

Connecting Through

Holidays

Connecting Through Holidays



Holidays and seasonal traditions are key aspects of a person's culture and heritage. Western holidays and traditions can act as bridges to connect with your immigrant and refugee neighbors.

As you introduce your neighbors to these traditions, keep in mind that many of these holidays have Christian and biblical origins. Christmas and Easter are two such holidays that can encourage deeper connections and spiritual conversations. Here are some other ways you can use holiday traditions to connect with your immigrant and refugee neighbors:

- * Host a Christmas party or an Easter meal.
- * Explain the Christmas and Easter traditions that your family observes (Christmas tree, gift-giving, Easter eggs, etc.).
- * Consider offering your guests a small gift. Be aware that in some cultures, gifts are opened at home rather than immediately.
- * Sing or play a Christmas carol, or let children search for hidden Easter eggs.
- * Ask your friends if they would like to know the origin of a certain holiday.
- * Read the Christmas or Easter story from the Bible. If children are present, have them act out the various character parts as you read it.
- * Use the *JESUS* film to visually portray the birth or crucifixion and resurrection scenes in your friend's heart language.

You can access the *JESUS* film <u>here</u>. Use the world icon in the video player to change the language of the film.



Annual Holidays of Islam 2024-2025

Loving our neighbors as outlined in Mark 12:31 also includes learning about their beliefs and cultural traditions. The following list provides a brief educational overview about the major holidays celebrated in the Muslim faith.

These holidays follow a lunar year calendar, which is different from the 12-month calendar year used in the Western Hemisphere. This means the holidays fall on different dates every year. Visit online sources or check with the Muslim calendar to confirm the day and month the holiday will fall this year.

Annual Holidays of Islam 2024-2025



February

Lailat al Miraj honors the one-night journey taken by the Prophet Muhammad in approximately 621 A.D.

Lailat al Bara'ah

February

Many Muslims regard Lailat al Bara'ah as a night when Allah forgives their sins. Some also believe that Allah decides their fortunes for the coming year. In many regions, Muslims pray on this night for their deceased ancestors. Shia Muslims also commemorate the birthday of Muhammad al-Mahdi on this date.

Ramadan

March

Ramadan, also referred to as the fasting month, is observed by Muslims worldwide in the 9th month of the Islamic lunar calendar year. During Ramadan, Muslims refrain from eating or drinking anything between sunrise and sunset, as practicing fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam.

Laylat al Qadr

March

The Night of Power—also referred to as Laylat-al-Qadr—is considered the holiest night in the Islamic faith, as it honors the night when the angel Jibrail revealed the first verses of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad. Muslims honor this event by worshipping and praying to Allah.

Eid-al-Fitr (End of Ramadan)

April

Arabic for "Festival of Breaking Fast," Eid al-Fitr is the first of two canonical festivals of Islam. Eid al-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan, and is celebrated during the first three days of Shawwal, the 10th month of the Islamic calendar.

Waqf al Arafa - Hajj

June

Waqf al Arafa - Hajj, or the Day of Arafah, is considered the holiest day in the Islamic calendar (the holiest night being The Night of Power). The following day is the beginning of the holiday Eid al-Adha, when Muslim pilgrims journey to Mount Arafat and the Plain of Arafat where the Prophet Muhammad gave one of his final sermons.

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June

Eid-ul-Adha means the "Festival of Sacrifice." It commemorates the prophet Ibrahim's devotion to Allah and his readiness to sacrifice his son, Ismail. Just before the sacrifice, Allah provided a ram, which Ibrahim slaughtered in place of his son. Celebrations of Eid-ul-Adha can last between two and four days.

Al-Hijra - Islamic New Year

July 2024; June 2025

Al-Hijra, the Islamic New Year, marks when the Prophet Muhammad moved from Mecca to Medina, and set up the first Islamic state. Al-Hijira is a low-key celebration in comparison to the two major Islamic festivals of Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha.

Day of Ashura / Muharram

July

The first month of the lunar Islamic Calendar, called Muharram, is sacred to Muslims. However, the 10th day of Muharram bears the most significance. The Shia Muslims recognize this day to mourn the death of Husayn Ibn Ali, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, while the Sunni Muslims celebrate the parting of the Red Sea and the victory of Moses over the Egyptian Pharaoh.

Milad un Nabi (Sunnis) and Milad un Nabi (Shia)

September

Most Muslim countries, as well as India, celebrate the Prophet Muhammad's birthday, or Milad un Nabi, as it is commonly known in Islamic culture. While the Shia Muslims traditionally celebrate this day on the 17th of the month, the Sunni Muslims celebrate it on the 12th of the month.