SECTION 3: Marriage and the family

3.7 Muslim teachings on family life

Lesson outcomes
By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:
• explain Muslim teachings on family life
• understand why they are important to Islam and for being a Muslim
• express your opinion on these teachings and assess how they differ from the opinions of others.

The heart of the community
Within Islam, the family is at the heart of the Muslim community. It is also the most important way of ensuring that children grow up as good faithful Muslims.

• There are plenty of opportunities for religious activities at home as well as in the mosque.
• Parents are responsible for the religious upbringing of their children. The mother is at the heart of the Muslim family. In a traditional family the mother is responsible for teaching the children about halal and haram in the home while the father is responsible for taking the boys to the mosque.
• The beliefs and values of Islam, including the principles of haram (forbidden) and halal (permitted), are learned first in the family.

Activities
1. Outline the main Muslim teachings concerning family life.
2. Explain how these teachings enable children to grow up to be faithful Muslims.
3. Role-play. You are a Muslim teenager and your friend is a Christian teenager. Explain to each other how your family lives differ.

Parents have the responsibility to send their children to the madrasah, where Muslim children can learn to read the Qur’an in Arabic.
Some Muslim parents in the UK may choose to send their children to Muslim schools.
Within the mosque, the imam may offer advice on all matters of marriage and family life.
Financial aid may be given to families from the zakah fund in times of need.

A Muslim family celebrating Ramadan together.
Family values

Islam teaches that the values of family life are so important and so long-lasting that they are the foundation of society. Family values are based on the Qur’aan and traditions from the life and teaching of Muhammad and are handed down through the generations.

Family life is the cradle of human society providing a secure, healthy and encouraging environment for parents and growing children.

For discussion

Do religious guidelines help or hinder family life? Give your reasons.

• Family life is the arena in which human virtues such as love, kindness, mercy and compassion can be developed.
• Family life is the most secure protection against troubles in society and within the individual.
• Family life encourages the individual to see themselves as part of a wider community and discourages anti-social behaviour.
• Muslims believe that these values are not just for the benefit of individual families, but also the worldwide family (ummah) of Islam. The family group and the ummah are kept together in three ways: kinship (blood ties), marriage and faith. These are seen to be in the order of most importance, but sometimes faith will take first place if there is a conflict of interests.

The traditional Muslim family

The traditional Muslim family is an extended one: it includes not only parents and children, but also grandparents and elderly relatives. Muslims believe that extended families mean greater stability, continuity, love and support for each other.

The elderly are treated with dignity. Muslims consider it to be an honour and a blessing from God to be able to look after elderly relatives. After all, it was the now-elderly grandparents who looked after the next generation when they were children. For Muslims, looking after elderly members of the family is a sacred action, which should be done with kindness, patience and respect. The Qur’aan states: ‘Your Lord has commanded that you worship none but Him and that you be kind to your parents. If one of them or both of them reach old age with you, do not say to them a word of disrespect... and act humbly to them in mercy.’ (Surah 17:23–24)

Activities

6 What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in an extended family?
7 What do you think it means to treat the elderly with respect?

Summary

• The family is at the heart of the Muslim community and the place where children grow up to be good Muslims and understand the importance of Islam as a way of life.
• Parents and children have important responsibilities within the family.
• The family is the way in which Muslim life is best protected.
• Marriage is the key to the family and all Muslims are expected to marry.

Activities

4 Make a list of the main responsibilities held by: (a) a Muslim parent; and (b) a Muslim child.
5 Do Muslim guidelines make family life easier or harder for: (a) parents; and (b) children? Explain your reasons.
3.7: Muslim teachings on family life
Lesson plan 7
(Student Book pages 72–73)

Learning outcomes
By the end of the lesson:

(AO1)
• all students will be able to describe the main points of Muslim teachings on the family
• some students will be able to understand why these teachings are important in Islam

(AO2)
• all students will be able to give their own opinions about Muslim teachings on family life
• some students will be able to give reasons for their opinions and show that they have considered a different opinion
• a few students will be able to evaluate different points of view, showing why they consider their own view to be the right one.

Resources required
• Resource sheet 3.7.

Recap of previous experience and prior knowledge
Briefly recall the previous lesson, particularly the religious issues discussed with regard to family life.

Starter

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<tr>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>Display the phrase ‘The family is the cornerstone of society’ on the board. Ask students to discuss what that means and explain that many Muslims would describe the family in this way.</td>
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Main teaching

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<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Using the information on page 72 of the Student Book under the heading ‘The heart of the community’, examine together the importance of family life in the Islamic community. Ensure the students understand terms such as haram, halal and madrasah. Ask the students what they consider to be the most significant features and to say why they think this.</td>
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### SECTION 3: Marriage and the family

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<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>In pairs, ask the students to read through material on page 73 of the Student Book under the heading 'The traditional Muslim family'. They should write down the advantages and disadvantages of living in an extended family. Then ask them to imagine what it might be like to be an elderly grandparent living with a family of younger people. How might they feel in that situation and why?</td>
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</table>
| 10 minutes | Ask students to answer the following: Choose one religion other than Christianity and explain why family life is important to followers of that religion. (8 marks)  
Ask the students to write down three ways in which children can show respect for their parents and three ways in which parents can show respect for their children. |
| 15 minutes | In their pairs, using resource sheet 3.7, ask the students to jot down what they think are the three key Muslim family values and to compare them with the three key values of Christianity. Ask them to say what the major similarities and differences are. |

### Plenary

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<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>Ask students to consider if Muslim attitudes towards the family will help or hinder family life.</td>
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### Homework

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| 1 week  | Students should answer the following exam-style question: In your answer you should refer to at least one religion.  
'Religion does not help family life today.'  
(i) Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion. (3 marks)  
(ii) Give reasons why some people may disagree with you. (3 marks) |

### Differentiation

Higher ability students will benefit from making a more detailed comparison of Christian and Muslim views – look for major similarities and differences.

Lower ability students may benefit from writing frames for the exam questions.

### Links

Citizenship: 1.2a, 1.3b, 2.1a, c, 3l  
Personal Wellbeing: 1.1c, 1.2b, 1.5a, b, 2.1a, 2.3d, 3a, d, g, h, i, j
Muslim teachings on family life

Muslims take family life very seriously.

Muslim parents:

• pray every day for the well-being of their children
• make sure their children grow up to be good Muslims
• take their children to the mosque
• may send their children to Muslim schools.

Muslim children:

• must be respectful and obedient to their parents
• respect and serve older members of the family
• pray for the well-being of their families.

1 In pairs or small groups, complete the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you think are the three key values of Muslim families?</th>
<th>What do you think are the three key values of Christian families?</th>
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What are the main similarities and differences between the two sets of values?

Similarities

Differences