

Fact Sheet

Islam



The Scout Association of Australia includes Members of every faith, background and religion. The following fact sheet has received the approval of the heads of the leading religious bodies.

- In Australian Scouting, we use an inclusive approach to 'Duty to God', focusing on exploring spiritual beliefs and the use of reflection as a tool for development. You will notice this approach to Duty to God, including spiritual development, reflected in our Promise.
- Members should develop their relationship with the spiritual values of life by adhering to their spiritual principles, whilst respecting the spiritual choices of others.

Attendance at the beginnings

Islam began in present day Saudi Arabia in the 7th Century CE. In Arabia there was widespread worship of various tribal Gods and Goddesses as well as a strong belief in one supreme God.

The last of the prophets

Muhammad 570-632 CE established Islam. Muhammad is considered the last and final in a line of prophets of Allah which included Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus. Muslims never refer to him as the 'founder' of Islam because they consider Allah (the God) to be the true founder of their religion.

The prophet was born in Makkah in 570 CE, shortly after the death of his father. His mother died when he was six and he went to live with his grandfather and then his uncle, who was a trader. Mohammad became a trader and when he was 24 he went to work for a wealthy widow whom he later married.

The revelations

Muhammad often left the city to contemplate in a cave just outside Makkah where he received a revelation from Allah through the prophet Gabriel. He told Muhammad that Allah had chosen him to be his messenger. Muhammad returned home and he later received more revelations through Gabriel which were

recorded by friends and eventually collected to form the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam. After his first revelation Muhammad spent the next twenty years or so teaching about Allah, the One and Only God.

How Muhammad was received

Muhammad gained a number of followers but his message was not always well received. Muhammad criticised the people of Makkah for their religious practises and the merchants became incensed as it affected their trade. Eventually the persecutions suffered by Muhammad and his followers intensified to such extent that their lives were in danger. In 622 CE they were given permission to migrate from Makkah to Madina. This event is known as Hijrah (the departure, exit or emigration) and Muslims date their calendar from this point in history.

Muslim belief

Muslims believe that Allah is One. The word Islam denotes a state of peace attained through willing obedience to Allah's divine guidance. A Muslim is one who submits himself or herself completely to Allah. Some Muslims repeat the following words during the day whenever an important action is performed ('Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim', In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful).

How Muslims live

Islam requires its adherents to carry out certain duties which are expressions of basic beliefs. There are five particular requirements which support the Muslim way of life. These are known as 'The Five Pillars of Islam'.

Shahadah (Declaration of faith) - there is no God except Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.

Salah (Communication with and worship of Allah) - the aim of regular worship is to develop love for and devotion to Allah. Muslims have a duty to pray five times a day at set times and in set sequence.

Zakah (Annual welfare due) - Zakah is a proportion of one's wealth (2.5% of annual savings and other items) given to the needy. It is an obligation and an act of worship.



Fact Sheet

Islam

Sawm (Fasting) - Muslims fast during the month of Ramadan as a means of learning self-restraint. It is a time when they remember the revelation of the Qur'an to Mohammad and from daybreak until sunset they abstain from food, smoking, drinking and sexual relations.

Hajj (Pilgrimage) - Hajj is the annual pilgrimage to the Ka'bah in Mekkah during the month of Dhul Hijjah. Muslims who are financially able and can do so have a duty to participate in the Hajj at least one during their lifetime.

Note: Refer to QBSI for uniform adaptations for female members

Adapted with permission from The Scout Association (UK)