea light, you may wish to extinguish it at the end of the session during the closing words.

## ***The Problem in the World & The Solution (30 min)***

### **Problem:**

***Self-sufficiency - pride or self-reliance***

### **Solution:**

***Submission (to Allah)***

#### **Leader Resources (Background and support for leaders so they can explain in their own words):**

- The Five Pillars of Islam: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mv2l9ROwwEs>
- Introduction to Islam: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgP\\_OSOS3lA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgP_OSOS3lA) (minutes 1:35-2:50)
- The Five Pillars: <http://pluralism.org/religions/islam/introduction-to-islam/the-five-pillars/>

#### **Leader Notes:**

For Muslims, the journey of faith is largely one of growing and maintaining your connection to and trust in Allah. Some have pointed out that the root word for Islam, “al-Silm,” means “submission” or “surrender.” So sometimes you might hear Muslims talk about their faith as “submission to Allah.” Submitting to God can sound like one is just agreeing to serve under God’s authority. But for Muslims it is more complicated and richer than that. The Muslim relationship to Allah/God is not just one of saying “Yes, God, I honor that you are in charge and I promise to follow your rules.” but also “Allah, I promise to remember to trust in your guidance and support.” And even more than that: “Allah, I promise to remember to be grateful for your faithful guidance and support.”

In other words, this is very much a journey into trust and closeness with the divine, not just a journey into obedience. While it is accurate to describe the Muslim spiritual journey as one of greater and greater submission to Allah, it is also just as important to understand the journey as one of greater and greater closeness to and awareness of Allah. As [one description](#) puts it, the goal of Muslim religious practice is to “increase their sense of God-consciousness.”

And there’s no better way to get a sense of this journey of closeness and awareness than by exploring what are called The Five Pillars of Islam. So today’s session is dedicated entirely to exploring these five pillars. They are very powerful steps along the journey toward closeness and awareness of Allah.

#### **Presenting the Five Pillars on a Poster Board**

It’s hard to remember five big and complicated ideas. So to help your youth keep track as you present the Five Pillars, we encourage you to use a visual. Get a poster board (or use a whiteboard if you have one) and draw five large but [simple pillar shapes](#) across the board. Then write the name, English translation and phrase connected to our theme of journey below each pillar:

- Shahada: Testimony or Witness - “The Journey begins with a Declaration!”
- Salah: Prayer - “Remembering You’re Not Alone on the Journey”
- Zakat: Charity - “Life is not a Journey We can do Alone”
- Sann: Fasting & Ramadan - “The Journey into Another’s Shoes”
- Hajj: Pilgrimage - “The Outward Journey that Enables an Inward Journey”

With this board in front of the group, use these leader notes above to explain the general frame of Islam as a journey of greater and greater closeness to and awareness of Allah and then use the following five sections on the Five Pillars to tease it out further.

## The First Pillar - Shahada (Testimony or Witness)

*"The Journey begins with a Declaration!"*

### Explain & Theme Connection

#### Leader Resources (Background and support for leaders to explain in their own words)

- Shahada from the Berkeley Center: <https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/essays/shahada>
- An example Shahada: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-43DvXauUyU>

#### **Making a Theme Connection:**

After using the above resources to explain the basics of Shahada, be sure to connect it to our theme of journey by stressing that the Shahada is the way all Muslims begin their faith journey. You might also want to point out that Shahada is not just a declaration of belief, but also [a declaration of trust](#). It is not just saying, "I believe that Allah is one and Muhammad is Allah's messenger." It is also a way of saying, "I will place my trust in Allah as the source of life and support and I will place my trust in Muhammad as the primary source of wisdom about Allah and faith." You might even say that it is a way of declaring to oneself and others that "I choose the path of Allah above all others and I trust that Allah will walk beside me and guide me the whole way!"

#### **Making a UU Connection:**

*Instead of just downloading more information and asking the youth to passively receive it, ask your youth where they see similarities and differences between our faith and Islam on this topic. ("So, how are we UU's similar or different when it comes to this idea of Shahada?") To help you guide them as they offer answers, we've created the below cheat sheet for you:*

**We are different because....** UUs support individual freedom when it comes to belief and don't have any creed or testimonies that we require all members to confess when they begin their journeys as UUs.

**We are similar because...** However, UUs do begin their UU journey by committing themselves to a church community. Instead of saying "I believe..." a new UU will participate in a joining ceremony where they sign a membership book and usually publicly declare, "I promise to walk with you all in covenant." So, while a new UU doesn't necessarily begin their journey knowing or declaring that God will walk faithfully beside them, they do begin knowing their church community will walk faithfully with them.

**Leader Note:** *After you've finished presenting and discussing, consider walking up to the poster board and coloring in the pillar image of the pillar you just finished discussing. Doing this each time will help your youth keep track of where you're at in the discussion. You might also invite the youth to color in each pillar as you go along.*

### **Optional "Further Engagement" Activity if you have Extra Time:**

Get a first-hand look at a young woman reciting her Shahada and beginning her faith journey.. Show the video below then engage in discussion.

**Reciting my Shahada:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-43DvXauUyU>

# Game Break!!

This session on the Five Pillars is packed full of a lot of learning about the Five Pillars and the theme of journey. So to insert energy and fun right away, we recommend stopping after the first Pillar for a “Trust Game Break.”

Having explained that the Five Pillars are about a journey towards connection and trust in Allah and having Shahada is a declaration of one’s trust in Allah, tell the youth that you want to help them lean into the *experience and feeling* of trust. We can talk all we want about what Muslims think, but nothing beats gaining a sense of what their faith *feels like*. Saying “I place my trust in Allah” is very different than the spiritual experience of letting go and emotionally “falling into Allah’s dependable arms.”

So help your youth have that experience of letting go and trustfully falling into arms greater than yourself by playing some of the following trust games on our UUA’s website:

<https://www.uua.org/youth/library/adults-ministry/deepfun/stretching>

There are a number of games listed at this link, scroll down the ones on trust, which are:

- **Trust Walk Variations**
- **Trust Fall**
- **Trust Carry**

**NOTE/CAUTION:** Lifting/carrying/supporting participants is a serious activity, along with remembering that anyone can choose to not participate, you **MUST** make sure a group is ready for the activity so as to have no one dropped.

Remember anyone can opt out if they don’t feel comfortable. This, like other activities has the ability to trigger those who have experienced trauma. Make sure you explain the activity, so people know what they are getting into.

## **The Second Pillar: Salah (Prayer)** *“Remembering You’re Not Alone on the Journey”*

### **Explain & Theme Connection**

#### **Leader Resources (Background and support for leaders to explain in their own words)**

- What is Salat? Daily Prayer in Islam  
<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2016/02/01/explaining-daily-prayer-in-islam>
- BBC - Muslim Prayer Movements  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/galleries/salah/>

#### **Making a Theme Connection:**

Use the above resources to explain Salah generally, and then go on to connect it to our monthly theme by pointing out how this daily prayer practice is a way of reviving and maintaining one’s trust in God throughout the day. It’s a way to keep your faith strong along the journey! After all, we all know it’s easy to lose connection to our faith as we navigate the pressures and other voices around us. Salah’s practice of asking one to pause multiple times throughout the day helps Muslims keep their focus and faith strong. (Note: the Arabic words Salah and Salat are used interchangeably.)

#### **Making a UU Connection:**

*Instead of just downloading more information and asking the youth to passively receive it, ask your youth where they see similarities and differences between our faith and Islam on this topic. (“So, how are we UU’s similar or different when it comes to this idea of Salah?”) To help you guide them as they offer answers, we’ve created the below cheat sheet:*

**We are different because...** Prayer means many things to many people. UUs have an especially diverse understandings of prayer, so we don’t have certain prayers or prayer practices that are shared by all. And we don’t have a practice of doing any daily practice.

**We are similar because...** However, one thing most UUs agree on is the importance of taking time each day to remember to be mindful or grateful. While we may not stop 5 times a day, many UU’s have a weekly or daily prayer or meditation practice to reconnect with gratitude or awareness.

**Leader Note:** *After you’ve finished presenting and discussing, consider walking up to the poster board and coloring in the pillar image of the pillar you just finished discussing. Doing this each time will help your youth keep track of where you’re at in the discussion. You might also invite the youth to color in each pillar as you go along.*

### **Optional “Further Engagement” Activity if you have Extra Time:**

#### **Discussion**

Invite the youth to name some ways they pause one or more times a day (or during the week) to restore their mindfulness, gratitude or trust in life or themselves. Giving examples: dinner prayer or gratitudes, going to church, time alone, posting things online you’re thankful for, singing your favorite song, telling your family you love them before you leave the house, etc.

#### **Activity**

Using the [Muslim Prayer Movements](#), invite the group to try the postures of Muslim Daily Prayer.

## The Third Pillar: Zakat (Charity)

*“Life is not a Journey We can do Alone”*

### Explain & Theme Connection

#### Leader Resources (Background and support for leaders to explain in their own words)

- BBC - Zakat: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/practices/zakat.shtml>
- What is Zakat?: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xXWP-BZh3w>
- Islam - Stephan Prothero, on obligation to and Allah’s preference for the poor (minutes 11:56-13:13) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FfKN2Sf7Ac>

#### **Making a Theme Connection:**

Use the above resources to explain Zakat generally, and then go on to connect it to our monthly theme by pointing out how Zakat tells people that no one should have to journey through life alone. For Muslims, God calls us to care for each other along the way. It goes on to *require* that those who are fortunate on their journeys *must* help those who encounter “rough roads.”

Be sure to also stress that Zakat is about more than charity and “helping others less fortunate.” It is part of the Muslim belief that “all things belong to Allah.” Given this, Islam is especially critical of amassing wealth for oneself or using wealth as a sign that you are better than or harder working than others. (<http://islam.ru/en/content/story/rich-man-poor-man>). So, the wealth you find or gather on your journey is *not yours*; it is Allah’s wealth that Allah has given you to share and help others.

#### **Making a UU Connection:**

*Instead of just downloading more information and asking the youth to passively receive it, ask your youth where they see similarities and differences between our faith and Islam on this topic. (“So how are we UU’s similar or different when it comes to this idea of Zakat?”) To help you guide them as they offer answers, we’ve created the below cheat sheet:*

**We UUS are different because...** UU’s wouldn’t describe pledging or our money as “belonging to God.”

**We are similar because...** UU’s also believe we have a responsibility to share our money with others, even an “obligation” to share. We call it pledging, and the UUA suggests anywhere from 2 - 10% as a fair share contribution. <https://www.uua.org/finance/apf/pacific-western-midamerica/contribution-guide>. Many UU congregations require it from members.

**Leader Note:** *After you’ve finished presenting and discussing, consider walking up to the poster board and coloring in the pillar image of the pillar you just finished discussing. Doing this each time will help your youth keep track of where you’re at in the discussion. You might also invite the youth to color in each pillar as you go along.*

### Optional “Further Engagement” Activity if you have Extra Time: **Do the Math**

Talk about the UU perspective that pledging and charity is an expression of gratitude for what we have, not just about one being generous. Consider sharing your own understanding of why you pledge to your church and how it connects to your own belief in responsibility toward others or the idea that all things belong to “God.”

Then Invite the youth to calculate how much would they give if they were Muslim and paid Zagat on their allowance or the money they get for their birthdays or at holidays? Zagat is 2.5%.

How much would a Muslim pay who makes the average US wage of about \$60,000.? What is that number equivalent to? What might that require one to give up for the sake of others?

## The Fourth Pillar: Sann (Fasting - Ramadan)

*“The Journey into Another’s Shoes”*

### Explain & Theme Connection

#### Leader Resources (Background and support for leaders to explain in their own words)

- Ramadan - Religion Facts  
<http://www.religionfacts.com/ramadan>
- What is Ramadan and Why Do Muslims Fast?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8768sLli6g>
- What is Ramadan? What does it mean to you?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDs12nC6mng>

#### **Making a Theme Connection:**

Use the above resources to explain Ramadan and fasting generally, and then go on to connect it to our monthly theme by explaining that fasting is about cleansing one’s heart and mind, but it is also about increasing empathy for those who are less fortunate. In this sense, it is about a journey into another person’s shoes. Feeling an empty belly temporarily is a way to deepen compassion for those whose bellies are regularly empty.

#### **Making a UU Connection:**

*Instead of just downloading more information and asking the youth to passively receive it, ask your youth where they see similarities and differences between our faith and Islam on this topic. (“So how are we UU’s similar or different when it comes to this idea of Sann?”) To help you guide them as they offer answers, we’ve created the below cheat sheet:*

**We are different because...** UUs don’t formally practice fasting.

**We are similar because...** While we don’t fast as a regular practice, we UUs do have our own ways of remembering and being in solidarity with those less fortunate, such as special offering plates, social justice work and volunteering.

**Leader Note:** *After you’ve finished presenting and discussing, consider walking up to the poster board and coloring in the pillar image of the pillar you just finished discussing. Doing this each time will help your youth keep track of where you’re at in the discussion. You might also invite the youth to color in each pillar as you go along.*

### Optional “Further Engagement” Activity if you have Extra Time:

**Try it:** Bring out some food. Invite the group to discuss if they have ever fasted and what it was like? Invite them to put off eating the food in front of them until the very end of the session. It is a minor challenge compared to fasting from sunup to sundown for a whole month!

## **The Fifth Pillar: Hajj (Pilgrimage)** *“The Outward Journey that Enables an Inward Journey”*

### **Explain & Theme Connection**

#### **Leader Resources (Background and support for leaders to explain in their own words)**

- What is the Muslim Holy Pilgrimage aka Hajj  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rn8s35VKidE>
- Hajj in 3 minutes  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0jsF\\_xsODI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0jsF_xsODI)

#### **Digging Deeper**

- The Hajj to Mecca explained: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29HpUaJpwvI>
- Why is Mecca having an 80BN makeover? : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UhljFEa-l>

#### **Making a Theme Connection:**

Use the above resources to explain Hajj generally, and then go on to connect it to our monthly theme by talking about how Hajj is an outward journey that enables one to take a very significant inward journey.

#### **Making a UU Connection:**

*Instead of just downloading more information and asking the youth to passively receive it, ask your youth where they see similarities and differences between our faith and Islam on this topic. (“So how are we UU’s similar or different when it comes to this idea of Hajj?”) To help you guide them as they offer answers, we’ve created the below cheat sheet:*

**We are different because...** UU’s are aren’t expected to engage in one particular pilgrimage.

**We are similar because...** Some congregations have their youth groups always make a trip to Boston, the headquarters of the UUA, or sometimes to Walden Pond.

**Leader Note:** *After you’ve finished presenting and discussing, consider walking up to the poster board and coloring in the pillar image of the pillar you just finished discussing. Doing this each time will help your youth keep track. You might also invite the youth to color in each pillar as you go along.*

### **Optional “Further Engagement” Activities if you have Extra Time:**

- Invite youth who have made the trip to Boston to share their impressions. If none have, invite an older youth in.
- Discuss what other travel have youth participated in which might be interpreted as a pilgrimage? For instance, going to see a volcano might be a pilgrimage for someone interested in geology. Visiting a planetarium might be a pilgrimage for an astronomer. Going to a K-Pop concert might be a pilgrimage.
- Play the Journey Game: <https://doitandhow.com/2012/05/16/im-going-on-a-trip-game/>

### **Graffiti Board - Filling in the Gaps (3 min)**

Invite the youth to add a picture or word to the graffiti board, picking one thing that engaged them most about today’s session. What did they learn that they think is most important to add?

Remember to use markers that are a different color than was used to fill or the board at the start of the session, so you can continue to track learning over the sessions.

## **End the Little Fast**

If you did the optional activity for Sann, then invite the group to partake in the food that has been set out for Sann.

## **Looking Ahead - What to do ahead of time or expect (5 min)**

Thank the youth for their participation this week. Note one thing that you particularly appreciated or enjoyed about the session you just did with them.

Remind the youth that next week is THE VISIT! Share a bit about where you are going, go over logistics and stress any rules that will need observed-e.g., let them know about clothing expectations.

## **Tacking up our Eight Practices of Welcome**

Hand out the list of the Eight Practices of Welcome, Handout #3. Remind the youth that we are using them during our visit next week and will be reviewing how well we do. So ask them to please make time to think about them during the week. Which one do you particularly need to remember and work on for yourself?

## **Choosing an Interview Question (either now, or before you leave for your visit on Summit Sunday)**

If you are able to include a conversation with a leader as part of your visit, we suggest that you bring questions for the youth to ask. We have included the Interview Questions at the end of this packet as part of the preparation for the visit, labeled Handout #4. We suggest that you ask the youth which question they would like to ask. Be flexible to allow youth to ask their own questions, paraphrase the question from the Handout in their own words or ask it straight out.

*(Remember that we also recommend sending the list of questions ahead of time to the faith leaders you are going to interview. This will allow them to prepare. You might also want to let them know that the youth will be taking turns asking their favorite questions from the list or ones they have generated themselves.)*

## **Closing Words (1 min.)**

“In the days ahead, **May the ropes be with you.** May we stay close to our deepest and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. And may we remember to lean into life’s joy. Blessed be. Amen”

# Week 3

## Summit Day

(The Visit)

### Purpose

- Get a direct experience of the Muslims with a visit.
- Engage and use our Eight Practices of Welcoming.

### Preparation & Leader Notes

#### Dinner and Drive Time Tips (Email to parents prior to the meeting):

##### Before:

- Talk to your youth about the 8 practices of welcoming and how they might use them in their visit.
- Remind youth to bring an offering. We recommend an amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- Remind your youth about dress requirements. [Leader note: tailor this bullet to the visit]

##### After:

- Ask your youth to share their favorite part of the visit.
- Reflect with them on your own experiences with and understanding of Muslims. Share your assumptions and stereotypes and ask your youth how their experience relates to those assumptions and your past experiences.

##### For You:

Spend some time countering the negative messaging about Muslims with these resources::

- Meet the Global Muslim Peace Movement  
[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/gasim-rashid/meet-the-global-muslim-pe\\_b\\_5563494.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/gasim-rashid/meet-the-global-muslim-pe_b_5563494.html)
- 10 Muslim peace activists proving negative stereotypes wrong  
<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/10-peace-loving-muslims-to-be-thankful-for/>
- Catholic nun and Muslim Imam work together for forgiveness and peace  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tzSPf7fyCo>
- Mehdi Hasan | Islam Is A Peaceful Religion | Oxford Union  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jy9tNyp03M0>

#### Pre-Visit to Do List:

- Arrange for and prepare the drivers. Make sure the drivers:
  - Have the address of the destination and a phone number to call if there are problems.
  - Have a list of who is in their car and their emergency contact numbers.
  - Are familiar with and comply with congregational safety guidelines, such as a license and proof of insurance on record.
- Send the Interview Questions to the faith leader, optional.
- Make sure to collect signed permission slips from group members, with all relevant contact information and emergency numbers. Make a copy to leave at the church, and a copy to bring on the trip.
- Let parents know the approximate time of return and post it on the door of your meeting room.
- Prepare to post a “We Will Return Soon” note in case someone comes late, such as “Sorry we missed you. The Crossing Paths group is visiting \_\_\_\_\_. We will return at \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Bring offering money for each group member or remind them to bring some
- Consider purchasing or bringing a gift for your host. Perhaps an interfaith poster or calendar.
- Make sure you have collected and clarified all the rules & expectations for your visit. You will share this information before you leave your church on Summit Sunday. Rules and expectations include:
  - the name of the faith community you are visiting. (e.g., First Congregational Church of...)

- the religion's name for their house of worship. (e.g., temple, church, mosque...)
- what the religious leader is called and how they should be addressed (e.g., "They are call a minister and they should be addressed as Rev. Jones or Pastor Jones.")
- other behaviors that should be observed (e.g., expect dress, silence in certain spaces, when one can and when one shouldn't participate in a ritual, etc.)
- When and if it is appropriate to take pictures with phones. (Remember that we want to have some select moments when photos are gathered so they can be used in the end of year scrapbook or video)

## ***Session - Visit***

### **Before You Go**

Before you leave, gather as a group at your home church and do the following:

#### **Choosing an Interview Question (if you didn't do this on Tack Sunday previously)**

If you are able to include a conversation with a leader as part of your visit, we suggest that you bring questions for the youth to ask. We have included the Interview Questions at the end of this packet as part of the preparation for the visit, labeled Handout #4. We suggest that you ask the youth which question they would like to ask. Be flexible to allow youth to ask their own questions, paraphrase the question from the Handout in their own words, or ask it straight out.

#### **Remembering to be a Good Guest:**

Leader reviews basic information and guidelines about how to be respectful during the visit:

1. Share the name of the faith community you are visiting. (e.g., First Congregational Church of...)
2. Share the religion's name for their house of worship. (e.g., temple, church, mosque...)
3. Tell them what the religious leader is called and how they should be addressed (e.g., "They are called a minister and they should be addressed as Rev. Jones or Pastor Jones.")
4. Review other behaviors that should be observed (e.g., silence in certain spaces, when one can and when one shouldn't participate in a ritual, etc.)
5. Make sure everyone's dress is appropriate and honors the expectations of the tradition you are visiting. If someone has forgotten, address the situation according to the understandings you've made ahead of time.
6. Share when and if it is appropriate to take pictures with phones. (Remember that we want to have some strategic moments when photos are gathered so they can be used in the end of year scrapbook or video)
7. Share expectations about texting and use of smartphones.
8. Remind them that they are guests and will be representing Unitarian Universalism to your hosts
9. Go over the travel plans and rules:
  - Assign participants to a car and make sure they know to return in the same car.
  - Be respectful of their drivers and cars.
  - Give emergency contact numbers to drivers.

**Packing Up Our Eight Practices:** Gather in your church foyer or parking lot before you go. Stand together in a circle and share a blessing based on the Eight Practices of Welcoming. We recommend that you print out this blessing, so the youth have the Eight Practices physically available. Here's one version of a blessing you could do. Do it as a group by each person taking turns reading one line:

*Leader: Let us take a breath and pause before we go.*  
 [PAUSE IN SILENCE]

*With our feet firmly grounded here at our church home, we are grateful.  
Here we find community and comfort.  
Here we also encounter the call to go out, explore and become more..*

*On our journey today, let us take our practices and values with us  
so we can notice and receive all the gifts offered to us.  
May we remember to...*

*Be fully present  
Be curious  
Be open to being changed  
Be comfortable with discomfort  
Be an appreciative listener  
Be light-hearted  
Be gentle when mistakes are made  
And, be ourselves*

*With all these commitments tucked tightly in our hearts and heads,  
Amen, Let's go!*

## **The Visit**

Have a great time!

**Don't forget about collecting pictures for our future scrapbook/memory wall/video project.** At the very least get a picture of the youth standing in front of the house of worship.

*Have the youth text or email you 1-2 of their favorite pictures that they took. Save for the spring scrapbook/memory wall/video project.*

## **After the Visit** (just before everyone heads home)

### **Looking Ahead - What to do ahead of time or expect (1 min.)**

Thank the youth for their participation. Praise something about how the youth handled themselves. Note one thing that you particularly appreciated or enjoyed about the visit.

Remind the youth that next week is Lake Sunday. Lift up anything they need to do or think about ahead of time.

### **Closing Words**

"In the days ahead, **May the ropes be with you.** May we stay close to our deepest and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. And may we remember to lean into life's joy. Blessed be. Amen"

# **Week 4**

## **Lake Sunday**

*(Reflecting on Our Visit)*

### **Purpose**

- Reflect on the visit.
- Review our use of the Eight Practices of Welcoming

### **Preparation & Leader Notes**

#### **Dinner and Drive Time Tips (Email to parents prior to the meeting):**

##### **Before:**

- *Talk with your youth about what they plan to write on the Thank You Card that will be sent to the faith community they visited last week. This will help them prepare, give them a chance to reflect more on the visit and better enable them to write something meaningful.*

##### **After:**

- *Ask your youth to share which of the 8 Practices of Welcoming were hardest for them personally.*
- *Ask them to share something about the graffiti board. They have been adding new thoughts to it to each week. Ask them how the board has changed? What's interesting about how it has changed and grown? How does it show that the group's understanding of Islam has evolved?*

##### **For You:**

- *Talk with your spouse/partner or a friend about how your own view of Islam has evolved over the month as a result of your conversations with your youth.*

#### **Pre-Session to Do List:**

- Get a thank-you card for everyone to sign.
- (optional) Invite a guest with a Muslim background or experience, perhaps identified in the Parent Orientation, or from a request to the congregation at large. Share Handout #4 with them and let them know the youth will be asking them the questions listed, optional.
- (optional) Make plans to attend the adult service or part of the service as a way of exploring the monthly theme of Journey.

## Session

### **Entering - Graffiti Board Writing**

Using the same graffiti board from past weeks, invite those entering to add words, pictures or impressions that represent what stuck out for them about last week's visit.

### **Gathering & Centering - Worship (10 min)**

*To Prepare: - Set out the Thank-You Card and markers or pens.*

#### **Centering Sound**

Invite everyone to calm and center themselves. Use whatever ringing vessel you have chosen (chimes, bowl, bell). Ring the bell/bowl/chimes. Once the sound ends, pause for a moment of silence and then end by saying "Amen" or blessing words of your own.

#### **Lighting the Chalice**

*"We light this chalice in gratitude for the path we share, a path that guides us back to our deepest self, back to each other, and back to life's gifts and joy."*

#### **Welcome**

Suggested welcome script: "Welcome everyone to Lake Sunday! Lake Sunday is about "coming back from our journey - back down the mountain - and reflecting on our trip" I'm so excited for us to talk about our visit and notice all the gifts the visit gave us. In addition, please write your name and one of the things you will remember on our Thank-You Card for [faith leader/place of worship] as we share this song called "Grateful."

#### **Music for Centering**

**GRATEFUL: A Love Song to the World | Empty Hands Music | nimo feat. daniel nahmod**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sO2o98ZpZg8>

#### **Closing Words**

*"In the rest of our time together and in the days ahead, **May the ropes be with us.** May we stay close to our inner and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. May we remember to lean into life's joy. - Blessed be. Amen"*

#### **Extinguish the Chalice**

Leader note: If you have an open flame, we suggest extinguishing it at this point to prevent accidents and pyro-play. Otherwise, consider extinguishing it during the Closing at the end of the session.

## Reflecting on the Visit (30 min)

Questions to guide the discussion:

### *Initial Reactions*

- 1. What surprised you?** What was completely new? What didn't you expect?
- 2. What was the most interesting part?** What was "cool"? When were you having the most fun?
- 3. What didn't you fully understand?** What confused you? What do you want to learn more about (Leader note: Answer the questions/confusions if you can. Or see if the group can help. If time, look up the answer on a computer/phone. If no time for that, encourage the youth to look it up with their parents or promise to look it up for them)

### *Personal Application*

**How did the trip and our past few weeks of learning make you think about your own life differently?**

Lead the group in discussion about their personal takeaways. Invite them to think about how the visit and past few weeks gave them a challenge for their own life. Here are some possible questions to help them with their reflection:

- *Are you curious about trying out fasting as a spiritual practice? Would you like some of us to try it out together and explore what a UU version might look like?*
- *How has this month made you rethink your assumptions and stereotypes about Muslims?*
- *What is one thing about Muslims that you now want others to know?*
- *Do you want to be more serious about setting aside a percentage of your allowance or birthday money for those less fortunate as Muslims do with the practice of Zakat?*
- *Has the Muslim practice of Hajj made you excited about doing a UU pilgrimage?*
- *What is your favorite Islamic contribution to western civilization?*
- *What was your favorite game we played this month and why? What lesson did it drive home for you?*

Leader Note: Consider sharing your own personal takeaways first to model and help them think about this. How did the visit and learning invite you to think differently or want to make a change or add something more to your life?

## Activity #1 - Game

### Kabaddi - played in India and Southeast Asia (Muslim)

Kabaddi can be played anywhere outdoors: in your yard, in a field, on the playground. All you need are 2 teams of people (preferably each with at least 3 players), and rope or chalk dividing the playing field into 2 separate territories. The teams line up about 20 feet back from the center line, on their corresponding sides. Teams take turns between offense and defense.

A player from one team stands near the center line. To begin the game, this player runs into the opposing territory and tries to tag one of his opponents. While doing this, the player must keep yelling “kabaddi-kabaddi-kabaddi-kabaddi-kabaddi-kabaddi” the entire time she is on the opponent’s territory, without taking a breath, until she makes it back to her side. Everyone she touches is out.

The opponents can try to capture that player and prevent her from getting back to her side. If she does not make it back to her original side before she runs out of breath (i.e. if she stops saying kabaddi-kabaddi-kabaddi) then she will be out.

Get a group of kids with good vocal chords and a lot of energy and have a go at kabaddi!

<https://kidworldcitizen.org/a-popular-playground-game-in-india-kabaddi/>

## Activity #2 - Game

### Sepak Takraw or Hacky Sack

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sepak\\_takraw](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sepak_takraw)

“...considered more of an art as there is often no opposing team, and the point is to keep the ball aloft gracefully and interestingly.”

This version sounds very much like Hacky Sack, played in the U.S. except with a rattan ball.

Watch this Pro Game:

<http://digg.com/video/hacky-sack-volleyball-sepak-takraw>

## Engaging the Graffiti Board - Stepping back and seeing how far we’ve come! (10 min)

- Gather around the graffiti board or take it down and bring it into the circle.
- Pause to see if there are any last things to add.
- Invite reactions and discussion
  1. **What strikes you as you look at all the colors?** Were there some weeks where we seemed to learn more than others? Are there more words than pictures? What does that mean?
  2. **Is there anything on the board that needs to be corrected?** Any “understanding” that was incomplete or misunderstood?
  3. **What 2-3 things seem to best describe the essence of the Muslims for you?** If you had to explain the Muslims to someone else, which 2-3 items on the board would you talk about?
- Take some selfies! Individual and as a group. Remember to remind the youth that we will be using these pictures in the spring to create a scrapbook, memory wall or video to document our journey this year.

## **Eight Practices Review (10 min)**

Remind the youth that Crossing Paths is not just about visiting and learning about other religions. It's also about learning skills and practices to better engage new people and new ideas throughout our entire life. So explain that you are reviewing how well the group used the 8 Practices not just to "grade ourselves" but also to push ourselves to develop them as "life practices." The 8 Practices are included below, in Handout #3.

There are a number of ways to review the practices:

1. **As a group:** Have the group evaluate itself as a whole by going through the list one by one and asking the group to share when they did each practice well and when they could have done it a bit better.
2. **As individuals:** Ask each person to pick one practice they feel they did well and one practice they wish they had done better and want to work on. Take turns having each youth share their answers.

## **Looking Ahead - What to do ahead of time or expect**

Thank the youth for their participation this week. Note one thing that you particularly appreciated or enjoyed about the session you just did with them.

Remind the youth what is happening next week and make sure they know what they have to do ahead of time. Note one thing that you are particularly looking forward to.

## **Closing Words**

"In the days ahead, **May the ropes be with you.** May we stay close to our deepest and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. And may we remember to lean into life's joy. Blessed be. Amen"

*Extinguish the chalice if you haven't done so earlier. Invite any participants to sign the thank-you card if they haven't done so.*

## ***Add-Ons for Groups with More Time***

### **Option #1 - Interview**

If you have time, consider inviting a congregant with a background in Islam to visit and talk with the youth. You can do this after or before you reflect on your visit - both have advantages and disadvantages. Use Handout #4 "Interview Questions."

### **Option #2 - Attend the Adult Service on Journey**

"Visiting" your own worship service can enrich the experience tremendously. If you usually meet during the service, consider changing and expanding your schedule for Lake Sunday, attending the service first then staying after to do the Lake Sunday session. You can go even deeper with this by asking your minister or ministers to come talk with the youth after the service about what they appreciate about Islam and how they see us being similar and different when it comes to belief and their understanding of what it means to be a people of Journey.

# Handout #1

## Arabic Letters

From *Holidays and Holy Days* by Charlotte Brotman and Barbara Marshman

### ARABIC LETTERS

Corresponding to English sounds

A ا	B ب	D د	
E (ee) ي Also I end Y	F ف Also V	H ه	
J ج	K ك Also QU	L ل	
M م	N ن	R ر	
S س	SH ش	T ت	
TH - <u>thin</u> ث	TH - <u>that</u> ذ	W-U و Also OO	Z ز

copyright 1983  
Brotman - Marshfield

Ramadan 6

## Handout #2

### Guessing Game - Islamic Contributions to Civilization

Which of the following were introduced by the Islamic Empire during their Golden Age, pulling Europe out of the Dark Ages?

<i>Invented or Introduced</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Maybe?</i>
<i>Soap</i>			
<i>Musical scale</i>			
<i>Hospitals</i>			
<i>Oranges</i>			
<i>Algebra</i>			
<i>Optics</i>			
<i>Medical forceps</i>			
<i>Chess</i>			
<i>Chocolate</i>			
<i>Rice</i>			
<i>Arabic Numerals</i>			
<i>Coffee</i>			
<i>Paper</i>			
<i>Universities</i>			
<i>Violin</i>			
<i>Toothbrush</i>			
<i>Flying Machine</i>			
<i>Medical stitches</i>			
<i>Mechanical crank</i>			
<i>Surgery</i>			

**Answers:**

All of the items except chocolate were introduced or invented by the Muslims. The Olmec people of Latin America are credited with the invention of chocolate.

***Handout #3***  
***The Eight Practices of Welcoming Difference***

1. Be fully present
2. Be curious
3. Be open to being changed
4. Be comfortable with discomfort
5. Be an appreciative listener
6. Be light-hearted
7. Be gentle (allow and heal mistakes)
8. Be yourself

## ***Handout #4***

### ***Interview Questions***

1. Were you raised Muslim, or did you become one later in life? If you were raised a Muslim, what in particular has kept you involved? If you became a Muslim later, what in particular drew you to it?
2. Did you attend Arabic school? What was it like?
3. What is your favorite passage from the Koran, Islamic morality tale or historical Muslim story?
4. Have you ever gone on the Hajj? What was that like?
5. What's your favorite thing about Ramadan? Do you celebrate it in any unique way?
6. When did you do your Shahada? How did you do it? In front of your faith community? Your family? Others? Were you nervous? Excited?
7. At our church, we are talking this month about what it means to be a person of Journey. What does "Being a person of Journey" mean to you? How has being a Muslim influenced that?
8. What are the major misconceptions out there about Muslims? What do you wish others better understood?
9. Is there a particular Muslim belief or perspective that you think is especially relevant to our culture and political climate right now?
10. What's your favorite thing about being a Muslim?

## Some Resources to Remember:

### Soulful Home Family Guides

Invite your parents to explore the themes at home with their entire family by subscribing to our monthly parent guides, **Soulful Home**.

Here's the link to the Soulful Home page on our website:

<https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/soulful-home.html>.

Here's [a link](#) to a PDF flyer you can share with families.

### Inspiration Facebook Page

To keep you inspired as a group leader, check out our Soul Matters Facebook inspiration page:

<https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircle/>

Consider also sharing it with your youth and their families!

### Soul Matters Spotify Music Playlists

Discover musical inspiration on each of our monthly themes through our playlists:

<https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/spotify-lists.html>

A great source of inspiration and connection for you, the youth and their families!

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