

Unit 5A Why is Muhammad ﷺ important to Muslims?

ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit children learn about the life and teachings of Muhammad ﷺ and develop their understanding of why he is significant for Muslims. They explore the idea of role models and how Muhammad ﷺ provides a role model for Muslims. They explore the concept of revelation and religious experience, including the importance of quiet contemplation.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit builds on previous work on different world religions and draws on previous work on sacred texts. It provides a basis for unit 5B in year 5, 'How do Muslims express their beliefs through practice?' and connects with units on worship and the community, and unit 6D year 6, 'What is the Qur'an and why is it important to Muslims?' The Qur'an is covered in unit 5B, so the focus here should be on the Muslim belief that the word of Allah was revealed through Muhammad ﷺ.

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if children have:

- studied other key figures in religions

VOCABULARY

In this unit children will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:

- religious experience, *eg revelation, holy, sacred, angel*
- Islam, *eg Qur'an, Allah, Mecca, Ka'aba, Ramadan, Hadith, Shahadah*
- religious terms, *eg prophet, idol, fasting*

RESOURCES

- artefacts: a copy of the Qur'an, Qur'an stand
- CD-ROMs
- videos
- a range of books with stories about Muhammad ﷺ

EXPECTATIONS

At the end of this unit

most children will:

understand why Muhammad ﷺ is important to Muslims; know that Muhammad ﷺ is regarded as a model for all Muslims to follow; describe the different stories about Muhammad ﷺ that teach Muslims about how to carry out God's will in their daily life; identify people in their own life who are role models for themselves, and recognise other influences on their behaviour and views

some children will not have made so much progress and will:

know that Muhammad ﷺ is important for Muslims and that they follow his example in their lives; be able to identify people in their own lives, whose example they try to follow

some children will have progressed further and will:

explain the key beliefs Muslims hold about Muhammad ﷺ and his role as the final messenger, including the meaning of the Shahadah; review their own values and commitments in the light of those people who belong to the faith they have studied

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

MUHAMMAD ﷺ: THE NIGHT THAT CHANGED HIS LIFE

- to understand why Muslims call Muhammad ﷺ the messenger of God
 - to identify the religious beliefs about Allah, Muhammad ﷺ and the Qur'an which are expressed in the story of the revelations to Muhammad ﷺ
 - to recognise the impact and influence this event had on Muhammad ﷺ and all followers of Islam
 - to compare their own experience of quietness for reflection with those of religious people such as Muhammad ﷺ
 - to use a range of research and study skills, including ICT, to locate the life of Muhammad ﷺ in its historical and geographical context
- Focus on the story which is often called the 'Night of power' and how it changed Muhammad's life and the history of the world. Tell or read the story which tells of the revelation of the Muslim holy book, the Qur'an, to Muhammad ﷺ. This is an exciting and dramatic story which can be a starting point for some extended work on themes such as:
 - events which have changed the history of the world
 - experiences which have changed the lives of individuals
 - an exploration of the idea of change and transformation
 - the meaning of 'revelation', making links with other stories children may know about powerful religious experiences
 - the importance many people, both religious and non-religious, place on finding time for reflection and contemplation
 - How might Muhammad ﷺ have felt when he realised what Allah had done (eg fear, inadequacy)?*
 - Muhammad ﷺ frequently spent time alone in quiet contemplation. Ask the children to sit quietly and reflect on times when they have been asked to do something which they felt a bit afraid of doing.
 - Ask the children to write a response to this story in different forms, such as a first person account, an account from the point of view of another character (eg *Khadijah*) or a poem, to capture the spiritual dimension of Muhammad's experience.
 - Ask the children to copy the Shahadah and write a short explanation of the beliefs it expresses.
 - Set an independent learning research task by asking the children to find out where and when the events took place in the story. Make links with other people, places and events which they have studied in other curriculum areas. Record the information on a class timeline and world map. *What else was happening around 570 CE that you might add to the timeline? What other places can you identify on the map?*

- explain why Muhammad ﷺ is called the messenger of God
- describe how the Qur'an contains the revelations given to Muhammad ﷺ by Allah
- explain why the Qur'an is believed to be the word of God
- reflect on their own experience of being daunted by a task
- place the events in the life of Muhammad ﷺ in historical and geographical context

- Muslims often write or say 'peace be upon him' when the name of the prophet Muhammad ﷺ is used.
- A number of versions of the story of Muhammad ﷺ and the stories he told are available. Choose versions that are appropriate to the age, ability and background of the children, and check that the illustrations are appropriate.
- Introducing children to different versions of the stories could be a valuable teaching point and link with the *National Literacy Strategy: Framework for teaching*.
- Some television and video versions of the stories are available, but check that these are acceptable before using them. Remember that it is not acceptable to the majority of Muslims to reproduce the human form: teachers need to be aware of this and the reasons why, and select resources with this in mind. Be particularly sensitive to Muslim children when you set tasks that may require drawing people.
- Use a range of resources for the research task, including ICT.

THE REVELATION OF THE QUR'AN TO MUHAMMAD ﷺ

- to understand that the Qur'an is fundamental to Muslims because it is the 'word of God'
 - to make links between symbolic actions and the beliefs which underpin them
 - to recognise that Muslim beliefs and practices are rooted in the Qur'an
 - to know that Muslims believe the Qur'an is Allah's final revelation and Muhammad ﷺ the final messenger
- Follow on from the story of the revelation of the Qur'an by introducing the children to the Qur'an itself. Take some time preparing them so that they expect this to be something special. They should be familiar with special books from previous units.
 - Explain that Muslims treat the Qur'an with great respect because they believe that the Qur'an is from Allah, and every word and every letter is sacred. Discuss why they think this is. Explain that the Qur'an is treated with respect in a Muslim home. It is usually placed on a special wooden stand to be read. Show a copy of the Qur'an and Qur'an stand. Discuss how Muslims treat the book and what this shows about its importance. Make links with the way the children and their families treat special things in their own homes.
 - Ask the children to find out about and discuss the meaning of the word 'revelation'. Ask them to write an acrostic using the word revelation. Explore the role of Muhammad ﷺ as God's messenger and the responsibility that this implies. *What would you like to be chosen to do?*

- explain why the words of the Qur'an can never be changed and why all Muslims learn Arabic in order to read and understand it
- explain how Muslims treat the Qur'an and the reasons why
- explain what is meant by revelation
- reflect on the meaning of responsibility and its meaning in their own lives

- Muslims believe that every word of the Qur'an is the holy word of Allah.
- Copies kept in school should be treated with respect. Never place the Qur'an on the floor or under other books.

STORIES ABOUT MUHAMMAD ﷺ

- the key beliefs that Muslims hold about Muhammad ﷺ
 - to recognise the importance of events in Muhammad's life for Muslims today
 - to know some of the teachings Muhammad ﷺ gave
 - to identify the ideas and beliefs which are expressed through the stories they study
- Explain that many of the things which Muhammad ﷺ did and said were remembered and carefully recorded. The stories and sayings help Muslims to understand the Qur'an and put what it teaches into practice in their daily lives.
 - As a class, share and discuss selected stories from the Hadith. Alternatively, children could work in pairs or small groups and deduce from their story what it tells Muslims about Muhammad ﷺ, and whether there is any guidance in it for Muslims today. In this way, a range of stories could be covered within the class and ideas could then be pooled to build up a profile of what Muhammad ﷺ was like and what he did.
 - Help the children to make a simple storybook for Muslim children about the life of Muhammad ﷺ. *Looking back at what we've learnt, what are the key points that you think Muslim children should know about Muhammad ﷺ?* Discuss why most Muslims do not find pictures of human or animal forms acceptable. Ask the children to think carefully about how the book can be illustrated without pictures of people or animals.

- identify some key beliefs about Muhammad ﷺ which Muslims hold today
- explain why Muslims remember at least one key event in the life of Muhammad ﷺ
- explain the meaning of at least one story about Muhammad ﷺ

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

HOW DO MUSLIMS TRY TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF MUHAMMAD ﷺ?

- to compare their own experience of role models and influences on their life with those of Muslims
 - to identify their own values and commitments and recognise how these affect their own behaviour
 - to make links between the values and commitments of Muslims and their behaviour in daily life
 - to identify some key Muslim ideas exemplified in the life of Muhammad ﷺ
- Explain that Muslims believe that Muhammad ﷺ brought the message of Allah and that he also interpreted it in his daily life. Explore the idea of a role model. Use examples from the children's own experience of role models. *Who is special in your life? Who influences the things you do, what you think, eat, drink, wear, how you spend your time? Why do these people influence you? Where do you think their values have come from?* Use examples from the teachings of Muhammad ﷺ that provide a model for living.
 - Use videos or CD-ROMs which show examples of Muslims, preferably children or young people, talking about the importance of Muhammad ﷺ as an influence on how they live their lives. Use role play to explore a situation where children could show their understanding by deciding how a Muslim might respond and why.
 - Compare and contrast what they have learnt about Muhammad ﷺ with key people who are very important in religions they have studied. *What special qualities did Muhammad ﷺ have? What are the qualities a religious leader should have? How are these different from the qualities of other types of leader?*

- identify people who influence them and give a simple explanation of how and why
 - give an example of an action they themselves have done which reveals their values
 - identify sources of their own values and commitments
 - explain why Muslims try to follow the example of Muhammad ﷺ
 - apply their knowledge by suggesting what a Muslim might do in a given situation, following the example of Muhammad ﷺ
- Where possible, use materials, eg videos, CD-ROMs, which show Muslims, especially children, speaking for themselves about their faith and way of life.

FUTURE LEARNING

Children could go on to:

- study, in greater depth, the teachings of the Qur'an and their impact on the Muslim way of life

OUT-OF-SCHOOL LEARNING

Children could:

- talk to a Muslim about the importance of Muhammad ﷺ
- visit a local mosque
- research Muslim art on the internet, finding out about calligraphy and Arabesque