

## Islamic Greeting (Great Ice breaker)

As-salaam alay-kum – Peace be upon you. This is a great ice breaker and can bring down barriers almost immediately

Waa lay-kum salaam (response) – And peace be upon you too.

## Definition of Islam / Muslim

1. Islam - Comes from the Arabic root word “silm” or “salama”, which means peace, security, to feel safe and content. “Islam” means peace through submission to God.
2. Muslim – Comes from the same root word and describes one who submits to God or practices Islam.
3. Islam is considered a “deen” or system of living or way of life for practicing Muslims.
4. Islam is a monotheistic religion with a focus on the worship of one God without partners, equals or progeny.

## Muslim Population – 1.5 Billion Worldwide

1. Not all Muslims are Arab. Arabs are only 15% to 20% of Muslims in the world.
2. Most Arabs in the US are Christians, largely from Lebanon. Lebanon has a large Christian minority.
3. Indonesia has the largest Muslim population, not the Middle East.
4. Approximately 7 to 14 million Muslims in the US:
  - a. African Americans – 40%
  - b. South Asian – 30%
  - c. Arab – 18%
  - d. African – 3%
  - e. European – 2%
  - f. Chinese & South East Asian – 2%
  - g. Others – 5%

## Beliefs (Articles of Faith)

What one believes in his or her heart but cannot necessarily be witnessed or observed. They include belief in:

1. One God referred to as Allah - Not a separate God but the same God as the Christians and Jews. However, Muslims believe that our concept of God is different but it is the same God that created all things. Muslims use God and Allah interchangeably.
2. Angels – Mostly serve the same purpose as mentioned in the Bible. Qu’raan mentions Michael and Gabriel as well as others mentioned in the Bible.
3. Prophets – Many of the same Prophets mentioned in the Bible are mentioned in the Qu’raan including Adam, Noah, Moses, Abraham, John, David, Jesus and others. Muhammad is considered the last of the Prophets or the “seal of the Prophets”. Muslims always say “Peace be upon them” when mentioning their names. This also applies to Mary the mother of Jesus. Muslims believe they were special people specifically chosen by God to relay his message directly but that none of them should ever be objects of worship.
4. Holy books – The Qur’aan as the final revelation from God but that Moses was given the Torah, David the Zaboor (Psalms), Jesus the Injeel (Gospel). Muslims believe in what was directly revealed to them, not necessarily all that was written by others.
5. Day of Judgment – A time when people will be called to account for the deeds and beliefs.
6. Qadr – God’s will

## Practices (Pillars of Islam)

These are the actual physical practices of Islam, which can be observed or heard.

1. Shahada (Declaration of Faith) – To freely bear witness w/o coercion that there is nothing worthy of worship except God and that Muhammad is his Messenger. This is an actual statement that one makes.
2. Salah (5 daily prayers) – Literally means to “connect”.
  - a. Fajr – dawn time
  - b. Thuhr – around the lunch period
  - c. Asr – early afternoon
  - d. Maghrib – right around sunset time
  - e. Isha – night time

Note: if someone is not responding to you it is likely they are in prayer. Once a Muslim enters prayer he or she does not respond unless it is an emergency. The prayer typically takes about 5 to 10 minutes to complete. It can be performed any clean and quiet place, except for bathrooms. It is normally performed with a series of standing, bowing and prostrating but can be performed sitting or lying down if one is ill.

3. Zakah – charity or “purification of wealth”. Each Muslim with money left over at the end of the year pays 2% of that to the needy in the community.
4. Sawm – Fasting during the month of Ramadan from just before dawn to sunset.

Special Notes for class: Not required for those who are sick, pregnant or breast feeding, especially those with diseases such as diabetes.

5. Hajj - pilgrimage to Makkah for those who are physically capable and can afford the cost of travel. Performed at least once in a Muslim's lifetime.

## Holidays

1. Eid Al-fitr – Celebrated at the conclusion of Ramadan. The first day starts with a large congregational prayer called Eid Salah. Holiday lasts for 3 days total. Children receive gifts, family and friends gather and visit.
2. Eid Al-Adha – Celebrated at the conclusion of Hajj (pilgrimage). Also lasts for 3 days.

## Diet

1. Muslims do not eat pork or pork by-products. Muslims also do not consume alcohol. However, medicines can be an exception as the preservation of life takes priority.
2. Some Muslims

## Islam and Culture

1. Islam and culture differ greatly. There is nothing wrong with culture so long as it does not contradict Islam itself.
2. Not all that a Muslim does is motivated by religion.
3. In many cases culture may directly contradict religion.

## Attire and Hijab (head scarf)

1. Hijab is worn by women when in the presence of men who are not relatives. However, it is not worn when in the presence of relatives. This becomes a requirement usually beginning with the teen years but some prefer to wait until they are college age or older. It is not unusual for some women to wear it and other not too although they live in the same household.
2. Women typically will cover all except their faces, hands and feet. Some women insist on covering their faces though this is not required. However, we in the Muslim community respect their right to do so.

3. Men at a minimum must cover the area between the navel and the knees and are required to dress modestly as well.

## **Special Considerations for Care Givers and Medical Professionals**

1. Most Muslim women prefer a female care giver, but will not mind working with males if females are not available. However, some women will insist on a female.
2. If a male attendant wants to enter the room of a female patient it is best to announce that he is entering and give the female time to put on her scarf. This is a very sensitive issue for women and will create a great deal of good will if this is respected.
3. When possible a male should visit a female while accompanied by another female. Also, when a female attendant enters the room of a male patient the same consideration should be given. Men are also required to cover certain areas when in the presence of women who are not relatives. Many men go far beyond the minimum requirement of male dress and would greatly appreciate the courtesy.
4. Birth control is really a personal matter but should still be handled delicately as it differs from person to person.
5. Many hospitals now have Muslim chaplains who are on call. Be sure to check who is available ahead of time.