

Unit 6D What is the Qur'an and why is it important to Muslims?

ABOUT THE UNIT

This unit enables children to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Qur'an and appreciate its significance for Muslims.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit builds on other units on Islam – 5A and 5B in year 5, and 6B in year 6. It relates strongly to unit 5A in year 5 on the importance of Muhammad ﷺ, which covers the revelation of the Qur'an. The unit also draws on work on sacred texts in the other religious traditions studied in years 1–5.

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if children have:

- studied sacred texts in other religions and so understand concepts such as 'word of God' and holy
- an understanding of some important Muslim beliefs
- visited a mosque and seen, in the place of worship, the sacred text being read
- had opportunities to develop the skills of reflection, application and interpretation in RE

VOCABULARY

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

- Islam, eg *Qur'an, Hafiz, Bismillah, Madrasah*
- religion, eg *blasphemy, sacred, mystery, revelation, authority, reverence, compassionate, merciful*

RESOURCES

- a copy of the Qur'an for school use
- a Qur'an stand
- recording of a Qur'anic recitation
- CD-ROMs
- videos
- a poster with the 99 beautiful names of God

EXPECTATIONS

At the end of this unit

most children will:

describe how and why the Qur'an is treated in a special way by Muslims; form and address questions sensitively to a Muslim about the effect of the Qur'an on their lives; explain the connection between the Qur'an and the beliefs of Muslims on Allah and guidance; describe and explain one of the main messages of the Qur'an

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

know that Muslims use the Qur'an as their holy book; understand how a Qur'an would be treated by a Muslim; suggest how a Muslim's life might be affected by a teaching from the Qur'an

some children will have progressed further and will:

identify beliefs of Muslims from the Qur'an which they share, and others which they do not share and be able to explain the reasons for their views; pose deeper questions to ask Muslims about the effect of the Qur'an on their lives; transfer their understanding of the significance of the Qur'an to looking at sacred texts in other faiths

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

WHAT IS THE QUR'AN?

- that the Qur'an is the sacred text for Muslims
- that it is believed to be the word of God and is treated with respect and reverence
- to reflect on their own values and the influences in their lives
- about some of the ways in which the Qur'an influences the lives of Muslims

- Show a Qur'an to the children. Wash your hands first and let the children see you take it down from a high shelf and uncover it. Build up a sense that this is a special book.
- Discuss with the children what they think about a book being handled in this way. *What does it suggest to you about the book?* Introduce the word 'sacred' and explore what this means. Tell them that Muslims believe that the Qur'an is the word of God. It guides their behaviour and is the basis for their belief.
- Use questions to establish what children can remember from previous work on Islam. *Can you recall the story of the revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad ﷺ?* Revise this story and then move on to the importance of the Qur'an for Muslims today.
- Tell children that many Muslims learn the words of the Qur'an by heart and recite rather than read them. Discuss why the children think learning something 'by heart' is important. *What do you know 'by heart'? Is it easy or difficult? Why do you think learning the Qur'an is important for Muslims?*
- Ask the children to draw a chart or diagram to show what is important in their life. *Where is the authority in your life? What do you treat with respect? What influences the way you think and act? Ask them to draw a chart or diagram for a Muslim boy or girl of the same age. How is it different? How is it similar?*

- understand the meaning of 'sacred' in relation to a religious text
- can explain some of the reasons why the Qur'an is important to Muslims
- reflect on and identify sources of authority which influence their own lives
- compare and contrast their own experiences of what influences their lives with those of Muslim children

- Care must be taken when handling the Qur'an in the classroom. It should be covered and kept on a high shelf. Hands should be washed before touching it.
- As this unit follows other units on Islam it is an opportunity to build on and consolidate previous knowledge and understanding.
- The focus needs to be on the final activity.
- Muslims who have learnt the whole of the Qur'an from memory are called 'Hafiz'. They are highly respected.
- Emphasise that it is not enough to keep the Qur'an properly – respect is shown through regular reading and reflection.
- The prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, 'a person in whose heart there is no knowledge of the Qur'an is like a ruined house' (Hadith).

THE QUR'AN: WHAT DOES IT TEACH ABOUT GOD?

- that the Qur'an teaches that God has many qualities, the most important being compassion and mercy

- Play a recording of a recitation of the Qur'an.
- Tell children that every recitation begins with the 'Bismillah', which is in Arabic and means 'In the name of Allah, the compassionate, the merciful'. All the chapters in the Qur'an begin with these words. Explore the meaning of 'compassionate' and 'merciful' and discuss what this tells us about the Muslim view of God. *When might people need to act with compassion or show mercy?*
- Show children a poster with the '99 Beautiful Names of God' and discuss some of them.
- Ask the children to work in pairs to discuss and then write about what they think the qualities of God might be. Share the ideas as a group.
- *If you were choosing a beautiful name for God what would it be and why?* Ask the children to present the chosen name and the reasons for choosing it as a poster, decorated attractively with calligraphy or arabesque, for display.

- know that the Qur'an teaches that God is compassionate and merciful and understand what this means
- reflect on their own ideas about the characteristics of God

- Prepare children to listen respectfully even though the sounds may be strange to them.
- The words are sacred to the person who is chanting them: it is a way of worshipping God.
- Remember that it is not acceptable to most Muslims to reproduce life-like images of people or animals. This is because only God created life and it is considered a blasphemy to try and emulate this act of creation. This could be discussed with children when they plan how to decorate their posters.

THE QUR'AN: WHAT DOES IT TEACH ABOUT GUIDANCE?

- that the Qur'an is a book of guidance for living for Muslims
- that texts are powerful influences on how people think and act

- Listen to and discuss stories from the Qur'an which show how Allah gives guidance.
- Discuss children's experiences of where they look for and receive guidance. *When do you think it is important to receive and follow guidance?*
- Tell the children that Muslims sometimes say that the Qur'an often makes them stop and think before they do things.
- In groups, prepare a class debate on whether young people should be encouraged to read books, magazines and other texts (including ICT materials) that have a good influence on them.
- Ask the children to write an article for a magazine recommending books and other materials which they think would influence children and young people to grow up to become responsible citizens.

- know that Muslims' behaviour is influenced by the Qur'an
- compare religious and secular influences and reflect on how books and other texts influence their own lives

STUDYING THE QUR'AN

- that Muslim children and young people study the Qur'an at Qur'an schools
- that religious and secular groups believe that it is important to teach their children about beliefs and ways of life

- Show a video or CD-ROM extract which shows Muslim children and young people attending Qur'an school or Madrasah, which is held at most mosques. Discuss why this is important.
- Ask the children to find out what different activities take place at a Qur'an school, using videos, CD-ROMs and reference texts. Ask them to produce an information leaflet explaining what the Qur'an school is for.
- Discuss with the children why they think Muslims want to help their children and young people to understand their faith.
- Ask the children to make a list of 10 things which adults, ie parents, carers and teachers, want for them; and a second list of things they think Muslim parents, teachers and religious leaders want for their children. *What are the similarities and differences?* Share and discuss the lists as a class.
- *What would you want to pass on to future generations of your family?*

- know that Muslims study the Qur'an in order to understand their faith
- consider the reasons why Muslim adults want their children to learn about their religion
- make connections with the hopes which the adults in their lives have for them
- compare and contrast religious and secular values

- At Madrasah, children are not only learning the Qur'an they are being taught about all aspects of what it means to be a Muslim.
- Explore with the children the reasons why Muslims want to ensure that their religious and cultural traditions are passed on to their children.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

WHAT IS THE QUR'AN AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- the significance of the Qur'an for Muslims today
- to select and put together information to form a plan for a television programme on the Qur'an
- to work successfully with others in a group

- Ask the children to plan a television programme for schools, aimed at years 5 or 6, on 'the importance of the Qur'an for Muslims'.
- In groups, tell them that they will become the production team planning the programme. They must make decisions such as: *What is the purpose of the programme? Who will they film and where? What format/techniques could they use?*
- Ask the children to devise criteria to judge their plans. Talk about their ideas, and write them down so that all the children can see them.
- Ask the children to present their ideas to the class, who will act as the television company's executive committee. The committee will judge the ideas of each group in turn, with each individual writing a short report on which presentation they thought met the criteria most successfully and why.

- work with others to create a presentation about the Qur'an and its importance to Muslims
- evaluate the work of other members of the class or group

- Allow two lessons for this final activity which draws together what the children have learnt about the Qur'an and its significance for Muslims, and allows them to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

FUTURE LEARNING

Children could go on to:

- study the Qur'an and its significance to Muslims in greater depth

OUT-OF-SCHOOL LEARNING

Children could:

- find texts that are treated in a significant way at home, and write a set of guidelines explaining how and why they are treated like this
- collect examples of significant texts or quotes that are meaningful to themselves and other people in their family, and record them in a special book