



An understanding about the month of **Ramadan** and the unique practices of Muslim students during **Ramadan**.

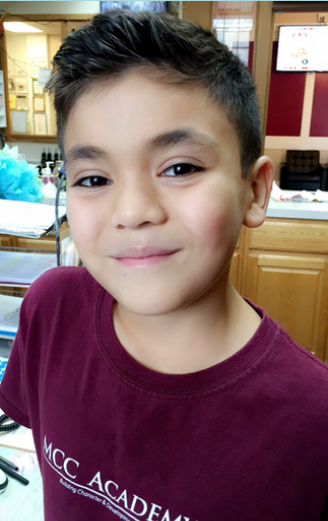
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# RESOURCE GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

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**COMPILED BY  
ICNA SISTERS CANADA**





# Aim

Educators strive to provide students with an inclusive educational environment. It can be difficult to always know how best to be sensitive to students with needs outside of the norm, which is often the case with students from diverse cultural or religious backgrounds that are unfamiliar.

As such, the aim of this resource guide is to empower educators with a brief and focused understanding of how Muslim students celebrate Ramadan, and serve as a reference or resource for schools when devising policies or responses to Muslims who may ask to be temporarily accommodated in a unique way.

By informing educators of the meaning and value that Ramadan has to Muslim students and how they may respond to special requests during this month, we hope that this guide will help schools take another step further in continuing to support the well-being of all students regardless of faith and culture by fostering learning environments that emphasize equity, anti-racism, and inclusion.

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## *What is Ramadan?*

Ramadan is the ninth month of the lunar calendar.

During this month, a Muslim fasts daily from any food or drink from dawn till sunset

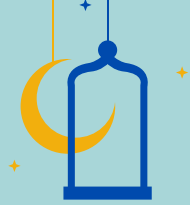
Fasting is an important obligation in Islam and is incumbent upon all Muslims who have reached the age of puberty.

Fasting helps develop God-consciousness and self-discipline.

The lunar calendar is 10-11 days shorter than the solar (Gregorian) calendar; therefore, Ramadan is 10-11 days earlier each year.



# Why do Muslims fast?



## Compassion



Builds empathy and a desire to give to the less fortunate

## Physical benefit



Helps cleanse and detox the body

## Spiritual benefit



Achieves a sense of closeness and connection to God

## Sense of community



Sharing of meals amongst family, friends, and neighbours

## Month of charity



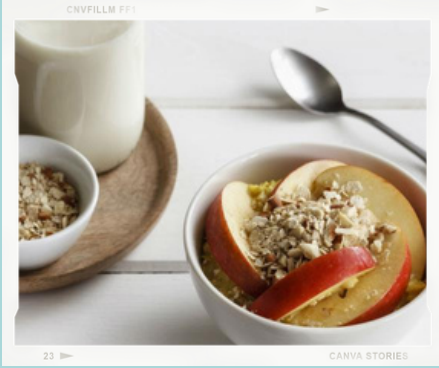
Alms giving to the needy and poor

## Self-discipline



self-control, moderation, and restraining from unhealthy norms

# A Typical Ramadan Routine



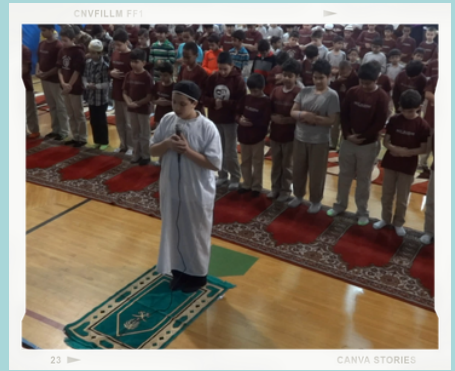
A nutritious pre-dawn meal (Suhoor)



Recitation of Quran



Breaking of the fast with dates, water and traditional foods (at sunset)



Taraweeh (extra prayers) in the early part of the night





# Eid Celebrations



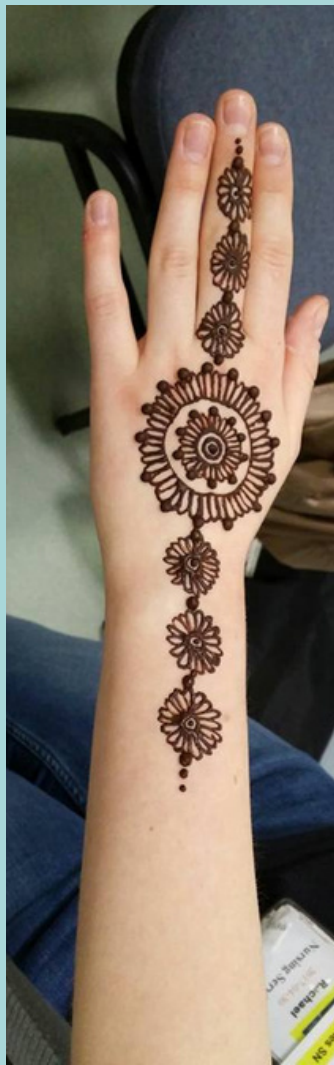
The sighting of the new moon marks the end of Ramadan.

After 29 or 30 days of fasting (depending on the moon sighting), Eid is celebrated the next day.

Eid activities typically start with an early morning congregational prayer in the mosque.

Muslims pay charity before prayer, visit family, friends, the sick, and elderly, enjoying special traditional meals, and giving gifts especially to children.







# Frequently Asked Questions

## *Why is Ramadan so important to Muslims?*

**In Islam, there are five core beliefs that a Muslim adheres to. Ramadan is one of them.**

**The five beliefs are as follows:**

● The Testimony of Faith: To be Muslim, one must verbally state one's belief in the oneness of God and in the prophethood of Muhammad, Adam, Abraham, Noah, Moses and Jesus peace be upon them all.

● Prayer: A Muslim performs five prayers a day (at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and early part of the night), Prayer is a direct connection between the worshipper and God without any intermediaries.

● Paying Alms: a Muslim has to pay alms (zakat) of a minimum of 2.5% from all their saved wealth to support the needy every lunar year.

● **Fasting in the month of Ramadan: A Muslim fasts every year during the month of Ramadan. Fasting is observed from dawn until sunset, abstaining from food and drinks.**

● The Pilgrimage to Mecca (Saudi Arabia): Hajj (pilgrimage) is a once-in-a-lifetime obligation for every Muslim who is physically, mentally, and financially able to perform it.

## *Who is eligible to fast?*

Fasting is obligatory upon every Muslim that has attained puberty (with exceptions)

## *What makes someone exempt from fasting?*

Muslims that are ill, those that are travelling, and women who are menstruating, are pregnant, or lactating are exempted from fasting.

# Frequently Asked Questions

*Are children who haven't attained puberty allowed to fast?*

Yes children who are enthusiastic are encouraged to fast, allowing them to feel the essence of their belief. But it should be under parental supervision and discretion.

*How can schools help children that are fasting?*

- For students that are fasting at your school, they can be offered to study in the library during lunchtime.
- For students who play sports, coaches can still allow them to participate even though these students may not be able to fulfill all team obligations and practices during the four weeks of Ramadan. Flexibility is appreciated to allow Muslim students to participate in sports activities while still respecting their limitations in physical capabilities during this month.
- It is also requested that the school please provide a supervised prayer area for students to perform their noon and mid-afternoon prayers which usually need only 5 minutes of time.

*How can teachers be considerate of fasting students?*

Teachers can realize that a student may feel tired to participate in class, especially by the afternoon. They can also help students by easing deadlines considering the fact that these students have extra congregational prayers at night. In gym class, teachers can be conscious of fasting students and assign less strenuous activities or an alternate assignment to fulfill any requirements, such as an essay on a related topic.

# Frequently Asked Questions

*Doesn't fasting make the body too weak to perform basic day-to-day activities?*

Fasting actually gives the digestive organs a rest, and helps the body to get rid of the accumulated toxins which are detrimental to our health. In fact, fasting strengthens the body and has been proven beneficial in treating many diseases. Thirty days of fasting is an ideal time to also break bad habits like smoking etc.

*Is Eid celebrated on the same day every year?*

No. Muslims follow the Islamic lunar calendar, which is shorter than the solar (Gregorian) calendar by about 10-11 days. Thus, Islamic holidays come earlier each year.

*Can Muslims celebrate Eid on different days?*

Yes. Some Muslims mark the Eid holiday with an actual sighting of the new moon and others go with astronomical calculations. Regardless of the procedure, the holidays fall on the same day or one day apart

*How can teachers be considerate of students celebrating Eid?*

For Muslims, Eid is as big as Christmas is for Christians. Thus, a Muslim student would prefer to not attend school or take an exam or have to complete a big assignment on this day so that they may spend time celebrating with loved ones.

# Glossary of Terms



- ALLAH - The Arabic word for God, the creator of the universe
- Islam - A monotheistic religion
- Muslim - One who follows the religion of Islam.
- Ramadan - Ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar.
- Taraweeh - extra congregational prayers in the early part of the night in Ramadan
- Suhoor - the pre-dawn meal before starting the day's fast
- Iftar- the breaking of fast with food and water at sunset
- Eid (also known as Eid ul Fitr)- the festival marking the end of Ramadan



**By understanding the practices of Muslims, educators can assist and accommodate Muslim students in schools, helping these individuals to feel part of the fabric of the education community hence enabling them to be better students and model citizens of Canada.**

*Thank you for reading and your kind consideration!*

**For details or clarification on any aspect of this information, please contact [icnasiscalgary@gmail.com](mailto:icnasiscalgary@gmail.com)**

**For more information please visit [www.icnasisters.ca](http://www.icnasisters.ca) and [www.gainpeace.com](http://www.gainpeace.com)**

