

Your task:

Present information on the Muslim Rites of Passage that you have learnt about. You may present this information in any way you like, but please remember to make sure that there is some detailed writing about at least two of the events to go with your work. You will need to explain what the Rite of Passage is, what happens at the event and why it is important to Muslims.

Birth

At the moment of birth, many Muslims speak the words of the Adhan (the call to prayer) in the ear of the baby so that the call to serve Allah is present from the start of the child's life and it the first thing they hear after they enter the world. It is usual for it to be the dad who speaks to the child first.

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Aqiqah

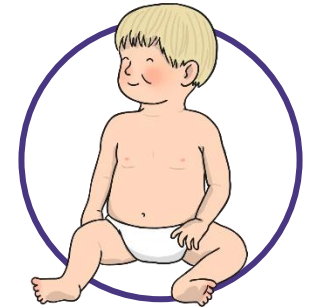
Muslims celebrate the birth of a baby in a ceremony called Aqiqah. Aqiqah is performed seven days after a baby is born. If Aqiqah can't be done on the seventh day after the baby is born, it should be done on the 14th day, or the 21st day, or the 28th day and so on.

- The most important reason for having an Aqiqah ceremony is so that Muslims can say thank you to Allah (God) for the birth of a baby. Parents invite friends and family to celebrate and join them in thanking Allah. They share a special meal together. Friends and family might bring gifts for the baby.



- An important part of Aqiqah is when the baby's head is shaved. Shaving a baby's head is mentioned in the Muslim special book, the Qu'ran.

It shows that the baby belongs to Allah. After the baby's head has been shaved, the name of the baby is announced. Muslim parents choose their baby's names very carefully. Boys will often be named after one of Allah's special messengers. Girls will often be named after women in the Qu'ran. The baby's hair is weighed. The parents will then give the same weight in silver to charity. Giving to charity is an important part of being a Muslim.



- In some places, a baby's family will make an offering of meat. They will share this meat with their friends and give some of it to poor people who don't have much to eat. In Britain, Muslims might order the meat from a special Islamic butcher. This meat will also be given to people who don't have much money.

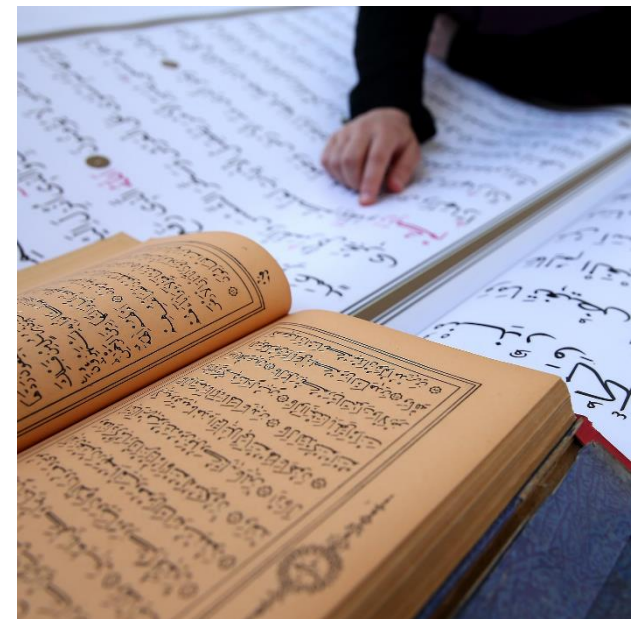


Commitment – Bismillah

There is no formal commitment ceremony for Muslim children because they are considered to be born Muslim. At the age of four they have a Bismillah ceremony. This recalls the time when Muhammad first received the command from the Angel Jibril to receive the first words of the Qur'an.

The child is dressed in traditional clothing, or their best clothes, and he or she sits in front of the Qur'an and recites verses from it.

Parents, relatives and friends then pray that the child will grow up in full knowledge of the Qur'an. They share sweet food to represent the sweetness of the Qur'an



Why Do Muslims Value Marriage?

Muslims see marriage as a key part of life and an important aspect of their religion. Muslims believe that marriage is the best place in which to have children and raise a family.



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Why Do Muslims Value Marriage?

Many marriages are arranged by family members although both partners must agree before the wedding can take place.

Although arranged marriages are very popular, Muslims can meet their partner at work, through friends or at social gatherings.

Traditionally, the woman often proposes to her future husband via a male relative such as a brother or an uncle.



Why Do Muslims Value Marriage?

Weddings often take place in a mosque but this is not essential. Muslims can get married in their own homes or in some other suitable location.



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Before the wedding ceremony, some brides decorate their hands and arms with henna, called Mehndi. Brides often wear a white wedding dress or a brightly coloured traditional shalwar-qameez outfit in red and gold.

Grooms wear a simple traditional or western-style suit or a combination of both.

Guests should be respectful and not wear revealing clothes but no matter what, the outfits are guaranteed to be bright and colourful.



Why Do Muslims Value Marriage?



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In Islam, marriage is a legal contract. This is known as the nikah. Both the bride and groom have to sign the nikah and this makes up the most important part of an Islamic wedding ceremony.

There may be a reading from the Qu'ran and the Imam (an Islamic leader) will conduct the ceremony and announce the couple as man and wife.

During some ceremonies, the bride and groom may sit on a throne or platform so that they can be seen clearly by their guests. In some more traditional ceremonies, these guests will be separated into male and female areas and not allowed to mix until after the ceremony is over.

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On the wedding day, the groom will give his bride a gift of money or something else of value. This is called the mahr and is known as a dowry. The mahr is a mark of respect and is the groom's way of showing that he is serious about wanting to marry her.

The mahr is also a form of protection or insurance for the bride in case her husband dies or the marriage ends. It is intended to give her some financial security.



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As in many cultures, there is a celebration after the nikah which is called a walima. This is a banquet, usually hosted by the groom's side of the family, in which the bride and groom mingle with their guests, eat and celebrate their marriage.

The walima usually takes place the day after or within a week of the nikah and is the first time in which the two families (the groom's and the bride's) come together as one.



Death rites

When a person is dying, if he or she is able to, they should say the Shahadah, which is a declaration of faith.

As soon as possible after death, the body is washed three times by relatives of the same gender as the deceased, and it is then wrapped in a white cloth. The body is then taken to an outdoor location, sometimes near the mosque, where Muslims will stand and offer prayers for the forgiveness of the deceased and that they may find peace and happiness in the world to come.

The body is buried as soon as possible after death. For a Muslim, death is the end of life on Earth but not the end of a person's existence.