

# Christian Perspectives on Different Religions

This term we're going to be looking at some of the different major religions in the world. The point of these studies isn't so much to teach you about each of these different religions (do you think you could explain Christianity in one hour??) but to have a really quick look at some of the basic beliefs that each religion holds and compare that to what Christians believe. Because we're basically rushing through the religions and also because the Youth Leaders aren't Scholars in Religion, please don't use what we teach you as a basis for a debate on the major religions in the world! While what we will be talking about is accurate, each of the religion we will be looking at has different interpretations and understandings, and we are only scratching the surface. For example a Catholic understanding of God is different to a Baptist understanding of God. Likewise, a Sunni Muslim is quite different to a Shi'a Muslim. And speaking of Muslims, tonight we're looking at Islam.



Some basics...

What does Islam mean? *Submission*. Submission to who? *Allah*.

A Muslim is someone who submits

## What is the main Islamic belief?

"*There is no God but Allah and Mohammad is the Messenger of Allah.*"  
**The more important question then is, who is Mohammed?**  
Mohammed was born in the city of Mecca in about 570AD. Arabia at the time was a pagan nation, but there were a lot of Christian and Jewish influences in the region.

## Who is Jesus (according to Islam)?

Jesus is just a man who was a prophet of God. God doesn't have any sons (Matthew 17:5). Compare this to the bible: Who did Jesus claim he was? (John 10:30, John 14:9, John 8:58). How do Muslims deal with this? By ignoring it or saying that bible is wrong.

## **Why is believing that Jesus is the Son of God important for Christians?**

What about the cross? Muslims believe that Jesus didn't die on the cross. Allah took Jesus to heaven before he was crucified and Judas took his place, and that Mary and the other disciples were fooled by this.

## **Why is it important that we know and believe that Jesus died on the cross? (1 Corinthians 14:12-14)**

## How do Muslims receive salvation?

By works. Muslims earn salvation by following the five pillars. If salvation is not achieved, it's because they didn't follow the Koran properly. There is a real fear for a lot of Muslims that they haven't done enough to please God.

## **How do Christians receive salvation? (Read Ephesians 2:8-9)**

## **What do you think Christians and Christianity can offer to Muslims?**

When Mohammed was about 40 he started spending a lot of time in meditation and started having disturbing visions. In one of these visions he believed he talked to the Angel Gabriel. Over a period of 10 years Mohammed received a whole series of revelations which were recited to him. The Arabic word for recite is Qur'an and this is the basis for the Islamic faith. Mohammed returned to Mecca and began to preach to the people there. He never claimed to be divine, but insisted that Allah had called him to be a prophet.

Brainstorm: Write down everything you know (or think you know!) about Islam

### What do Muslims believe?

There are 5 basic doctrines that every Muslim must believe

1. **God:** There is only one true God and His name is Allah. Allah is all-seeing, all-knowing and all-powerful
2. **Angels:** The chief angel is Gabriel, who appeared to Mohammed. There is also a fallen angel called Shaitan (from the Hebrew word Satan), and Shaitan's followers are called djinn (demons)
3. **Scripture:** Muslims have 4 books inspired by Allah. The Tawrat of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy), the Zabur (psalms of David), the Injil (Gospel of Jesus) and the Koran. The Koran is Allah's final word to mankind, so it supersedes and overrules all previous teachings.
4. **Mohammed:** The Koran lists 28 prophets of Allah. These include Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and Jesus. But Mohammed is the greatest prophet of them all.
5. **End Times:** Muslims believe that on the "last day" the dead will be judged by Allah and everyone will be sent either to heaven or hell. Good Muslims go to heaven which is a place of sensual pleasure and Hell is for those who oppose Allah and his prophet Mohammed.

**What would be the top 5 things that Christians believe?**

**Where do Muslims and Christians disagree on these doctrines?**

**What is it about the differences that mean Christians and Muslims aren't on the same page?**

### **The Five Pillars of the Faith:**

These five practices need to be performed for someone to be a good Muslim

1. **Statement of belief.** To become a Muslim, you just have to say you're one and you do this by reciting the *Shahadah*: "There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is the prophet of Allah."
2. **Prayers:** Every Muslim must pray 5 times a day facing the holy city of Mecca.
3. **Charity:** Muslim law requires that people give 1/40 of their income to widows, orphans, the sick and other unfortunate people.
4. **Ramadan:** The ninth month of the Muslim calendar is called Ramadan and is the holiest month. Muslims must fast for the whole month but only during daylight hours. During Ramadan the believer must not commit any meaningless acts otherwise the fasting is meaningless.
5. **Pilgrimage to Mecca:** The hajj must be performed by every Muslim at least once in their lifetime.

**What is 'un-christian' about these pillars? Why?**

**To become a Muslim you just have to say you are. What makes someone a Christian?**