



Getting to Know Our Muslim Neighbors

Islamophobia – not in our Community!



A Dangerous Problem that People of Goodwill Must Confront:

Islamophobia (or anti-Muslim sentiment) is the prejudice against, hatred towards, or fear of the religion of Islam or Muslims, and it is reaching a fever pitch in the United States. Behind the fervor is a confluence of circumstances: attacks on westerners from a rising ISIS, and a citizenry with a nearly total lack of familiarity with the religion and followers of Islam. To that, add divisive and inflammatory rhetoric in the political sphere and a dangerous environment results.



Our Current Challenge:

Failing to confront discriminatory rhetoric gravely endangers the promises of fairness and religious liberty upon which America is founded. Whether it occurs in private or in public, consistently countering such rhetoric is essential to provide a balance to a dangerous wave of religious-based hatred.



How to Respond to untruths:

ISIS is not Islam:

- Muslims worldwide profoundly reject the hate-filled doctrine espoused by ISIS.
- ISIS is a radical terrorist organization seeking to legitimize its actions by tying them to a respected religion.
- It is no fairer to say that Islam is to be blamed for ISIS than it is to say that Christianity is to be blamed for the KKK.

Fearing the Unfamiliar- *reveals more about the fearful than the feared :*

- Fearing the unknown is a very common human emotion.
- We must train ourselves to learn from, engage, and build relationships with Muslims and all those with whom we are unfamiliar to overcome this fear.

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Discrimination based on race, religion, or nationality is Un-American

- America's greatness is derived not from discrimination but from a long history of extraordinary attempts to protect minorities from populist mobs.
- We are a nation founded by immigrants upon the principle of freedom of religion.
- The immigrant Muslim population overwhelmingly demonstrates high levels of education, voluntarism, and has greatly contributed to the success of America.
- Nevertheless, some media outlets and politicians have suggested blocking all Muslims from entering the country, even American Muslims traveling abroad from returning to their families in the US, and further, increasing police patrols in predominantly Muslim neighborhoods.
- Supports for these attitudes and policies, is support for discrimination.



Cincinnati Muslim Community

Greater Cincinnati's Muslim community, estimated to be "25,000 plus" is very diverse. It includes immigrants from many of the 53 Muslim majority countries, who have built American Islamic institutions here. Their children, born and raised here, now making up a majority of Muslim Americans, see themselves as totally American, practicing a faith that is completely compatible with the U.S. Constitution. Many are native African Americans, here for centuries. Muslim Americans are serving this country in all walks of life. Ten percent of our physicians are estimated to be Muslim. Many of our educators in schools and universities as well as lawyers, engineers, architects, IT workers, US soldiers, media personnel, professional athletes, restaurant and grocery store operators and transportation workers, to name a few, are Muslim. Many serve on civic boards promoting social justice. Others serve on boards of local universities, hospitals and charitable organizations. They are all people trying to build a better life for themselves, their children and those around them.

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To learn more: Those desiring more information on our Muslim neighbors and the religion of Islam are encouraged to contact any of the following groups for available speakers, interfaith panels, tours, and other resources. They would welcome hearing from you!

Islamic Center of Greater Cincinnati

Tours & Talks Program

(513) 755-3280

www.cincinnatiislamiccenter.org

Clifton Mosque

(513) 221-4003

www.cliftonmosque.org

Cincinnati Islamic Community Center

Speakers Bureau

(513) 377-0964/297-1679

www.masjidcinti.com

Cincinnati Chapter of Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)

(513) 281-8200

www.cairohio.com

The Edward B. Brueggeman Center for Dialogue, Xavier University

(513) 745-3922

www.xavier.edu/dialogue

www.interfaithcincy.org

National Underground Railroad Freedom Center

Education Department

(513) 333-7500

www.freedomcenter.org

Islamic Networks Group (ING)

Education, Curriculum and Interfaith Resources

www.ing.org

Bridges of Faith TRIALOGUE

(513) 806-9650

trialoguecincinnati@gmail.com

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10 Things You Can Do

For greater Awareness and Acceptance of our Muslim Neighbors

1. Take it upon yourself to learn about the religion of Islam (www.ing.org)
2. Get to know a person of the Islamic faith.
3. Invite a Muslim representative or an interfaith panel to speak to your organization. Call 513-755-3280 (Islamic Center of Greater Cincinnati)
4. Speak to your family about the importance of respecting persons of all religious faiths.
5. Schedule a visit to a mosque for your organization. Call 513-755-3280
6. Urge your church or synagogue to partner with a mosque on a civic project, social or athletic event.
7. Invite neighbors and friends into your home to meet a Muslim and to learn about Islam. Call 513-755-3280.
8. When a person speaks disparagingly about Muslims out of ignorance or prejudice, politely challenge him/her with “that is not my experience or my understanding...”
9. Contact your local elected officials urging them to support government policies that respect the religious freedom and civil rights of persons of all religious traditions.
10. If you are out in public and witness a Muslim individual being harassed by a bully or bigot, simply go up to the victim and strike up a conversation, ignoring the perpetrator. Report the incident, call (513) 281-8200 (CAIR-Ohio, Cincinnati, www.cair.com).

“You can coordinate the most sophisticated program, but what changes people is people -- access to relationships they’re otherwise not having.” - Christine Geoghegan

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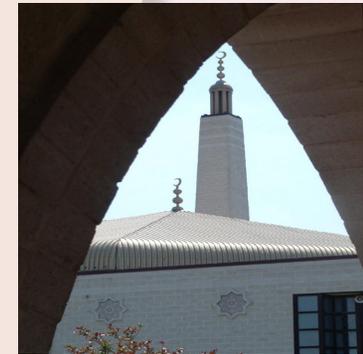
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Frequently Asked Questions About Islam



What do Muslims believe? What are their Practices?

Muslims are followers of the religion of Islam. The word “Islam” means “submission to God” and is derived from a word meaning “peace.” Muslims refer to God the creator as “Allah.” Muslims subscribe to 6 articles of faith: belief in Allah, belief in the angels, belief in the prophets, belief in the revelations of Allah, belief in the last day of judgment, and belief in the fate that God wills for them. They endeavor to live their lives in obedience to 5 actions of faith, or Pillars: testifying that Allah is the one true God, ritually praying five times a day, being charitable, fasting during the month of Ramadan, and, if physically and financially able, making a pilgrimage (Hajj) to Mecca in Saudi Arabia during their lifetime.

Are all Muslims from the Middle East?

Less than 20% of the 1.6 billion Muslims in the world are Arabs. Many live in non-Arab countries in the Middle East and Africa, with the most populous Muslim nations being Pakistan, India, Indonesia and Malaysia.

Muslims in America and in Cincinnati?

There are an estimated 3.3 million Muslims residing in the United States, constituting 1% of the population. (Pew Research Center, May 2016). Muslims date back to the founding of America. Many were brought here as slaves. Today, 60% of American Muslims are first generation immigrants. In Cincinnati, there are an estimated 25,000-35,000 Muslims worshiping at eight mosques and involved in and contributing to all aspects of the professional and civic life of our community.

How did the Qur’an come to be?

Muslims believe the Qur’an to be the literal word of God as delivered in the Arabic language to Prophet Muhammad through the Archangel Gabriel in the Seventh Century. It was revealed over 23 years of the Prophet’s life and preserved in memory and written form by his companions. Some Muslims have memorized the entire Qur’an.

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Is the Qur’an a violent book?

Muslims see the Qur’an as providing for mercy and healing. It contains passages, historical in context and often misunderstood, that encourage Muslims to stand up for themselves when under attack or persecution. It warns Muslims, though, against committing aggression. The Qur’an also forbids Muslims from forcing anyone to accept Islam against his/her will.

What is Shari’a Law?

Shari’a law is derived from the Qur’an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. It is open to interpretation by scholars. It includes laws for social order, crime and punishment, guidelines for marriage and family life, and rituals of worship. When Muslims pray or fast or give charity, they are following Shari’a. Most Muslim countries employ a combination of secular and Islamic law, and for many, Shari’a has no role in the judicial system. Shari’a does not apply to and is not imposed upon non-Muslims.

What is Jihad?

Literally, it means “struggle.” This can include an internal, individual struggle as one tries to improve him/herself, or can refer to an external, armed struggle of a group against oppression or tyranny. Jihad does not mean or imply the forcing of Islam on others or occupying their land.

Is Hijab oppressive/forced on women in the name of Allah?

Hijab, which is the covering of the head, arms and legs, is widely adopted by Muslim women around the globe. It is a sign of chastity and purity and, despite the common misperception of non-Muslims, it is for many an expression of empowerment and a declaration of freedom from objectification. It is required by law in only two (Saudi Arabia and Iran) of the 53 Muslim-majority countries.

How do Muslims view ISIS?

Muslims worldwide profoundly reject the hate-filled doctrine espoused by ISIS. It is a radical terrorist organization seeking to legitimize its actions by tying

them to a respected religion. In America, every reputable Muslim organization has consistently and publicly denounced ISIS and its acts of terror. It is no fairer to say that Islam is responsible for ISIS than it is to say that Christianity is to be blamed for the KKK.

Who is Jesus in Islam?

Muslims believe that God has communicated with humankind through messengers and prophets. They believe that Jesus is a messenger and prophet of God, sent to the children of Israel. Muslims believe in all of the biblical prophets such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. They believe these prophets delivered a message from God, applied that message in their character and behavior, and became examples for other believers to follow.

What do Islam, Judaism and Christianity have in common?

Christianity, Judaism and Islam are classified by religious scholars as the three “Abrahamic” faiths, all three monotheistic religions originating with the prophet Abraham. Their followers are united in believing in God and in being accountable to God for their morals, piety, charity and sense of justice as stressed in the Christian Bible, the Hebrew Bible and the Qur’an. Muslims believe that Islam is the final, progressive modification of God’s message to humanity on earth, built upon the foundations of Judaism and Christianity. The Qur’an orders Muslims to treat Jews and Christians with kindness and justice.

