



VOICES
INSPIRING MESSAGES
ON TODAY'S TOPICS

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 1 May 4, 2025

“Understanding Islam”

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank you for our Muslim friends and neighbors and their witness to us about prayer, submission and giving. O Lord, we confess that sometimes we have not been the ambassadors that you have called us to be. We have, because of our fear or our hate, not demonstrated love to our Muslim neighbors. Forgive us O Lord, and help us to demonstrate your love in Jesus name we pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Genesis 21:9-13, 20 (NIV)

⁹ But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, ¹⁰ and she said to Abraham, “Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac.”

¹¹ The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. ¹² But God said to him, “Do not be so distressed about the boy and your slave woman. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring^[a] will be reckoned. ¹³ I will make the son of the slave into a nation also, because he is your offspring.”

²⁰ God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer.

2 Corinthians 5:20 (NIV)

²⁰ We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.

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INTRODUCTION

The word “Islam” means “submission to the will of God.” Followers of Islam are called Muslims. Muslims are monotheistic and worship one, all-knowing God, who in Arabic is known as Allah. Followers of Islam aim to live a life of complete submission to Allah following the five pillars of Islam.

Christians and Muslims worship the same God and share common ground when it comes to submission to God, prayer, and giving to the poor. However, Christians differ with our Muslim cousins when it comes to the authority of the Quran and beliefs about Jesus. Despite our differences, both Christians and Muslims can grow closer to God by building bridges between our communities and learning from each other.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you have any Muslim friends, neighbors, or co-workers? If so, have you ever discussed religion with them?
2. Islam is the religion of surrender or submission to Allah. Similarly, Jesus called his followers to “take their cross.” What do you believe it means for you to choose eternal life, to “take up your cross” and follow Jesus?
3. Muslims pray five times a day facing Mecca. How does your prayer life compare? What can you do to improve your prayer life?
4. Muslims must pay their ‘purity of wealth’ - a small percentage of their income that goes to the poor and the needy - once a year. What are the main ways you are involved in honoring God by serving others?
5. Muhammed was a warrior; leading an army was one of the roles he played. The teachings of the Quran [about war and violence] stand in marked contrast to those of Jesus. When you feel like “getting even,” how can you become more like Jesus instead?

FINAL APPLICATION

This week, work on gaining a better understanding of Islam.