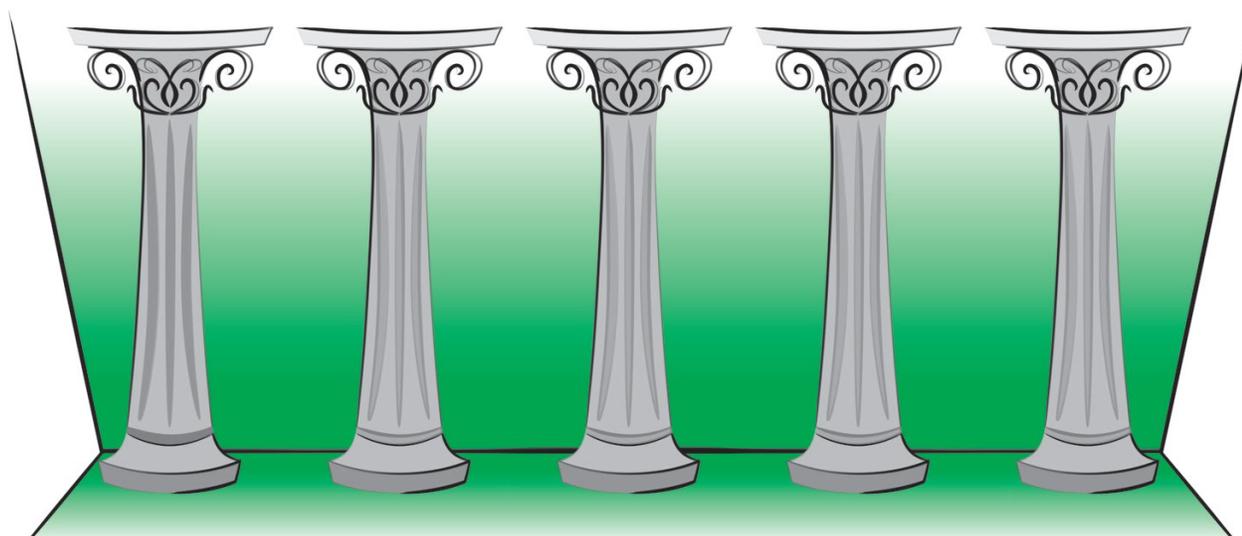


An Introduction to Islam

Roy and Jinky Twadell are missionaries with Evangelical Friends Mission. Their ministry is with people who are from cultures where Islam is the most common religion. There are more than one billion people who follow the religion of Islam. These people are commonly called Muslims. The largest number of Muslims is in Indonesia. In the United States there are 4 million Muslims. About 20% of all Muslims live in the Middle East.

Founded in the 7th century A.D., Islamic fundamental beliefs include angels, the revealed books and scriptures, a series of prophets, and a Last Day (Judgment). Muslim duties include five daily prayers, a welfare tax called zakat, fasting (during the month of Ramadan), and a pilgrimage (hajj) to Mecca; these four elements plus the profession of faith are called the Five Pillars. The pillars of Islam are required of all Muslims.

[Teaching Note: Have kids compare and contrast the practices above with what Christians practice.]



Shahada Witness

In Arabic “La ilah ha il Allah, Muhammadan Rasul-Allah” is translated: “(There is) no God but Allah (and) Muhammad is His Messenger” or, “There is no God but Allah” and “Muhammad is His Apostle.”

Salat Prayer

Performing daily prayers is an act of communication between humans and God. Five daily prayers are considered a duty for all Muslims and on these occasions preparations in ritual purity are required.

Zakat Alms

The zakat is a form of giving to those who are less fortunate. It is obligatory upon all Muslims to give 2.5 % of wealth and assets each year (in excess of what is otherwise required) to the poor.

Sawm Fasting

Another form of offering thanks to God is fasting. It is a duty to all Muslims to fast during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, Ramadan. During this month, Muslims refrain from food and drink during daylight: before sunrise to just after sunset. Exceptions are those with ill health, pregnant women, and travelers. The breaking of the fast is a joyous occasion. Sawm during Ramadan or any time is recognized as physically demanding but spiritually rewarding.

Hajj Pilgrimage

The pilgrimage season begins in the tenth month, the month following Ramadan, and lasts through the middle of twelfth month, Dhu al-Hijja. This fifth pillar requires Muslims to travel to Saudi Arabia to visit the Holy Sites of Islam.