

Elementary-Level Modifications

The anti-Muslim racism curriculum we have developed is best suited for middle and high school students due to complexity and reading levels of the various texts. This does not mean, however, that these concepts cannot or should not be brought up in elementary classrooms. The following are our suggestions for how to modify this curriculum for younger audiences.

Many people think that elementary-aged students are too young to start learning about stereotypes, prejudice and bias. But children as young as two and three years old begin to recognize and make decision based on differences in race, gender and ability. As educators, we must create spaces for students to address and learn about these differences in respectful and affirming ways.

Whether or not you have Muslim students in your classroom, there are many ways to teach young students about Islam and Muslims. Building background knowledge about the religion through videos and stories is a great way to introduce this concept to students. Celebrating holidays that are important to the Muslim community, like Ramadan and Eid, in your classroom helps students draw similarities between their different family customs. With lower-elementary students, craft activities like [designing prayer rugs](#), or [mosques](#), or [decorations](#) for holidays.

Picture books are a great way to broach difficult topics with young students- and even older ones at times! Below, you will find a list of fiction books that help teach students about Islam and the diverse experiences of Muslims in America. Use these on their own as a read-aloud text, or as an opener to introduce the content, or start a conversation before a lesson. The nonfiction list helps to contextualize these experiences by teaching students about the social and cultural history of Islam and Muslims.

Children's Literature

For teaching about Muslims/ Islam through Fiction

[My Name is Bilal](#) by Asma Mobin-Uddin

When Bilal and his sister Ayesha move with their family, they have to attend a new school. They soon find out that they may be the only Muslim students there. When Bilal sees his sister bullied on their first day, he worries about being teased himself, and thinks it might be best if his classmates didn't know that he is Muslim. Maybe if he tells kids his name is Bill, rather than Bilal, then they would leave him alone. Mr. Ali, one of Bilal's teachers and also Muslim, sees how Bilal is struggling. He gives Bilal a book about the first person to give the call to prayer during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. That person was another Bilal: Bilal Ibn Rabah. What Bilal learns from the book forms the compelling story of a young boy grappling with his identity (Amazon).

[Lailah's Lunchbox: A Ramadan Story](#) by Reem Faruqi

Lailah is in a new school in a new country, thousands of miles from her old home, and missing her old friends. When Ramadan begins, she is excited that she is finally old enough to participate in the fasting but worried that her classmates won't understand why she doesn't join them in the lunchroom.

Lailah solves her problem with help from the school librarian and her teacher and in doing so learns that she can make new friends who respect her beliefs. This gentle, moving story from first-time author Reem Faruqi comes to life in Lea Lyon's vibrant illustrations. Lyon uses decorative arabesque borders on intermittent spreads to contrast the ordered patterns of Islamic observances with the unbounded rhythms of American school days.

[Under the Ramadan Moon](#) by Sylvia Whitman

We wait for the moon. We watch for the moon. We watch for the Ramadan moon. We give to the poor, and read Qur'an, under the moon. We live our faith, until next year under the moon, under the moon, under the Ramadan moon. Ramadan is one of the most special months of the Islamic year, when Muslims pray, fast, and help those in need. Sylvia Whitman's lyrical story, with luminous illustrations by Sue Williams, serves as an introduction to Ramadan_a time for reflection and ritual with family and friends. A detailed note about Ramadan is included.

[Ramadan \(Celebrate the World\)](#) by Hannah Elliot

Learn all about the traditions of Ramadan with this first book in the brand-new board book series Celebrate the World, which highlights celebrations across the globe.

In the ninth month of the year, when the first crescent moon rises in the sky, it's time to celebrate Ramadan! In this lovely board book with illustrations from Rashin Kheiriyeh, readers learn that Ramadan is a time to reflect on ourselves, to be thankful, and a time to help others.

[One Green Apple](#) by Eve Bunting

Farah feels alone, even when surrounded by her classmates. She listens and nods but doesn't speak. It's hard being the new kid in school, especially when you're from another country and don't know the language. Then, on a field trip to an apple orchard, Farah discovers there are lots of things that sound the same as they did at home, from dogs crunching their food to the ripple of friendly laughter. As she helps the class make apple cider, Farah connects with the other students and begins to feel that she belongs.

Ted Lewin's gorgeous sun-drenched paintings and Eve Bunting's sensitive text immediately put the reader into another child's shoes in this timely story of a young Muslim immigrant.

[Under My Hijab](#) by Hena Khan

Grandma wears it clasped under her chin. Auntie pins hers up with a beautiful brooch. Jenna puts it under a sun hat when she hikes. Zara styles hers to match her outfit. As a young girl observes six very different women in her life who each wear the hijab in a unique way, she also dreams of the rich possibilities of her own future, and how she will express her own personality through her hijab. Written in sprightly rhyme and illustrated by a talented newcomer, *Under My Hijab* honors the diverse lives of contemporary Muslim women and girls, their love for each other, and their pride in their culture and faith.

[The Proudest Blue](#) by Ibtihaj Muhammad

With her new backpack and light-up shoes, Faizah knows the first day of school is going to be special. It's the start of a brand new year and, best of all, it's her older sister Asiya's first day of hijab--a hijab of beautiful blue fabric, like the ocean waving to the sky. But not everyone sees hijab as beautiful, and in the face of hurtful, confusing words, Faizah will find new ways to be strong.

Paired with Hatem Aly's beautiful, whimsical art, Olympic medalist Ibtihaj Muhammad and Morris Award finalist S.K. Ali bring readers an uplifting, universal story of new experiences, the unbreakable bond between siblings, and of being proud of who you are.

[Mommy's Khimar](#), Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow

A young Muslim girl spends a busy day wrapped up in her mother's colorful headscarf in this sweet and fanciful picture book from debut author and illustrator Jamilah Tompkins-Bigelow and Ebony Glenn.

A khimar is a flowing scarf that my mommy wears.

Before she walks out the door each day, she wraps one around her head.

A young girl plays dress up with her mother's headscarves, feeling her mother's love with every one she tries on. Charming and vibrant illustrations showcase the beauty of the diverse and welcoming community in this portrait of a young Muslim American girl's life.

[It's Ramadan, Curious George](#) by H.A. Rey, Hena Khan

It's the first day of Ramadan, and George is celebrating with his friend Kareem and his family. George helps Kareem with his first fast and joins in the evening celebration of tasting treats and enjoying a special meal. Then, George helps make gift baskets to donate to the needy, and watches for the crescent moon with the man in the yellow hat. Finally George joins in the Eid festivities to mark the end of his very first Ramadan.

This playful tabbed board book, with a foil-stamped cover, makes a great holiday gift for all fans of Curious George—those who celebrate Ramadan, and those who are learning about it for the first time!

[Moon Watchers: Shirin's Ramadan Miracle](#) by [Reza Jalali](#)

Looking through the tall trees in their backyard in Maine, Shirin and her dad search for a glimpse of the new moon, the sign that the month of Ramadan has begun. Ramadan is a time when Muslims around the world pray, fast, and pay special attention to doing good deeds. Shirin is nine and thinks she should be able to fast like her older brother Ali, but her parents feel she is still too young to go without food and water all day. When Shirin catches Ali sneaking food after school, she wonders: Should she tattle or is this an opportunity for a good deed? Shirin feels left out when the others break their fasts to have their own meals after dark and in the early morning, before it is light again. But then her grandmother tells a story that shows her a way she can feel more a part of Ramadan and the traditions and closeness her family enjoys during this special month of the year. Her good deeds result in a surprise for everyone!

Early Childhood

1. [Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns: A Muslim Book of Colors](#), Hena Khan
2. [Crescent Moons and Pointed Minarets: A Muslim Book of Shapes](#), Hena Khan
3. [It's Ramadan, Curious George](#), H. A. Rey, Hena Khan
4. [Yo Soy Muslim: A Father's Letter to His Daughter](#), Mark Gonzalez
5. [Hassan and Aneesa Love Ramadan \(Hassan & Aneesa\)](#), Yasmeen Rahim

For teaching Islam through Nonfiction:

[DK Eyewitness Books: Islam](#) by DK

Explore the world's fastest-growing religion--from the Prophet Muhammad to Ramadan and the Qu'ran. Learn about traditional Islamic dress, feasts, and Islam's rich tradition of design.

Why do Muslims fast? What are the five pillars of Islam? What happens during the pilgrimage to Mecca? How did Islam spread across the world, from Spain to China? Find answers to these questions and more. Read about annual festivals in the Muslim calendar, including Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha. View the layout of a mosque and see Islam's role in scholarly learning, from astronomy to mathematics and medicine. Learn about the religion's first conquests and the arms and armor of the Islamic world. Read about Islam's important figures, including the scholar Avicenna, the explorer Ibn Battuta, and the military leader Saladin.

DK Eyewitness Books: Islam is the perfect guide for kids who want to learn about this vibrant religion and culture.

[1001 Inventions and Awesome Facts from Muslim Civilization](#), by National Geographic

We often think that people from a thousand years ago were living in the Dark Ages. But from the 7th century onward in Muslim civilization there were amazing advances and inventions that still influence our everyday lives. People living in the Muslim world saw what the Egyptians, Chinese, Indians, Greek, and Romans had discovered and spent the next one thousand years adding new developments and ideas. Inventors created marvels like the elephant water clock, explorers drew detailed maps of the world, women made scientific breakthroughs and founded universities, architects built huge domes larger than anywhere else on earth, astronomers mapped the stars and so much more! This book takes the winning formula of facts, photos, and fun, and applies it to this companion book to the 1001 Inventions exhibit from the Foundation for Science, Technology, and Civilization. Each page is packed with information on this little-known history, but also shows how it still applies to our world today.

[The Grand Mosque of Paris: A Story of How Muslims Rescued Jews During the Holocaust](#), Karen Gray Ruelle

Few Parisians were willing to risk their own lives to help. Yet during that perilous time, many Jews found refuge in an unlikely place--the sprawling complex of the Grand Mosque of Paris. Not just a place of worship but a community center, this hive of activity was an ideal temporary hiding place for escaped prisoners of war and Jews of all ages, especially children.

Beautifully illustrated and thoroughly researched (both authors speak French and conducted first-person interviews and research at archives and libraries), this hopeful, non-fiction book introduces children to a little-known part of history. Perfect for children studying World War II or those seeking a heart-warming, inspiring read that highlights extraordinary heroism across faiths.

Includes a bibliography, a recommended list of books and films, and afterword from the authors that gives more details behind the story.

[The Genius of Islam: How Muslims Made the Modern World](#), by Bryn Barnard

The Middle Ages were a period of tremendous cultural and scientific advancement in the Islamic Empire—ideas and inventions that shaped our world.

Did you know that:

- The numbers you use every day (Arabic numerals!) are a Muslim invention?
- The marching band you hear at football games has its roots in the Middle East?
- You are drinking orange juice at breakfast today thanks to Islamic farming innovations?
- The modern city's skyline was made possible by Islamic architecture?

The Muslim world has often been a bridge between East and West, but many of Islam's crucial innovations are hidden within the folds of history. In this important book, Bryn Barnard uses short, engaging text and gorgeous full-color artwork to bring Islam's contributions gloriously to life. Chockful of information and pictures, and eminently browsable, *The Genius of Islam* is the definitive guide to a fascinating topic.

[Celebrating Ramadan](#), Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith

During the holy month of Ramadan, Ibrahim and his family, along with millions of other Muslims, eat and drink nothing from sunup to sundown. They are participating in a 1400-year-old-tradition that is one of the pillars of the Islamic faith. It marks the time when the Prophet Muhammad began to receive the revelations of the Qur'an, the sacred book of Islam. In this engaging photo essay, Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith and Lawrence Migdale follow Ibrahim's family through the month of praying and fasting until the feast and celebration of Eid al'Fitr that ends Ramadan. They explain the basic beliefs of Islam, tell the story of the life of the Prophet Muhammad, and offer an intimate look at the day-to-day lives of a devout Islamic family. A glossary, map, and index are included.

[Coming to America: A Muslim Family's Story](#) by Bernard Wolf

After four years of hard work and frugal living in New York, Hassan Mahmoud can afford to bring his family from Egypt to live with him. This close-knit family adapts to American life while staying true to their Muslim beliefs and Egyptian customs. Intimate and charming scenes of daily life are recounted -- preparing family meals, visiting a mosque in Manhattan, discovering the joys of snow. Through captivating color photographs and engaging text, this thoughtful book helps young readers understand Muslims as individuals and families.