



Tanzania

Lesson 4: The Religions of Tanzania

Question and Answer: The religion of Islam

Islam is the **second most popular religion** in the world with over 1.5 billion followers. It is more often thought of as a complete way of life rather than a religion.

Islam began in Arabia and was revealed to humanity by the Prophet Muhammad. Those who follow Islam are called Muslims. Muslims believe that there is only one God, called **Allah**.

Islam is mainly followed in the Middle East, Asia, and the north of Africa.

Who is the founder of Islam?

The prophet Muhammad, who was born in A.D. 570 at Mecca, in Saudi Arabia, is often regarded as the founder of Islam. He was the last prophet to be sent by Allah. However the first prophet was Adam.

There were many prophets before Muhammad including: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, Elias, Jonah, John the Baptist, and Jesus, peace be upon them.

What does Islam mean?

The Arabic word 'Islam' means submission and obedience, and derives from a word meaning 'peace'.

What is Islam based on?

Islam is based on the ministry of a man named Muhammad, and on the words that Allah gave to the world through Muhammad.

(Muhammad is so esteemed by Muslims that it is usual to utter the blessing "peace be upon him" after his name.)

What or who is a Muslim?

A Muslim is a follower of the religion of Islam.

What do Muslims believe?

The basic belief of Islam is that there is only one God, whose name in the Arabic language is Allah, and who is the sole and sovereign ruler of the universe.

Muslims have 6 main beliefs

1. **Belief in Allah** as the one and only God.
2. **Belief in angels.**

3. **Belief in the holy books.**
4. **Belief in the Prophets** (special messengers).
e.g. Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus.
Muhammad is the final prophet.
5. **Belief in the Day of Judgement...**
The day when the life of every human being will be assessed to decide whether they go to heaven or hell.
6. **Belief in Predestination...**
That Allah has already decided what will happen.
Muslims believe that this doesn't stop human beings making free choices

Who or what is Allah?

Allah is the name Muslims use for the supreme and unique God, who created and rules everything. The heart of faith for all Muslims is obedience to Allah's will.

Who is Muhammad?

Muhammad was born around 570 A.D. in the city of Mecca on the Arabian peninsula. Muslims believe that Muhammad is the last in a line of prophets that includes Moses, Abraham, and Jesus. Muhammad proclaimed that the Quran was the last Book of God, and that he himself was the last Prophet.

The Qur'an is a record of the exact words revealed by Allah through the Arch Angel Gabriel to Prophet Muhammad. Muhammad memorized and wrote down the words.

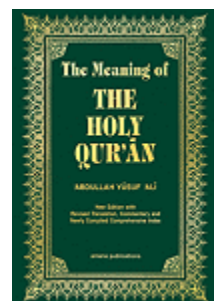
Muhammad interpreted the words in his daily life. Therefore many of the things which Muhammad did and said were remembered and carefully recorded. The stories and sayings help Muslims to understand the Quran and put what it teaches into practice in their daily lives.

What is the holy book of Islam called?

The Muslim scripture is the Holy Qur'an. Muslims believe it is 'the word of God'. Muslim beliefs and practices are rooted in the Qur'an.

Muslims treat the Qur'an with great respect because they believe that the Qur'an is from Allah, and every word and every letter is sacred. It is usually placed on a special wooden stand to be read.

Muslims regard the Qur'an as the unaltered word of God.



**The content of this lesson comes from the following website:
<http://www.chiddingstone.kent.sch.uk/homework/religion/Islam.htm>

Questions:

1. Muslims believe the Qur'an is God's Word and is more reliable than the Bible. Is this true?
2. Muslims say Muhammad was the greatest and final prophet, even greater than Jesus. Is this true?
3. Muslims say Jesus was just a prophet, not God. Is this true?
4. If Jesus was just a prophet, not the Son of God, who paid for the sins of the world?

God has given us the Bible and tells us that we are to use His Word to strengthen our own faith and to spread the Good News of Jesus our Savior to the whole world. God does not mention anything about another prophet who will come after Jesus. There are many passages that talk about the coming of Jesus as the Savior of the world. Can you think of any of these passages? (John 3:16, Isaiah 9:6, Micah 5:2) We Christians believe the Bible, which tells us Jesus is our Savior from sin. We pray that the Gospel will be taught throughout Tanzania so that all may hear about the saving grace won for all people by our Savior Jesus.