

UNDERSTANDING RAMADAN

TO SUPPORT MUSLIM STUDENTS

AN EDUCATORS' GUIDE



WHY UNDERSTANDING MUSLIM STUDENTS' IDENTITIES MATTERS

A strong sense of belonging is essential for student achievement and well-being. Educators play a key role in fostering inclusive environments by understanding and respecting students' identities, traditions, and lived experiences.

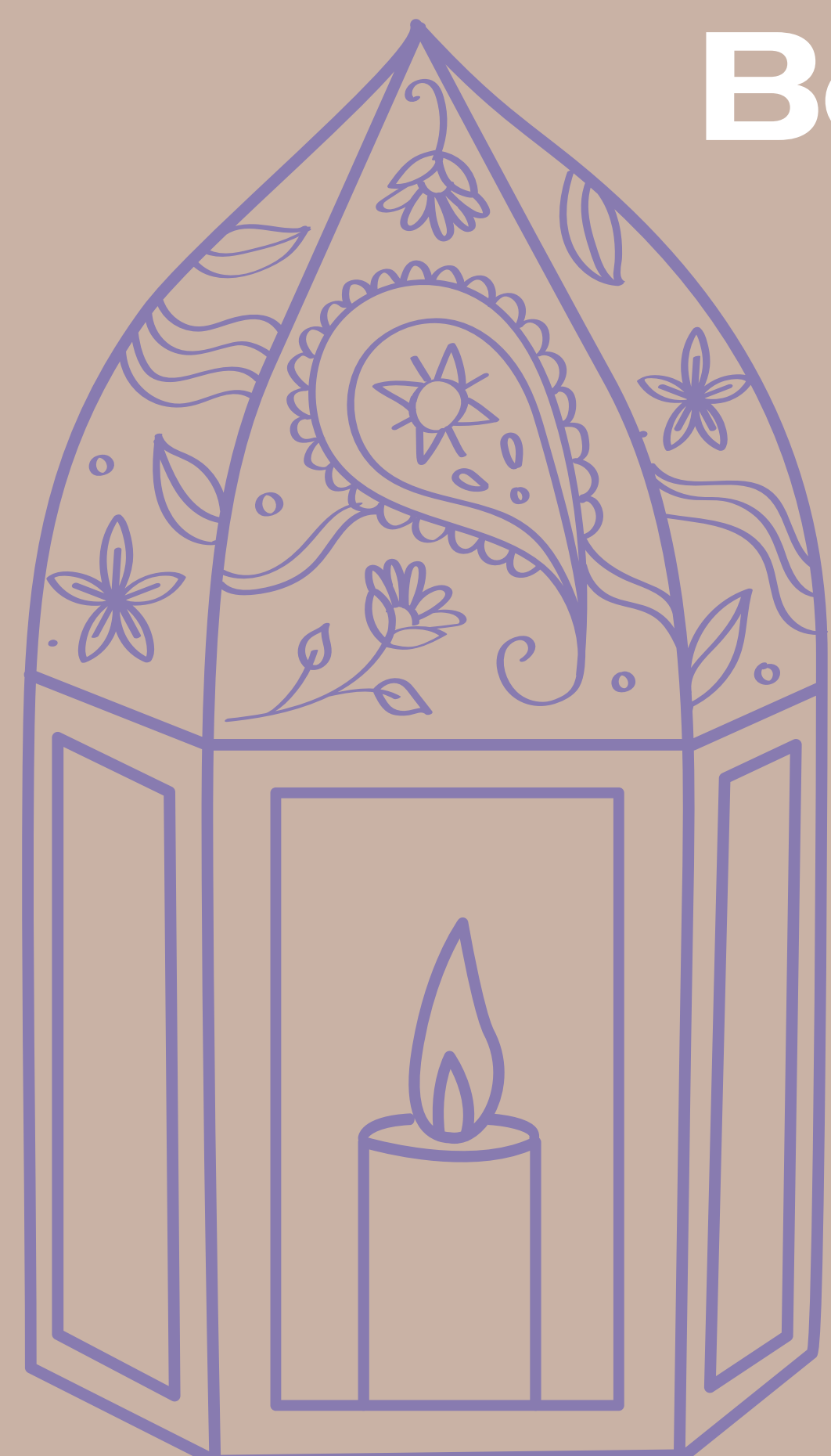
By integrating this knowledge into teaching practices and school culture, educators can help Muslim students feel seen, supported, and valued, particularly during Ramadan.

This infographic serves as a starting point for understanding how to support Muslim students during the month of Ramadan and create an inclusive and affirming learning environment.

Benefits of Fasting

Spiritual/Mental/ physical Benefits of Ramadan:

- Inner peace and mindfulness
- Leads to mental clarity
- Introspection and reflection aligns body, mind and spirit
- Fostering lasting changes in lifestyle and well-being
- Develop empathy towards the less fortunate
- Resets body's metabolism



What is Ramadan

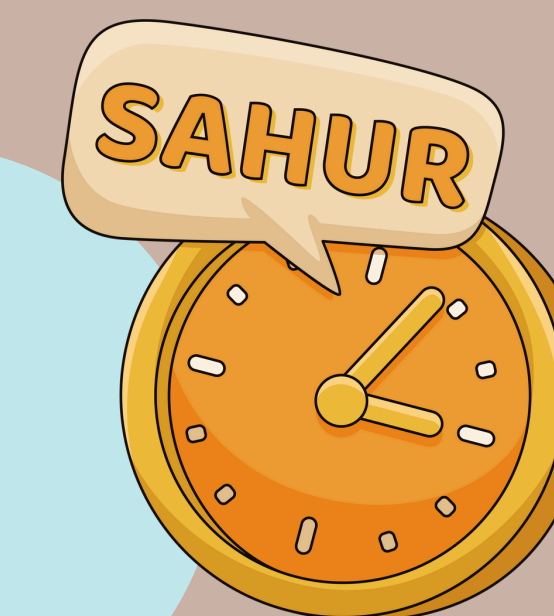
Ramadan, the 9th lunar month of the Islamic calendar, is a sacred time for Muslims worldwide. Many anticipate this month with **joy and spiritual eagerness**. Islamic fasting during Ramadan is more than a physical practice—it is a time for self-reflection, self-improvement, and spiritual growth.

During this month, Muslims who choose to fast abstain from food and drink from sunrise to sunset. Many also engage in increased worship, prayer, charitable giving, and community connection. While these are common practices, **the way individuals observe Ramadan may vary based on personal, cultural, and regional differences.**

A Typical Day in Ramadan



Wake up for the pre-dawn prayers Tahajjud, and meal **Suhoor** (name may vary by language).



Go about your regular day without eating or drinking (not even water), while making a conscious effort to pray, engage in self-reflection, self-improvement, charity, and community service.



Break fast at sunset with **Iftar**—the exact timing may vary based on different Islamic schools of thought.



Some may choose to attend the mosque for voluntary prayers beyond the daily prayers (for some, this is called **Taraweeh**).



Others may wake up before the pre-dawn meal for additional prayers

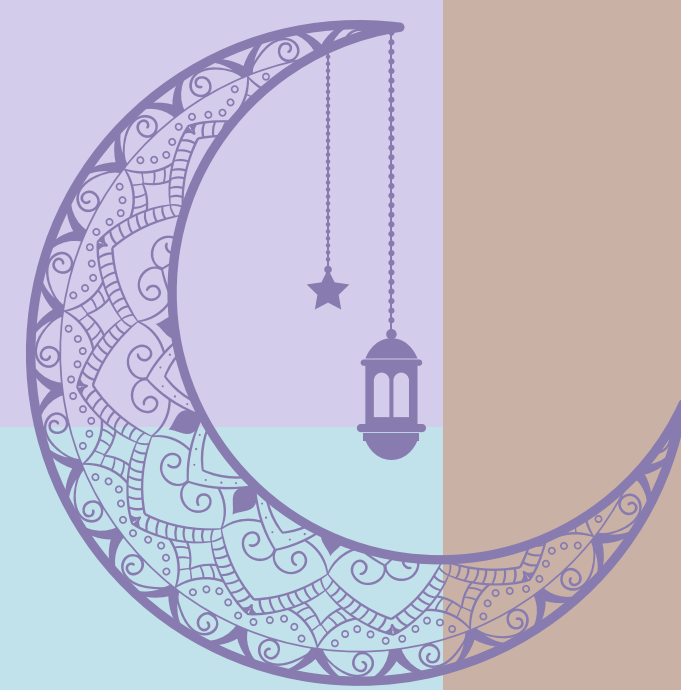
HOW TO SUPPORT MUSLIM STUDENTS IN RAMADAN

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- Check in with students and staff.
- Understand that energy levels may be lower due to fasting and late-night or early-morning activities during Ramadan. Energy may decline as the day progresses.
- Ensure prayer spaces are readily available (attendance may increase during Ramadan)
- Provide a separate room or space for fasting students during lunch or nutrition breaks, especially in elementary schools.
- Recognize that fasting affects students differently.
- Offer an alternative space away from regular eating areas for those who wish to use it.
- Note that not all students fast, and not all who do may choose to use the separate space.

SPECIAL DAYS DURING THE MONTH OF RAMADAN



- **Jummah (Friday) Prayers:** A sacred midday prayer; some students may attend mosque, especially during Ramadan.
- **The Last Friday of Ramadan** (some refer to it as Jumma Tul Wida): Expect higher absenteeism as students may attend mosque for prayers.
- **Eid Ul Fitr:** A major celebration; high absenteeism among Muslim students. No assessments or new lessons should be scheduled.
- **Last 10 Days:** A spiritually significant time; students may have lower energy or miss school due to night prayers.

Increase Sense of Belonging and Understanding Through Curriculum Connection

- Incorporating culturally relevant texts in class
- Science of fasting and effects on the body (can relate it to many other types of fasting)
- Geography and time zones - length of the fast varies all over the world and the year.
- Moon cycles/ Lunar calendar



Providing Curricular and School Accommodations

- **Flexible Deadlines:** Due to busy schedules, students may need extra time for assignments to maintain academic success.
- **School & Family Events:** Consider scheduling events outside Ramadan or communicate early to accommodate observant families.
- **Physical Education Adjustments:** Reduce or modify activities for fasting students, offering less physically demanding alternatives and more breaks.
- **Music, Dance, & Movie Accommodations:** Some students may refrain from these activities for spiritual reasons. Provide alternatives and consult parents on school events involving music or dance.

Some younger students, even if not required to fast, may choose to participate to feel connected with their family and community. It is essential to approach Ramadan as a **joyful and meaningful time**, recognizing the strengths and values it brings to individuals and communities.