

Getting to Know Islam & Muslims

Speaker Scripts

For a Muslim student presenter (grades 7–12) speaking to non-Muslim middle and high school students. Each script is about 100 words; roughly 40–50 seconds spoken.

Page | 1

Slide 1 — Title: Getting to Know Islam & Muslims

Hi everyone! Thanks for having me today. My name is [name], and I'm a [grade] grader just like a lot of you, I stress about tests, I'm on my phone too much, and I have strong opinions about the cafeteria food. I'm also Muslim. Today I want to talk about what that actually means, because honestly, most of what people hear about Islam comes from the news or random posts online, not from actual Muslims. So, for the next few minutes, you're getting it straight from the source. And please, ask me anything at the end. Seriously.

Slide 2 — Who Are Muslims?

Let's start with the big picture. There are about two billion Muslims in the world; that's one in four people on Earth. Here in the U.S., there are around 5 to 7 million of us. Here's something that surprises people: only about 20% of Muslims worldwide are Arab. The countries with the most Muslims are actually Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Nigeria. And American Muslims? We're one of the most diverse faith communities in the country, Black, South Asian, Arab, white, Latine, and more. So, there's no one “look” for a Muslim. We look like... everyone.

Slide 3 — What Do Muslims Believe & Practice?

So, what do Muslims actually believe? We believe in one God, “Allah” is just the Arabic word for God, and Arabic-speaking Christians use it too. We believe in angels, in prophets like Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, ending with Muhammad, and in holy books including the Torah, the Gospel, and the Quran. We also believe in life after death. Our main practices are called the Five Pillars: declaring our faith, praying five times a day, giving charity, fasting during Ramadan, and making a pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime if we're able. Sound familiar? Islam, Christianity, and Judaism share a lot.

Slide 4 — What Does Islam Seek to Accomplish?

People sometimes ask me, “What’s the point of all those rules?” Fair question. At its heart, Islam is trying to help people become better humans. It teaches us to know and worship God, to stand up for what’s fair and speak out against cruelty and injustice, and to use our brains, to learn, ask questions, and make thoughtful choices. It pushes us to build good character: honesty, patience, humility, forgiveness. To care for others, especially family, neighbors, and people in need. And to take care of the planet. Basically: a strong relationship with God, good character, and caring about other people.

Slide 5 — Everyday Life for a Muslim Teen

So, what does this look like day-to-day for someone my age? I pray five short prayers a day, sometimes during lunch or a free period. It takes about 5 to 10 minutes, less time than a TikTok scroll session. Some Muslim women and girls wear hijab, the headscarf. Important thing: it’s a personal choice, and people wear it differently, or not at all. Food-wise, many of us eat halal, which is a similar idea to kosher, and skip pork and alcohol. And community matters: Friday prayers at the mosque, youth groups, weekend religious school. Honestly, it’s a lot like a Christian youth group or Hebrew school.

Slide 6 — Ramadan & the Eids

Ramadan is probably what I get asked about most. One month a year, Muslims fast from dawn to sunset, no food, and yes, no water either. It’s about gratitude, self-discipline, and generosity. At school, that means skipping lunch, waking up before dawn to eat with my family, and getting through classes, tests, and practice while fasting. I might also miss a day for Eid, our holidays. How can you support a fasting friend? Still invite us to things, we don’t want to be left out. Don’t make a big deal of it. And “Ramadan Mubarak!” or “Eid Mubarak!” always makes our day.

Slide 7 — Muslims in Media & Your Feed

Quick question: think about the last Muslim character you saw in a movie or show. Were they a villain? A victim? That’s the pattern, we’re rarely just regular people, friends, or heroes on screen. And online it’s worse, because algorithms boost outrage. Extreme and false posts about Muslims spread way faster than boring everyday reality, like me doing homework. So, here’s my ask: when you see a post about Muslims, check it. Who made this? What’s the source? Would you say it to a classmate standing right next to you? The good news: Muslim creators are out there telling their own stories with comedy, cooking, and gaming and reaching millions.

Slide 8 — Myth vs. Fact

Let's bust some myths, rapid-fire. Myth one: "All Muslims are Arab." Nope, only about one in five is. The country with the most Muslims is Indonesia. Myth two: "Islam oppresses women." Actually, Islam granted women rights to education, property, and consent in marriage 1,400 years ago, centuries before many other places did. Muslim women make their own choices, and those choices are diverse. Myth three: "Jihad means holy war." It really means "striving," like striving to be a better person or a better student. Harming civilians violates Islamic teachings, full stop. There are more answers at ingyouth.org/faqs.

Slide 9 — Islamophobia — and What You Can Do

I want to get real for a second. Islamophobia isn't abstract for students like me. It looks like "jokes" about terrorism or bombs, someone pulling at a girl's hijab, "go back to your country" comments, rumors in group chats, or blaming a classmate for something happening across the world. Here's how you can be an upstander. Don't laugh along; silence reads as agreement. Check in with the person targeted; it means more than you think. If it's safe, speak up: "That's not okay." Tell a trusted adult. And don't reshare hateful posts, report them instead. Small actions genuinely matter.

Slide 10 — Muslims You Already Know

Here's the fun part: you already know Muslims, even if you don't realize it. Muhammad Ali, boxing legend and civil-rights icon, maybe the most famous athlete ever. Ibtihaj Muhammad, the U.S. Olympic medalist who fenced in hijab. Mo Salah, one of the biggest soccer stars on the planet. Riz Ahmed, an Emmy- and Oscar-winning actor. Hasan Minhaj, comedian and storyteller. And Ms. Marvel, Kamala Khan, Marvel's Muslim teen superhero, who's basically living proof that Muslim kids can be the hero of the story too. Muslims are athletes, artists, comedians, scientists, everywhere you look.

Slide 11 — Things You Use Every Day

Want to know some things you used today that came from Muslim civilization? Algebra, sorry about that one, comes from *al-jabr*, part of the title of al-Khwarizmi's book, and the word "algorithm" comes from his name. Every app you use runs on algorithms. Coffee was first brewed and popularized in Muslim Yemen before it took over the world, so your morning latte has Muslim roots. Ibn al-Haytham's experiments with light and optics laid the groundwork for the camera, so, your selfies too. And one of the world's oldest universities, Al-Qarawiyyin, founded in 859 CE, was started by a Muslim woman, Fatima al-Fihri.

Slide 12 — More Alike Than Different

Here's what I really want you to take away: we're more alike than different. The values Islam teaches, respect for parents and elders, giving charity, standing up for fairness, caring for the earth, are probably values your family teaches too. Muslims, Christians, and Jews all trace our faiths back to the same person: Abraham. Muslims revere Jesus as one of God's greatest prophets. And Mary? She's so honored in Islam that an entire chapter of the Quran, Chapter 19, is named after her. Different paths, sure. But we're branches of the same family tree.

Page | 4

Slide 13 — Thank You / Let's Continue the Conversation

That's my presentation. Thank you for actually listening! But honestly, the best part starts now. No question is off-limits. You can ask out loud, or if you'd rather stay anonymous, drop it in the question box. If you're not sure where to start: What surprised you today? Where have you seen stereotypes in your own feed? What would you want to ask a Muslim classmate — because hey, you've got one right here. And if a question comes to you later, tons of them are answered at ingyouth.org/faqs. Thanks again — who wants to go first?