

# Islam *Awareness*




Muslim Association  
of Canada

**Support and Consideration for  
Muslim students**

# FACTS



- ◆ ISLAM = Religion
- ◆ MUSLIM = Follower of Islam
- ◆ There are 1,053,945 Muslims in Canada, making Islam the second largest religion in the country after Christianity. It is the fastest growing religion in Canada.
- ◆ Worldwide there are 1.6 – 1.8 billion Muslims representing a diversity of nationalities (around 50 Muslim majority countries and present in many other countries as a significant minority).



*What do you need to  
know about Islam &  
Muslims?*



## What do Muslims Believe?

1)

There is one and only God, **Allah** & the last prophet & messenger, **Prophet Mohammad** (PBUH)

2)

All the **prophets** - (from Adam and Noah to Moses, Jesus and Mohammad)

3)

All the **divine books** (of monotheistic religions)

4)

**Angels** (Created by Allah with the purpose to follow His orders).

5)

The **Day of Judgement** (everyone will be resurrected to be judged for their actions by God)

6)

**Predestination** (Humans are given free choice & agency over their actions within a life set by God's infinite wisdom, knowledge & order)

# What do Muslims Practice?



**Practicing Muslims must engage in the following:**

- ◆ **Testifying** that there is only **one God** and that Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), is the last and **final messenger**
- ◆ Performing daily **prayers**, five times/day
- ◆ Giving **charity** (Zakat @ 2.5% of accumulated wealth)
- ◆ **Fasting** during the month of Ramadan
- ◆ Making a **pilgrimage** to Makkah ('hajj' - once in a lifetime for those who are capable)
- ◆ They are also encouraged to do additional charity, volunteering, care for those in need and those who are disenfranchised, be good to their neighbours and develop their communities, keep family and kinship ties close, be conscious and protective of the environment, etc.

# Observance of the Five Pillars Globally

## Global Observance of the Five Pillars

*Median level of observance across the 39 countries surveyed*



Declaration of faith in  
God (Allah) and the  
Prophet Muhammad



Fasting during day-  
time in the month  
of Ramadan



Observing zakat  
(charitable giving)



Performing salat  
(five daily prayers)



Pilgrimage to  
Mecca (hajj)

Source: Pew Research Center's Aug. 2012 report, "The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity."

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

# What is the Message of Islam?

1)

To advocate for the true freedom from all forms of oppression.

2)

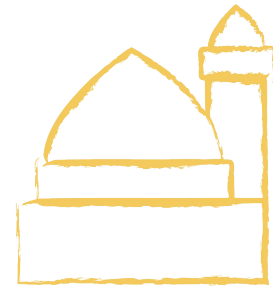
To invite people to the worship and submission to the Creator.

3)

To make the world a better place (justice, dignity, compassion, and prosperity for all).

# What are the Core Islamic Concepts?

- ◆ Piety (God Consciousness / God Centeredness)
- ◆ Justice
- ◆ Compassion
- ◆ Human Dignity
- ◆ Societal Reform
- ◆ Diversity based on Mutual Understanding (“To know one another”)



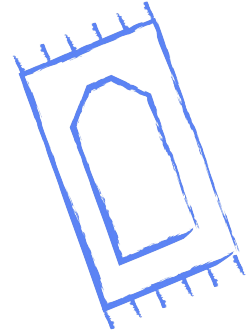
# *How to Support Muslim Students?*

# Muslims Practice Prayers 5x/day



Muslim Association  
of Canada

- ◆ 5 times/day: dawn, noon, afternoon, dusk, and nighttime (fajr/duhr/asr/maghrib/isha) -Individually or in congregation.
- ◆ Beforehand wash their face, hands, arms and feet with clean water before each prayer (Wudu).
- ◆ Call to Prayer (Athan).
- ◆ Prayer recited either aloud or in silence and consists of standing, bowing, and prostrating.
- ◆ Anyone wishing to join the prayer is welcome.
- ◆ It normally takes less than 10 minutes to complete a prayer.
- ◆ Friday prayers (Jumuah),, similar to Saturdays for Jews and Sundays for Christians, is the day for congregational worship in Islam. The midday prayer is preceded by a sermon.



# How to Support Muslims to perform their Prayers



- ◆ Provide 15-20 minutes for each daily prayer. The midday weekly, Friday prayer, takes 30 minutes.
- ◆ Provide a quiet, clean and relatively private prayer space.
- ◆ Provide access to running water to wash up before prayers. Some would need to wash their feet, don't be surprised.
- ◆ During prayer, the worshipper is fully engaged so ensure worshippers are not interrupted. Should others be present, they should avoid walking in front of the worshipper and try to be as quiet as possible.
- ◆ If there is a health and safety concern (ex. fire alarm) the students can and should respond by stopping the prayer immediately.
- ◆ Students may request to leave the premises to go to a mosque for prayer. Students can pray on the premises and do not need to go to the mosque, even on Fridays but will have to arrange for someone to give the sermon.

# Islamic Observances & Holidays



Muslim Association  
of Canada



## *Major Holidays*

- ◆ Fasting month of Ramadan (9th month in hijri/ Lunar calendar)
- ◆ Eid Al-Fitr - an annual holiday celebrating the end of fasting, includes prayers, giving charity, and family time.
- ◆ Eid Al-Adha - an annual holiday celebrating the end of the pilgrimage season, includes prayers, sacrifice and distribute food for charity, and family time.

## *Other Special days*

- ◆ Fasting on the day of Ashurah (passover) on the 10th day of the first month of the hijri/ lunar calendar.
- ◆ Fasting on the day of Arafah when pilgrims are on the Mount Arafah on the 9th day of the last hijri/lunar month.
- ◆ Many Muslims commemorate the birthday of Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) on the 12th day of the third month of the hijri/ lunar calendar, not necessarily as a holiday but as a day of remembrance and recognition.

# How to Support Muslims on their Holidays?



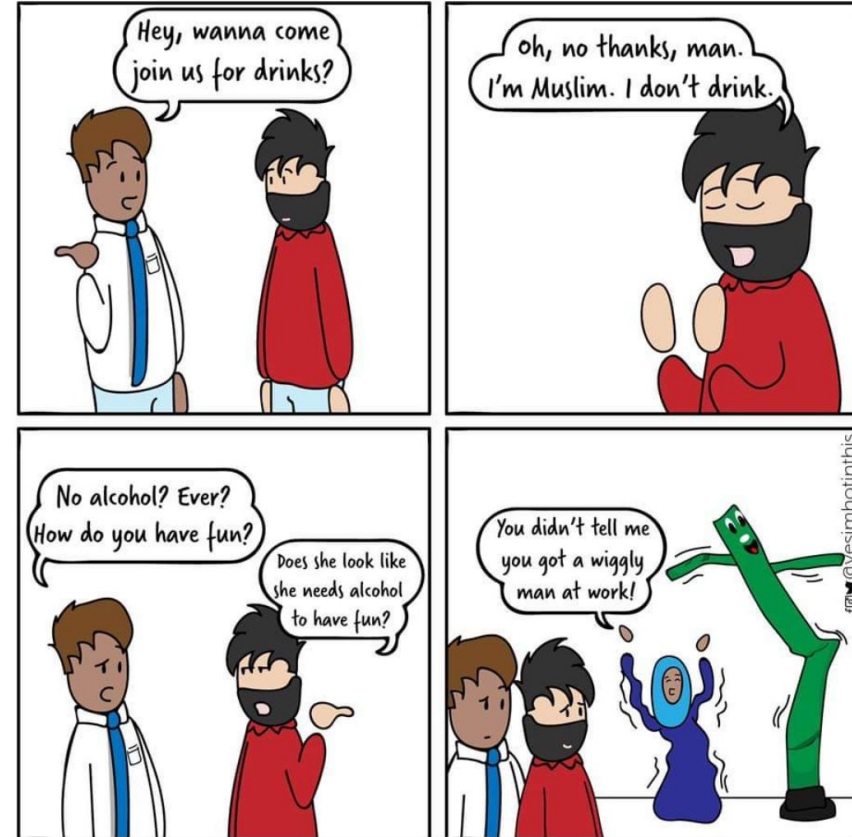
Muslim Association  
of Canada



- ◆ Do NOT schedule exams or major project submissions on their holidays (two Eids).
- ◆ Make it easy for them to take the Eid day off.
- ◆ Help them make up for the missed work.
- ◆ Recognize this religious holiday for Muslims and encourage other students to do good gestures to their Muslim colleagues.
- ◆ In Ramadan particularly, realize that the fasting Muslim students have a disrupted schedule for food and sleep. Be sensitive to their situation and encourage others to be sensitive to them.
- ◆ Make it easy for those who might ask to be exempt from extreme physical activity because of the lack of food and drink.
- ◆ Some Muslims might not be fasting for different reasons (e.g., health, period, choice). Please do not ask much about fasting. It is enough to recognize Ramadan.

# Muslims Have Dietary Requirements

- ◆ Muslims refrain from consuming:
  - ◆ Alcohol (drinking or marination)
  - ◆ Pork, and any pork by-products or derivatives
- ◆ Many Muslims choose to adhere to “Halal” standards for meat and poultry slaughter and preparation. This is similar to ‘Kosher’ food for Jewish people.



# How to Support Muslims' with their Dietary Restrictions

---



Muslim Association  
of Canada

- ◆ Food should be marked with a clear, age-appropriate marker, if it contains any of the following objectionable products or ingredients:
  - ◆ Pork
  - ◆ Animal shortening
  - ◆ Gelatin
  - ◆ Alcohol
- ◆ If food cannot be marked, have ingredient lists readily available.
- ◆ Ideally consider the demand for halal food and offer it alongside other options such as kosher and vegetarian.

# Muslims Dress Modestly

- ◆ Men and boys may choose to wear clothing that covers from the navel to the knee.
- ◆ Some choose to wear a small head covering, or maintain a beard.
- ◆ Muslim women often choose to wear loose-fitting and non-revealing clothing in public. Additionally, some choose to wear a hijab or head covering and some may wear a face veil, commonly referred to as a niqab.
- ◆ Muslim students in general may choose to cover their body at all times, even in same gender rooms.



# How to Support Muslims' Modest Dress

---



Muslim Association  
of Canada

- ◆ Be sensitive to the fact that female students who choose to wear the hijab commonly experience issues with other youth, with one in three reporting having their hijab tugged, pulled, or otherwise offensively touched.
- ◆ Ensure that students are not mocked or teased for their clothing choices.
- ◆ Create an environment where such conduct is unquestionably unacceptable.
- ◆ Allow alternative non-revealing clothing for physical activities/swimming.
- ◆ Allow private dressing and shower areas.
- ◆ Bring positive examples of women who wear hijab to your learning spaces.

# Muslims Adhere to Consent Culture

- ◆ Some Muslims refrain from all physical contact with unrelated persons of the opposite gender.
- ◆ This includes casual greetings such as kissing cheeks, hugging, hand-shaking, hand-holding.
- ◆ If a student excuses themselves from such forms of physical contact, or avoids eye contact with members of the opposite sex it should not be regarded as a personal insult or affront, just a personal preference.

Scenario: You're introduced to a dude,  
and he goes to shake your hand.



a. Sneeze into your hand

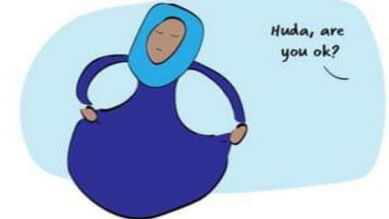
He does not know that you do not  
shake hands with just any random guy.  
Time slows down. Do you:



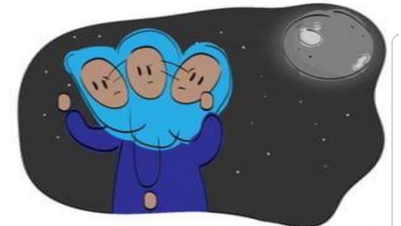
b. execute the perfect curtsy



c. Give a comprehensive explanation that leaves  
him pretty confused and possibly offended.



d. Realize you've taken too long to  
figure out what to do and everyone's left.



# How to Support Muslims' Interactions

---

- ◆ Do not extend hand first for handshakes with members of different genders.
- ◆ Respect boundaries and allow students to choose whether they wish to hug or hold hands.
- ◆ Avoid touching when comforting students. Although students may be touched for health and safety reasons or in the event of an emergency.
- ◆ Youth should not be forced to participate in certain coed activities such as dances or high physical contact sports (such as basketball or wrestling).

# *Misconceptions*

# Top 5 Common Misconceptions About Islam & Muslims



1. “Allahu Akbar” indicates imminent danger – **Nope!**
2. Muslims are particularly prone to violence and/or to support terrorism – **Nope!**
3. Islamophobia doesn’t exist – **Nope!**
4. Islam oppresses women – **Nope!**
5. Sharia law is scarier than the boogie monster - **Nope!**

Muhmmad Ali was a proud American Muslim - **Yesss!!**

**Thank you**

