



Nadia's Ramadan

A short film about Muslim holidays for the public school classroom

Lesson Plans for the classroom

Video description

Nadia, a young Muslim-American girl, describes the celebration of Ramadan, a month in which Muslims fast or go without food and drink during the day. She narrates one day in the life of her parents and siblings as they fast. Nadia explains when Ramadan occurs, what happens from the beginning to the end of the day, and what it means for adults and children. The video ends with a description of the holiday celebration that concludes the fasting month of Ramadan, and how its lessons and influence carry over into the next year.

The following viewing guide and enrichment lessons bring out the basic facts in the video and help students and teachers see how it represents Muslims in the United States and around the world, showing Ramadan's meaning in their lives.

To sign up for viewing the film in your classroom, visit <http://www.upf.tv/nadiasramadan/>.

About Unity Productions Foundation

Unity Productions Foundation (UPF) is a 501(c)3 non-profit education and media company whose mission is to promote peace through the media. UPF (www.upf.tv) produces high quality films for national and global broadcast. UPF creates and executes public campaigns that use media to increase understanding and dialogue among the world's spiritual and cultural traditions, with a special focus on Muslims and Islam. UPF films have been seen by over 150 million worldwide, and these films appear on stations such as PBS and National Geographic International. Each film has won multiple awards, including, for example, a Cine Award, the ITVADC Peer Awards, and a Gold Award at the Hamburg World Media Film Festival.

Lesson Plans for Nadia's Ramadan

In collaboration with Susan Douglas of Georgetown University's Center for Muslim Christian Relations, we have developed these lesson plans for teachers who wish to enhance the discussion with learning through the film. These lessons correlate to national state standards and common core requirements and guidelines.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact UPF at dialogues@upf.tv or (202) 298-8088.



Tips for pre-viewing

1. Ask students what special days they know of that come once a year? Students may mention birthdays, national and religious holidays. Encourage students of different backgrounds to mention their holidays, and ask them what these are called, and what happens on those days.
2. To open the subject of religious holidays, ask students which of the special days they have named are related to religious celebrations. What do these *holidays* mean? Since the word itself contains the word “*holy*,” explore with students some associations with the word “*holy*.” They may mention worship, special places, venerating the past, or the act of prayer. This question is of course very open-ended.
3. Preview the video by setting the scene, asking students to look for clues about a special religious celebration they may not have heard of before, which takes place in the US and around the world. Who celebrates this way? What do they do? How long does it last? What does it mean to the people?
4. The teacher may wish to preview some of the film’s related vocabulary, using the glossary at the end of this lesson packet. Perhaps focus on one or two key words (*fast*, *Islam*, *Muslim*, *sunrise*), but leave the word *Ramadan* undefined before viewing the film, since the lesson centers on its definition and associations with a complex set of ideas.

Comprehension Questions for Post-viewing

1. Where does the scene take place?
2. What does the narrator—Nadia—describe first? (“Ramadan is a holy month for Muslims”)
3. When does this event take place? (summer)
4. What kind of special month is Ramadan? What makes it special? (fasting)
5. How does Nadia describe *fasting*? What will she do that might be hard? Who will also be fasting in her family? (parents, older sisters) Who will not fast? (her younger brother)
6. After viewing the video, let students work in pairs or groups to write a timeline of what happens during the day.
 - a. Start by brainstorming all the things that they remember happening until the end of the day (*Mom wakes children, getting out of bed, eating a meal, prayers, later playing a game, reading Qur’an together, Dad comes home, preparing food, friends come over, call to prayer, breaking the fast, praying evening prayer together, eating the main meal called iftar.*)
 - b. Then put these events in order on the timeline.



- c. After putting what they remember in order, see if the students can associate a time of day (morning, afternoon, evening), or even time on a clock, with these events. HINT: what event starts and ends the fasting day? (dawn for the early meal, then sunrise—sunset ends the fast) See question 7 (below) for more about the time for fasting.
7. How long does the fast last every day?
- To find out, the class may look up what time sunrise and sunset happen today, and at what time these events occur during the summer months. (Ramadan took place during July in 2014. Here is a calendar showing sunrise/sunset for different cities around the world <http://www.calendar-365.com/calendar/2014/July.html>)
 - With information on sunrise and sunset times, discuss how long the characters in the video actually go without eating or drinking.
8. What did Nadia tell us about what happens during Ramadan, besides not eating or drinking? Ask students to look at their timelines and make a list. (prayers, writing on the good deeds chart, reading Qur'an, the holy book, together) How does this list help explain what Ramadan is really about?
9. Do students remember what Nadia says about less fortunate people? (orphans, poor people)
10. What other things about the family do we learn in the video from visual clues? (*reading in Arabic, playing games indoors and outdoors, speaking English and another language, clothing, foods, the family's house*)
11. Does the month of Ramadan always happen at the same time of year? What does the time for fasting have to do with the moon? What hints are there in the video? (moon chart, watching the moon after dinner). See lesson on the moon and solar years, below, to explain in a science-based activity.
12. How does the month of Ramadan end? (the new moon is seen) What happens on the next day? (*Eid al-Fitr—the celebration of ending the fast*)
13. How do Muslims celebrate Eid? (*getting presents, dressing in fancy, colorful clothes, going to the mosque, giving charity, prayer in a large group, greeting friends, having outdoor games, food, and fairs*)



Discussion Questions & Activities

1. Why do you think children like to practice fasting with their older sisters and brothers, and their parents? How do families make it easy for children to try fasting?
2. This family is shown fasting during the summer months when school is out for vacation. How would fasting for children be different during the school year? What about playing sports?
3. What do you see the family eating for breakfast that tells you where they are living? What might people in other parts of the world eat for the pre-dawn meal?
4. Do you think it gets easier or harder to fast throughout the month?
5. How hard might it be for a working father or mother to fast?
6. How might the Ramadan fast be different for people in countries or communities where a majority of people are Muslim in contrast to celebrating it in countries where there aren't many Muslims living together?
7. How might Ramadan meals differ between a poor and a rich family?
8. Pick a country from the map, and research any special Ramadan customs there (See map below, and additional sources at the end of these lessons.)
9. What clothes do people wear to celebrate the Eid festival? Find photos of different costumes for festival celebrations around the world. How are they similar?
10. As an additional activity for the science lesson on the moon and solar calendar, the class may also investigate the difference in length of days near the equator and farther north or south at different times of year. *(This may be too complicated, but curious students may like to know that days can be extremely short or extremely long at some locations near the poles. Muslim communities in those countries can fast a more normal schedule, using the calendar from a nearby country, or even use the timing at Makkah, Saudi Arabia if they choose.)*



Background Reading and Activities for the Video “Ramadan”

What is Ramadan?

Ramadan is the name of a special month which Muslims around the world observe by fasting. When a person is fasting, it means they do not eat or drink anything for a time. Muslims fast during the day for a whole month. They are free to eat three meals in the evening and before sunrise. Then they celebrate together at the end of the month.

Who are Muslims?

Muslims are people who believe in the religion of Islam. Muslims follow the Qur’an, the holy book of Islam. They also follow the example of the man who first taught the Qur’an and lived by it. His name was Prophet Muhammad, and he lived over 1400 years ago. Muslims try to follow his teachings and way of life today.

Muslims are expected to worship God and do good deeds. Prayers, fasting, and giving charity are examples of good deeds. So, too, are being kind and helpful.

What do Muslims do in Ramadan?

In the video, viewers learn that fasting during the month of Ramadan means no eating or drinking from sunrise until sunset each day. It also means trying to do good deeds, to help people, and to avoid arguing and angry words. Muslims are also supposed to remember God often, pray special prayers, and read from their holy book, the Qur’an, reciting it alone and together. They recite the Qur’an in Arabic, the language in which it originally appeared.

Muslims customarily go to their house of worship, the mosque, for prayers in the evening and for a celebration at the end of the month called Eid al-Fitr.

They prepare food for their families, for guests, and for poor people, and often invite Muslims who have no families living with them. They give charity to people near and far away.



Why do Muslims fast in Ramadan?

According to Islamic teachings, Muslims are required to fast during the day for one month each year, all together as a community around the world.

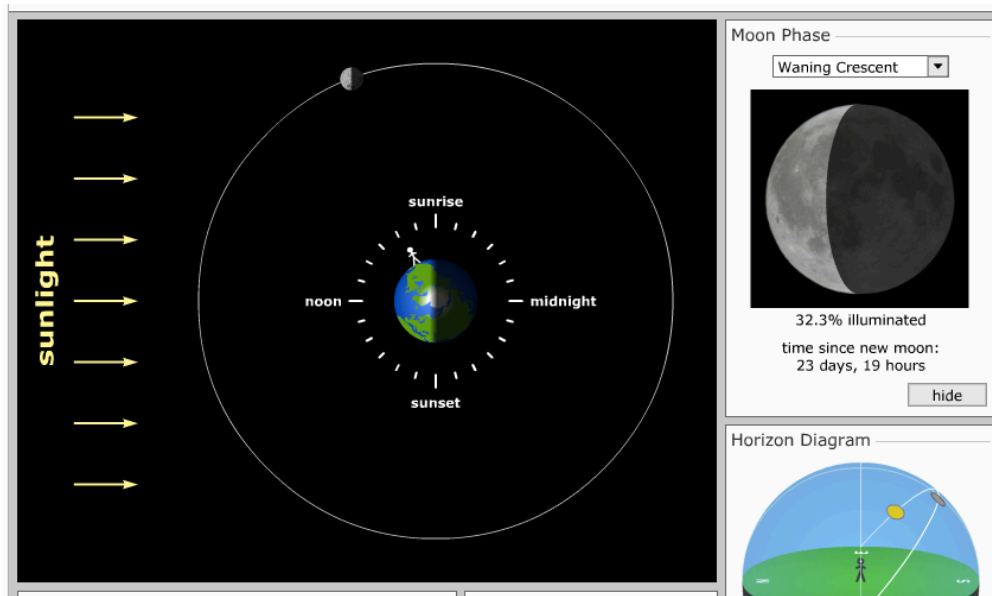
Muslims' experience Ramadan in similar ways:

- They say it is good practice for self-control. Not only remembering not to eat or drink, but moderating personal behavior.
- They say it helps people remember the poor, by feeling hunger as poor people do every day.
- They say fasting takes people's minds off day-to-day life and helps them remember God.
- They say that fasting is a way to obey God, since only God really knows if the person has not eaten or drunk anything all day.
- They say the acts of fasting, being kind, and giving charity all help people to be grateful for what they have.

When is Ramadan?

Muslim holidays like Ramadan obey the lunar calendar, in which days and nights are measured by the changing moon. By contrast, the days and months of the solar calendar—from January to December—are fixed. Because solar days and months are slightly longer, Ramadan occurs about eleven days earlier each solar year. The solar calendar follows the earth's seasons: winter, spring, summer, fall. The lunar calendar measures its months by the phases of the moon.

Watch an animation that shows how the moon's shape changes during the month: <http://astro.unl.edu/naap/lps/animations/lps.html> (University of Nebraska Astronomy Applet Project, screenshot shown below without animation.)



Ramadan begins with the ninth new moon of the Islamic calendar. The month begins after the moon has become invisible, and then the smallest crescent, or sliver of light, appears—the new moon. It ends with the next new moon—a period of 29 or 30 days. You can make a slider that shows the moon’s changing shape out of an envelope. Observe the moon’s changing shape in the sky during one month, and use the slider to record what you see each night. (See activity on the next page.)

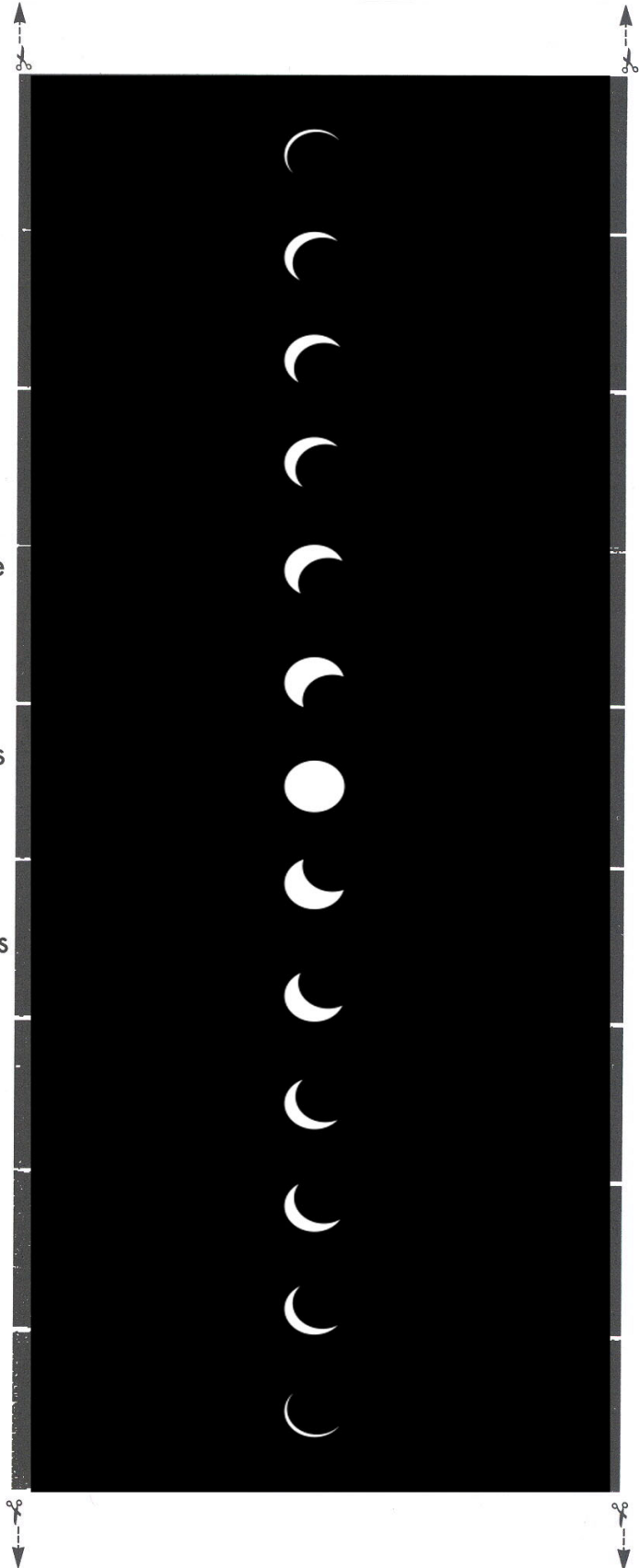
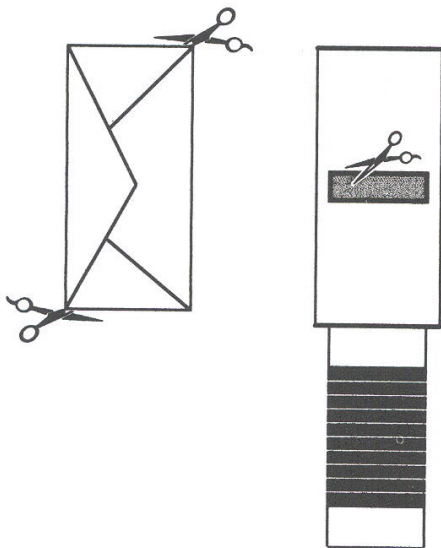
The year measured by the moon cycles is 11 days shorter than the year measured by the earth’s path around the sun. That means Ramadan comes at different times of year. Ramadan moves “backward” through the seasons. It takes more than 30 years for Ramadan to cycle, or move around, through all four seasons.

As you know, days in winter are shorter than the days in summer. In which seasons would it be easier for Muslims to keep the fast for a month? In which seasons is it hardest to fast for a whole month? During a person’s lifetime, they experience Ramadan in all the seasons.



The Moon's Changes Each Month

1. Cut out the moon strip the full length of the paper. Add another strip of the same width and length. Mount on cardboard strip of the same size.
2. Seal a business envelope and slit open both ends.
3. In the middle of one side, carefully cut a window the same size as one section of the moon diagram.
4. Slide the moon strip into the envelope so that the first segment of the moon's phases shows in the window.
5. Slide the diagram slowly past the window to show the class the moon's phases in "animation."





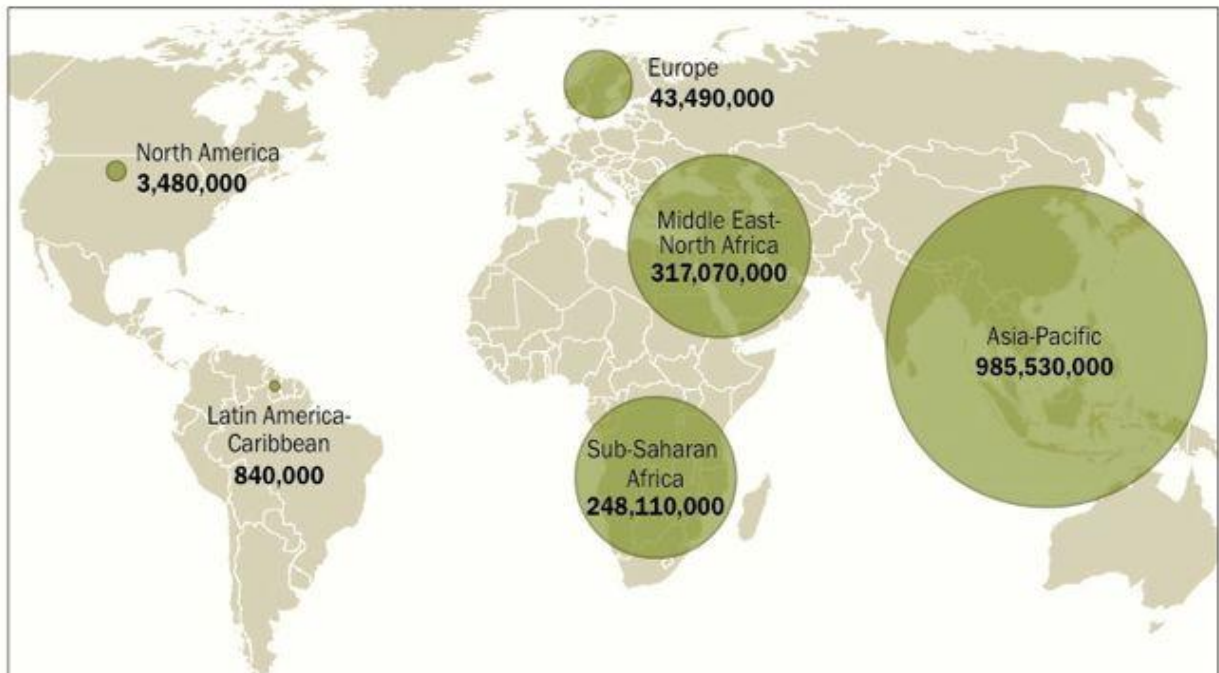
Where in the World Do Muslims Live?

Muslims live all over the world. In some places there are many Muslims who live in some countries as the **majority**. That means, in some countries, half or more than half of the population is Muslim. In other places, fewer Muslims live as a **minority**. In those countries, less than half the population is Muslim. In both majority and minority Muslim countries, however, people of other religions live together with Muslims.

The map below shows all of the continents. A green circle shows the population of Muslims in different regions, or parts of continents. Which region has the largest Muslim population? Which continents have the smallest Muslim population?

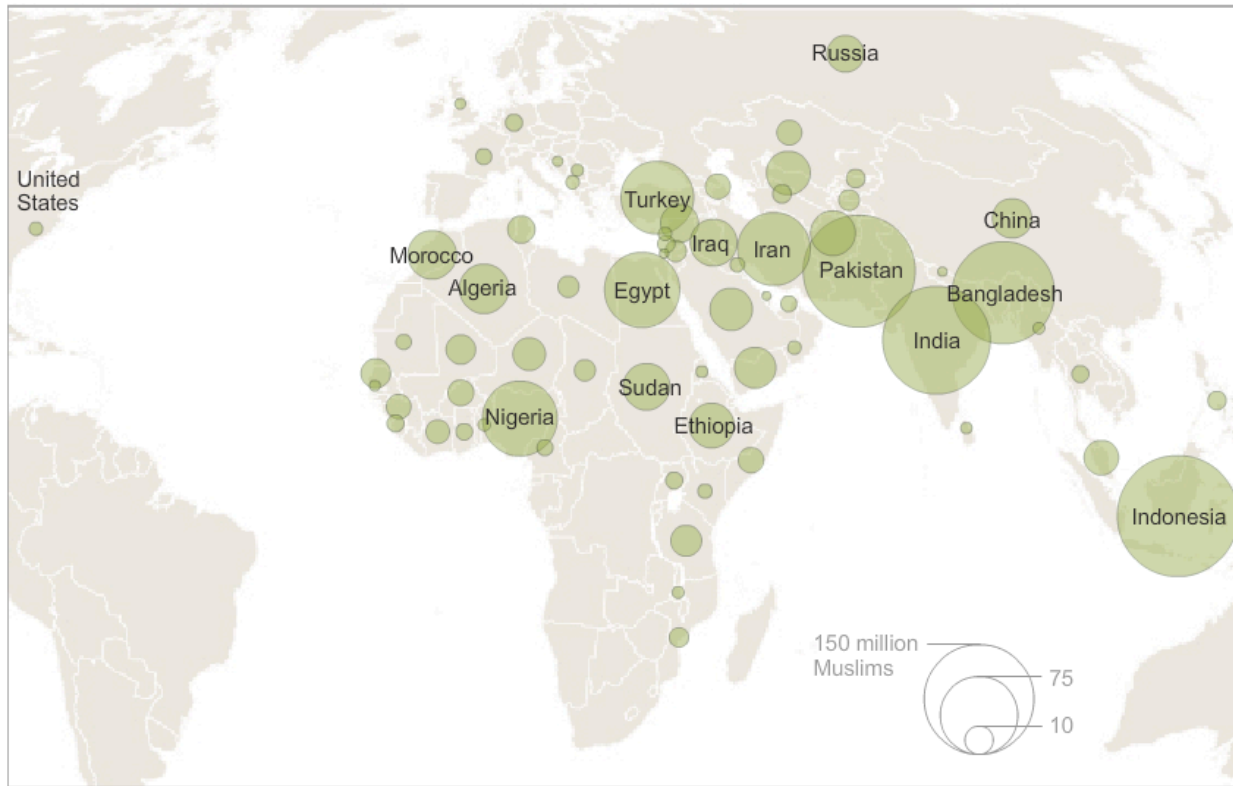
Regional Distribution of Muslims

Population by region as of 2010



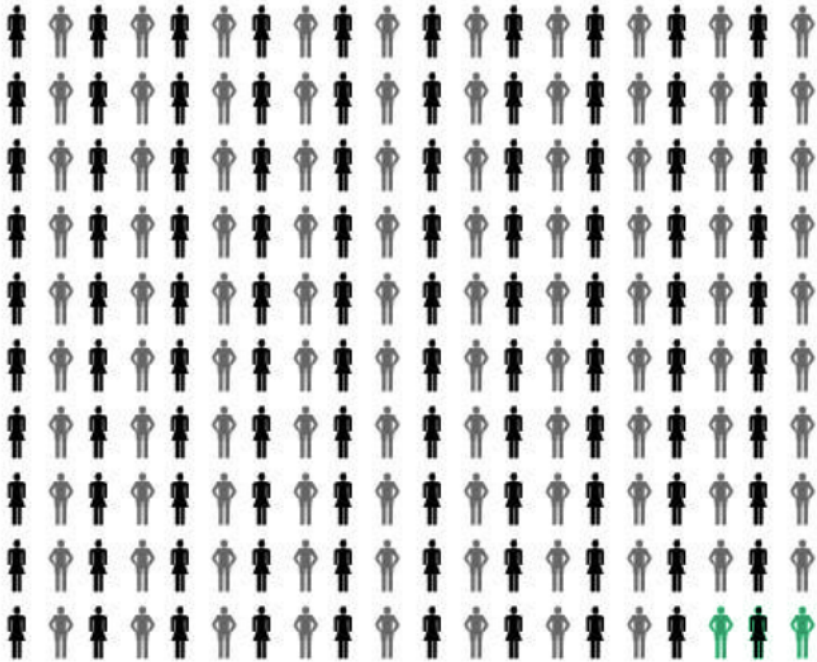
Map from <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-muslim/>

The second map shows a circle for each country. The size of the circles indicates the comparative number of Muslims living in different countries. How does the first map relate to the second map?



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

One of the smallest circles on the map is in the United States. How many Muslims live in the United States? There are about 5-6 million Muslim-Americans, out of a population of 317 million Americans. That means, for every 200 people who live in the United States, only 3 are Muslim-Americans. The graphic below shows 200 people, with three of them in green.



That doesn't seem to be many people out of such a large population as the United States. Muslim communities are, however, spread among many states and cities in the US. Muslim Americans work at many jobs, go to schools and colleges, and enjoy life with their families and communities. Like the family in the video, they gather with their friends and families to work, play, worship, and celebrate together.

How are Ramadan and Eid customs the same and different around the world?

Muslims all over the world fast during Ramadan and celebrate Eid al-Fitr when it ends. Eid is always a festive time, and both children and adults look forward to it all year. The basic practices and meaning of the Ramadan fast and Eid are the same around the world. There are many customs and traditions in different part of the world that add special color and variety.

Use the "Online photo galleries of Eid Celebrations in the US and Around the World" and the bibliography at the end of these lessons to study some of the different ways Muslims enjoy the month.

Same

- Fasting and praying during Ramadan, and going to the mosque
- Having a meal before sunrise called *suhoor*



- Sharing food with family and friends
- Enjoying special sweets
- Doing good deeds for family, friends, and other people
- Radio, TV, or the call to prayer to announce the end of the fast each day
- Giving food, help, or money to the poor before the end of Ramadan
- Cleaning and decorating the house and streets
- Taking a bath and putting on new or best clothes
- Giving and getting presents and gifts of money, especially for children
- Praying at the end of Ramadan all together in a large hall or outdoors
- Enjoying games, fireworks, and good food in a 3-day celebration

Different

- Lanterns and songs for children in Egypt
- Drummers wake people for the early morning meal
- Special foods and sweets in each culture
- Swings and rides for children on Eid
- Special poems and songs in each culture
- Different types of clothing worn by people of different cultures
- Theater performances, especially stories of long ago (See story books in list below)
- Dance in Egypt <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Bx7l4qYrG4>
- Puppet shows in Indonesia <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wph0cBNi7Yo>



Glossary of Terms and Pronunciation Guide

Islam [iss-LAAM]: a world religion practiced by over a billion people around the world

Islamic [iss-LAAM-ik]: describes something about Islam

Muslims [MOOS-lims]: people who follow Islam

Qur'an [cur-AAN]: the holy book of Islam

Muhammad [moo-HUM-mud]: the person who taught about Islam. Muslims believe he was a prophet, a messenger (teacher) sent by God.

Mosque: a building where Muslims pray (also called a masjid [MUS-jid])

Eid al-Fitr [EED al-FIT-UR]: the Islamic "Celebration of Breaking the Fast" of Ramadan

Eid al-Adha [EED al-AD-HA]: the Islamic "Celebration of the Sacrifice," the major one of two Islamic celebrations in the year

Ramadan [ra-ma-DAAN]: a month when Muslims fast

Fast: to stop eating and drinking for a time

Dawn: the first light of morning, before sunrise

Suhoor [su-HOOR]: a meal eaten in Ramadan before dawn

Eid Mubarak! [EED moo-BAR-ak]: a greeting in Arabic language, it means "blessed celebration"

Henna: a red-brown body paint made from a plant. Women and girls paint designs on hands and feet with henna.

Makkah [MAK-ka]: city where the Ka'bah is, and Muhammad was born. Muslims face Makkah every day to pray.

Ka'bah [KAA-bah]: a building in Makkah, a place for Islamic prayer



Additional Resources

For more reading on Muslim celebrations for younger and older students, See *Muslim Holidays: Teacher's Guide and Student Resources* (Council on Islamic Education, 2004, ISBN 1-930109-07-5) *

*An excerpt from *Muslim Holidays*, the booklet above, contains a primary grade unit on the basics of Ramadan and stories of some customs in several countries. In addition, it contains a group of essays by Muslim-American children on their first-hand experience with fasting in Ramadan and Eid celebrations.

Online photo galleries of Eid Celebrations in the US and Around the World

Al-Arabiya *Eid al-Fitr around the World* Slideshow at

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/photo-gallery/2014/07/28/Muslims-around-the-world-celebrate-Eid-al-Fitr-1334.html> - slide=0

Baltimore Sun, "Muslims around the world celebrate Eid al-Adha or the Feast of the Sacrifice," <http://darkroom.baltimoresun.com/2014/10/muslims-around-the-world-celebrate-eid-al-adha-or-the-feast-of-the-sacrifice/> - 1

Boston Globe, "The Big Picture: Ramadan 2010,"

http://www.boston.com/bigpicture/2010/08/ramadan_2010.html *China Daily*, "Muslims around the World Celebrate Eid al-Fitr," http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2014-07/30/content_18207088.htm

The Guardian newspaper, "Eid al-Fitr Celebrations around the World in Pictures,"

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2014/jul/28/eid-al-fitr-celebrations-around-the-world-in-pictures>

Ramadan Books for Children

Celebrate Ramadan and Eid Al-Fitr with Praying, Fasting, and Charity, Deborah Heiligman / Hardcover / National Geographic Society / September 2006

Celebrate Ramadan, Laura S. Jeffrey / Hardcover / Enslow Publishers, Incorporated / May 2007

Celebrating Ramadan, Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith / Library Binding or Paperback / Holiday House, Inc. / July 2002



Fasting and Dates: A Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr Story, Jonny Zucker / Paperback / Barron's Educational Series, Incorporated / September 2004

Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns: A Muslim Book of Colors. Khan, Hena. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2012.

Moon Watchers: Shirin's Ramadan Miracle. Jalali, Reza. First hardcover edition. Gardiner, Me: Tilbury House Publishers, 2010.

My First Ramadan, Karen Katz / Hardcover / Henry Holt and Co. (BYR) / August 2007

Night of the Moon: A Muslim Holiday Story. Khan, Hena. San Francisco, Calif: Chronicle Books, 2008.

Ramadan (Rookie Read-About Holidays Series) David F. Marx / Library Binding / Scholastic Library Publishing / March 2002

Ramadan and Id al-Fitr, Dianne M. MacMillan / Hardcover / Enslow Publishers, Incorporated / September 1994

Ramadan Moon. Robert, Na'ima B. London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2009.

Ramadan, Suhaib Hamid Ghazi / Hardcover / Holiday House, Inc. / September 1996

Ramadan, Susan Douglass / Library Binding or Paperback / Lerner Publishing Group / September 2003

Ramadan, Tatiana Tomljanovic / Hardcover / Weigl Publishers, Incorporated / October 2006

Ramadan: A Muslim Time of Fasting, Prayer, and Celebration, Carol Gnojewski / Hardcover / Enslow Publishers, Incorporated / October 2004

Ramadan: Islamic Holy Month, Terri Sievert / Hardcover / Coughlan Publishing / January 2006

The White Nights of Ramadan. Addasi, Maha. Library Binding edition. Honesdale, Pa: Boyds Mills Press, 2008.

Under the Ramadan Moon. Whitman, Sylvia. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman & Company, 2011.



Correlation to National Standards and the Common Core

Many state and local academic standards and curricula require teaching about holidays, whether religious or national, along with their associated practices, customs and significance. These curriculum mandates draw upon history, civics and geography standards set down during the 1990s. The Common Core Standards and the C3 Framework for Social Studies draw upon the skills in using texts, images, and oral presentations (speaking, listening, reading, writing) to gain and evaluate sources of information and to make meaning through analysis.

From *Geography for Life: National Geography Standards* (Geography Education Standards Project, 1994)

Grades K-4 Human Systems:

A. Identify and compare the cultural characteristics of different regions and people.

Grades 5-8 Places and Regions:

D. Illustrate how places and regions serve as cultural symbols.

Grades 5-8 Human Systems:

A. Identify ways in which communities reflect the cultural background of their inhabitants.

B. Identify and describe the distinctive cultural landscapes associated with migrant populations.

C. Describe and explain the significance of patterns of cultural diffusion in the creation of Earth's varied cultural mosaics.

From the *National Standards for Civics and Government* (Center for Civic Education, 1994)

Part IV

Section D.1. Diversity in American Society. Students should be able to describe diversity in the United States and identify its benefits. To achieve this standard, students should be able to...describe some benefits of diversity, e.g. it helps people appreciate cultural traditions and practices other than their own.

Section F.1. Promoting Ideals. Students should be able to identify ways people can work together to promote the values and principles of American democracy. To achieve this standard, students should be able to...explain how they can promote the values and principles of American democracy by respecting the rights of others, e.g. not discriminating unfairly against others because of their race, ethnicity, language, gender or religious beliefs.

From the *National Standards for History*



Grades K-4 Topic 1: Living and Working Together in Families and Communities, Now and Long Ago

Standard 1A: Demonstrate understanding of family life now and in the past by Comparing and contrasting family life now with family life in the local community or state long ago by considering such things as...religious observances, and cultural traditions.

Topic 4: The History of Peoples of Many Cultures Around the World

Standard 7A: Demonstrate understanding of the cultures and historical developments of selected societies in such places as Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe by...Comparing and contrasting various aspects of family life, structures, and roles in different cultures and in many eras with students' own family lives... Explaining the customs related to important holidays and ceremonies in various countries...