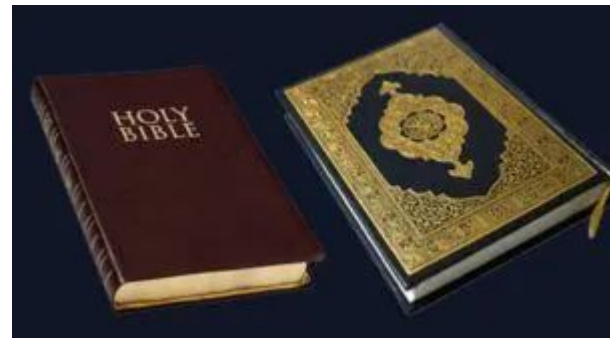

Contextualizing the Gospel

— Muslim Tract —

What is Contextualizing the Gospel

- Relaying the gospel in a way which speaks to and relates to what that culture/people group are already familiar with
 - Helps them to understand it better
 - Using Quran
 - Shared concepts, practices, characters, etc
 - Shows that you do not have to give up your culture/certain traditions to follow Jesus (unless convicted by Holy Spirit)
 - Covering, Halal, Worship, Prayer
- Muslims come from diverse backgrounds
 - Get to know them individually
 - Don't make assumptions
 - Cultural vs Practicing
 - Ask them questions! They may ask in return
- Each student has their own questions about God in their heart
 - Find what those questions are!



Building Relationships and Trust

- Relationship and trust are very important when interacting with Muslim/Middle Eastern friends
 - They tend to be very relational
 - Before diving into very spiritual conversations/topics
 - Can be more direct
- Building a bridge (same culture vs. different)
 - Ask about their culture and share american culture
 - Lay common grounds
 - Look at similarities before pointing out differences
 - Be an example of love
 - Build friendship
- Hospitality is highly valued
 - Tea time
 - New arrivals-sharing with them halal groceries or restaurants

Cultural Tips

Do's and Don'ts

Don'ts

- Don't attack Islam, Muhammad, or the Quran, etc.
- Don't front-load sensitive issues like the deity of Christ and the Trinity.
- Don't shake hands with the opposite gender, unless they offer first.
- Don't get into arguments or get defensive about Israel and Palestine, American foreign policy, etc
- Don't make jokes about Muslim-Christian relations, terrorism, etc.
- Don't throw your Bible around casually
- Don't take offense

Do's

- Do invite them into your home, and practice generous hospitality.
- Do pay for coffee/tea/meal (most of the time), if you are the inviter.
- Do accept invitations to their homes and even to visit their mosque.
- Do ask them about their home culture - food, family, traditions...
- Do ask them about their experience being a Muslim - upbringing, faith practices...
- Do ask them about their experience in the USA as a student
- Do invite them over for American holidays, especially Christian ones.
- Do share about your relationship with God, emphasizing his love and closeness.
- Do tell quotes and stories from Jesus (*Isa al Masih*), as relevant to the conversation.
- Do offer to pray for them, closing in Jesus' name.
- Do show respect for the Bible and the Qur'an

Having Discussions

Jesus in Everyday Conversations

- **Anticipate certain topics** that may come up and share what Jesus says about them

Possible Structure:

“Jesus said something interesting about that...”

“Here’s how it affects me...”

“What do you think about that?”

Contextualize Personal Testimony

- Emphasize your personal relationship with God
 - Ask how is their personal relationship with God?
 - Point out places in the Bible where God was personal (dialogue)
- Emphasize God’s grace
 - Not by your works that you were saved/made righteous (Romans 3:12-“No one is righteous, not one”)
 - Concept of good deeds covering bad deeds
- Emphasize the change in your life
 - James 2:14-26 “Faith without works is dead”

Tips for Devoted vs Cultural Muslim

When a student is passionate/knowledgeable about Quran:

- Discussion topics can get deep quickly; More direct questions/topics are asked and brought up
- Be sensitive to Holy Spirit
- Allow HS to reveal certain things to them
- Don't forget prayer!!
 - We can tend to want to be apologists but only God/Holy Spirit can do the real work
- Try not to get into debates and focus on the gospel!

What to do with a Muslim friend that doesn't know Quran or is only culturally Muslim?

Instead of asking them what does the Quran say, ask them what they believe?

- What is your relationship with God like?

Respond with a scripture/parable(s)

Using Gospel Terms

Sin

The term “sin” is unfamiliar to many Muslims, who refer more to “bad deeds”.

Muslims do not believe in original sin, but rather that man is inherently weak and makes bad choices.

As a result they do not see our need for a savior. God can simply sovereignly choose to forgive and accept believers.

In practice, many Muslims feel deep shame before God and sense their own inadequacy.

Try this: Explain sin as wrong thoughts, intentions and deeds, and failing to live up to God’s standard. As you study the Bible aim to show that sin is a much larger problem than it may seem: it goes beyond mere deeds to the deep attitudes of the heart, creates a chasm between us and God and ultimately can only be resolved by God.

Psalms 51 (written by David, whom Muslims respect) is a great passage demonstrating this.

Muslims can have more of an honor/shame than innocence/guilt moral framework,

Images of how sin covers us with shame before others and God are particularly poignant (Is. 59:2, Ps. 62:7).

Muslims also value cleanliness before God, so sin as defilement is also an appropriate image (Is. 64:6, Mk. 7:15).

The Cross

Just like first century Palestinian Jews, Muslims cannot imagine God condemning one of his prophets to die in a shameful manner like the cross.

A prophet being humiliated in this way would tarnish God's honor. Many have been taught that Jesus did not really die on a cross because God placed another (possibly Judas) in his place (Qur'an 4:157).

Try this:

Share how Jesus' obedience to the point of death honors God, and removes the shame of those who receive him. Jesus did not remain dead, but through his resurrection broke the power of death and displayed the triumph and majesty of God.

Forgiveness/Salvation

The Qur'anic texts paint various portraits of how forgiveness is granted by God: by doing good deeds and avoiding bad ones (Q. 11:114, 6:164), faith and deeds together (Q. 5:18, 3:133-136), God's sovereign justice, (Q. 4:48, 99:6-8), committing minor sins but avoiding major ones (Q. 4:31) or despite all one's sins (Q. 39:53)

In practice, most Muslims believe—and live—as if doing more good deeds than bad ones will lead to God forgiving. No Muslim is guaranteed heaven (26:82), and in the face of this uncertainty some fear and strain to earn God's favor. Others seem comfortably satisfied by *hadith* (traditions) that say good deeds weigh as much as seven hundred times as much as bad deeds in the scales of justice.

Try this: Don't tell your Muslim friends what they believe. Instead ask them questions about how one can be forgiven and granted salvation.

Every person longs to know their future is secure in God, so when appropriate tell them about the comfort and security you experience knowing your sin—past, present and future—is forgiven in Jesus.

Words to be Cautious of/
Not Use Early on

Son of God

- Many Muslims think Christians believe the blasphemous idea that God had a child through sexual procreation (Qur'an 5:116).
- Rather than leading with a term that evokes the wrong meaning, we can allow Muslims to discover for themselves over time.

Instead use: Word of God (Jn. 1:1, Qur'an 3:45), the Messiah (the Hebrew form of "Christ"; Matt. 16:16, Qur'an 3:45) and the one sent by God to save.

If a Muslim asks you directly about the Son of God concept- Consider responding:

"That is a great question, I'd love to look at Jesus with you in the Gospels. We'll see together how he identified himself, and we can discuss it then. Would you like to read with me?"

You can also shift the focus by responding "Can I tell you a story?" and then sharing one of Jesus' encounters or parables.

Trinity

- Muslims often think Christians worship three gods.
 - One Qur'anic verse seems to say the Trinity is composed of Allah, Mary, and Jesus (Q. 5:116).
- The term Trinity does not appear in the Bible but rather is deduced through statements that the Father, Son and Spirit are each divine yet God is one.

Try this:

- Emphasize that we believe in one God as passionately as they do (Deut. 6:4, Mk. 12:29)
- Aim to read the Bible together and let them discover who God is.

Concepts to Emphasize

Jesus the Messiah

Many Muslims in the world know of and respect *Isa al Masih*, Jesus the Messiah.

He is the greatest prophet in Islam after Muhammad, came from God with a message for humankind, and is credited with a variety of miracles including healing the blind and giving life to the dead (Qur'an 3:45-50).

The Qur'an teaches that Jesus is alive in heaven today and knows the day of judgment (43:61).

Try this: Focus on Jesus! Often Christians spend our time telling Muslims "what Christianity teaches" or "the Bible says"

Start with the common interest we have in Jesus: use "Jesus taught" and "One time Jesus..."

Tell stories and parables from the Gospels. Invite your friends to see how powerful and relevant Jesus is, and pray that the Spirit awakens their hearts to seek him more deeply.

God as Father

One of our favorite images of God—as a loving father—is absent from Islam’s 99 names of God. Islamic theology emphasizes God’s otherness (transcendence) to such an extreme degree as to make his closeness (immanence) almost unthinkable. Yet while orthodox teaching lacks the fatherhood concept, many Muslims long for this type of intimate connection to God.

Many Muslims, particularly from the Middle East, may have grown up with fathers that were distant and formal. Like for many of us today, the concept of father may be both appealing and difficult to relate to.

Try this: God as a loving father with believers as his children is one of the most beautiful images in the Scriptures (Ps. 68:5, Mt. 6:8-9, 6:25-33, Gal. 4:5-7, Eph. 2:11-19). Speak of it freely!

Talk about the connection you feel to God, comfort you experience in prayer, and satisfaction as a part of God’s new family. While new to your Muslim friends, these concepts speak to their heart longings.

The Bible/Holy Books

The Qur'an teaches that God has sent four holy books to guide people: the *Taurat* (Torah), *Zebur* (Psalms), *Injil* (Gospel) and Qur'an.

The Qur'an commands all believers to accept all of these books, but you will rarely meet a Muslim who has read the other three.

Most Muslims believe that only the Qur'an is uncorrupted and unchanged to the present day. "The Bible" is the book of the Christians, and many Muslims are not aware that it contains the Torah, Psalms and Gospels.

Try this: Operate with the assumption that your Muslim friends respect all of God's books but know very little about them.

Quote from the Torah and Psalms freely, as this will build your spiritual stature in their eyes.

Invite them to read these and even more so the Gospels. Sometimes reading from "creation to Christ" in the Bible lays the groundwork for them understanding the need for a savior.

- Memorize Scripture (including where) and share your why

Questions?

Practice Conversations

Think about how you might respond or divert from these; What scripture might you reference?

- Why do you fast?
- How is Jesus also God?
- Does the Bible contradict itself?
- Are you born Christian?
- Which Religion is the truth?
- How can your sins be forgiven?
- Is the Bible corrupt?

Partner Up! Take 10 min (5 min for each person)

Use the questions in the previous slide or ones you personally have been asked and want to practice

We will have volunteers share their practice convo with us :)

Handouts

Other Opportunities and Materials

Events and Trainings:

- IFI Peace Feast: March 28th
- IFI Eid: April 13th
- Bridges Training: April 6th/13th
- Sahara Challenge: April 16th-18th

Tracts:

- Book of John
- Adha in the Injeel

Parables:

- Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11)
- Two Debtors (Luke 7:36)
- Healing of Paralytic

Please fill out Survey and return to us

