

Islam



What is Islam?

Islam is the world's second-largest religion.

People who follow the religion of Islam are called Muslims and there are around 1.6 billion Muslims in the world.

Like Christians and Jews, Muslims are monotheistic, which means they only believe in one God who they call Allah, the Arabic name for God. Islam was founded in the Middle East over 1400 years ago by a man named Muhammad who gave Allah's message to the people on Earth and introduced the faith of Islam.

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Islam is an Arabic word meaning submission and obedience. It comes from a word meaning peace.

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Although their faiths are different, Christians, Jews and Muslims do share many of the stories and traditions that are told in the Old Testament of the Bible. Muslims believe Jesus was a prophet.



A mosque is a place of prayer and worship for Muslims. Friday is a holy day for Muslims; on Friday at noon, the most important religious service of the week is held. **A religious teacher called an imam (a 'man of knowledge')** leads **local prayer** and takes care of the mosque.



The Ka'ba (or Ka'bah) is an ancient shrine which rests on foundations built by Abraham and Ishmael. Muslims believe it to be holiest place on Earth and all Muslims must face the direction of the Ka'ba while they pray. The Ka'ba is covered in a black cloth, and embroidered in gold and silver with verses from the Qur'an. Every Muslim family, no matter where they live, knows what direction the Ka'ba is from their house.

Five pillars of Islam

The Five Pillars of Islam are the five duties that the Qur'an states any Muslim must follow. They are:

- The Shahadah - The declaration of faith, which Muslims repeat several times a day: "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His messenger."
- Salah - The five daily prayers, said in Arabic at dawn, just after midday, mid-afternoon, just after sunset and after dark.
- Zakah - The duty to give money to help the poor (at least 2.5% of their savings and valuables every year).
- Sawm - Muslims must fast during the month called Ramadan and not eat or drink during daylight hours.
- Hajj - A religious pilgrimage to Makkah which Muslims are expected to make at least once in their lifetime if they are able to.

Websites:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zpdtstk/articles/zrxxgwx>

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TOP TEN FACTS

- People who practise the religion of Islam are called **Muslims**.
- There are about 1.6 billions Muslims in the world, living in many countries (mainly in the Middle East, north Africa and parts of Asia).
- Muslims believe that there is only one God, called Allah.
- Muslims believe that Allah sent many prophets to Earth to give his message. A prophet is someone who speaks for God on Earth. For Muslims, a man called Muhammad was the final prophet of Allah. He was responsible for starting the faith of Islam and is referred to as the Messenger of God or the Prophet.
- Muhammad was born in Makkah (also known as Mecca), which is now in modern-day Saudi Arabia, in A.D. 570. Muhammad is so highly regarded by Muslims that they say "Peace be upon him" (pbuh) whenever they say or write his name.
- The Qur'an, or Koran as it is sometimes known, is the holy book of Muslims.
- The Qur'an is written in Arabic and Muslims always try to read and recite it in this language.
- The mosque is the building where Muslims go to worship.
- **Friday is the Muslim holy day**, the time of the week when Muslims go to the mosque and pray.