

Introduction to Islam

Lesson 4: The Prophet Muhammad

10.8.2023

Objectives: Introduction to life of Muhammad and the radical vision of the Oneness of God.

Materials: Laptop/DVD/TV “Empire of Faith,” baklava/popcorn.

Time allotments suggested for 50 minute class, followed by 25 minute closing service.

****Note: Please begin class promptly, tracking time closely, so class has enough time for video on the life of Muhammad.**

1. Nametags and Graffiti Wall (5 minutes before class begins)

- Make nametags using blank paper, markers, and holders. Youth can create their own unique but LEGIBLE nametag. Make it a regular practice to wear nametags.
- “Graffiti Wall” questions: Write the following on whiteboard. Invite youth as they arrive to grab a marker and weigh in with their responses:
 - ▶ Make a list of what you know about the Prophet Muhammad.
 - ▶ If offered a free trip to one of these mostly-Muslim countries, which would you choose: Indonesia, Turkey, Senegal, Albania, Maldives, United Arab Emirates?
- Teachers complete attendance sheets.

2. Trivia Fun: Islamic Terms and Vocabulary (3 minutes max)

Have youth quickly take the attached vocabulary quiz to see how much they know. Turn sheet over after completing to find answers. Watch for these words in the video!

3. Chalice Lighting: Light the chalice, saying these words together: “We light this chalice as a symbol of our faith; the light of truth and the warmth of love.”

Teacher reads: (from Sufi mystic, Rumi)

“I am dust on the path of Muhammad, the chosen one.”

4. Screening: “Islam: Empire of Faith” (about 36 minutes)

Much of today’s class will use PBS film on the life of the Prophet Muhammad. Please use the viewing guide to follow along, with rough time estimates. Enjoy popcorn and baklava!

Viewing guide (with time markers):

4:00 Find **“Go to Chapter”** menu on screen toolbar, start **Chapter 2**, entitled “The Messenger”

10:14 Stop here at mention of Kaaba, skip to Chapter 4 (12:20)

12:20 **Chapter 4:** Muhammad as a merchant, conflict manager, visionary, voice of God, the Qur’an

21:00 Stop here as scholar’s comments on Qur’an ends, skip to Chapter 6 (28:50)

28:50 **Chapter 6:** Muhammad forging community of believers, call to prayer, spread of Islam, Dome of the Rock

50:40 Stop here as voice concludes “Islam has come to stay.”

5. Questions for Discussion (10 minutes)

- What did you learn? Were there misconceptions about Islam cleared up by the video?
- Does the video match or challenge popular Western perceptions of Islam?
- What were some of Muhammad’s roles and professions during his lifetime, and how did they relate to his role as the Prophet? (*Hint: Think about his experience as a merchant, arbiter in conflicts, advocate of social justice, military strategist, poet, religious visionary.*)
- Why was the teaching of Muhammad so powerful and spread so quickly? (*Hint: Think about the mix of social justice, unity/harmony, and poetic-religious vision.*)
- Why was the vision of the Oneness of God so radical and transformative? (*Hint: What did this mean for the tribalism of Bedouin culture, each with their own idols of worship?*)

6. Say goodbye until next time: Extinguish the chalice, saying together:

“May the light of truth and the warmth of love go with us in our hearts.”

7. Help clean up classroom before leaving: Please keep regular practice of readying classroom for the next class.

- leave lesson plan and all materials organized
- wipe the whiteboard clean
- tables and chairs neatly returned
- nametags collected in Ziploc bag
- leave any comments for RE staff on attendance sheets