

# *A Resource for Islamic Readings for Interfaith Service for non-Muslim Scouting Units*

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*A scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.*

*A Muslim is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.*

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## *Introduction*

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In April 2008, I had the honor to go through Wood Badge for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Course (SR-920, Sam Houston Area Council). It is hard to describe the experience of the two weekends. It was tiring, it was full of great information, the staff was enthusiastic, my fellow classmates were great, and my patrol (Buffalo!) quickly became good friends. But what was truly amazing and outstanding was the fact that the class was a gathering of 60+ adults who all lived the Scout law.

The Scout Law: A scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

What was also amazing was the number of Scout leaders who wanted to know about Islam, and wanted to know how they could include Muslim Scouts in their Interfaith Worship Services. As part of the SR-920 Chaplain and Chaplain's aides team, I worked on finding Islamic sayings and scripture that could be included in the participant-led Interfaith Worship Service during the second weekend. To my amazement, there was no easy resource. And hence, this project was born.

## *Purpose*

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The purpose of this resource is to provide leaders of non-Muslim scouting units and camps a way to include Muslim Scouts in their Interfaith Worship Service.

## *Additional Resources*

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It is not the goal of this resource to answer all the questions about Islam or how to include a Muslim scout in the unit. I have found there are many resources explaining Islam and address issues including dietary restrictions, prayer, and Ramadan. If a Muslim scout joins your troop, the best way to have questions answered is just to ask. But if you want to learn more about Islam or basic background, I strongly recommend the following print resource:

**Council on Islamic Education. *Teaching about Islam and Muslims in the Public School Classroom: A Handbook for Educators (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)*. Fountain View, California, 1995. Website [www.cie.org](http://www.cie.org), email [info@cie.org](mailto:info@cie.org)**

This excellent print resource was developed for public secondary schools and has been approved by the California Board of Education for inclusion in their districts. In reviewing the handbook, I found it well-written, and frank in addressing many questions beyond the basic tenets of Islam, including issues about family, parenting, clothing and head scarf, and women's rights.

Although an internet source would be valuable since it would be immediately accessible, I find it very hard to recommend any website since the content can be changed. If one is to use a website, one must always be wary. Believe it or not, the Wikipedia entries are reasonable starting points, but again I would recommend the above printed resource. Also, BSA has two websites about Islam and scouting: BSA National Council: Scouting in the Islamic Community (<http://www.scouting.org/Media/FactSheets/02-928.aspx>) and Islamic Council on Scouting of North America (<http://www.islamiccouncilonscouting.com/index.htm>). The latter one has the religious award requirements listed.

## Islam: Tenets of Faith

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Although I refer you to the printed resource noted in previous section for more details about Islam, I do want to at least touch on three important topics: God and the word “Allah”; the Five Pillars of Islam; and the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition.

### God and the word “Allah”

On a personal level, it frustrates me as a Muslim that many of my fellow Americans believe the misconception that Muslims believe in a different God than Jews and Christians. In Islam, there is only One God and no other god. In the Qur’an, it is clear that this One God is the God of Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, the Virgin Mary, and Jesus (all and more prophets’ stories are in the Qur’an).

*“Do not argue with the People of the Book [Jews and Christians] except in good manner, and Say ‘We believe in that which is sent down to us and that which is sent down to you; our God and your God is the same One God.’” (Qur’an 29:46)*

The misconception finds its roots in the fact that a Muslim – independent of his/her native language – refers to the One God by using the Arabic word “Allah” for several reasons. This word “Allah” is special in Arabic. It cannot be made masculine or feminine (e.g., God or Goddess). It cannot be made plural (e.g., Gods or Goddesses). Hence, the Arabic word “Allah” has more meaning to Muslims than the English word “God”.

### **For the Interfaith Worship Service, I have substituted “Allah” with “God”.**

*“Whether you call Him Allah or the Most Gracious; it is all the same by whichever name you call Him because for Him are all the Finest names.” (Qur’an 17:110)*

### Five Pillars of Islam: Religious Obligations for Muslims

“Every action performed in obedience to God’s guidance or in order to please Him is considered an act of worship in Islam. Thus helping someone with their homework, greeting a stranger, or being respectful to an elder are at the same time acts of worship which earn spiritual reward. However, it is the specific acts of worship commonly termed the “Five Pillars of Islam” that provide the framework for the Muslim’s spiritual life. *The observance of these duties is regulated by individual conscience, and consequently, in real life, a spectrum of practice exists among Muslims.*” (p.20, Teaching about Islam and Muslims in the Public School Classroom)

1. Shahadah – the Declaration of Faith. By sincerely performing the Shahadah publicly in front of at least two Muslim witnesses, one becomes a Muslim. The Shahadah is a two-fold declaration of faith. First is the declaration that there is only One God and nothing else is worthy of worship. Second is the affirmation of Muhammad’s prophethood (and thereby affirming all previous prophets since Muhammad is considered the last prophet.)
2. Salah – Formal Prayer. Muslims are required to perform formal prayers five times a day – from early dawn to sunrise (Fajr), shortly after mid-day (Dhuhr), mid-afternoon to sunset (Asr), immediately after sunset (Maghrib), and nighttime after dusk has ended (Isha).

Prayers can be done at any place – at a mosque, at home, or at campouts. It is important to note that in Islam, the religious duties should not be viewed as a hardship. In particular, there are provisions to help a Muslim meet these obligations when traveling (e.g., the combining and shortening of Dhuhr and Asr, or Maghrib and Isha).

3. Sawm (Fasting) during the Month of Ramadan. During the month of Ramadan, each day, Muslims do not eat or drink while the sun is up (dawn to sunset). In addition to prayers, the month of Ramadan will impact scouting activities the most. Because the fast includes no liquids, outdoor activities and campouts are going to be limited for the Muslim scout during this month. Even troop meetings when sunset occurs during the meeting may be difficult for the scout to attend. Further, Ramadan does not occur at the same time each year. Every year, Ramadan begins 11 days earlier due to the Islamic calendar being a lunar calendar. In 2009 it will begin in the later part of August, but in 2015 (next National Jamboree) it will begin in the middle of June. Children are not required to fast till they have entered puberty (age 12-13 yrs). Similar to prayers, if fasting will cause hardship, there are accepted excuses from fasting including health indications, travel, elderly, and pregnant and nursing women. Muslims are expected to make up missed days when they can. If this is not possible, then they must instead arrange to feed two persons for each day missed.
4. Zakat – Mandatory Almsgiving (Charity). Giving Zakat is an act of worship by which a Muslim gives to poor and needy persons in the society.
5. Hajj – Pilgrimage. Muslims are required to perform Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca, at least once in their life if they are physically and financially able to do so. The topic of Hajj is beyond the scope of this document.

### Judeo-Christian-Islamic Beliefs

Islam is the third monotheistic religion and shares prophets with Judaism and Christianity. In the Qur'an, one will find the story of the creation of the Earth, Adam and Eve, the flood and Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael, Moses and the exodus from Egypt, and the Virgin Mary, Immaculate Conception, and Jesus. It is important to note, Muslims believe in Jesus as a prophet and man whom God bestowed the ability of miracles and in Mohammed as a prophet and a man. Muslims worship only Allah – the same God of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.

*“I have put my trust in God; who is my Lord and your Lord” (Qur'an 11:56)*

*“Say, ‘We believe in God and what is revealed to us and what is revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes; and in that which was given to Moses, Jesus and other Prophets from their Lord; we do not discriminate between any one of them, and to God we do submit ourselves.’”(Qur'an 3:84)*

**It makes you stop and think that we may not be all that different.**

## *The Meaning vs. Translation of the Qur'an*

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Because the revelations were in Arabic, any English translation is really the translator's attempt to convey the meaning. So what is included in this manual is not a translation of the Qur'an, but the meaning in English. If there is a question, one is always referred to the original Arabic.

I have used several English translations, but have highly relied on the following one:

Malik, Muhammad Farooq-i-Azam. English Translation of the Meaning of the Al-Qur'an: The Guidance for Mankind. The Institute of Islamic Knowledge, Houston, Texas 2006. (The Institute of Islamic Knowledge, PO Box 8307, Houston, TX 77288. 281.448.4080. [www.al-quraan.org](http://www.al-quraan.org) )

I have chosen this translation because I found it to be the best for an Interfaith Worship Service. To quote from Mr. Malik's forward (on p.15):

The reader should know that given the depth and sublimity of the Qur'anic text, a literal translation into another language is virtually impossible. The reader would agree that any translation of the Qur'an can never be equal to or be the replacement of the original, therefore, no translations including this, however accurate they may be, can be designated as the Qur'an. (p.15)

The method of translation followed here is based on the theme and subject matter discussed in the verses of the Qur'an rather than the literal translation. Literal translations into English cannot create the same continuity in English as in the Arabic text; the reader may not enjoy the force of the Arabic language and the effects of Allah's speech. (p.15)

## *Referencing The Qur'an and Hadith*

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For verses from the Qur'an, the reference will be Sura: Ayat (Chapter: Verse). For instance, the first Sura (Chapter) in the Qur'an is the Al-Fatha. It has seven Ayats (verses), hence if one is to reference the second Ayat of the Al-Fatha, it would be "Qur'an 1:2". (For this document, if Qur'an is the source, I have italicized the font.)

Unlike the Qur'an, Hadith are the sayings and traditions of Prophet Muhammad himself. Hadith cover all aspects of life. In referencing the Hadith, the source (name of the narrators) is listed.

## *Grammatical Note*

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Alliteration is the process of using English letters to recreate a foreign word. In this document, I use the word "Qur'an" instead of Koran because I feel the spelling "Qur'an" is a better representative of the proper Arabic pronunciation. But both words refer to the same scripture. For similar reasons, I use "Muslim" instead of Moslem, but both words mean the same thing.

# Islamic Reading, Sayings, and Scripture: Compiled for Interfaith Worship Service in Non- Muslim Scouting Troops

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## *AL-FATHA (THE OPENING)*

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This first sura is repeated in every prayer several times and encompasses the Islamic faith.

*In the name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.*

*All praise is for God, the Lord of the World.*

*The Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.*

*Master of the Day of Judgment.*

*You alone we worship and You alone we call on for help.*

*Guide us to The Right Way.*

*The Way of those whom You have favored; not of those who have earned Your wrath, or of  
those who have lost The Way.*

*(Qur'an 1:1-7)*

## *Ayat-ul-Kursi: A Prayer of Protection*

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*God! There is no god, but He: Ever-Living, the Sustainer of all existence. He neither slumbers nor sleeps. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. Who can intercede with Him without His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them. They cannot gain access to anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases. His Kursi (throne) is vaster than the heavens and the earth, and guarding of these both does not fatigue Him. He is the Exalted, the Supreme. (Qur'an 2:255)*

## *The Golden Rule*

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In all faiths, there is a version of this rule. For Islam, it is

None of you will truly believe till he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself.  
(Hadith Bukhari 1:12)

## The Scout Law

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In my scouting experience, the most common element of Interfaith Worship Service has been “The Scout Law” with a scripture reading after each attribute. The following are Islamic verses that can be used as part of Scout Law reading.

The Scout Law: A scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

### A Scout is trustworthy.

*If you are on a journey and cannot find a scribe to write down the transaction, then transact your business by taking possession of a pledge. If one of you entrust another with a pledge, let the trustee discharge his trust faithfully and let him fear God, his Lord. (Qur'an 2:283)*

*God commands you to give back the trusts to whom they are due, and when you judge between people, judge with fairness. (Qur'an 4:58)*

*Those who keep trusts and honor their promises, who stand firm in their testimonies, and who strictly guard their prayers. It is they who shall live with honor in paradise. (Qur'an 70:32-35)*

It is obligatory for you to tell the truth, for truth leads to virtue and virtue leads to Paradise, and the man who continues to speak the truth and endeavors to tell the truth is eventually recorded as truthful with God. (Hadith Saheeh Muslim #6309)

### A Scout is loyal.

A believer is like a brick for another believer, the one supporting the other. (Hadith Saheeh Muslim #6257)

Don't sever relations of kinship, don't bear enmity against one another, don't bear aversion against one another and don't feel envy against the other and live as fellow-brothers as God has commanded you. (Hadith Saheeh Muslim #6218)

Avoid suspicion, for suspicion is the gravest lie in talk, and do not be inquisitive about one another, and do not spy upon one another, and do not feel envy with the other, and nurse no malice, and nurse no aversion and hostility against one another. And be fellow-brothers and servants of God. (Hadith Saheeh Muslim #6214)

### A Scout is helpful.

*God loves those who do good deeds. (Qur'an 5:93)*

God does not judge you according to your appearance and your wealth, but He looks at your hearts and looks into your deeds. (Hadith Saheeh Muslim, #2564)

A Scout is friendly

*And "Peace" will be their greetings. (Qur'an 10:10)*

*Let no men laugh at other men who may perhaps be better than they are. ... Do not defame one another, nor call one another by offensive nicknames. (Qur'an 49:11)*

A person asked, "What sorts of deeds are good?" He replied, "To feed the poor, and to greet those whom you know and those whom you do not know." (Hadith Bukhari 1:27)

A Scout is courteous

*You shall speak courteously to needy persons if you lack the means to assist them. (Qur'an 17:28)*

A Scout is kind.

*Those who spend generously in the Way of God, whether they are in prosperity or in adversity, who control their anger and forgive other people, God loves such charitable people. (Qur'an 3:134)*

*Kind words and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury. (Qur'an 2:263)*

*We have enjoined man to show kindness to his parents. (Qur'an 29:8)*

A good word is an act of kindness. (Bukhari)

A Scout is obedient.

*Do not create mischief in the land after it has been set in order. (Qur'an 7:56)*

*You shall be kind to your parents. If one or both of them live to their old age in your lifetime, you shall not say to them any word of contempt nor repel them and you shall address them with kind words. (Qur'an 17:23)*

A Scout is cheerful.

Do not underestimate any kind of acts, even to receive your brother cheerfully. (Hadith Saheeh Muslim #6359)

A good word is an act of kindness. (Hadith Bukhari)

A Scout is thrifty.

*Do not be extravagant, surely, He does not love the extravagant. (Qur'an 4:141)*

*When they (the righteous) spend, are neither extravagant nor stingy, but keep the balance between those two extremes. (Qur'an 25:67)*

A Scout is brave.

*Establish prayer, spend secretly and openly out of the sustenance which We have provided for them, and repel evil with good. They are the ones for whom there is the home of Paradise in the hereafter. (Qur'an 13:22)*

A Scout is clean.

*When you rise up for prayer, wash your faces and your hands as far the elbows, wipe your heads with wet hands and wash your feet to the ankles. (Qur'an 5:6)*

A Scout is reverent.

*Those who believe and do good deeds, establish prayers, and give charity, will have their reward with their Lord. (Qur'an 2:277)*

*Call on your God with humility and in private. (Qur'an 7:55)*

*Pray to Him in humility and privacy. Surely, the mercy of God is always close to the doers of good. (Qur'an 7:56)*

*Enjoin prayers on your family and be patient in its observance. (Qur'an 20:132)*

## *Diversity*

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*And also of His signs are the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colors; surely, there are signs in this for the knowledgeable. (Qur'an 30:22)*

## *Family, Parents*

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*You shall be kind to your parents. If one or both of them live to their old age in your lifetime, you shall not say to them any word of contempt nor repel them and you shall address them with kind words. You shall lower to them your wings of humility out of mercy for them and pray, "Oh my Lord! Bestow on them Your blessings just as they cherished me when I was a little child." (Qur'an 17:23-24)*

*Enjoin prayers on your family and be patient in its observance. (Qur'an 20:132)*

*Our Lord! Make our wives and children the comfort for our eyes and make us leaders of the righteous. (Qur'an 25:74)*

*We have enjoined man to show kindness to his parents. (Qur'an 29:8)*

*We have enjoined upon man to treat his parents with kindness... When he reaches the age of full strength ..., he says "My Lord! Grant me the grace that I may thank you for the favors You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may do good deeds that will please You, and grant me good children." (Qur'an 46:15)*

A person asked the Prophet, "Who among the people is most deserving of the best treatment by me?" and He answered, "Your mother." "And then who?" "Again, it is your mother." "Then who?" "Again, it is your mother." "Then who?" Thereupon he said, "Then it is your father." (Hadith Saheeh Muslim)

Surely, the most perfect among the believers is he who is the best in manner and kindest to his wife. (Hadith Jami' Tirmizi)

## *Good Deeds and Charity*

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*And be steadfast in prayer and regular in charity: And whatever good you give, you shall find it and more with God: for God sees well all that you do. (Qur'an 2:110)*

*The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of God is that of a grain that sprouts seven ears, each bearing on hundred grains. God multiplies for whom He pleases. God is All-Embracing, All-Knowing. (Qur'an 2:261)*

*Those who spend their wealth in charity by night and day, secretly and openly, they will have their reward from their Lord. (Qur'an 2:274)*

*Those who believe and do good deeds, establish prayers, and give charity, will have their reward with their Lord. (Qur'an 2:277)*

*You can never attain righteousness unless you spend in the cause of God that which you dearly cherish; and whatever you spend, surely, it is known to God. (Qur'an 3:92)*

*You shall give to your relatives their due and to the needy, and to the wayfarer. (Qur'an 17:26)*

God does not judge you according to your color or appearance nor to your wealth, but He looks at your hearts and looks into your deeds. (Hadith Saheeh Muslim, #2564)

### Humility

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*You shall not walk arrogantly on the earth, for you can neither rend the earth asunder nor attain the height of the mountains. (Qur'an 17:37)*

### Nature

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*In the creation of the heavens and the earth, in the alternation of the night and the day, in the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the profit of mankind, in the rain which God sends down from the skies, with which He revives the earth after its death and spreads in it all kinds of animals, in the change of the winds and the clouds between the sky and the earth that are made subservient, there are signs for rational people. (Qur'an 2:164)*

*It is He Who sends down water from the sky, which provides drinking water for you and brings forth vegetation to pasture your cattle. With it He grows for you crops, olives, date-palms, grapes and every kind of fruit. (Qur'an 16:10-11)*

*He has set the mountains on the earth. He also made the rivers and roads so that you may find your way; and likewise made landmarks and the stars for your guidance. (Qur'an 16:15-16)*

*He is the One Who has created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon, and all the celestial bodies turning around in orbits of their own. (Qur'an 21:33)*

*Do you not see that God has subdued to you all that is in the earth and the ships that sail through the sea at His command? He is withholding the sky in a way that it cannot fall down on the earth without His permission. (Qur'an 22:65)*

(Special note. At a summer camp (at Buffalo Trails Scout Camp), I was awoken in the middle of the night with the winds gusting down the canyon and my tent folding over on me. I picked up my Qur'an and began reading where I had left off – at this verse!)

### Other readings

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*Show patience; surely God is on the side of the patient. (Qur'an 8:46)*

*Never say of anything "I will certainly do it tomorrow" EXCEPT if you add "If God wills." (Qur'an 18:23-24)*

A man adopts way of life according to that of his friend, so you should be careful whom he makes a friend. (Hadith Musnad Ahmad)

The strong-man is not one who wrestles well but the strong man is one who controls himself when he is in a fit of rage. (Hadith Saheeh Muslim #6313)

I asked my Father about the Prophet's behavior among his companions to which he answered: "He was always cheerful, easy mannered and lenient. He was not rough, noisy, vulgar, insulting, or miserly. He used to overlook what he dislikes without depriving others of hope or answering them negatively. He refrained from disputation, prattling and curiosity. He spared others from three things: He never censured, found fault with or spied on them. He spoke only what he hoped would be rewarded. When he spoke, his listeners lowered their head quietly and when he was silent they spoke. They never spoke haphazardly in front of him. If one talked in his presence they listened to him until he has finished. He used to laugh and wonder at what they laughed or wondered at. He was patient with strangers who were rude in both their talk and requests." (Hadith Al-Hussain)

A man visited his brother in another town and God sent an Angel to wait for him on his way and when he came to him, the Angel said: "Where do you intend to go?" He said: I intend to go to my brother in this town." The Angel said, "Have you done any favor to him (the repayment of which you intend to get)?" He said, "No, except this – that I love him for the sake of God, the Exalted and Glorious." Thereupon the Angel said, "I am a messenger to you from God (to inform you) that God loves you as you love him (for His sake)." (Hadith Saheeh Muslim #6226)