

Exploring Islam

Teacher's Guide



Ra-id Abdulla, MD

Course Five

**First Edition
2014**

Exploring Islam

Islamic Studies for Children

Course Five

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Teacher's Guide Introduction

This book provides teachers with an outline of the educational goals of this textbook. The elementary level 5 textbooks series was specifically designed to teach Muslim children in Western based cultures their religion in a language and environment they are familiar with.

Each textbook consists of 5 recurring subjects, these are:

- **Quranic Studies:** the complete series of 5 textbooks covers the suras of the 30th juzi' of the Quran. Unit one includes the following suras: 1, 105-114
- **Life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Sira):** this textbook covers the outline of the life of the Prophet. This Sira is repeated in more details in Units 3&4. Unit 2 reviews the events surrounding other prophets while Unit 5 reviews notable individuals from the companions of the Prophet.
- **Belief (Iman):** Aspects of belief in Allah, His angels, Messengers, the Hereafter as well as other aspects of belief are reviewed in tis textbook
- **Worship (Ibadat):** Basic acts of worship are outlined in this textbook, this includes wudu, athan, prayer, zakat and pilgrimage.
- **Islamic Manners and Conduct (Mu'amalat):** Children are exposed to scenarios they may encounter in their daily lives. These are presented through stories children can relate to. The purpose is to learn the Islamic take on how to handle what they may face in their daily lives as they live among Muslims and non-Muslims.

Teachers and parents are encouraged to review the entire curriculum in the 5 units series prior to teaching each book as they are structured to introduce various topics in a crescendo manner where there is increase in depth and complexity of the subjects presented as the child matures through the years of elementary education.

Each school will decide whether to teach Quran separately from Islamic studies. At Universal School in Bridgeview, a suburb of Chicago where this textbook series was devised and taught Quran was taught as a separate subject. In Quran classes memorization of Quran was emphasized, whereas in Islamic studies the meaning was the focal point of teaching. Schools may decide to combine both into one class.

We thank the Kind Lord for allowing us to present these series of textbooks for our children's education and ask him to forgive our sins and shortcomings.

Ra-id Abdulla, MD

Preface

In the name of Allah Most Merciful, Most Compassionate

Praise to Allah, the Knowledgeable, the Guider. Peace upon his Prophet Muhammad, his household and his companions.

Writing any book is hard; writing a children's book is a nightmare. Will they understand the concept? Are the words too difficult for that particular age group? Am I making any sense at all? And on and on go the questions in one's mind.

It would not have been possible to embark on such an important endeavor if it wasn't for Dr. Amine's request, encouragement, and unrelenting persistence. I am also indebted to my father in law, Dr. A. S. Hashim, whose great scholarly work embodied in numerous Islamic textbooks for young Muslims inspired and assisted me in writing this series of Islamic books for children.

This book is a unit of a larger plan. Prior to writing these books, a committee of educators from Universal School in Bridgeview, Illinois developed an Islamic Studies curriculum for grades 1-12. The hope was to produce a single textbook for each educational level, similar to other subjects taught in elementary, middle and high school.

In writing these books I avoided the typical preaching style of listing things "to do" and "not to do". Instead, these textbooks deliver their teachings through stories. It is hoped that this format will be more interesting to young children who are more attentive when a story is narrated. Each story includes Islamic teachings as well as a Hadith or Quranic verses relevant to the topic. It is interesting to note that more infor-

mation could be packed this way, not to mention making it more fun to read.

The issue of how to best transliterate Arabic names remains difficult to solve. There is no consensus amongst writers. We hope that with future editions this issue could be resolved.

I am grateful for the wonderful work of all those who spent endless hours editing this book. We hope to reprint this textbook annually, introducing corrections and revisions every year. Therefore, we welcome your comments regarding any unforeseen errors or suggestions for improvement.

Mrs. Atta, the Islamic Studies teacher of elementary levels at Universal School was instrumental in the success of using this series of books. She has been able to provide valuable contributions to improving the books through her suggestions and addition of questions after each chapter. We pray that Allah rewards her on our behalf and bless her and her wonderful family.

I am indebted to my wife, Janaan, whose support and critique were most valuable. Furthermore, I would like to thank my three children, Muhammad, Zaineb and Maryem who let me know that the stories were worth listening to.

و الحمد لله رب العالمين و الصلاة و السلام على أشرف المرسلين.

Ra-id Abdulla, MD

Dedication

To
My son Muhammed

رحمة الله عليه

May Allah forgive his sins and grant him the everlasting Paradise for his efforts in editing this book. His loving and happy nature was a fresh breeze Allah ﷻ graced us with during the 22 years of his life before he returned to His Lord.



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Page	Chapter	Subject: Title
12	1	Quran: sura 82: Alinfitar - Mr. Zuhair is missing
14	2	Sira: Abu Bakr Elsiddiq
15	3	Worship: Mistakes in wudu
16	4	Conduct: Kindness to Neighbors
18	5	Conduct: Kindness to animals
20	6	Quran: sura 81: Attakweer
22	7	Sira: Omar bin Alkhatib
24	8	Worship: Mistakes in salat
26	9	Conduct: Hypocrites
28	10	Conduct: Manners
30	11	Quran: sura 80: A'basa
32	12	Sira: Uthman bin Affan
34	13	Worship: A mistake in fasting, or is it?
36	14	Conduct: Generosity

Page	Chapter	Title
38	15	Conduct: Neighbors
40	16	Quran: sura 79: Annazia'at
42	17	Sira: Ali bin Abitalib
44	18	Worship: Mistakes in zakat
46	19	Quran: sura 78: Anaba'
48	20	Mr. Zuhair is found





Teacher's Notes

Chapter title

Chapter 1

Alinfitar: Mr. Zuhair is Missing

Subject

Quranic Studies:

Alinfitar, sura number 82

Description

Allah is the judge of our actions on the Day of Judgment.

Suggestions

Our actions are recorded by the 2 angels accompanying each human being. All we do or say, trivial or important is recorded and revealed to us on the Day of Judgment. To be aware of this is to be on our guard from doing wrong.

Ask students to think of all the good and bad they have done that day and examine how better they could have acted that day, had they had the chance to do so.

Lead by example, tell them that you will pretend that you are an 11 year old boy or girl and recite a previously prepared “pretend” review of what you did that day, create a mix of good and bad and review with students each item and how better you could have acted that day.

Pick 1-2 ayat and ask students to memorize the chosen ayat.



Teacher's Notes

Chapter title

Chapter 2

Abu Bakr

Subject

Companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Sira)

Abu Bakr

Description

The life, character and achievements of Abu Bakr ﷺ

Suggestions

Sira is best taught through the following steps:

- Narrate events
- Select important points in the series of events, ask students how each point affected subsequent outcome and what would have happened if that event did not unfold in the way it did.
- Ask each student to pick which particular event is most important and ask them to present their point of view in a short (3 minute presentation).
- Ask students to comment on each presentation and ask presenting student to respond to comments. Children of this age thrive on debate and counter debate, it is a natural part of their inquisitive thinking and allows them to absorb the subject with more thoroughness than mere memorization of events.
- Contrast contribution of various companions to specific events in Islamic history, such as strengthening Islam while in Mecca, migration to Medina, etc.
- How did each companion contribute to Islam after the Prophet's death.



Teacher's Notes

Chapter title

Chapter 3

Mistakes in Wudu

Subject

Worship (Ibadat):

Wudu (ablution)

Description

Mistakes to avoid while making wudu.

Suggestions



Teacher's Notes

Chapter title

Chapter 4

Kindness to Neighbors

Subject

Islamic Manners and Conduct (Mu'amalat):

Being kind to neighbors

Description

The strength of Islam is in the strength of its community. Muslims treat their neighbors with kindness and love, just like treating a relative, this results in a strong a cohesive community.

Suggestions

Explore with students the nature of neighbors:

- They live close to us, they are the first we go to ask for help and we are the first they go to when they need help.
- Neighbors see us every day, know us and know our secrets, we trust them to protect us and they trust us to protect them.
- Children of neighbors play together and form life long bonds, just like relatives.

It is no surprise that the Prophet made sure that we treat neighbors as we treat relatives.



Teacher's Notes

Chapter title

Chapter 5

Kindness to animals

Subject

Islamic Manners and Conduct (Mu'amalat):

Muslims must be kind when treating others, even animals

Description

An important feature of Islamic behavior is to be kind to all and to help those weaker than us, including animals.

Suggestions

Discuss with student:

- When the strong help the weak the whole society becomes strong.
- Helping those in need brings the society together.
- All creatures of Allah are worthy of protection, even animals.
- Unless one is harvesting a plant to use, a Muslim should not cut a tree or damage vegetation.

The logo features a large yellow circle on the left containing a red letter 'T'. To its right are four smaller circles in blue, green, red, and yellow, arranged in a descending arc. Below the 'T' is the text 'Teacher's Notes' in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

Teacher's Notes

Chapter title

Chapter 6

Attakweer التكوير

Subject

Quranic Studies:

Attakweer, sura number 81

Description

Allah describes in the first several ayat the Day of Judgment and eventually how we are judged for what we did in this life.

Suggestions

The first portion of this sura describes the Day of Judgment, explain to students that on that day, those who have followed Allah's path and did good in their lives will reap the reward of Paradise to live in it for ever and ever.

Scenes from the Hereafter should be used as an enticement to follow Allah's command rather than be afraid of what will inevitably happen.



Teacher's Notes

Chapter title

Chapter 7

Omar bin Alkhatib ؓ

Subject

Companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Sira)

Omar bin Alkhatib ؓ

Description

The life and achievements of Omar bin Alkhatib ؓ are detailed in this chapter.

Suggestions

Sira is best taught through the following steps:

- Narrate events
- Select important points in the series of events, ask students how each point affected subsequent outcome and what would have happened if that event did not unfold in the way it did.
- Ask each student to pick which particular event is most important and ask them to present their point of view in a short (3 minute presentation).
- Ask students to comment on each presentation and ask presenting student to respond to comments. Children of this age thrive on debate and counter debate, it is a natural part of their inquisitive thinking and allows them to absorb the subject with more thoroughness than mere memorization of events.
- Contrast contribution of various companions to specific events in Islamic history, such as strengthening Islam while in Mecca, migration to Medina, etc.
- How did each companion contribute to Islam after the Prophet's death.



Teacher's Notes

Chapter title

Chapter 8

Mistakes in salat

Subject

Worship (Ibadat):

Salat: how to correct mistakes while making salat

Description

This chapter deals with how to correct an error while making salat

Suggestions

Most acts of worship are best taught through practice:

- Lead the students in prayer , then demonstrate how to correct an error while making salat.
- Ask students to lead others in salat as practice and have them pretend that a mistake was made to demonstrate how to correct the error.



Teacher's Notes

Chapter title

Chapter 9

Hypocrites

Subject

Islamic Manners and Conduct (Mu'amalat):

Hypocrisy

Description

A Muslim should never be a hypocrite.

Suggestions

Hypocrisy is very much loathed by Allah ﷻ, discuss this issue with students:

- Define hypocrisy as outlined in the hadith in this chapter.
- Point out examples of modern day acts of hypocrisy.
- List ways how an act of hypocrisy could be hurtful.
- Ask students to give examples of hypocrisy and how it was harmful to others.

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Teacher's Notes

Chapter title

Chapter 10

Manners

Subject

Islamic Manners and Conduct (Mu'amalat):

Manners of speech in Islam

Description

Allah ﷻ guides Muslims in many ways in their daily lives, this chapter deals with how best to converse.

Suggestions

Challenge students to a contest. Ask few students to tell the class of something interesting they recently encountered, such as a trip or going out with friends or family. Then tell them about the hadith in this chapter about how it is best to be brief or be quiet. Finally challenge them to retell the story but only mention what is important and helpful to know. The purpose of this challenge is to teach students how to : say good things or be quiet.



Teacher's Notes

Chapter title

Chapter 11

A'basā

Subject

Quranic Studies:

A'basā, sura number 80

Description

Allah ﷻ wants Muslims to tell everyone about Islam, but at the end Allah will take care about getting his message out to everyone. Muslims should invite all to Islam and not worry about convincing specific people to become Muslims. We may think that if influential people become Muslims, it will spread Islam faster. In this sura, Allah ﷻ tells his Prophet ﷺ to focus on those who want to become Muslim, not those who if became Muslims will spread Islam faster.

Suggestions

Narrate the event of prophet Muhammad ﷺ with the blind man and follow it up with a discussion why Allah wanted the Prophet to focus on those who seek Islam rather than those who we think will be better for Islam.

Have students list what they are thankful for what Allah ﷻ has given them.



Teacher's Notes

Chapter title

Chapter 12

Uthman bin Affan

Subject

Companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Sira)

Uthman bin Affan

Description

The life and achievement of Uthman bin Affan ؓ

Suggestions

Sira is best taught through the following steps:

- Narrate events
- Select important points in the series of events, ask students how each point affected subsequent outcome and what would have happened if that event did not unfold in the way it did.
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- Contrast contribution of various companions to specific events in Islamic history, such as strengthening Islam while in Mecca, migration to Medina, etc.
- How did each companion contribute to Islam after the Prophet's death.



Teacher's Notes

Chapter title

Chapter 13

A mistake in fasting, or is it?

Subject

Worship (Ibadat):

Fasting

Description

What to do if someone ate or drank by mistake while fasting

Suggestions

Start by reviewing facts about fasting

List things which break a fast

Discuss how eating or drinking when fasting does not break the fast if done by mistake.

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Teacher's Notes

Chapter title

Chapter 14

Generosity

Subject

Worship (Ibadat):

Reading Quran, praying and giving in charity are all acts of worship

Description

Worship is not praying alone, but extends to reading Quran and giving in charity as well as other acts like fasting.

Suggestions

Start by defining worship to students: obeying and glorification of the one and only one creator.

Point out that Allah ﷻ always couples worship in the Quran with doing good.

Doing good could be helping others with your time, effort, kindness and whatever is helpful to those who need it.

Allah ﷻ describes in the hadith narrated in this chapter those who worship him prayers and in giving to others as worthy of envy!

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Chapter title

Chapter 15

Neighbors

Subject

Islamic Manners and Conduct (Mu'amalat):

Helping neighbors

Description

Introducing the Islamic concept of the importance of neighbors.

Suggestions

Introduce the following concepts to students:

- We live right next to our neighbors and spend much of our time with them and around them
- Neighbors see us everyday, know if we are okay, or if we need help
- If you need something late at night, it is easy to go to your neighbor and ask for help, they are right there next to you
- A neighbor shares their happy and sad moments with you

It is no surprise the Prophet r asked us to treat them just like brothers, sisters and cousins.

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Chapter title

Chapter 16

An-Nazia'at النازعات

Subject

Quranic Studies:

An-Nazia'at, sura number 79

Description

Three main themes are presented in this sura. The first is a scene from the Day of Judgment, the second is a scene of our history reminding people of prophet Musa عليه السلام and his attempts to convince Pharaoh to believe in Allah, the rejection and arrogance of Pharaoh and finally his destruction. The third and last theme is about the time of the Prophet ﷺ when he was asked about the Day of Judgment, when will it occur and Allah's response to those who ask about it: Only He Allah ﷻ knows.

Suggestions

Review with students the different themes within this sura: the Day of Judgment, Pharaoh and Musa عليه السلام and finally Allah's response to those who ask the Prophet ﷺ about the timing of the Day of Judgment.

Explore with students the beauty of construction of this sura. It starts with a trip in time to the future detailing in rapidly flashing scenes events from the Day of Judgment then abruptly followed by a trip to the past to the time of Musa عليه السلام and Pharaoh as they duel in discussions about the Creator and finally back to the time of the Prophet where people were asking the Prophet about the timing of the Day of Judgment, the same issue which was initially detailed in this sura. This rapid switch from one time period to another of interlinked topics provides compelling narrative imagery which can be appreciated even by children of this age, especially in children of this era who are familiar with such times shifts in narration from stories they read or movies they watch. This exploration of the Quran will allow children to appreciate it as a masterpiece, not only in content, but in presentation as well.

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Chapter title

Chapter 17

Ali bin Abi-Talib ؑ

Subject

Companions of the Prophet Muhammad ؑ (Sira)

Ali bin Abi-Talib ؑ

Description

The life and achievements of the Prophet's cousin and companion Ali bin Abi-Talib ؑ

Suggestions

Sira is best taught through the following steps:

- Narrate events
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Chapter title

Chapter 18

Mistakes in Zakat

Subject

Worship (Ibadat):

Zakat

Description

Review of zakat and common mistakes made when making zakat.

Suggestions

Review with students the facts of giving zakat, when is it indicated and how much then expand it to who it should be given too and its benefits in keeping the society healthy.

Point out to students:

- zakat, just like praying, fasting and making Hajj is an act of worship.
- Giving money to those in need is either zakat, which is obligatory or sadaqa which is above and beyond zakat. Sadaqa is not obligatory.



Teacher's Notes

Chapter title

Chapter 19

النبا' Al-Naba'

Subject

Quranic Studies:

Al-Naba', sura number 78

Description

Allah ﷻ reminds people in the beginning of the sura of his creations, all the wonderful things around us which make our lives possible on this earth. The Allah ﷻ reminds us of the Day of Judgment when people will be judged for what they did during their earthly lives and upon which it is decided our destiny for the eternal Hereafter life: either Paradise or the Hellfire.

Suggestions

Explore with students the first 16 ayat of this sura. Allah ﷻ lists sign after sign of His perfect creation which enables a perfect synch between human beings, their needs and the environment we are placed in which provides our needs to survive while on earth.

On the Day of Judgment, all that we know in tis life will cease to exist as it becomes unnecessary and we are judged for what we did and rewarded with Paradise or Hellfire, another existence, but this time for eternity.

