

Sharing with Muslims



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Welcome to this introductory teaching segment, "Sharing with Muslims"

Before you begin, please consider these points:

- As noted in Session 1: Intro to Islam, this topic is potentially huge with hundreds of books having been written on it from many perspectives and approaches. As such, this introductory teaching aims simply to serve as a starting point.
- There are many methodologies to be employed while sharing Christ with Muslims. If there is a single methodology, however, that overarches all others it is this: Genuine friendship. All other methodologies such as verbally sharing the Gospel story, opening the Scriptures, asking questions, employing apologetics, utilizing tracts and/or multimedia, etc., are used to best effect when embedded within genuine friendship. Jesus is the Prince of Peace. We promote irenic processes (that which promotes peace) as a reflection of His character and Truth to shine through our every attitude and action. As you consider the reasons why Muslims come to faith in Jesus we think you will see the wisdom of this philosophy and approach.
- In order to set the stage for you, if you will, we start with two stories – one of a Believer's experience in sharing with Muslims and the testimony of a Muslim who came to Christ. Note what they share "worked" in their lives. This will help you put the rest of what is shared into context and, we believe, set you on a good path in sharing your faith with your Muslim friend.
- We personally cannot "save" anyone else, nor can you argue someone into faith in Jesus Christ. We are used of God, however, to introduce others to Jesus with the awesome activity of the Holy Spirit. Thus, you will see why "tool" #1 is what it is in this material. Use it!
- These materials are free for your personal use. Our quotation of copyrighted sources does not in any way imply freedom for you to reproduce and distribute these materials without the copyright holder's permission.
- We very much enjoy hearing how you have benefited from and utilized these materials. Please share your experience with us via email: info@cmocanada.org.

May the Lord bless you as you learn, grow with God's heart for and reach out to Muslims in the love and truth of Isa al-Masih, Jesus the Messiah.

Sincerely,

cmocanada.org

JESUS IN THE QUR'AN

Author: Matt Zahniser, professor of world religions at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky.
Excerpted from "Misguiding Lights?" Stephen M. Miller, ed., pp. 36-38. Beacon Hill Press, Kansas City, Missouri. 1991.

Almost always when the Muslims host my students and me, they talk about Jesus before they open up the discussion for questions. They insist that all Muslims must believe in Jesus.

The Qur'an urges Muslims to believe in Jesus (2:136, 2:285).^{*} And the Qur'an tells Muslims who Jesus was: the Messiah (3:45), a word from God (3:45), born of a virgin (3:47), one who spoke from the cradle, healed the blind, and the leper, raised the dead, and made a clay bird fly (3:49).

But the Qur'an also teaches that Jesus was not the Son of God (5:75), that He was not divine (5:116-118), and that he did not die for the sins of the world (4:157).

Clearly the Qur'an presents a different Jesus from the Jesus of the Gospels. The Muslim Jesus is a prophet, like Muhammad. It was to Jesus that God gave a book called the Gospel to reveal God's will to people.

My students and I tried to help the Muslims see what the New Testament teaches – that God sent Jesus so we could know God, not just know God's will. Our Jesus was far more than a prophet who guides us. He saves us and makes us friends with God.

Our Muslim hosts insisted that humans cannot know God. "Since nothing we know resembles God in any way," they explained, "nothing exists that can help us know God. But by means of the Qur'an we can know God's will for us."

We replied that our Book, the Bible, gives us guidance for our lives, but it also leads us to Jesus, through whom we come to know God personally. The person, Muhammad, gave Muslims a book by which they believe they can know God's will. Our Book, the Bible, leads us to a person, Jesus, through whom we can come to know God.

As we put on our shoes and left the Muslim house of worship, the call to prayer echoed in my thoughts. "God is great. There is no god but God." The truth that this God had made himself known to me personally through His Son, Jesus, is the greatest of His great deeds. After doing for us what He did through Jesus, how could God then simply send a messenger with a book?

My students and I failed to convince our hosts they could know God through the Jesus of the New Testament.

Even now, as I think about how difficult it is to make Christ known to our Muslim friends, my memory takes me back almost 30 years to another Ismail I had known as a graduate student. I met Ismail at a party my church gave for international students. Ismail was an Iraqi Muslim doing graduate work in America.

The two of us became good friends. When a small church invited me to come and preach, I invited Ismail to go with me. He gladly accepted.

After I concluded the service, we both spent a happy time visiting with the congregation outside the church. When I got back into my car, Ismail was already seated there, weeping. When I asked him why he was crying, he said, "It is so wonderful to be with people who love God." The people at the church had touched his heart.

Maybe that is the answer. If Muslims can see the love of God in us, perhaps they will be willing to take another look at Jesus.

^{*} The references are to chapter (*surah*) and verse (*ayah*) of the Qur'an.

A Muslim Looks at Muhammad and Jesus

The story of Abdul Saleeb and what he discovered about Islam and Christianity

My name is "Abdul Saleeb." I was born and raised in a Muslim country in the Middle East. Even though I lived in a very conservative Muslim society, I grew up in a somewhat of a liberal Muslim family. Furthermore, my Muslim upbringing was unique due to my mother's serious involvement in Islamic sufism. So I can honestly confess that I have had first-hand experience of every aspect of contemporary Islamic movements. I personally did not consider myself very religious. At one point I even turned to Marxist ideologies thinking that they could provide real solutions to my country's social ills. However, throughout all this time I never doubted the fundamentals of my religious faith. I thought of Islam as a faith with such high ideals that I did not consider myself worthy of the name Muslim but I wholeheartedly believed that Islam was God's last and most perfect religion for all mankind, based on God's final revelation, the Qur'an, and the prophet Muhammad, God's seal of prophethood. My view of other religions (especially Judaism and Christianity) was that although they were fundamentally the same since they had all been revealed by one God, they were all inferior to Islam because all of them had to various degrees corrupted the original message of their founding prophets, something that we as Muslims have not done.

My religious views were radically challenged when I left my country because of its civil turmoil and went to Europe for the continuation of my studies. By the providence of God and because of various circumstances, I ended up enrolling in an International Christian School.

A question I once asked my teacher revolutionized my worldview. I asked, "How come your word of God says one thing and our word of God says something different?" My teacher, not knowing much about Islam at all, gently asked, "How do you know the Qur'an is the word of God?" I was taken aback by that response. I had lived in a world in which everyone simply presupposed that the Qur'an was dictated word for word by God to the Prophet Muhammad and no one ever questioned that assumption. That brief encounter forced me to start on a journey, engage my Christian friends in hours of cordial discussion and debate about the truthfulness of the Christian faith.

Christianity and Islam

Like almost any other Muslim, my original reaction to the claims of Christians about Jesus Christ was that of utter shock. These claims not only seemed like plain blasphemy but also quite nonsensical. How could any rational being believe such things about an honored prophet of God? Despite my fundamental theological differences with my friends, there was something about their life and faith that impressed me a great deal. There was a sincerity in their relationship with God and with other people that I had not encountered. So I would often tell them that I did not want to deny their faith but I just wanted to find a compromise so that I could hold to the truth of Islam and they could continue to hold to their faith.

However, I was in no doubt that their belief about Jesus was based on statements that the prophet Jesus had never actually claimed for himself. My difficulty in understanding Christian belief was very much along the lines that have historically separated Islam from Christianity.

I did not grant in any way that the Bible, especially the New Testament documents, were reliable when it came to reporting the words of Christ. Anything in the Bible that disagreed with the Qur'an was automatically rejected as being a corrupt teaching in the Bible.

My spiritual journey went on for months. Oftentimes I did find comfort in the Qur'an, but I was encountering more questions in that book than answers. For example, the violent tone of many of the Qur'anic passages (especially against the unbelievers but also against the Jewish and Christian people) began to bother me, when compared with the emphasis on love in the New Testament. One particular passage that troubled me, especially in light of my good friendship with many Christians, was in Sura 5:51.

"O ye who believe! Take not Jews and Christians for your friends and protectors; they are but friends and protectors to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them. Verily God guideth not a people unjust."

However, the most troubling section of the Qur'an had to do with the character of the prophet Muhammad himself. According to Sura 33:37, God sanctions Muhammad's desire to marry the divorced wife of his own stepson, "in order that (in future) there may be no difficulty to the believers in (the matter of) marriage with the wives of their adopted sons, when the latter have dissolved with the necessary (formality) (their marriage) with them. And God's command must be fulfilled."

I vividly remember the first time that I came across that verse in my study of the Qur'an. I began to sob with great sorrow and shame. All my life I had been told that Muhammad was the most perfect and ideal moral example for mankind and yet the Qur'an had a good number of examples of how the "revelations" could be so self-serving to the prophet himself!

Christianity or Islam

I immediately wrote a letter to my mother back home with some of these troubling questions that I was encountering. The response that I received to my letter from one of the most prominent religious leaders in my country was that I should just continue my secular studies and not focus too much on religion. On the other hand, as my understanding of the Bible was increasing many of my questions were beginning to get answered. Even as a Muslim I came to believe that the crucifixion of Christ was an undisputable historical fact that no honest person that deals with evidences of history could deny.

The character of Christ himself, as manifested for example in his beautiful Sermon on the Mount, was gradually making a great impression on me. But for me the most impressive factor about Christ was the multitude of Old Testament prophecies about the coming of the Messiah. Some of these prophecies were so specific and they were fulfilled in the life of Jesus to such a detail that it amazed me to see how God had taken hundreds of years of Jewish history to prepare the coming of the Messiah; prophecies ranging from Messiah's ancestry, his manner and place of birth, his life and ministry to the circumstances surrounding his death by crucifixion. I was very attracted to Christ and yet I could not deny my own tradition and past. Becoming Christian seemed a definite betrayal of my own family and Islamic heritage. The tension in my life was so strong that I felt torn asunder between these two faiths.

But I still could not bring myself to accept that Jesus was anything more than a human being. Since he had never explicitly said, "I am God and you must worship me," the Christian claim about Jesus was based on speculation and historically unreliable Gospels. Surely the incredible statements attributed to Jesus were invented by later Christians and put in the mouth of Jesus.

A Muslim Converts

In the midst of all this anxiety of thought, I woke up one morning and was suddenly struck by the meaning of a verse written by the prophet Isaiah in his ninth chapter. I had read this verse several weeks prior to that morning, but I had never understood its meaning. In Isaiah 7:14 we read,

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."

Isaiah then goes on to write in chapter 9,

"[...] in the future he (God) will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan the people walking in darkness have seen a great light, on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned [...] For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne [...] from that time on and forever."

I could not believe it! The fact that the Messiah was not going to be just a prophet but Mighty God himself was therefore a truth that had been prophesied seven hundred years before Christ in the Old Testament, and not something that had been made up by Christians many years or centuries after Christ! It was God's own promise that he will come in flesh (Immanuel = God with us) and will establish a kingdom that will last forever.

I came to trust in Christ, the next day on January 20, 1985. I cried uncontrollably as I was praying and turning to Christ in faith. I did not know why, and though I had never felt much burden of guilt, I was feeling a great sense of peace and relief from the burden of my sins. A greater satisfaction was the sense of rest in finally finding the truth about God and His revelation of love to mankind in Jesus Christ. A book that helped me (and several other Muslim friends of mine who became Christians around the same time that I did) tremendously in answering many of my questions about the deity of Christ and the reliability of the New Testament documents was **Josh McDowell's "Evidence That Demands A Verdict."** I highly recommend it.

Soon after my own conversion, I decided to dedicate my entire life to promoting the Good News of Christ among Muslims and especially the people of my own country. I later came to the United States and received my undergraduate and graduate degrees in Biblical and Theological Studies. **I also co-authored a book called Answering Islam: The Crescent in the Light of the Cross.**

Abdul Saleeb, Ramadan of 1996

Source:
<http://everystudent.com/wires/abdul.html?OVRAW=islam%20christianity&OVKEY=islam%20christianity&OVMTc=standard&OVADID=610565012&OVKWID=3467386012>

SO WHY DO MUSLIMS COME TO FAITH IN CHRIST?

Just what is it – what are the elements or significant factors – that move a Muslim out of Islam and into the Kingdom of God? In surveying thousands of Muslim background believers (MBBs), organizations who love and seek to reach Muslims have found the following common factors. Consider these carefully in reflection on how you are or will share Christ with your Muslim friends.

1. The lifestyle of Christians – Christ-likeness, righteousness, love
2. The Power of God in answered prayers & the miraculous
3. Dissatisfaction with their Islamic experience
4. The spiritual truth of the Bible: Jesus
5. Biblical teachings about the love of God.

TOOLS FOR SHARING YOUR FAITH WITH A MUSLIM

If you want to build a deck, a garage, or a new house, you'll need tools to do it. Likewise, in order to build new bridges of understanding to witness to your Muslim friend, you'll need certain tools. Below is a list of tools, together which form a strategy, for sharing your faith with a Muslim.

I. Prayer:

Muslims are people of prayer. Christians are, too. Never stop calling out to the Lord and interceding for the Spirit's work in your Muslim friend. You cannot save them – only God can. Keep coming to Him and submitting yourself to Him for His work through you. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that will get through to them. And while you're praying, let them see and know it, too. And be sure to ask God to visit them in a dream or vision or other miraculous event in their life. Nothing gets our attention like a "power encounter!"

II. Relationship:

Only within the context or environment of a trusting relationship will your Muslim friend be able to accept and receive what you are sharing with them. It takes relationship because a Muslim needs to *see* your faith at work within you. And, within this trusting context, you will *earn* the right to share the Gospel because you have first *listened* and worked to understand your friend – who they are, what they believe and where they are coming from. Then you will be able to work through misunderstandings, false teaching and stereotypes – both theirs and your own. Build your relationship and your "witness" will seep through!

III. Patience:

Someone has said that you can use the "Four Spiritual Laws" (or similar witnessing tract) with a Muslim. The difference is that it may take you about a year to get through it! There is no substitute for time. If you want to bake a cake, or cook a meal, it takes time. If you don't take the proper time to cook it, then you'll end up with something inedible. The same is true in your relationship with a Muslim. It will take time to go through all the aspects of the Gospel they need to hear before they will understand and receive it.

IV. Felt Needs:

Each of us has "felt needs" in our lives – those things that are most important or dear to us. These are the issues of the heart, the questions that we have, the problems we need help with, the dreams and desires we hold dear. Only God can really answer and fulfill these in our lives. Speak to these felt needs in your Muslim friend's life and minister the Word of God to them on these issues.

To help you get started with “tool” number One we share this article from www.30-days.net

How to Pray for Muslims

Every Muslim is unique and wonderful in God's eyes and we should be careful not to generalize or presume that all Muslims are the same. However, there are some important issues to help us understand how to pray more effectively.

Every Muslim is someone whom God loves. Some Christians do not pray for Muslims because of their own prejudices or fears. Let us begin in prayer by asking God to give us a heart filled with love and compassion towards Muslims. We also need to pray in faith and confidence that God will hear us and will move powerfully in answer to our prayers of love and compassion. (John 14: 12-14)

Muslims believe in the uniqueness of an all powerful and supreme Allah. Similar to Christians and Jews, Muslims believe that Allah is creative and eternal. Muslims also believe that Allah is unknowable and that it is impossible to ever really know him or have a relationship with him as a personal saviour. According to Islam, Allah holds himself apart from mankind. When praying for Muslims, pray that they will have a full revelation of the true God and His loving character. (Hebrews 8:8-9)

The Muslim worldview is strongly influenced by an awareness of the supernatural and the presence of good and evil spirits known as jinn. Jinn are greatly feared and are often thought to be responsible for illnesses and misfortune. Superstitions control many aspects of a Muslim's everyday life and often result in them living in constant fear. This fear reveals a heart cry and desperate need that can only be met in the person and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Pray against the fear that influences many Muslims. (1 John 4:18)

Galatians 4:22-25 tells us that Ishmael was born as a result of works resulting in slavery. Islam means submission and a Muslim understands that he is a servant of Allah. While this is also a Biblical aspect of our relationship with God, it is incomplete. As Christians, through Jesus, we know that we move from being servants to becoming sons and daughters. Pray that Muslims will also understand that God desires for everyone to know Him as children and not as slaves. (Galatians 4:7) (Matthew 18:3)

Islam teaches that a person must do enough good deeds to outweigh the bad deeds in order to make it to paradise. (Ephesians 2:8-9.) Even then, there is no guarantee for a Muslim of salvation. As a result of this belief, it is difficult for many Muslims to fully understand the basis of forgiveness of sins. It is also difficult for Muslims to understand repentance. When we pray for Muslim's to get saved, we are really praying that they will be convicted of sin and know true repentance. We are also praying that they would experience God's total forgiveness and thus be able to forgive others. And, we are also praying that they would know the assurance of salvation through Jesus, something Islam can never offer them. (Ephesians 2:8-9.) (1 Peter 5:6) (Matthew 6:14-15)

Never underestimate the work of the Holy Spirit as you pray for Muslims. Allow God to teach you how to pray and to share His heart with you concerning them. Vast numbers of Muslims have come to Christ as a result of supernatural encounters. Many have dreams and visions of Jesus. It is only God who can open blind eyes and soften hearts. Only God can bring true conviction of sin and create new life. (Romans 8:26) (John 16:8)

30 Days - calling all Christians to pray for all Muslims

Resources:

We are encouraged that there is a growing body of resources available on sharing your faith with your Muslim friend. Not all resources, however, have the same attitude or approach. Many, unfortunately, are quite combative and negative toward Islam, Muslims and the potential for them to come into the Kingdom of God. To help you, we do recommend you explore the following resources.

Online Resources:

Agencies:

These agencies may also provide additional resources. Please consult their resource pages for details.

1. [Frontiers](#)
2. [AWM](#)
3. [Pioneers](#)
4. [IMB](#)
5. [ACMC](#)
6. [Center for Ministry to Muslims](#)
7. [Joshua Project](#)
8. [Perspectives](#)

Reference & Resource Sites:

In addition to our Resources page (<http://www.cmocanada.org/resources>), the following are sites you can use for reference and some also offer additional resources. Please note: Some of these sites, such as #3 and #5, are not "Christian" but "Muslim" sites

1. [Answering Islam.org](#)
2. [Encountering Islam](#)
3. [Qur'an](#)
4. [Bible Online](#)
5. [Hadiths Online](#)
6. [William Carey Library](#)
7. [30-Days Muslim Prayer Focus](#)
8. [Caleb Project Store](#)

Here's a tract that will help you and your Muslim friend on just one of the key issues to be explored together:

**THE WITNESS OF ISLAM TO THE VALIDITY
THE TORAH AND THE GOSPELS**

The Torah and the Gospel, or the Old and New Testament of the Bible, constitute the written Word of God. Nothing coming from God, the Holy One, is false. What does Islam have to say about these two divine volumes?

Actually, the Qur'an testifies to the integrity of the Christian Scriptures. Anyone reading the Qur'an will be astonished at its clear witness to the validity of the Bible's contents. The following surahs serve as examples to this fact:

"We have sent down the Torah, a guide and a light; the prophets judge thereby, as do the rabbis and priests, with what they preserved of God's book. Of this they are witnesses."

"We followed on this with Jesus, Son of Mary, confirming what lay in His hands of the Torah. We brought Him the Gospel, in which is guidance and light, confirming what is in His hands of the Torah, guidance and exhortation for the pious."

The Qur'an calls us to honour and to use the Torah and the Gospel:

"Say, o people the Book, you are nought until you uphold the Torah and Gospel, and what God sent down to you."

"Let the People of the Gospel judge as to what God has sent down. They that withhold judgement therein are impious."

"O ye that have believed, believe in God, His apostle, and the Book He sent down to His apostle, and the Book He sent down previously. He who disbelieves in God, His angels, His books, His apostles and the Judgement Day, has strayed far away from truth."

"These are the ones to whom we brought the Books, judgements and prophecy. If they should disbelieve in it, we have appointed a people who will not disbelieve in it. Such are those whom God has guided."

"We have sent men before you other than whose whom we inspired; ask then the people of prayer if you understand not."

Christians believe in the divine inspiration of the Old Testament. The canon of the Old Testament was completed around 300 BC and divided by the Jews into three sections: the Torah or the Law, the prophets and the Writings.

Concerning the New Testament, scholars agree that it was written and in circulation while many of Christ's followers who had seen and heard Him were still living. The New Testament contains the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of Paul, Peter, James, John and Jude, and the book of Revelation.

This was a brief summary of the contents of the Bible, a book inspired by God and revealed to holy men. God has preserved it through His sovereignty and power, and has chosen faithful men to translate His Word into the tongues of men throughout the world. The existence of the Scriptures in about 1,400 languages today is without doubt one proof that God watches over and protects His Word eternally.

Indeed, nations will pass away, tongues will be stilled and the world will continue to change, but the Bible will remain the Living Word forever. God's message for every man, woman, and child and for all times and places is found in the Bible. This message offers salvation through Jesus Christ to all people, regardless of their race, colour, language or nationality. The Bible has vital power available to all who will accept Jesus as their Saviour by faith, thereby becoming the children of God.

Dear friend, this is a summary of the booklet The infallibility of the Torah and the Gospel by Iskander Jadeed. If you wish to learn more about this subject write to us, and we shall send this booklet to you free of charge. Please, print your address clearly. Thank you.

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