

Ramadan Moon by Na'ima Robert and Shirin Adl

This book follows Ramadan from one new moon to the next capturing the magic of the moon and what it represents during the Holy Month.

What is Ramadan?

Ramadan is a holy month. It was the month when the Prophet Mohammed received the first verses of the Qur'an from Allah. It is a time for reflection, for meditation, for carrying out additional prayers each evening and for listening to the Qur'an being read in the Mosque. The entire Qur'an is read by the time of the Night of Power. During Ramadan fasting begins at daybreak and ends at sunset. At the end of each day fasters will break the fast with a meal, called iftar. Usually the meal is a simple one designed to provide nourishment.

Ramadan is a hard month and its end is met with the joy and pleasure of Eid. During Eid families visit each other and share a meal. It is a special time for children who are dressed up in new clothes and given presents. Eid is a celebration, a coming together, a return to normal living after a period of personal reflection and spiritual renewal.

Lesson Activities

- Display the opening page to the class (family looking up to sky with yellow background). Hide the text. Start a class discussion about the illustration by asking; What is this family doing? What do you notice about them? Establish that they are actually looking for the Ramadan Moon – this is the beginning of Ramadan.
- Ask the children to work in pairs. Give them a copy of the 'world' page and ask them to spend a few minutes studying and talking about the image. Can they note down anything that they notice? Through discussion establish that 'Muslims of every nation' have been represented. Dependant on age you may also wish to point out that the illustration of the globe has been represented so that the main Islamic Countries are in the centre of the map. Look at what the Muslim men and women are wearing in the picture. Some are wearing traditional Muslim dress. Display to the pupils traditional Muslim clothing and explain that some Muslim women choose to cover their heads with a Hijab. Give the children some time to draw/ paint their own Muslim figure (s). Cut out and arrange them around a large globe for display. You may also want to take this opportunity to show the children where the Holy City of Mecca is located. Show them a prayer mat and explain that Muslims pray facing Mecca – they use a compass or qiblah to find the direction of the Holy City. Use the 'praying page' in the book for further discussion.
- Explore the illustration of the Mosque. Explain that this the place of Worship for Muslims. Spend some time looking at the features of a Mosque by using photo images or, if possible, making a visit to a Mosque. Divide the class into teams and together make a 'Box Mosque.'

- Note that the moon is portrayed on every page of the book. Using the images of the moon from the book plot what is happening to the moon (also use the illustrations inside the front cover for reference.) You may wish to link this to observing the phases of the moon. Children may wish to make a 'star and crescent' mobile which plots the stages of the moon during the month of Ramadan.
- Once the different stages of the moon has been plotted the children could use the book to match what is happening in the story at each stage of Ramadan. i.e. attending Mosque, making collections for charity.
- Note – After the full moon comes the last ten days of Ramadan, 'those last days tinged with sadness.' These are special days in the life of every Muslim. Muslims believe that although the Prophet Muhammad was promised paradise, he used to exert himself even more during these last 10 days hoping to draw even closer to Allah. For Muslims the last ten days should be a time to perfect one's fast and to avoid anything that may break it. It is also a time to give more to charity and to settle disputes. It is a time for soul searching, evaluating one's life and for asking forgiveness. One may wish to here explore the idea of fasting during Ramadan and how testing this can be for Muslims.
- The Night of Power – Islamic belief is that this is the night when the first verses of the Qur'an were revealed to Muhammad. It takes place around the last ten days of Ramadan. Muslims believe that on this night God blesses everyone, forgives all sins and grants all prayers. Muslims hope that Allah will give them anything that they desire on this night. Give each child a star and ask them to write on it what they would wish for on the Night of Power. Hang from the ceiling in a display.
- The new crescent moon brings Eid. Look at the illustration with the family celebrating Eid. From the words and text on this page how can we tell that the family are celebrating Eid. What are they doing? How is it different to the illustration earlier on in the book with the family eating their meal after fasting all day?