Getting to Know
American Muslims and Their Faith

An Interactive Curriculum
for Middle and High Schools

Developed by ING
Introduction

This curriculum Getting to Know American Muslims and Their Faith was designed to supplement content standards in social studies and world history as it relates to the study of world religions and their contributions to civilization. The curriculum was developed by ING based on our long experience delivering this and other presentations through live speakers. If you live in an area where there is a local Islamic Speakers Bureau (ISB) program, we recommend inviting a live speaker to deliver the presentation, since this provides an opportunity for you and your students to interact face-to-face with a Muslim. Alternatively, the presenter can come in after the presentation to answer student questions. If you live in an area where there is no speakers’ bureau, or you prefer to deliver the presentation yourself, we have provided the presentation notes for each slide to accompany the digital presentation.

The curriculum is composed of five lesson plans that center on different parts of the digital presentation Getting to Know American Muslims and Their Faith. The curriculum begins with the actual presentation notes that describe each slide in the presentation. In addition to the presentation notes, each lesson includes discussion questions and film clips about topics related to each lesson, as well as discussion questions about each film. The film clips highlight the different topics covered in each lesson to give your students a broad perspective, for your selection as appropriate for your students. These lessons were designed to be used either jointly or independently as stand-alone curriculum depending on the time available and your desired focus.

At Islamic Networks Group (ING) our mission is to promote understanding through education, increase religious literacy and interfaith engagement, and prevent harassment and bullying in schools. It is our hope that through this curriculum we can provide balanced information to educators that will help supplement their curriculum in a manner that is relevant, engaging, and informative.

Curriculum Standards

This curriculum Getting to Know American Muslims and Their Faith was designed to support teachers in middle and high schools. The five lessons focus on many themes addressed by the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies and the National Center for History in the Schools at UCLA. Many of these themes are also addressed in state social studies content standards, including those from the states of California, Texas, and New York, three leaders in this field.

Relevant Themes

Concepts such as beliefs, values, mores, institutions, cohesion, diversity, accommodation, adaptation, assimilation, and dissonance – (National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies – 1: Culture)

Different interpretations of key historical periods and patterns of change within and across nations, cultures, and time periods – (National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies – 2: Time, Continuity, and Change)

That complex and varied interactions among individuals, groups, cultures, and nations contribute to the dynamic nature of personal identity (National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies – 4: Individual Development and Identity)

Concepts such as mores, norms, ritual, status, role, socialization, ethnocentrism, cultural diffusion, competition, cooperation, conflict, assimilation, race, ethnicity, and gender (National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies – 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions)
Concepts and ideals such as human dignity, social justice, liberty, equality, inalienable rights, responsibilities, civil dissent, citizenship, majority and minority rights, the common good, and the rule of law (National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies – 10: Civic Ideals and Practices)

The origins of Islam and major beliefs (Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools-7.2; New York Content Standards-Global History and Geography 2.3a, 2.3b; Texas Education Agency Curriculum Standards-Social Studies-World History Studies-113.42.23.A)

The life and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools-7.2.2)

The significance of the Qur’an (Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools-7.2.3)

Causes and consequences of the rise of Islamic civilization in the 7th-10th centuries (National Center for History in the Schools-World History Era 4)

Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the civilizations of Islam in the middle ages (Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools-7.2)

Identify examples of art, music, and literature that have transcended the boundaries of societies and convey universal themes such as religion, justice, and the passage of time (Texas Education Agency Curriculum Standards-Social Studies 6.18.D)

The student understands the relationships among religion, philosophy, and culture (Texas Education Agency Curriculum Standards-Social Studies 6.19.A / 113.43. World Geography Studies)

The development of Islamic law and its impact (New York Content Standards-Human and Physical Geography 2.3a, 2.3b; Texas Education Agency Curriculum Standards-Social Studies-World History Studies-113.42.25.D)

Position of “people of the book” (New York Content Standards-Human and Physical Geography-2.3a, 2.3b)

Islamic teachings on the connection with Judaism and Christianity (Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools-7.2)

Social class: women and slavery in Muslim society (New York Content Standards-Human and Physical Geography-2.1d, 2.2c, 2.3c)

Origins of American Slavery (Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools-8.7.2)

Religious pluralism from 20th century immigration (Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools-11.3.4)

The significance of religious holidays and observances such as Christmas, Easter, Ramadan, the annual hajj, Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, Diwali, and Vaisakhi in various contemporary societies (Texas Education Agency Curriculum Standards-Social Studies 6.19.B)

Historical Role of Religion (Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools-12.3.3)
Lesson Topics

This curriculum *Getting to Know American Muslims and Their Faith* is divided into five distinct lesson plans with accompanying presentation notes, discussion questions and supplemental films. Each lesson covers the topics outlined below, which can be used alone or as part of the entire curriculum.

**Lesson One: Terminology and Demographics**
- Defining the Muslim greeting *salaam* and the words Muslim and Islam.
- Key demographics of Muslims throughout the world, including the total population, major areas where Muslims live, and other differences between Muslims, including nationality, culture, education, and language.

**Lesson Two: American Muslims**
- Background and demographics of American Muslims
- Muslims in the U.S.
- History of Muslims in America
- Famous American Muslims
- American Muslims in Academia
- American Muslims Serve Our Country

**Lesson Three: Beliefs and Practices**
- Major Beliefs of Islam
- Five Pillars of Islam
- Major Muslim holidays
- Putting belief into action
- Excellence in character and the Golden Rule

**Lesson Four: Addressing Common Misconceptions**
- Growing anti-Muslim sentiment
- Islamic teachings about moderation in religion and prohibitions against terrorism
- Gender equity in Islam

**Lesson Five: Relations with Other Religions**
- Shared Ideals
- Islam and Religious Pluralism
- Relations with Other Religions
- Islam and Judaism: Moses in the Qur’an
- Islam and Christianity: Mary and Jesus in the Qur’an
- Abrahamic Traditions: Shared Beliefs and Practices
- Shared Practices Among Religions
LESSON ONE: Terminology and Demographics:
Presentation Content, Discussion Questions, and Supplemental Films
Introduction

This lesson introduces the most commonly used Muslim greeting and the meaning of the words “Muslim” and “Islam.” It also covers key demographics of Muslims throughout the world, including the total population, major areas where Muslims live, and other differences between Muslims, including nationality, culture, education, and language.

Content Themes
American Studies, Ethnic Studies, Religious Studies, Islam in America

Guiding Questions
• What are some key terms and demographics that students need to know to undertake a study of Islam and Muslims?
• What are some of the factors that contribute to Muslims’ diversity?

Learning Objectives
At the end of this unit, students will be able to:
• Identify the meanings of the words salaam, Muslim, and Islam as well as the term Arab.
• Identify key demographics about Muslims throughout the world, including the total population and major areas where Muslims live in the world.
• Recognize the vast diversity among Muslims in terms of ethnicity, nationality, language, and other factors such as education and economic status.
Lesson One Presentation Content: Terminology and Demographics

The following presentation notes are designed to explain the subject matter on each respective slide when delivering the digital presentation that accompanies this curriculum. Italicized notes are either instructions or tips, or optional information about other religions.

Slide #1: Copyright

Notes:

- Do not remove this slide. However, you should skip over it when presenting the slideshow.

Slide #2: Title Page

This presentation is entitled Getting to Know American Muslims and Their Faith.

Slide #3: Muslim Greeting

TIP: Before showing this slide, say, “I’m going to begin my presentation with the universal Muslim greeting.” Then ask, “Does anyone know the greeting? I’ll give you a hint, it’s similar to a greeting one finds in other faiths.”

- While Muslims around the world speak various languages and greet each other in different ways, many Muslims throughout the world, from Morocco to Indonesia, share a common greeting when they want to say “hello” or “good-bye” to each other.

- The greeting *as-salaam alaikum* literally means “Peace be upon you” in Arabic.

- The response to this greeting is *wa-alaikum as-salaam*, which means “may peace be upon you too.”

- The most important word in this phrase is *salaam*, which means “peace,” like the Hebrew *shalom*, which has the same meaning (*shalom aleichem* is the entire phrase). In churches one may also hear the phrase “peace be with you.”

TIP: Experiential learning can be facilitated by having the students repeat the greeting in Arabic after you and then try it out with each other. You may also suggest that the students try the greeting the next time they meet someone who is a Muslim.

- The significance of this greeting for Muslims is that they begin their interaction with others in the spirit of peace. Like followers of other religions, most Muslims view attaining peace in the world as a fundamental goal of their religion.

TIP: If someone asks, “Why do American Muslims say the greeting in Arabic instead of English?” explain that the Arabic language is often used in prayer by American Muslims because Arabic is
the original language of prayer in Islam. Many Americans of other faiths whose first language is English also use the language of their holy scriptures or traditional liturgy in prayer, such as Jews who use Hebrew or Catholics who use Latin. Greetings of peace are a form of prayer through which you are wishing peace to the person you meet.

Slide #4: Outline of Presentation

- Today we are going to talk about what it means to be a Muslim in America beginning with some basic terminology.
- We will look first at where Muslims live in the world, and then in the U.S., and talk a little about their background and make-up.
- We will then look at the major beliefs and practices of Muslims, including some that are shared with other faiths.
- We will conclude by discussing a key ethical tenet taught in Islam called *ihsan*. This concept inspires Muslims to build good character, an ideal that is emphasized by all religions.

Slide #5: Muslim

- A Muslim is a person who follows the religion of Islam.
- Muslims are diverse in race, ethnicity, nationality, and language, as are people of other religions.
- People are often confused between the words Islam and Muslim, probably because they begin with two different letters. However, the source of both words is the Arabic root *s-l-m* which is also the root of the Muslim greeting, *salaam*, which means “peace.”
- The correct pronunciation of the word “Muslim” is with a soft “s,” unlike the word “muslin,” the cloth.

  **TIP:** You may have the students repeat the word after you for correct pronunciation.

Slide #6: Islam

- Islam is a proper noun and the name of the religion followed by Muslims.
- The word Islam is commonly translated as “submission or surrender to God,” but it also means “peace”; combining both meanings signifies “peace through following God’s guidance.”
- For a Muslim this implies that the goal of the faith is to attain peace through following God’s commandments. Attaining this peace requires working on one’s self—which is why Islamic teachings have traditionally focused on “purification of the heart” or the cultivation of excellent moral character and behavior.
Slide #7: 1.8 Billion Muslims Worldwide—Nearly 25% of the World’s Population

- According to a 2017 Pew poll it is estimated that there are about 1.8 billion Muslims in the world, which is about 25% of the world’s population.\(^2\)
- As mentioned earlier, Muslims are diverse, living all over the world. Let’s look at where they live.

**QUESTION FOR STUDENTS:** What single country do you think has the largest Muslim population?

- You might be surprised to know that the country with the largest Muslim population is Indonesia with 232 million Muslims (compared to Saudi Arabia which has a population of 32 million); surrounding countries in Southeast Asia add up to 260 million for the region.
- In South Asia, three countries – Pakistan (208 million), India (177 million) and Bangladesh (165 million) – are home to nearly a third of the world’s Muslim population with a combined population of 550 million (although India, with a population of over 1 billion people, is predominantly Hindu, and Indian Muslims only make up around 14% of the population, Indian Muslims make up about 10% of the world’s Muslim population).
- The second largest concentration of Muslims in the world is in Africa, mostly in northern and western Africa. Non-Arab African Muslims total about 240 million, while Arab Muslims, who live in North Africa and the Middle East, make up over 320 million.
- People are also surprised to learn that there are over 23 million indigenous Muslims in China and 80 million Muslims in Central Asia (in countries whose names often end with “-istan”).
- There are an estimated 44 million Muslims in Europe, with large populations in Russia (16 million), Germany (4 million), and France (4.7 million).
- In North America, it is estimated that there are between 3 and 6 million American Muslims.

Slide #8: Muslim Population

- We have seen where Muslims live in the world. Yet what is the most common misperception about the ethnicity of Muslims? *(The answer you will probably receive is: “They are Arabs.”)*
- You may be surprised to learn that only 15% of all Muslims are Arabs (the proper term is Arab, not Arabian, which should only be used to refer to non-human objects, such as Arabian horses).
- That means that most Muslims—85%—do not speak or write Arabic, or live in Arab countries. They may learn enough Arabic to read the Qur’an or perform their prayers in Arabic, but it is not their native or spoken language.


• Just as not all Muslims are Arab, not all Arabs are Muslims.

• Approximately 10 to 15% of all Arabs are Christian or belong to another religion such as Judaism. In Lebanon the percentage of Christians is as high as 41%.

Slide #9: Diversity Among Muslims

• While representations of Muslims in mass culture are often one-dimensional, in reality Muslims are extremely diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, nationality, and language.

• Additionally, as with any other religious group, numerous other factors influence their attitudes and behavior in addition to religion. These include the following:
  – Culture and background: People’s culture and background impact many aspects of their life, such as the types of food they eat, the language(s) they speak, the clothing they wear, and the music they listen to. For example, Muslims from Malaysia or Indonesia (the largest Muslim country) are culturally very different from Muslims from Afghanistan or Saudi Arabia.
  – Family and upbringing: Even within the same family no two siblings are alike. Additionally, family dynamics such as the relationship between the husband and wife or the treatment of daughters in comparison to sons can greatly impact a person’s attitudes regarding gender relations.
  – Education and economic status: Similarly, the level of education people have, whether an elementary school education or a college degree, influences their exposure to different ideas and their understanding of the world. The varying economic status of people, whether wealthy or poor, affects the opportunities and resources available to them.
  – Political environment: Factors such as whether a person lives in a democracy and has opportunities to participate in the government or lives in a dictatorship where voices are censored or suppressed influence a person’s civic participation in society.
  – Even within the same religious group, there is great diversity in religious ideology and practice.

• All of these factors play a role in a person’s behavior. Additionally, like adherents of other faiths, Muslims observe varying degrees in practicing their faith, from those who are very observant to those who are Muslim in name only, and those who are in between. Observance of a particular practice also varies, with different degrees of strictness or laxness. Sometimes Muslims’ behavior may actually contradict religious teachings.

• Unfortunately, the media often portrays all Muslims as being one dimensional in character (violent, extremist, oppressive towards women, etc.) and often explains actions committed by Muslims as being solely motivated by their religion. Additionally, Islam is portrayed as being monolithic and static, whereas in reality, Islam, like any religion, varies greatly depending on the culture and social conditions in which it is practiced.

• As with any group, it is important to recognize the diversity among Muslims and avoid stereotyping an entire group of people based on the actions of a few.

Post-Presentation Questions

Analysis/ Comprehension Questions
(Questions about facts on each slide)

Muslim Greeting
1. What does the term *as-salaam alaikum* mean and how is it used?
2. What is the significance of this Muslim greeting?

Muslim
3. What does the word Muslim mean?
4. In what ways are Muslims diverse?

Islam
5. What does the word Islam mean?
6. How are the terms Muslim and Islam related?

1.8 Billion Muslims Worldwide—Nearly 25% of the World’s Population
7. How many Muslims are there in the world? What percentage of the world’s population do they make up?
8. What country has the largest population of Muslims in the world?
9. What part of the world has the largest Muslim population?
10. Are there more Muslims in Europe or North America?
11. Name some countries where Muslims are a minority.

Muslim Population
12. What percentage of Muslims are Arabs? Does this surprise you, and if so why?
13. What percentage of Muslims do not speak or write Arabic or live in an Arab country?
14. What percentage of Arabs are Christians?

Diversity Among Muslims
15. What are some influences which impact Muslim’s daily lives in addition to their religion?
16. Are there varying degrees to which Muslims practice the teachings of their faith, or do all Muslims practice
their faith in the same way?
17. Muslims are one of the most racially, economically, and nationally diverse groups of people in the world. How have people come to believe that Muslims only belong to a certain national, economic and racial background? What role does the media play in portraying Muslims as one dimensional?
18. What can we do to change these perceptions?
Discussion Questions

1. Do other religions also have specific greetings? How are they similar or different from the Muslim greeting?

2. Since Muslims represent 25% of the world’s population, it is important to study Muslims and their faith. Are there other factors in the world today that make it important to study about Islam and Muslims?

3. We realize there are many misconceptions about Muslims and their faith, and we feel that this is a good time to begin to discuss these misconceptions. What things do you already know about Muslims or Islam? What would you like to learn? Do you have any Muslim friends or family members?

4. Media representations of Muslims often portray them as being the same or being motivated in their actions only because of their religion. How does this lesson challenge that idea? What are some of the other factors that might influence a Muslim’s behavior?

Activities

1. Divide the classroom into groups and assign each group one of the major regions discussed in this lesson. Have them research and present orally and visually about each region.

2. Divide the class into groups and ask them to research notable Arab Americans in different fields such as politics, entertainment, etc. Have each group present about their findings to the rest of the class.
Supplemental Film Content

In this section of the curriculum we provide recommendations or links to films that relate to the topics we discuss in this lesson. These films vary from clips taken from full length documentaries, to music videos and other short documentaries which show sides of American Muslims different from what we are used to seeing in mainstream representations in the media. Each of the film names or links is accompanied by a brief description of the film as well as discussion questions for the class.

Note: like any online content, video or film links may change or no longer work over time. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Topics and Related Films

**Muslim Greeting**

**Themes:** Peace, American Muslims, Hip Hop, Islamic Art

In Chicago’s famous Marquette Park, there is a music and culture festival unlike any other in the United States called the “Takin’ it to the Streets” arts and culture festival. The festival brings together tens of thousands of Muslims and other Chicagoans to celebrate the music, diversity and culture of American Muslims and the larger Muslim world. At this festival hip hop artists, DJ’s and break dancers show off their talents while Muslim community leaders in the community, and other prominent leaders such as Jessie Jackson take to the stage to address the crowd. In this short clip the musician and actor Mos Def starts his set by singing the Muslim greeting as-salaam alaikum to the crowd. Interspersed throughout this piece are scenes from the festival hosted by the local Chicago non-profit Inner-City Action Network (IMAN).

**Questions about the film:**

1. One of the most globally respected aspects of Islam is its long tradition of art. How does “Takin’ it to the Streets” serve as a platform for American Muslims to contribute to this long history?

2. Can you think of any other famous Muslim musicians or hip hop artists?

**Further Resources:** Inner-City Action Network website

**Islam**

**Themes:** Islam, History, Commonalities with other Faiths, Islam and Christianity, Islam and Judaism

*Inside Islam* by the History Channel provides a very good introduction to the history of Islam, demographics of Muslims globally, and differences between Muslim populations throughout the world. This clip shows the global practice of Islam, and also discusses the many shared practices and beliefs that Islam shares with Judaism and Christianity.
**Islam Empire of Faith**

*(2000), PBS. Clip run time: 0:00 - 3:10*

**Themes:** History, Islam, Prayer, Islamic Civilization

Covering more than a thousand years of history over three separate films, *Islam Empire of Faith* is one of the best documentaries about the long history of Islamic civilization and its influences on the world. The beginning of the film is a nice summary of some of those influences such as the call to prayer which echoes in the background. This clip is also a good introduction to the call to prayer, because it actually translates the meaning of the words, unlike many of the other films that also feature the call to prayer.

**Further Resources:** [PBS original Website for films](http://www.pbs.org) and [PBS Curriculums for films](http://www.pbs.org/teachers)

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**Inside Islam: What a Billion Muslims Really Think** *(2009), Unity Productions Foundation (UPF). Clip run time: 1:00 - 2:23*

**Themes:** Muslim Population, Demographics, Global Muslims

This clip is a short introduction to global demographics of Muslims. As the synopsis of this film states, *Inside Islam* “explores the opinions of Muslims around the globe as revealed in the world’s first major opinion poll on the subject, conducted by Gallup, the preeminent polling organization. Gallup researchers began by asking the questions on every American’s mind. Why is there so much anti-Americanism in the Muslim world? Who are the extremists and how do Muslims feel about them? What do Muslims like and dislike about the West? What do Muslim women really want? Crucial policy decisions hang on these questions; they continue to generate passionate disagreements in the public square. Yet for all the heat and controversy, the actual views of the world’s Muslims have been conspicuously missing from the debate. Now we have the missing answers and statistics, gathered, parsed, and analyzed, not by pundits, but by professional researchers. As part of this groundbreaking six-year project, Gallup conducted tens of thousands of interviews with residents in 35 predominantly Muslim nations, as well as smaller populations in Europe and the United States.”

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**Paradise Found: Discovering Islamic Art** *(2007), Channel 4 (United Kingdom)*

**Themes:** Islamic Art, Global Muslims

One of the areas that has been a source of admiration in the Muslim world is the long and creative history of Islamic art. This history influenced much of the art of the world, and one of the complex design patterns has even inspired a word in the English language, ie. “arabesque,” meaning “an ornamental design.” As the description of the film states, “In this two-part series, renowned art commentator Waldemar Januszczak makes an epic journey of discovery across the Muslim world, revealing awe-inspiring architecture and art objects that evoke the history of Islam. Along the way he meets local historians and experts—as well as an array of weavers, calligraphers, potters, and jewelers—who contribute their knowledge of this fascinating art-historical field. The result is a stimulating introduction to a set of globally significant aesthetic traditions.” This film includes art and architecture from throughout the Islamic world including the Taj Mahal in India, the great mosque made completely of mud in Djenne, Mali and architecture from Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iran, Egypt, and Turkey. Three clips we recommend for the classroom include: the Taj Mahal from: 2:03–5:35, the Rustem Pasha Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey and its exquisite tiling from 1:10:00–1:16:55 and the clip of the grand mosque in Djenne, Mali from 1:16:55–1:24:40.
Questions about the film:

1. In what ways do you think Islamic art has affected art in the rest of the world?
2. What are some of the themes that Islamic art is meant to invoke?
3. What did you think were some of the most beautiful pieces of art or architecture in the film?
4. Can you imagine making a building out of mud? How did the clip about the grand mosque in Djenne, Mali surprise you?

Further Resources: Placing Islamic Art on a New Pedestal

Themes: Democracy, Freedom, Peace, Islamic Art

As the Arab Spring unfolded in the Middle East in 2011 many people throughout the world were inspired by the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions. In this short film, American Muslim break dancers Justin Mashouf and Kian Khiaban choreograph their dances with film footage of protests from Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia. As the artists themselves describe this project, “Inspired by the uprisings occurring in the cradles of civilization, this film is an ode to movements striving to reclaim their dignity and sovereignty from their keepers. As the seeds of spring begin to harvest, the earth purges itself of winter. This project was produced in an effort to show solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the Middle East and North Africa who are demanding their right to be heard.”

Questions about the film:

1. What does this film show about Arab and Muslim aspirations for the ideals we value in this country such as democracy and freedom? How does that challenge some of the ways that the media often portrays Muslims?
2. What would it be like to live without the freedoms we have in the United States—the same freedoms people are struggling for in the Arab world?

Themes: War, Youth, Culture

After more than thirty years of war, the people of Afghanistan have suffered greatly. As is often the case during war, it is the children who suffer the most. With over 40% of the people in Afghanistan under the age of 15, having an outlet for the youth in the midst of all this turmoil is of the upmost importance. With the abject level of poverty that Afghans are living under there are very few things for youth to do. One activity that has been introduced in recent years by an international NGO called Skateistan is skateboarding. According to their website, “Skateistan is Afghanistan’s—and the world’s—first co-educational skateboarding school. Operating as an independent, neutral, Afghan NGO, the school engages growing numbers of urban and internally-displaced youth in Afghanistan through skateboarding, and provides them with new opportunities in cross-cultural interaction, education, and personal empowerment.

Questions about the film:

1. What surprised you most about this video?
2. What types of lives do young people live in Afghanistan?
3. How has skateboarding been an outlet for these young people in the midst of war?

4. How has Skateistan used skateboarding to help encourage these young people to communicate with each other?

Themes: Peace, War, Islamic Art, Islam in Africa

Youssou N’Dour is a Senegalese Muslim and one of the most famous musicians in all of Africa. He has been known internationally since the 1980s with many hits both in Africa and throughout the world. His music fuses many different styles ranging from traditional Senegalese music, Jazz, Hip Hop, Soul, and Reggae. Beyond being a singer, Youssou N’Dour has used his music to help political causes such as ending apartheid in South Africa, and fighting against malaria in Africa as a special representative to the United Nations. In this film Youssou spreads his message that Islam is a religion of peace. He also shows the world a different face of Islam as the vast majority of Muslims in West Africa are Sufis, Muslims who follow the mystical and spiritual teachings of Islam. We see an example of this in this clip as we hear his song *Bamba*, about Shaykh Amadou Bamba who resisted French colonialism through non-violent means in Senegal in the nineteenth century. The clip also shows people visiting the mausoleum of Shaykh Amadou Bamba who is considered a great Sufi saint in West Africa.

Questions about the film:

1. How does this clip about Muslims in West Africa give you a new perspective about the diversity of Muslims throughout the world?

2. How do Muslim artists help to teach people about Islam in ways that other people cannot?
Further Resources

Note: All resources are recommendation for teachers or adults only.

Books

Articles

Websites
*Patheos - Muslim Faith Portal: Islam as a Religion, History, Beliefs and Facts*: “Founded in 2008, Patheos.com is the premier online destination to engage in the global dialogue about religion and spirituality and to explore and experience the world’s beliefs. Patheos is the website of choice for the millions of people looking for credible and balanced information about religion. Patheos brings together faith communities, academics, and the broader public into a single environment, and is the place where many people turn on a regular basis for insight, inspiration, and stimulating discussion. Patheos is unlike any other religious and spiritual site on the Web today.”

*Geography Map Lesson*: this interactive lesson provides the names of countries in the Middle East and Africa as well as an empty map of the region. Students learn while testing their ability to match the names with the countries.