



SYLLABUS

UNIT 1: WHAT IS ISLAM?

**THE PROGRESSIVE ISLAM
CURRICULUM FOR ADULTS**

**PREPARED & PRODUCED
BY MUSLIMS FOR
PROGRESSIVE VALUES**

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funding from the A&A
Foundation

CURRICULUM PURPOSE

Founded in 2007, Muslims for Progressive Values (MPV) is the oldest progressive Muslims nonprofit in the United States. Our mission is to advocate for human rights, social justice and inclusion in the United States and around the world by inculcating a culture rooted in human rights through public education, advocacy, and the arts. For over a decade, we have worked to return the American and global Muslim community to one that honors the original traditions of Islam, traditions that uphold human rights and social justice for all. Recognizing that the only way to return the practice of Islam to a truly traditional one, one that is rooted in social justice, compassion, and pluralism, we have sought out to produce educational resources for the general public to learn from. It is our belief that progressive interpretations of Islam should be as accessible as possible but for far too long, these interpretations have remained in scholarly and theological texts.

The Progressive Islam Curriculum, generously funded by the A&A Foundation, is a culmination of MPV's desire to increase accessibility of these progressive interpretations so that the general Muslim population has the tools to understand and practice the truly traditional form of Islam. It is our hope that by making previously scholarly academic interpretations more accessible, that generations of Muslims to come can be oriented towards and knowledgeable about an Islam that is rooted in human rights and traditional and independent interpretations. We hope as you reach the end of the curriculum, you feel more rooted and connected to Islam and the practices and beliefs that bring you closer to God.

INTRODUCTION TO UNIT I

Unit 1 of the Progressive Islam Curriculum, seeks to address the ever evolving answers to the question "What Is Islam"? In this Unit, readers will be taken through a journey from Pre-Islamic Arabia, to the introduction of Islam to the Arabs and the impact this had on one man's life in particular, Prophet Muhammad. The content of the unit will also attempt to expand the readers' understanding of what it means to follow an Islamic way of life, briefly covering the Five Pillars of Islam before expanding on 8 core Islamic values that are core to leading a Muslim life. The unit concludes with an overview of Islam's understanding of human rights and the diversity of the Muslim population today, including the geographic make up of the population and the different schools of thought.

UNIT 1 LESSONS

- Lesson 1: Pre-Islamic Arabia
- Lesson 2: The Life of the Prophet
- Lesson 3: Islamic Values
- Lesson 4: Human Rights & Islam
- Lesson 5: Islam Today

UNIT 1 OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Readers will gain a basic understanding of the culture and society of Pre-Islamic Arabia, including tribal dynamics, religious practices, and political systems.

Objective 2: Readers will be introduced to a brief biography of Prophet Muhammad, including important individuals he encountered and events that occurred in his life, which served to shape his life trajectory.

Objective 3: Readers will be able to understand and identify specific Islamic values, and the basis for these values in Islamic jurisprudence, that should be considered to core to the practice of Islam and for Muslims.

Objective 4: Readers will gain a comparative understanding of Islam's definition of human rights versus the Western definition of human rights and an overview of general principles of human rights in Islam.

Objective 5: Readers will review a brief history of the geographical expansion of Islam and the various methods of expansion before assessing the various schools of Islam that make up the Muslim community today.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING SOURCES

TO READ

- [Quran: A Reformist's Translation](#) - Edip Yuksel, Layth Al-Shaiba, & Martha Schulte-Nafeh
- [Islam: A Short History](#) - Karen Armstrong
- [A History of Islamic Law](#) - Noel J. Coulson
- [No God but God](#) - Reza Aslan
- [Progressive Muslims](#) - Omid Safi
- [Muhammad, the World Changer: An Intimate Portrait](#) - Mohamad Jebara
- [Muhammad: A Prophet for our Time](#) - Karen Armstrong
- [Memories of Muhammad](#) - Omid Safi
- [Qur'an of the Oppressed: Liberation Theology & Gender Justice in Islam](#) - Shadaab Rahemtulla
- [The heirs of Muhammad: Islam's first century and the origins of the Sunni-shia split](#) - Barnaby Rogerson
- [Mecca: The Sacred City](#) - Ziauddin Sardar
- [The Humanity of Muhammad: A Christian View](#) - Craig Considine

TO WATCH

- [Sunni/Shi'a Sectarianism and Progressive Islam](#) - Adis Duderija
- [Memories of Muhammad](#) - Dr. Omid Safi
- [Contesting Muhammad: Contemporary Controversies in Historical Perspectives](#) - Kecia Ali
- [A Synopsis of Progressive Islam Thought](#) - Adis Duderija
- [Islam A Short History](#) - Karen Armstrong
- [A Journey with Islam in the 21st Century](#) - Imam Yahya Hendi
- [Understanding Salafism in Mainstream Sunnism](#) - Adis Duderija
- [The Prophet's Compassion](#) - Karen Armstrong
- [Qur'an and Social Justice](#) - amina wadud
- [Upholders of Justice in Islam](#) - Dr. Omid Safi

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