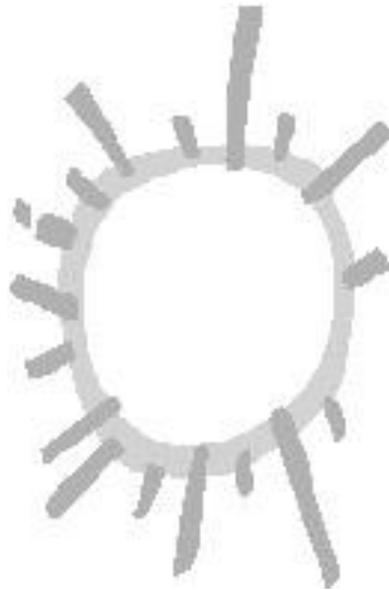


Training



Workshop

Training Workshop Overview

Introduction to Training Workshop

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IV. Appendix

Introduction

Now that you completed the Grounding Workshop, you are ready to start the second phase of your LIGHT preparation: The Training Workshop. The purpose of the Training Workshop is to prepare you and your colleagues to make excellent presentations to non-Muslim audiences on Islam's fundamental messages of tolerance, inclusiveness and peaceful coexistence for all people.

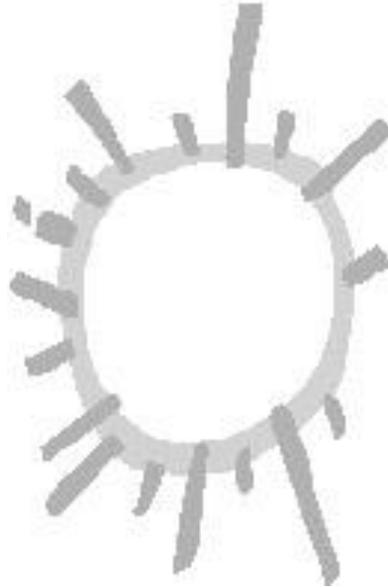
In order to accomplish this goal, the Training Workshop has been designed to prepare you in three areas:

1. How to prepare and organize your team for an outreach meeting.
2. How to present five specific lesson plans related to Islam's fundamental messages of tolerance, inclusiveness and peaceful coexistence for all people during outreach meetings.
3. How to respond to questions, misperceptions and misinformation about Islam. During outreach meetings.

During this Training Workshop, the LIGHT staff will provide information on the three areas. You will be assigned to one team of 3-5 participants. With your team, you will rehearse, and rehearse, and then rehearse pieces of the outreach meetings until you feel confident that you and your team can provide an excellent presentation.

This section of the manual includes all the information you will need during the Training Workshop. It will be your resource guide for conducting outreach meetings. We also plan on videotaping segments of the Training Workshops, and making one copy available to each team for reference and for review before outreach meetings. Finally, outreach meeting handouts (those are handouts that you will give to your non-Muslim audience) are available from Project LIGHT office.

All the best with the training. May Allah bless our efforts.



Presentation Tips and Guidelines

Section Overview

This section gives some tips and guidelines geared towards Project LIGHT outreach meetings. How team members handle themselves is key to the outcome of our or project. Reflecting on these tips will help you in preparing and executing a more effective program. Think about what you will be doing before you go. Consider how you will handle yourself, interact with your team, your audience and situations that might come up. Considering these guidelines will help you to go into your presentation in the right frame of mind.

Tips and Guides

- Interact
- Appearance
- Be Pleasant
- Smile
- Body Language
- Be Clear
- Listen
- Recognize the Contribution of the Audience
- Don't Be Defensive
- Be Respectful
- Humor
- Don't Interrupt Other Team Members
- Be Conscious of Time
- No Khutbas
- Maintain Control
- Don't Panic
- Relax
- Enjoy Yourself

Presentation Tips and Guidelines

Interact

Remember our approach is intended to be interactive. Keep eye contact with your audience when speaking. Recognize their responses and address them. Don't just get up there and talk to them; think of the program as a dialogue that moves through the different lesson plans. When presenting concepts, relate them back to earlier questions or comments.

Appearance

Dress sends a message; the visual impression you give will effect your audience's assessment of your credibility. Make sure that your dress is clean, attractive and appropriate for the occasion and audience. Colors have an impact on audience perception. Bold prints and bright colors can be a distraction, you want your audience to remember your message not your outfit. Additionally, too much black might give an unfriendly impression. Keep these ideas in mind, but remain true to yourself, you should be comfortable and reflect your own style.

Be Pleasant

Remember to be pleasant and enthusiastic at all times. Make your audience feel comfortable, welcome and relaxed. This is just as important as the rest of the program. How they feel about you will influence their perceptions of Muslims and very likely will effect how they will act towards Muslims in the future. Be personable, open and kind. Avoid sounding self-righteous at any point. Be optimistic. Avoid taking a victim stance. You are a Project LIGHT ambassador.

Smile

"Even a smile is charity." Smiling will help your audience get more from what you are saying. By smiling you will maintain a positive presence that will reflect in your posture and your tone of voice. This will help your audience to better focus, interact and relate to what you're saying. We have all been through straight-faced lectures, with monotone voices and have found ourselves zoning out and unable to grasp what the lecturer was saying.

Body Language

Be conscious of how you stand and the gestures you use; they say a lot about you. Be confident and open. Avoid fidgeting or folding your arms. Maintain your presence from the time you arrive until you leave. Stay interested and focused. Your audience is watching you even when you are not speaking.

Be Clear

Make sure to speak loudly and clearly so that your audience can hear everything you are saying. Avoid speaking quickly. Annunciate words and avoid using terms that your audience is unfamiliar with; translate Arabic terms into English.

Listen

Listening is a critical part of communicating your message. If your audience has something on their minds be sure to resolve those issues early on or they may not hear what you are saying. Listen for feedback. Comments and questions from your audience will give you a good indication of whether or not they understand your message. You may need to clarify or rephrase a point. In the end, what they understand and take home with them is more important than what you say.

Recognize the Contributions of the Audience

Make sure to recognize and praise the contributions of your audience. If they ask questions or bring up points, thank them for bringing it up.

Don't Be Defensive

Some audience members may make statements or ask questions that are offensive to you. Don't be provoked. Remember our purpose is to learn tolerance. Be tolerant, patient and pass on the LIGHT Thank them. They have helped you by giving you the chance to respond for the rest of the audience as well. Answer calmly and pleasantly. Don't allow your facial expressions or mannerisms to show annoyance. Be careful not to pounce when responding, you want to make them feel comfortable, so they can bring up all the issues or doubts in the back of their minds. If they don't bring them up, you can't address them.

Be Respectful

Be sensitive to your audience and team members. As always, you should think before speaking and consider how what you are about to say is likely to be heard or understood.

Humor

The use of humor can add to the enjoyable experiences and often make a point more memorable, but we have to be careful about appropriate usage. Be sure to avoid any joke or comment that is at the expense of someone else, even if it is a group you feel you are part of. Resist the temptation to tell jokes during question and answer session; it can give the impression that you are not taking the question seriously.

Don't Interrupt Other Team Members

Listen to what your team members are saying and let them finish before adding your comments. Make sure to give your team members a chance to speak without them having to interrupt you. Develop a signal with your team members for when you have something to say, so that they can recognize you and give you the chance to speak.

Be Conscious of Time

Make sure you have a watch or a clock. Make sure that your entire team is there plenty early. Respect your audience by starting and ending on time. Each lesson is going to need a certain amount of time. Be careful about going over. Keep your own remarks short and to the point as much as possible. If you run over make sure to make up time so you can finish the entire program.

Tips

Presentation Tips and Guidelines

Training Workshop

No khutbahs

We are all very passionate about Islam and our beliefs. This can lead to an eagerness to want to share all our knowledge and love of the religion. You will have a limited time for your presentation, so stick to the lesson plans. Remember Project LIGHT is an interactive program. No lectures. No preaching. Don't feel that you have to convey lots of facts, evidence or arguments. They probably won't remember what you say if you do, but they might feel you were trying to shove something down their throats!

Maintain Control

You are the leader in the room. You are responsible for cultivating respect within the group. Establish ground rules. Make sure that the audience stays on topic. If you have questions during the lessons, let the audience know there will be time for questions at the end and encourage them to write down their questions.

Don't Panic

Your audience may ask something or make a comment you don't know how to respond too. Keep calm. If you don't know an answer, be honest and offer to find an answer and get back to them. If they say something that is inappropriate, be polite and redirect them to the program.

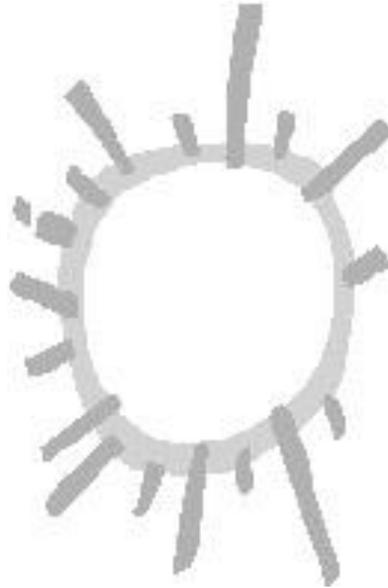
Relax

Almost everyone gets nervous when it comes to talking in front of a team. However, you're not really going to be giving a speech, so there's no need to have too much stage fright. It's a small group and you're interacting with them just like you always do. You know what you're doing. You've practiced it. Besides you're not alone up there and you never have to speak for more than two minutes.

Enjoy Yourself

If you have a good time presenting, your audience will pick up on it and they will have a good time as well. That will go a long way in their evaluation of their overall experience, an experience that could reshape their entire outlook on Islam and Muslims.

Notes



Preparing for Outreach Meetings

Section Overview

In this section, participants will be introduced to three areas related to how to prepare for outreach meetings:

- Logistics *Presentation*
- Designating Roles *Presentation*

Logistics

There are several steps to consider in preparation for your outreach meetings:

1. **Selecting a Group for an Outreach Meeting:** You and your team will be selected from similar age groups and close geographical areas, yet you will be diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity and educational/occupational background. You and your team will be assigned a Project LIGHT coordinator. The coordinator will stay in contact with your team to help you identify groups of non-Muslim peers to conduct outreach meetings with. As you know, you and your team are expected to conduct a total of six outreach meetings. Any of the team members, or the Project LIGHT coordinator, can suggest a group. It is important to consider the following factors when selecting a group:
 - a. The group is from a similar age group (so if you are in a high school/college team, select a group of high school or college students; if you are an adult, select a group of adults).
 - b. The group has an adequate meeting location for about 20 people, or can convene in a place such as a library room, a campus classroom, or a community center.
 - c. The group will include about 15-30 people.
 - d. The meeting location is close to the geographical area where your team is from.

2. **Approaching Groups about Conducting a Project LIGHT Outreach Meeting.** Please emphasize the following points when you approach any group:
 - a. This is a project funded by the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ).
 - b. This is a peer education program, conducted by ordinary Muslim Americans to their peers.
 - c. This is a one and half hour interactive presentation.
 - d. This is intended to provide non-Muslim peers with information on Islam's fundamental messages of tolerance, inclusiveness and peaceful coexistence for all people, in order to combat issues of discrimination and bigotry.
 - e. This is NOT intended to be a propaganda program for Islam, or a venue for converting people to Islam.
 - f. This is a free of charge presentation.

3. **Planning an Outreach Meeting Place and Date.** Once the team and the Project LIGHT coordinator approve a group, the coordinator and Project LIGHT Program Manager will coordinate the time and place of the outreach meeting with the team members and the group. The Project LIGHT coordinator and Program Manager will be responsible for communication with team members and the group about the time and place of the outreach meeting.

4. **Preparing Outreach Meeting Materials.** For each outreach meeting, you and your team will need few items: handouts, flip chart, markers, attendee list, and evaluation forms. The Project LIGHT coordinator will arrange for bringing those items to the outreach meeting. You and your team **MUST** remember to bring your Project LIGHT manuals, as they contain your lesson plans and response frameworks.

5. Arriving at the Outreach Meeting Place. Make sure to arrive to the meeting place early (at least half an hour before the start time). Inspect the meeting room for light, ventilation, and sound. Arrange the seating in the room to give an informal atmosphere (for example make a circle of chairs). Determine where your team will stand, is there enough space to conduct your role plays, and where will you position the flip chart.

Designating Roles

Each team will be composed of 3-4 members. Of course, each member will bring unique qualities to the team. This will also influence what roles should each one play. One important rule in this regard is that **EVERY MEMEBR MUST PARTICIPATE**. Participation in presenting outreach meetings can take several forms: facilitating question and answer sessions, taking part in role plays, conducting a group exercise, writing notes on the flip chart, etc.

The Project LIGHT coordinator will assist the team in identifying their very specific roles for each segment of the outreach meeting. This is so important for ensuring smooth flow of the presentation, and for helping team members prepare for their specific roles. The choice of roles should be based solely on members' skills and unique abilities.

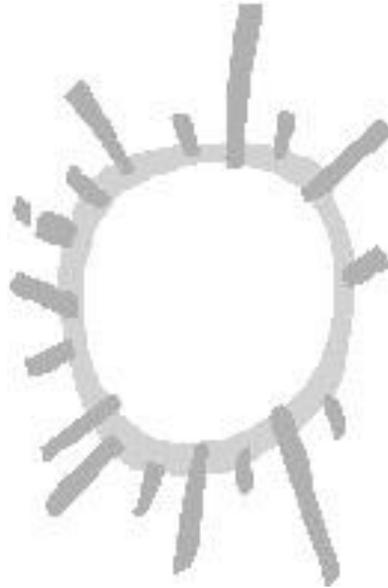
The Project LIGHT coordinator will also conduct the following tasks during outreach meetings:

1. Time keeper during outreach meetings.
2. Resource person as requested by activity leaders.
3. Administrator of audience attendance list and evaluation forms.
4. Small group team member for lesson plan 5, if needed.

One role that is of great significance is what we call "**The Connector**" role. This is the role of opening the meeting, introducing each segment of the presentation, closing it, introducing the next one, and closing the meeting. Each team must have one designated Connector.

Another role is that of **Activity Leader**. For each activity, the team must select an activity leader who will conduct the activity. For some activities, the activity leader must select assistant(s) whose roles will vary from scribing words and comments on the flip chart, distributing materials, to participating in role plays.

Notes



Conducting the Outreach Meeting

Section Overview

In this section, participants will learn how to introduce the outreach meeting, present five specific lesson plans, conduct a Question and Answer session, gather evaluation and close outreach meetings. Each segment and lesson plan has been designed to engage your audience in activities, while clearly communicating Islam's fundamental messages of tolerance and peaceful coexistence. During the Training Workshop, Project LIGHT staff will enact each segment and lesson plan, then ask each team to enact it. After lunch, each team will enact an entire outreach meeting.

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Introductions of LIGHT Team and Presentation | <i>Presentation</i> |
| • Islam as a Universal Religion | <i>Individual Quiz</i> |
| • Islam's Worldview on Human Coexistence And Interactions | <i>Role-Play & Group Exercise</i> |
| • Diversity of Muslims Today | <i>Role-Play & Discussion</i> |
| • Actions to Address Discrimination and Bigotry | <i>Role-Play & Small Group Discussion</i> |
| • Question & Answer Session | <i>Group Discussion</i> |
| • Evaluation and Closure | <i>Individual Evaluation</i> |

Introductions of LIGHT TEAM and Presentation (10 Minutes)

Before the start of the session make sure that the flip chart is up, and write the following three flipchart papers and post them in front of the audience:

<p>Flipchart paper 1: Welcome to Project LIGHT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Islam as a Universal Religion • Islam’s Worldview on Human Coexistence and Interactions • Diversity of Muslims Today • Actions to Address Discrimination and Bigotry • Questions & Answers • Evaluation and Closure 	<p>Flipchart paper 2: We Are....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordinary Americans • Ordinary Muslims <p>We Are Not....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious Scholars • Proselytizers <p>In this Meeting We Will....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share our understanding of Islam’s messages of tolerance and peaceful coexistence. • Collaboratively brainstorm action plans to address discrimination and bigotry. • Respond to the best of our ability to your questions. 	<p>Flipchart paper 3: Questions:</p>
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As people arrive to the meeting place, greet them with a smile and welcome them to Project LIGHT. Make sure to start on time, but if you have to, do not delay the starting time by more than 10 minutes. Make sure to let the audience know if you will have a late start.

When you start the session:

1. All team members and the Project LIGHT staff members stand in front of the audience.
2. The Connector welcomes everyone to Project LIGHT, making sure to:
 - a. explain the acronym “LIGHT” (Learning Islamic Guidance for Human Tolerance);
 - b. explain that the project is funded by NCCJ (the National Conference for Community and Justice) for the purpose of addressing discrimination and bigotry against Muslims, Arabs and South Asians after September 11.
3. The connector then announces that the session will start with a team introduction.
4. The connector then introduces her/him self, followed by the rest of the team members.
5. The personal introduction should take 1-2 minutes each, and include the name, educational/occupational affiliation, and something about yourself that the audience can relate to (i.e., mention your favorite hobby; say something about your family). SMILE when you talk!
6. The Project LIGHT coordinator passes around the attendee list.

Once the personal introductions are complete, the Connector refers to the three flipchart papers as following:

1. Referring to the first flip chart paper, repeat that the goal of the project is to address discrimination. This will be accomplished in this workshop in the various segments (describe each segment).
2. Referring to the second flip chart paper, explain who we are and are not, and what we will do in the workshop.
3. Referring to the third flip chart paper, explain that it will be used to record any questions raised during the meeting that will be addressed in the Question & Answer session.

At the same time, the other team members distribute the audience handouts. The Project LIGHT staff member then sits on the side of the room, clearly marking that s/he is present in an assistive role.

Lesson Plan I: Islam as a Universal Religion *(15-20 Minutes)*

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson plan is to illustrate to your audience that Islam is a universal religion, and to dispel some misperceptions. Muslims believe that Islam is a religion for all humanity, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or other factors. Muslims also believe that Islam as a religion is the extension and continuation of the message of monotheism that was revealed to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (peace be upon them all) among many other prophets and messengers. It is important to make your audience aware of those facts, which will likely come as a surprise to some of them.

Connector Statement: “Now we would like you to take a quick quiz about Islam, and will follow it with a discussion of the quiz results.”

Process and Tools

In this lesson plan:

1. The team member leading the activity will ask the audience to open the quiz page in their handouts that reads “Facts and Myths about Islam?”
2. Another team member will hand out to each member of the audience three cards: Green, Red and Yellow.
3. The team leader asks members of the audience to participate in responding to the quiz by raising the green card if they responded “true,” the red one if they responded “false” and the yellow one if they responded “don’t know” for each statement the activity leader reads.
4. The activity leader goes down the list of statements asking the audience to raise their cards. After reading each statement, and after members of the audience raise their cards, pause for few seconds to allow the audience to see the distribution of responses.
5. The activity leader then says in a “game show” sound: “The correct answer is....,” and the other team member raises the appropriate card.
6. The activity leader **MUST** follow each correct response with a brief explanation of the correct response. The emphasis must be on the universality of Islam, as explained below in the Activity Leader Remarks (suggested explanations are also included in the Appendix).
7. As members of the audience may question some of the correct responses, either respond to their questions if you think that an immediate response is in order, or defer a response to the Q&A session.
8. The entire exercise, including the closing remarks and discussion should last about 15-20 minutes.

Closing Discussion and Remarks

Activity Leader Remarks:

a. During the presentation:

Please note that this is perhaps the most significant lesson in terms of providing information about Islam that might come as a surprise to many in the audience. The following remarks are not intended to be read at the end of the lesson, but to be infused into the short statements explaining each of the correct responses. LIGHT staff will work extensively with those who will lead this session to ensure that they are well-prepared to present it effectively.

1. Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) did not start Islam as a religion, but more accurately he continued and connected the religion of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, among many other prophets (Peace be on them all).
2. The Holy Quran states explicitly that it included the news and stories of some prophets, but did not include some others.
3. Islam asserts the message of oneness of God, and all the behaviors and practices associated with such fundamental belief, such as our responsibility to our creator and His creation, including other humans, species, environment and universe.
4. While Islam in one sense includes unique practices and rules revealed to Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), its fundamental values, beliefs and practices are shared with all other monolithic faiths.
5. Islam's message is not limited by geography, race, ethnicity, gender, age or any other factors. It is a message for all humanity.

b. At the end of the presentation:

The activity leader makes comments to the effect that the quiz perhaps challenged some established assumptions about Islam, and that was actually our intention. It is important for us Muslims to highlight the universality of Islam, not just as another feature, but as a foundation for what naturally follows in terms of how we deal with others.

Tips

1. You will probably still get interrupted by questions during your remarks or after you finish them. Assign one team member to write on the flip chart all questions that you decide are better answered at the end of the meeting, and respond to those that you decide are worthy of response immediately.
2. Keep a pleasant posture throughout!!!

This Activity is Included in the Audience's Handout

Activity: Facts and Myths about Islam

For each statement below, please indicate if it is “true,” “false,” or if you “don’t know.” After that, the presenter will ask the entire group to raise their green (true), red (false) or yellow (don’t know) cards to indicate their responses, and will provide the correct responses.

	True	False	Don't Know
1. In the Islamic perspective, all people are equal regardless of race, gender, age, class, or nationality.			
2. In the Islamic view, Arabs are the chosen people of God.			
3. Fasting and almsgiving are among the five pillars of Islam.			
4. Abraham, Moses and Jesus were prophets according to the Quran.			
5. In most cases, Islam spread peacefully through intermarriages and commerce.			
6. Muslims consider Prophet Mohammed as the first prophet of Islam.			
7. In its early centuries, Islam spread in the world through forced conversion.			
8. The majority of Muslims in the world speak Arabic.			
9. Muslims believe they will be held accountable on the day of judgment.			
10. Saudi Arabia has more Muslims than India.			
11. According to the Quran, Allah, the God of Muslims, is the same God of Jews and Christians.			
12. Muslim obligatory prayers are performed seven times a day.			
13. In Islam women are not allowed to earn money, inherit or vote.			
14. Muslims are instructed to convert others to Islam.			
15. Few Muslims, responding to grievances and experiences against others, interpret their religion to justify violent actions against entire groups.			

Notes

Lesson Plan 2: Islam's Worldview on Human Coexistence and Interactions *(12-15 Minutes)*

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson plan is to illustrate to your audience that Islam advocates peaceful coexistence between all members of the human race. Muslims are instructed to respect differences between them and others, and are told in the Holy Quran that God's will dictates who believes and who does not. It is not up to Muslims to make others believe in their religion, but it is up to God. Consequently, Muslims are guided by a set of principles for coexistence and interaction with others—all others, Muslims or non-Muslims. In this lesson plan, the team's task is to communicate those principles to the audience.

Connector Statement: “Now that we discussed Islam's universality, let us talk about how Islam addresses issues of coexistence and interactions. Get ready for another exercise....”

Process and Tools

In this lesson plan:

1. Make sure that the flip chart paper with the thirteen principles of coexistence and interaction is hung on the wall in front of the audience.
2. The team member leading the activity will ask the audience to open the pages that include principles of coexistence and interaction in Islam. S/he must explain to the audience that these principles are derived directly from the Holy Quran and the practice of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). Refer the audience to the following pages that include the supporting sources from the Holy Quran and the Prophet (PBUH)'s practice.
3. The activity leader then asks the audience to spend 4-5 minutes going over those principles.
4. The activity leader then asks the audience to participate as judges of a role play that two of the team members perform.
5. In the role play, one team member will act as a non-Muslim person, and the other will act as a Muslim person. They will engage in series of mini dialogues (included in this section before the Notes pages) in which the non-Muslim person will make a statement, and the Muslim person will respond to it. The Muslim's statement will either affirm one of the principles listed, or will negate it. If the statement is affirming, members of the audience should say “Goal,” and explain which principle was affirmed. If the statement is negating a principle of coexistence and interaction, members of the audience should say “Foul,” and explain which principle was negated.
6. The activity leader must follow each mini dialogue and audience response with a brief explanation of the principle (suggested explanations are included in the Appendix).
7. The entire lesson, including closing remarks and discussion, should last about 12-15 minutes.

Closing Discussion and Remarks

Activity Leader Remarks:

a. During the presentation:

This lesson plan is the core of Project LIGHT. It is here that people learn about Islam's message of tolerance and peaceful coexistence. The activity leader must briefly comment on each principal following each of the mini-dialogues, with emphasis on the fundamental messages of tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Use the points below to guide your comments.

b. At the end of the presentation:

The activity leader emphasizes the following points:

1. Those principles reflect the directions in the Holy Quran and the Prophet (PBUH)'s practice to Muslims on how to coexist and interact with others.
2. If there are Muslims who do not follow those principles of coexistence and interaction, this is a reflection on those who do not follow the principles, but not on the principles themselves or on Islam.

Tips

1. Keep your presentation within an interactive dialogue mode.
2. Do not fall into Khutba mode.
3. Continue to maintain control of the interaction.
4. Keep a pleasant posture....

This Activity is Included in the Audience's Handout

List of Islamic Principles of Coexistence and Interaction

Tolerance

Recognizing God's ultimate goodness leads to recognizing the ultimate goodness of God's creation and plan. All of humanity has been created from a single soul. They are all created with the same nature and God has made that nature essentially good. It is important to respect all of mankind, as they are part of God's creation. It becomes, then, unacceptable to hold hatred and intolerance towards any part of the creation of God. The only thing that a Muslim should not tolerate is that which God has expressly forbidden.

Universality

Universality refers to the fact that the message of Islam is not confined to a "chosen" people or a specific sacred land; it is a message for all mankind. The Qur'an is seen as the final message of guidance to all humanity. Furthermore, the values of Islam are seen to be universal. A Muslim, by virtue of this belief, rejects racial discrimination, cultural chauvinism and narrow nationalism.

Diversity

Diversity is an intentional aspect of the creation of God. God created the world and mankind in such a way so that we could learn valuable lessons about the will of God, ourselves, and the rest of creation. Since diversity is deliberate, it must be valued. Furthermore, submission to God's will does not demand the eradication of diversity in all realms.

Trust

Faith teaches us to trust in God, and this trust creates safety and assurance. If we trust God, then we realize that he will not abandon us nor subject us to that which we cannot bear. This trust of God, coupled with an understanding of *fitrah*, also creates trust in ourselves and in others.

Equality

All of mankind is held to be equal in creation and potentiality. One individual only exceeds another in relation to piety, not in relation to superficial categories such as race, gender, age or class.

Respect for God's Creation

If we have faith in God, we necessarily must respect his creation. The implications of this are broad and include the respect for the environment, as well as respect for fellow members of mankind. Respect implies that we "feel or show deferential regard for; esteem...avoid violation of or interference with...show consideration or appreciation."¹

¹ Jost, David. *The American Heritage College Dictionary*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993.

This Activity is Included in the Audience's Handout

God as Judge

God is the final and ultimate judge of all mankind. Although, in societies we may have to judge, to the best of our ability, in accordance with God's will in order to maintain order, this judgment must always be tempered with the recognition that we have incomplete and imperfect knowledge.

Forgiveness

God is the ultimate and most merciful forgiver; he grants forgiveness when sincere repentance is proffered. Individuals should emulate this characteristic to the best of their ability. Furthermore, due to mankind's incomplete knowledge and understanding, we should not attempt to definitively judge the sincerity of another's repentance. We should err on the side of caution and leave the rest to God.

Patience

Patience means that we are steadfast and resolute even in the face of difficulties. Patience is directly connected to trust and faith in God. If we believe that God is the creator and the best planner than we are patient, with events and other individuals, as the creation and plan unfurls. Patience should not be confused with inactivity; the Qur'an urges us to patiently persevere. Perseverance is a form of action, rather than the lack of action.

Self-Development/Process

Our lives in this world are perpetually changing, and the struggle to actualize the will of God is ongoing. This means that we should be and are constantly in the process of self-development and refinement. Other individuals are also undergoing the same process and may be at different stages than ourselves. This is part of our created nature and therefore it must be respected. Additionally, this principle reflects the Islamic belief that all mankind, and each member of mankind, has the potential and capacity for improvement.

Self Discipline & Control

In order to act in accordance with God's will, we must curb and moderate certain desires and impulses. We must also have discipline in order to fulfill our duties and responsibilities. Discipline and control can manifest in behavior, language, practices, reactions and communication styles. Discipline and control facilitate a social existence that maintains the vision of *tawhid* by preventing man's desires from becoming the central, determining factor.

Human Nature (*Fitrah*)

This refers to man's created nature, which in Islam is held to be essentially good. It, also, relates to the fact that on one level, man like the rest of creation, submits automatically to the will of God. On another level, man was created with a unique trait, free will. This free will allows us to choose whether or not we conform to God's will in other ways. It is precisely this intentional trait that makes us moral creatures worthy and capable of vicegerency.

This Activity is Included in the Audience's Handout

Separation of People from Action

This principle teaches us to distinguish between individuals and their actions. Being the creations of God, we are not solely defined by our actions, some of which may be good and some of which may be bad. We should not encourage nor tolerate bad behavior, but we must recognize that even when an individual is acting inappropriately or in a blameworthy manner, we are not authorized to act cruelly and meanly towards that individual. We can disapprove of the behavior, without disapproving of the person. The prophets, themselves, serve as ideal role models; they clearly rejected and hated the transgressions of their own people, while, at the same time, they deeply loved them and wanted to assist them.

This Activity is Included in the Audience's Handout

Activity: Qur'anic Verses Related to Principles of Coexistence and Interaction

Read the following Islamic principles related to coexistence and interaction. After you finish reading them, participate as a judge of the mini-dialogues performed by two presenters as instructed.

Tolerance

... they are themselves a people transgressing beyond bounds! So turn away from them for you are not to blame. 51:53-54

Therefore turn aside from him who turns his back upon Our reminder and does not desire anything but this world's life. 53:29

Nor can goodness and Evil be equal. Repel Evil with what is better: Then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate! 41:34

Say : O ye that reject Faith! I worship not that which ye worship, Nor will ye worship that which I worship. And I will not worship that which ye have been wont to worship, Nor will ye worship that which I worship. To you be your Way, and to me mine. 109:1-6

Universality

Seest thou not that it is God Whose praises all beings in the heavens and on earth do celebrate, and the birds (of the air) with wings outspread? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise. And God knows well all that they do. 24:41

Say: "No reward do I ask of you for this Qur'an, nor am I a pretender. "This is no less than a Message to all the Worlds. 38:86-87

Diversity/Plurality

If it had been the Lord's will, they would have believed—All who are on earth! Wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe. 10:99

Mankind was but one nation, but differed later. Had it not been for a word that went forth before from thy Lord, their differences would have been settled between them. 10:19

If thy Lord had so willed, He could have made mankind one people: but they will not cease to dispute. 11:118

Let there be no compulsion in religion, Truth stands out clear from error. Whoever rejects evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks. And God heareth and knoweth all things. Seest thou not that God sends down rain from the sky? With it We then bring out produce of various colors. And in the mountains are tracts white and red, of various shades of color, and black intense in hue. 2:256

This Activity is Included in the Audience's Handout

And so amongst men and crawling creatures and cattle, are they of various colors. Those truly fear God, among His Servants, who have knowledge: for God is Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving. Those who rehearse the Book of God, establish regular Prayer, and spend in Charity out of what We have provided for them, secretly and openly, hope for a commerce that will never fail: For He will pay them their meed, nay, He will give them even more out of His Bounty: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate service. That which We have revealed to thee of the Book is the Truth,- confirming what was revealed before it: for God is assuredly- with respect to His Servants - well acquainted and Fully Observant. 35:28-31

To every People have We appointed rites and ceremonies which they must follow: let them not then dispute with thee on the matter, but do thou invite them to thy Lord: for thou art assuredly on the Right Way. 22:67

Trust

O ye who believe! Call in remembrance the favor of God unto you when certain men formed the design to stretch out their hands against you, but God held back their hands from you: so fear God. And on God let believers put all their trust. 5:11

It is part of the Mercy of God that thou dost deal gently with them wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over Their faults, and ask for God's forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs of moment. Then, when thou hast Taken a decision put thy trust in God. For God loves those who put their trust in Him. 3:159

He said: "O my people! see ye whether I have a Clear Sign from my Lord, and He hath given me sustenance pure and good as from Himself? I wish not, in opposition to you, to do that which I forbid you to do. I only desire your betterment to the best of my power; and my success in my task can only come from God. In Him I trust, and unto Him I look. 11:88

O ye who believe! Avoid suspicion as much as possible: for suspicion in some cases is a sin: And spy not on each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, ye would abhor it...But fear God: For God is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful. 49:12

Equality

It is He Who created you from a single person, and made his mate of like nature, in order that he might dwell with her in love. 7:189

O mankind! We created you from a single pair of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other. Not that ye may despise each other. Verily, the most honored of you in the sight of God is he who is the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted with all things. 49:13

O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, His mate, and from them twain scattered like seeds countless men and women;- reverence God, through whom ye demand your mutual rights, and reverence the wombs That bore you: for God ever watches over you. 4:1

This Activity is Included in the Audience's Handout

For Muslim men and women,- for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in Charity, for men and women who fast and deny themselves, for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in God's praise,- for them has God prepared forgiveness and great reward. 33:35

Respect for God's Creation

There is not an animal that lives on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but forms part of communities like you. Nothing have we omitted from the Book, and they all shall be gathered to their Lord in the end. 6:38

Who made good everything that He has created, and He began the creation of man from dust. 32:7

God is the Judge

He knows what is before them and what is behind them: and to God go back all questions for decision. 22:76

And if there is a party among you who believes in the message with which I have been sent, and a party which does not believe, hold yourselves in patience until God doth decide between us: for He is the best to decide. 7:87

Forgiveness

And let not those who possess dignity and ease among you swear not to give to the near of kin and to the needy, and to fugitives for the cause of God. Let them forgive and show indulgence. Yearn ye not that God may forgive you? God is Forgiving, Merciful. 24:22

Whatever ye are given here is but a convenience of this life: but that which is with God is better and more lasting: it is for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord: Those who avoid the greater crimes and shameful deeds, and, when they are angry even then forgive. 42:36-37

But indeed if any show patience and forgive, that would truly be an exercise of courageous will and resolution in the conduct of affairs. 42:43

Tell those who believe, to forgive those who do not look forward to the Days of God: It is for Him to recompense for good or ill each People according to what they have earned. 45:14

Patience

O ye who believe! When ye go abroad in the cause of God, investigate carefully, and say not to any one who offers you a salutation: "Thou art none of a believer!" Coveting the perishable goods of this life: with God are profits and spoils abundant. Even thus were ye yourselves before, till God conferred on you His favors: Therefore carefully investigate. For God is well aware of all that ye do. 4:94

Man is a creature of haste: soon enough will I show you My Signs; then ye will not ask Me to hasten them! 21:37

Therefore patiently persevere, as did all messengers of inflexible purpose; and be in no haste about the Unbelievers. 46:35

This Activity is Included in the Audience's Handout

And if ye do catch them out, catch them out no worse than they catch you out: But if ye show patience, that is indeed the best course for those who are patient. And do thou be patient, for thy patience is but from God; nor grieve over them: and distress not thyself because of their plots. For God is with those who restrain themselves, and those who do good. 16:126-128

Man is a creature of haste: soon enough will I show you My Signs; then ye will not ask Me to hasten them! 21:37

I swear by the time, Verily Man is in loss, Except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and join together in the mutual teaching of Truth, and of Patience and Constancy. 103:1-3

Self-Development/Process

By the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it; And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right;- Truly he succeeds that purifies it or causes it to grow... 91:1-9

Save him who shall repent and believe and do right. Such will enter the Garden, and they will not be wronged in aught... 19:60

Self Discipline

...and let not the hatred of some people in once shutting you out of the Sacred Mosque lead you to transgression and hostility on your part. 5:2

O ye who believe! stand out firmly for God, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear God. For God is well acquainted with all that ye do. 5:8

We ordained for the Children of Israel that if any one slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people. 5:32

Separation of People from Action

And as for the two of you who are guilty thereof, punish them both. And if they repent and improve, then let them be. Lo! God is ever relenting, Merciful. 4:16

Script for Role Play on Islam's Worldview on Human Coexistence and Interactions

Note: Please see Appendix for suggested statements that the activity leader would say after each mini-dialogue.

God is the Judge

1. So if I am not a Muslim, am I going to hell?
2. I do not know who is going to hell and who is going to heaven; only God knows that.

Diversity

1. My neighbors are African American Muslims; they do not dress like Arab Muslims you see on TV.
2. Well, they should because the Arab dress is the only proper Islamic dress.

Self Development Process

1. But you yourself hardly ever gave charity as your religion commands you to do until last year.
2. I am grateful to God that now I find it within me to give charity to those in need.

Separation of People from Action

1. I hear that Salman Rushdi insulted your prophet and your religion
2. Well, it is because he is a vicious horrible human being.

Trust

1. I am looking to interview a Muslim for the newsletter.
2. I am sorry, but people always twist what we say; I do not want to do it.

Equality

2. (if "I" is a man) Can my sister come with me to visit the mosque, or is it only for men?

OR

1. (if "I" is a woman) Am I allowed to visit the mosque, or is it only for men?
2. Of course women are welcome to visit the mosque, just as men are welcome.

Tolerance

1. You know, I like to drink beer, will always drink it, no matter what your religion says about it.
2. Well, I personally would not drink alcohol, but you will do what you will do.

Universality

1. Islam is an Arab religion; it is not for everyone.
2. Actually most Muslims in the world are not Arabs, and the Quran often addresses all humanity regardless of race or ethnicity.

God is Judge

Respect for God's Creation

Separating People from Actions (not distinguishing between combatants and non-combatants)

1. I understand that the majority of Muslims say that Islam is a religion of peace. So what about those who kill civilians?
2. I do not care what the majority of Muslims say; Muslims who kill civilians are fighting infidels who have killed Muslims and are going to hell.

Notes

Lesson Plan 3: Diversity of Muslims Today *(15-20 Minutes)*

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson plan is related to the previous one. Muslims everywhere may have different approaches to the principles of coexistence and interaction, and few may even negate them. Like all other communities, people behave along a wide spectrum of principles and guides, some coincide with the understanding of the principles we discussed in the previous section, and some do not. It is important that we present to the audience a realistic picture of where the community is today, and to make it clear that it is part of our self-development, and struggle to help ourselves and our brothers and sisters come closer to the principles we had discussed.

Connector Statement: “So far we talked about the universality of Islam and the principles of coexistence and interaction. Now we would like to give you a glimpse of the diversity within the American Muslim community. Given the different backgrounds and view points within the community, you will be able to draw the conclusion that it is important for us Muslims to be aware of, and to try to implement those principles of coexistence and interaction. We will now present to you a role play in which you will see how factors such as gender, culture, and approach to religion influence Muslims’ behavior, and that not all Muslims are of one mold.”

Process and Tools

In this lesson plan:

1. The team member leading the activity will ask the audience to watch a role play taking place in a mosque in the United States. S/he explains that the role play is about a group of Muslims meeting to discuss dinner plans for the Holy month of Ramadan.
2. The activity leader then takes the opportunity to discuss briefly Islam’s five pillars with a focus on Ramadan’s fasting rules and its spirituality.
3. Avoid using Arabic words such as “Iftar, haram, halal, masjid, alhamdulillah” because they will confuse an audience not familiar with those terms. The activity leader and the role players **MUST STICK TO ENGLISH**. Practice using English translated versions of common Islamic phrases- so instead of “haram,” say “forbidden,” and instead of “alhamdulillah,” say “thank God.”
4. The activity leader asks the audience to take notes on the designated page of their hand out about the interactions in the role play and what different actors stand for, in preparation for a group discussion following the role play.
5. In the role play, the four team members will act as members of a committee charged with preparing Ramadan dinners in the mosque.
6. The four roles will reflect the diversity in our community in terms of culture, gender, and approach to religion, westernization and modernity. Each team member must follow his/her role as scripted.
7. Before starting the role play, the activity leader asks the role players to introduce themselves according to their role play script (for example, I am Amr Abdalla. I am an American convert to Islam, married with two young children).

8. Perform the role play for about 5 minutes.
9. During the role play make sure that each actor brings up at least one issue (the type of food, the prayer time, etc.) Do not let one actor bring up all issues otherwise it will look like we are singling out that person and his/her culture, which is the last thing we want to do.
10. The activity leader asks the audience for their reactions to the role play using the two questions included in their handouts.
11. The activity leader accepts all points of views.
12. The activity leader verifies any points that the audience may have misinterpreted or misunderstood.
13. The entire lesson, including closing remarks and discussion, should last about 15-20 minutes.

Closing Discussion and Remarks

Activity Leader Remarks:

The activity leader thanks the team members for their participation in the role play then concludes with remarks to the effect that the Muslim community is diverse and includes variety of views. Emphasize that bringing people to adhere to principles of coexistence and interaction has been and will continue to be the struggle of humanity and that we believe that in Project LIGHT we have to relentlessly and patiently advocate those principles. Continue to smile!!!

Activity: Diversity Role-play: Ramadan is Around the Corner

Situation

A committee of four from the Muslim community has been delegated to plan a dinner during Ramadan. The group must plan the food and the program for the evening. Some people have been disappointed with how the dinners have been carried out in the past depending on who had been planning the event. The committee must agree upon the food, the schedule of events, the seating arrangements and the speaker for the program. A famous Imam is visiting the community for part of Ramadan and will be leading the night prayers. He only speaks Arabic and a translator has been arranged for him.

Person #1 (female)

You are an immigrant from the gulf area. Your education growing up was within an Islamic school there and you feel that you know Islam very well. You are very conscientious about your religious practice and want to make sure everything that you do is proper according to Islamic law.

You came to a Ramadan dinner in the past and were upset by the arrangement of men and women sitting at the same tables and socializing all in one room. Mixing is not allowed and there is no compromise. This is the legal ruling you were taught, and how things were always in your country of origin, and you don't see why Muslims should compromise in America. You are happy to be on this committee because you think it is important for someone to be there with knowledge of Islamic rulings to make sure that everything is done in a proper way and that there is no mixing at the event.

You are also very excited that a famous Imam from Saudi Arabia has come to lead prayers during part of Ramadan and is available to speak at the dinner. You are very excited to be able to have someone on his level as a scholar available to speak and are looking forward to the blessing of his speech. Also you think that it would be good for the community because he will set them straight about the proper way of doing things.

You would like to make arrangements to have the event catered by an Arab company so that they can make all the traditional dishes you are used to and that will make the guest from Saudi Arabia feel at home. Besides, sometimes when the Pakistanis do the catering, the food is too spicy for you.

The schedule for you is clear. Everyone will break their fast with dates because that is the tradition of the Prophet. It is not permissible to delay the break of the fast and it must be done as soon as sunset arrives. After that, everyone should go directly to pray because the prayer should not be delayed.

Emphasize with everything that things must be done according to Islamic law. You also feel that you know more than other people and that you have to help them to know how things should be done.

Person #2

You are Shia' from Pakistan. You are married with two young kids. You enjoy coming to these dinners in order to socialize with people from your culture. You work in a typical American environment and find these events to be a pleasant change to be able to speak your own language, eat your traditional food and wear your traditional cloths. During Ramadan you particularly feel homesick and miss all the traditions of Ramadan. At least by going to this event, you can still have some of the food and other aspects. You also want your children to be familiar with your culture and like to bring them to these events.

Because you are Shia', you do not break fast until it is fully dark outside. This has been akward at some Ramadan dinners you have been to because the Sunnis broke their fast before prayer and ate right away. You had to wait antoher 20 minutes and by that time most people were almost finished eating. The Shia' pray when mahgrib comes in, but wait to break their fast until it is dark. Since you are on the committee, you hope to avoid having the problem again by making sure everyone prays before they eat.

You are not very concerned about who speaks or what the program is. You do not speak or understand too much Arabic, but are very used to having Arabic speakers. That's the traditional way things are and it doesn't bother you too much that you don't fully understand, as long as the food is good.

You are hoping that they will use your favorite Pakistani caterer for the dinner because they make the best pakuras (fried veggies) that is the traditional appetiser that is used in your country when breaking fast. Arab food is too bland and it doesn't feel like Ramadan if you don't have your traditional food.

In your culture, the men and women would be separate at an event like this. It is the cultural way of doing things and you are used to it and comfortable. The women in your family prefer it to be separate. They like to wear their nice clothes to these dinners and socialize with their friends. They enjoy themselves more if they are separate from the men and can relax.

Person #3

You are a college student born in this country from immigrant parents. You've grown up in the American Muslim community. You often get frustrated with people trying to do things the old traditional ways from back home. We are living in American and we need to recognize that. You feel that it is time that your generation should be given a bigger role in deciding how things are done in the mosque. Many of your friends don't like to come to the mosque anymore because of the practices imposed on them. You do consider yourself Muslim, but don't like to be told how to practice your religion.

You are very much opposed to having the men and the women separated. You think it is ridiculous to be separated. When you go to school you interact with people of the opposite gender all the time. You think it is hypocritical of Muslims to have a different standard about mixing when socializing with each other, besides many of your friends are worried about how they will find a spouse and you think that it is better to have young people mixing in an environment that is Islamic with other people around.

You enjoy many cultural aspects of the Muslims community and enjoy the mix of foods and cultures. It doesn't matter to you what culture the food comes from, you like it all.

You think that it is useless to have a speaker from another country who doesn't speak English and who doesn't know the society we

are living in. You want a speaker that you can learn from, who is interesting and inspiring. You get really bored when they bring speakers who don't speak English and have a translator. You find it impossible to focus. If this happens, your friends will all leave rather than to sit there falling asleep.

Person #4

You are an American convert, married with 2 kids ages 11 and 14. You are really concerned with raising your kids as American Muslims, you want them to have social support that will help them be strong in their identity. You feel that it is very important that they have a positive and meaningful Ramadan experience. Your youngest child is going to try and fast the whole month this year for the first time and you want to do everything to encourage him/her.

Islam is not about culture for you. You converted after a lot of investigation and questioning. You believe in Islam, but sometimes feel that people try to force cultural things on you and make things more difficult than necessary. You have studied Arabic, but still have trouble following speeches and your children have learned to read, but can't understand spoken Arabic.

Your biggest concern as a member of this committee is to make sure that the program caters to children and families. You would like to see the children participate in the program and any speaker has to be able to catch the minds and the hearts of the youth.

You like to make Ramadan a family time and want to attend the dinner as a family. You feel frustrated by the idea of having the family separated because some people insist on having men and women separate and think that it makes a negative impression on your children. You believe his kind of separation is a cultural practice and not required by Islam.

You enjoy the different kinds of food from different cultures, but you kids don't like to eat anything spicy. Your spouse complains of feeling weak at the end of fasting and likes to eat before maqhrif prayer because it gives him/her more time to feel energized and focused on the prayer. Besides sometimes you think people rush through the prayer in order to get to the food, so you think its best to just let people eat and then go to the prayer.

You were the one who asked the committee convene. All four of you are gathered today. Start the discussion....

After five minutes of acting, finish the role play by stating that there are so many issues to address, but there is not enough time to reach consensus on them. Invite the others for another meeting the following week.

This Activity is Included in the Audience's Handout

Activity: Role Play- Ramadan is Around the Corner

Now that you have watched the role play "Ramadan is Around the Corner," please participate in the discussion of the following points:

1. What are your overall remarks about the interaction among the mosque members?

2. What seemed to guide each person's behavior?

Notes

Lesson Plan 4: Actions to Address Discrimination and Bigotry

(15-20 Minutes)

Purpose

This lesson plan is the culmination of Project LIGHT. In this lesson plan you want to demonstrate to the audience examples of discrimination and bigotry against Muslims, Arabs and South Asians. You then want to motivate them to think of other examples of discrimination and bigotry that they have known of, and to talk about it. Finally, you want to generate with them action plans that they believe realistic and doable to combat discrimination and bigotry.

Connector Statement: “Now that you learned about Islam’s approach to coexistence and interactions, and how Muslims are diverse, it is time to see how on occasions Muslims have been subject to discrimination and bigotry.”

Process and Tools

In this lesson plan:

1. The activity leader will divide the audience into 4-5 groups of 5-6 people (using the count method), and assign each group one of the team members including the Project LIGHT coordinator, if needed, to act as a facilitator of discussion, and to record notes.
2. Once seated in their groups, the activity leader will ask the audience to:
 - a. open their handouts to the pages that include the traffic court story in New York;
 - b. spend 4-5 minutes reading it;
 - c. designate a presenter;
 - d. discuss the three questions associated with the story in their handouts in 4-5 minutes; and,
 - e. have the presenter record the responses to the three questions.
3. Each LIGHT team member assigned to a small group will facilitate the discussion among the small group members as needed, and must write down the responses to the three questions on her/his own page, and submit them to the Project LIGHT coordinator for inclusion in a comprehensive file. The facilitator should act only as a scribe and make sure that the group stays on task; do not offer suggestions; do not become another member of the small group.
4. The entire lesson, including small group presentations and closing remarks, should last about 15-20 minutes.

Closing Discussion and Remarks

Activity Leader Remarks:

The activity leader thanks the audience for their participation in the small groups and remarks that:

1. the action plans they suggested will be helpful for Project LIGHT;
2. Project LIGHT will follow up with some members of the audience on the implementation of action plans; and,
3. it is all of us who must together combat discrimination and bigotry.

This Activity is Included in the Audience's Handout

Activity: A True Story- Judge labels Muslim woman as terrorist when contesting parking fine

<http://www.charlotte.com/mld/charlotte/news/5920513.htm>

Posted on Thu, May. 22, 2003

Terrorism Question Upsets Arab-American

JIM FITZGERALD

Associated Press

TARRYTOWN, N.Y. - An Arab-American woman who was in court to fight a parking ticket fainted when the judge asked her if she was a terrorist.

Anissa Khoder, 46, has filed a complaint with the state Commission on Judicial Conduct over the May 15 incident before Tarrytown Village Justice William Crosbie.

Crosbie, 79, confirmed this week that he made the remark but said he was "probably kidding with her." He denied her claim that he also accused her of financially supporting terrorists.

There is no transcript [for] the courtroom session in Tarrytown, 12 miles north of New York on the Hudson River.

The woman's stepson, Hussein Khoder, said his mother went to court because she was ticketed twice within an hour for the same parking violation and felt only one violation was valid.

Anissa Khoder told The Journal News that when her name was called, the judge asked if she was a terrorist. She said she was offended but kept that to herself.

She claimed that after giving the judge her explanation for why the tickets should be dismissed, "He said something like, 'You have money to support the terrorists, but you don't want to pay the ticket.' I could not believe I was hearing that."

She collapsed but recovered as officers took her outside. Both tickets were dismissed.

"He has to judge me, not my name," she said. "I love this country. It is my country. There's no Arabic music in my home. I have a 6-foot Christmas tree each year."

Anissa Khoder was born and raised in Lebanon. She and her husband arrived in the United States 14 years ago and she became a U.S. citizen in 1993, her stepson said.

Westchester County Executive Andrew Spano, who swore Khoder in as a citizen when he was county clerk, said Crosbie should step down or be ousted.

"To call someone a terrorist, that should never happen anywhere, let alone in a courtroom," Spano said. "And for this judge to say it was a joke is even worse."

This Activity is Included in the Audience's Handout

Activity: Small Group Discussion- Muslim Woman in Traffic Court

In your small group, please participate in discussing the following points:

1. What are examples of discrimination and bigotry against Muslims, Arabs, South Asians, and other groups that you know about?
2. What are possible consequences of such discrimination and bigotry on our society?
3. What actions can you take to combat discrimination and bigotry against Muslims, Arabs, South Asians, and other groups?

Notes

Questions & Answers *(15 Minutes)*

Purpose

This session is designed to respond to audience's questions. Typically, a non-Muslim audience will have so many questions about Islam, ranging from basic knowledge questions, to controversial issues, to misinformation and current events. Our purpose is to prepare you to respond to all possible questions in a manner that reflects what we stand for: Tolerance, peace and understanding. We prepared for you frameworks for responding to various types of questions (included in the following pages under Response Frameworks).

Connector Statement: “Thank you all for your attention and participation. Now, finally, we are ready to answer your questions.”

Process and Tools

In this session:

1. The activity leader will ask all team members to join her/him to stand in front of the audience.
2. All team members must join the activity leader, and have the Response Quick Reference in their hands.
3. If there are question already listed on the Question List, the activity leader chooses specific team members to respond to each of them.
4. The team leader then opens the floor for questions, selecting questions from the audience, and choosing specific team members to respond to each question.
5. The entire session, including small group presentations and closing remarks, should last about 15 minutes.

Closing Discussion and Remarks

Activity Leader Remarks:

The activity leader thanks the audience for their participation in the small groups and remarks that:

1. it has been a pleasure to present to the group;
2. to remind them that Project LIGHT's contact information is on the back of their handouts;
3. to ask them to stay for few more minutes to complete the evaluation forms

Notes

Questions & Answers

Conducting Outreach Meetings

Training Workshop

Response Frameworks

This section will provide frameworks for handling questions during Project LIGHT presentations. It is not possible to anticipate all the questions that might be asked during a question answer session, nor do we have time to prepare answers to the large number of questions that we know might be asked. The following frameworks are intended as tools for categorizing and fielding the range of questions that might be asked.

One important theme here is that most questions lend themselves to more than one response framework. For example, the issue of women's dress code may be discussed based on the *Islam 101* framework (meaning that Islam instructs men and women to be modest), and the *Cultural Practices* framework (meaning that the dress code within modest guidelines may vary from one culture to the other). Keep in mind that discussing any question may require the use of more than one framework.

Frameworks

- Islam 101
- God's Domain
- Islam's Value Parameters
- Universal and Particular Interpretations
- Debated Issues: Literal, Essence, and Context Interpretations
- Cultural Practices
- Misinformation
- Current Affairs

Islam 101

Purpose

This framework is used to address basic questions about Islam that might be asked during a presentation. This is intended for well-known and non-controversial issues about the beliefs and practices of Islam and Muslims.

Techniques

- For these questions, presenters can draw upon their knowledge of Islam.
- If uncertain about a question, they may defer to Project LIGHT staff person present.

Examples of Applicable Cases

- What is fasting?
- What is in that large black building the Muslims walk around?
- Are all Muslims Arab?
- Do Muslims worship Muhammad?
- What do Muslims believe about Jesus?

God's Domain

Purpose

God's domain framework is used to address questions about which man does not have the answers and the knowledge of them is solely with God. There are three kinds of knowledge. The first level is that which can be gained through observation of created things. This is the realm of science and common observation. It includes what is known as well as what might be learned through sensual perception. The second level is knowledge that could not be known except through revelation from God. The third level is the Domain of God. It consists of all the things that man can not know for certain through observation and God has not revealed the knowledge to man. Everything related to the unseen is God's domain; we can know nothing about them except what is revealed to us. Often people try to provide answers through philosophical and theological speculation, but they cannot have certain knowledge about these issues.

Techniques

- Do not offer speculation to try and answer these questions.
- Explain the limited knowledge of man and the unlimited knowledge of God.
- Quote verses from Quran.

Examples of Applicable Cases

- What happens to People of the Book in the Afterlife?
- How do you know if you are going to heaven?
- When will the day of Judgement arrive?

Islam's Value Parameters

Purpose

Islam is an open and flexible way of life with rather few things being forbidden. However, those things that are forbidden, are well know and very clear in Islam. These are the Islamic value parameters. These refer to actions that God has expressly forbidden in the Quran.

Techniques

- State that these things are expressly forbidden in Islam, cite Quran if you are able to.
- Emphasize that Islam is not meant to be difficult and everything that is good and necessary for mankind is permissible and encouraged.
- Emphasize that Muslims do not find it difficult to give up these things because they are expendable or there are permissible alternatives.
- Mention that we are part of God's creation and we have a responsibility to take care of ourselves, respect the rest of creation and not to violate what is forbidden. Our bodies are not ours to do with as we please, nor do we have freedom to harm or transgress anyone else or creation

Examples of Applicable Cases

- Why don't Muslims eat pork/ drink alcohol?
- What about extra-marital sexual relations/homosexuality?
- What about suicide bombings/ terrorist attacks?

Universal and Particular Interpretations

Purpose

In the methodology section, we talked about how it is important to distinguish between the universal verses that establish the principles of Islam and the verses that address specific situations. Some particularly problematic issues come from taking specific verses out of their context and treating them as if they were general.

Techniques

- State that some verses address specific circumstances and that these verses must not be taken out of context and separated from the circumstances.
- Mention the circumstances of the specific verses asked about if able.
- State that verses conveying universal principals are often repeated.
- Mention the universal verses that relate to the issue in question if able.
- Mention that verses of the Quran are not meant to be read in seclusion, but in relation to the rest of the Quran.

Examples of Applicable Cases

- What about the verse that says, “kill them where you find them” ?
- What about the verse about not taking Jews and Christians as friends?

Debated Issues: Literal, Essence, and Context Interpretations

Purpose

There may be questions related to literal statements in Quran or Hadith that might not be something that we can follow in our society today. It may be necessary to understand the context, both historical and specific situations, in which these statements come. By looking at the context and deriving the purpose we can often uphold the essential meaning without literal interpretation.

Islamic scholars have derived the framework of the “maqasid al-shariah” or purposes of Islamic Law from the Quran which consists of:

1. Preservation of Life
2. Preservation of Religion
3. Preservation of Wealth or Property
4. Preservation of Progeny
5. Preservation of Human Dignity

These five general goals can be seen behind the rulings in the Quran and Sunnah. This framework has served as a tool for scholars to check the appropriate nature of rulings, as any law should support at least one of these goals. If a ruling ceases to support its intended cause, it should be suspended, such as the case of Omar suspending the cutting of hand during a famine.

Techniques

- Emphasize the Essence of Quran as something relevant and applicable to all times and places.
- Emphasize the importance of looking beyond the literal to find the essence or purpose.
- In legal matters emphasize the purposes of law, as seeking what is best for society and individuals and that no ruling should violate these principles.

Examples of Applicable Cases

- I heard two women are equal to one man as witnesses.
- Physical punishments
- What about marrying slaves?

Cultural Practices

Purpose

Many things that are done by Muslims, and sometimes are heard about by non-Muslims, actually have nothing to do with Islam at all. Sometimes people confuse their culture with Islam and mistakenly defend practices as part of their religion while they are not and may even be contrary to Islam. Non-Muslims often perceive these practices as part of Islam as well and may ask about them.

Techniques

- Clarify the difference between Islam and other cultural traditions.
- Admit the need for Muslims to be better educated about these issues.

Examples of Applicable Cases

- Honor killings
- Female genital mutulation
- Arranged marriage

Misinformation

Purpose

There are some things said about Islam and Muslims that are categorically false. These things often developed as propaganda against Muslims, some of these things date back to the crusades and attempted at that time to demonize Muslims. Regardless, of when and why the lies were started, they have been and continue to be passed on to and by people who have no real knowledge or experience with Muslims.

Techniques

- Make it very clear that the information is untrue or baseless.
- Mention that the views are not accepted by any Muslims, nor by any legitimate non-Muslim scholar with knowledge about Islam and Muslims.

Examples of Applicable Cases

- Muslims are “Muhamadians”.
- The Prophet was a pedophile
- The Prophet was a terrorist

Current Affairs

Purpose

Muslims are very much associated with several current affairs issues. It is very likely that you will be asked about some contemporary situations within the world. However, our purpose is not to discuss these topics. Since you will have limited time within your presentations, you will not be able to deal with sensitive or complex issues. Attempting to address these issues could take up too much time away from the intended topic, distracting your audience from the message of Project LIGHT. In addition, quick responses that are not clear could be misunderstood and negate the message of Project LIGHT

Techniques

- Tell your audience that the issue is complex and requires a deep discussion in order to capture that complexity, which is not possible during this short presentation.
- Suggest that those in the audience who are interested in information about the issue contact Project LIGHT staff who will be glad to refer them to the appropriate individuals.
- Do not engage in a discussion of the issue, as it may spiral out of control.

Examples of Applicable Cases

- What do you think about the situation in Isreal/Palestine,?
- What about the Muslims in Chechneyah, Kashmir, the Philipenes, etc.?
- What do the Muslims think about U.S. policy in Afghanistan, Iraq, Liberia, etc.?

Response Framework Quick Reference Chart

Issue/Question	Islam 101	God's Domain	Value Parameters	Universal/ Particular	Literal/ Essence/ Context	Cultural Practices	Misinformation	Current Affairs
Why can't women drive in Saudi Arabia?						X		
Why can't Muslim women marry outside of the faith?					X			
What about terrorism?			X					
What happens to a Muslim who converts?		X			X			
Do Muslims believe in Jesus?	X							
I heard two women are equal to one man as witnesses.					X			
What does Islam say about Democracy?	X							
What about Jihad?	X						X	
Why did the Prophet have so many wives?					X	X		
What about honor killings?			X			X		
Why has the Quran not changed?	X							
What are the requirements of women's dress?	X				X	X		
What about Islam and Arts? Showing the Prophet?	X				X			
Are all Arabs Muslims?	X						X	
What is Muhamdanism?							X	
What about Racism and classism in Islam?						X		
What is the role of Animal sacrifice in Islam?	X							
What about Israel/ Palestine issue?								X
Saudi monarchs?								X
Is woman/man CPR ok?			X					
Why can't we eat pork or drink Alcohol?			X					

Issue/Question	Islam 101	God's Domain	Value Parameters	Universal/ Particular	Literal/ Essence/ Context	Cultural Practices	Misinformation	Current Affairs
Muslim women are inferior						X	X	
Why do Muslims hate us?							X	X
What about Islamic Punishments?					X			
What about suicide bombers?			X					
What about the verse that says don't take People of the Book as friends?				X				
Muslims believe their religion is the best.		X			X			
Islam is violent.							X	
Who is worthy of Paradise?		X						
What about homosexuality?		X	X					
What about Polygamy?					X	X		
What about marrying slaves?					X			
Who was Muhammad?	X							
Islam was spread by the sword.							X	
What about profiling?								X
I heard the Prophet was a pedophile; he married a young girl.						X	X	
What are Muslim dietary rules?	X				X			
What about America's foreign policy?								X
In America we are taught to look a person in the eye. How do you lower your gaze?	X					X		
How do Muslim men and women participate in the arts, i.e., dance, music, film, theater, etc.?					X	X		
Can a Muslim girl participate in swimming competitions? What does she wear?	X				X	X		
Can a Muslim girl go to the PROM with a non-Muslim boy?	X		X		X	X		

Notes

Evaluation and Closure *(5 Minutes)*

Purpose

This last stage of the outreach meeting is intended to gather information from the audience about how the meeting went. It is important for Project LIGHT to receive this kind of feedback in order to improve and make necessary changes. It also makes members of the audience feel that their opinion counts.

Connector Statement: “Before you all go, our Project LIGHT coordinator is now passing around evaluation forms.”

Process and Tools

In this session:

1. The connector makes sure that the Project LIGHT coordinator is handing out the evaluation forms.
2. The connector tells the audience that completing the evaluation forms will take only 2-3 minutes of their time.
3. The connector instructs the audience to not write their names or any other identifying information.
4. The Project LIGHT coordinator collects the evaluation forms as members of the audience complete them.

Closing Discussion and Remarks

Connector Remarks:

The connector thanks the audience for their participation in the outreach meeting and remarks that:

1. it has been a pleasure to present to the group;
2. to remind them that Project LIGHT’s contact information is on the back of their handouts; and,
3. to wish them all well, and invite them to stay in touch with Project LIGHT for any questions they may have, or to recommend other groups for LIGHT presentations.

Evaluation Form

Thank you for attending Project LIGHT's presentation. Please take few minutes to complete this evaluation form. Please do not write your name or include any identifying information. We appreciate your opinions.

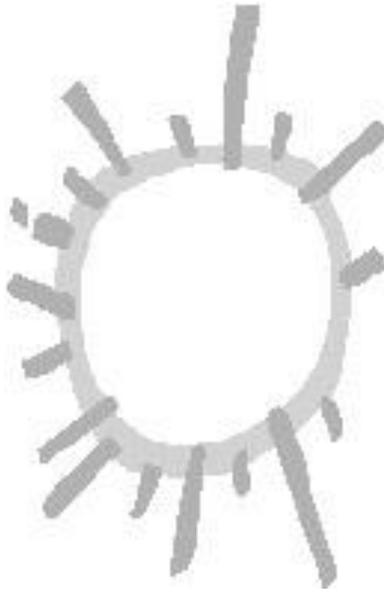
Date: _____

Location: _____

On a scale of 1-5 (1=poor, and 5=excellent), how do you rate the following presentation elements:	Poor					Excellent				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1. Information about Islam's messages of tolerance and peaceful coexistence.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. Information about discrimination and bigotry against Muslims.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. Information about actions to address discrimination and bigotry.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. The organization of the presentation.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. The presenters.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. The Question & Answer session.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

Notes



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