

Engaging Muslims

All Muslims are lost without Jesus. However, we cannot stereotype them as a homogenous unit.

There is no typical profile of a Muslim. These are some reasons why:

1. Islam is an identity. Anyone born in a Muslim family, nation, or culture is automatically a Muslim.
2. Muslims are not homogeneous. There are many varieties within Islam based on ethnic, national, cultural, linguistic, and political groupings.
3. Islam is going through explosive change. Exposure to the west is bringing in many new ideologies ranging from secular to fanatic.
4. Education, local and international, is contributing to various political, economic, philosophical, and religious trends.

Muslims range from Secular to Fanatic. Most are Moderate

Secular	Moderate	Fanatic
---------	----------	---------

Basic Biblical Principles

- Spiritual preparation: fasting and prayer **Matthew 4:1-16**
- Many are called, but few are chosen. We know that we will be rejected. **Matthew 22:14**
- God loves his children, his treasured possession. **Exodus 19:4-6**
- Do not be afraid, the kingdom is yours. **Luke 12:32**
- The gospel is foolish to the perishing but powerful to those being saved. **1 Corinthians 1:18**
- Nothing is done by eloquence or human wisdom but the power of the Spirit. **1 Corinthians 2:1-4**
- How will they believe if no-one tells them? **Romans 10:13-15**
- Assume they are open until they prove they are closed. **Revelation 3:6-8**
- Follow the example of Jesus: **John 13:15**
 - Jesus befriended sinners. **Matthew 11:19**
 - Jesus was soft on sinners, hard on sin. **John 8:11**
 - Jesus preached repentance **Matthew 4:17**
- Jesus spoke in parables, stories, and mysteries. **Matthew 13:10**
- Distinguish between Islam and Muslims. (God hates sin and loves sinners) **Romans 5:8**

Islam is an evil system set out to destroy Christianity. Muslims are people who are captives to Islam. God hates sin but loves the sinner. We may hate Islam but we must love Muslims.

Factors for success

- More contact with Christians. One Muslim needs to meet many Christians.
- More literature, videos, and Bibles. Give him or her choices.
- More love, hospitality, and friendship. Invite him or her to your home or to a cafe.
- More exposure to the Christian life. Take him or her to Christian social events.
- More testimonies / experiences of others you know or have read about as a way to “gossip the gospel.”

Practical Suggestions

1. Diagnose the need. Jesus asked questions.

A. Ask questions like these to show interest. Do not interrogate.

- Identify areas of struggle. Be personal. Ask about their lives.
- What do you think about Jesus?
- Have you ever had a dream of Jesus? Nightmares of hell?
- Have you ever read the *Injeel* (gospel)?
- Have you heard of this story that Jesus told? (Pick an appropriate parable.)
- How do you know whether you are going to heaven? What shall I do to go to heaven?
Example of an insurance policy that does not guarantee coverage.

B. Listen genuinely before you speak.

- Listen to personal needs and address them with a prayerful attitude.
- Don't answer questions unless you know the answer. Be willing to say, "I don't know."
- Don't monopolize the conversation. Engage people in discussion. Make sure they understand.

2. Do not hit and run; linger until you get a good idea.

- Remember that you are developing a relationship, not just trying to prove a point.
- Take charge of the conversation. Do not let them sidetrack you. But do not dominate.
- Offer to meet again. Invite him or her to your home.
- Pray with them

3. Do not argue, do not challenge.

- If you get into an argument, just be quiet. Stay focused. Relax. Pray. God is in charge.
- Let them say what they want to and do not interrupt.
- If you challenge them about Islam, the moderate will move toward fanaticism
-Similar to when someone attacks your family or culture
- *After* the person dumps on you, ask: Are you ready to let me say something now?
- Rather than argue back, give your testimony. Tell about any answered prayers. Changed lives and answered prayers are evidence of the living God. This should defuse the argument.

4. Find out what the good news is for specific people.

- Fear of God, Satan, fate: Assure them of God's protection.
- Guilt and fear of judgement: Explain how Jesus took the judgement
- Family issues: Find out about family members and their needs.
- Life's problems: Assure them that Jesus cares.

5. Use Scripture.

- Read the Bible with them. Do not just quote it.
- Put Bible in their hands and have them read it.
- Tease them with it. Let them ask for a copy.
- Give Scripture as a gift. (Bilingual scriptures are best, whenever possible)
- Offer to have a Bible discussion with them rather than a study.

6. Deal with one person at a time. Avoid the peer pressure of groups.**7. Do not invite Muslims to church until they are ready. Home groups are often better.****8. Look and pray for the ripe time to ask your friend to make a decision to follow Jesus.**

Let them want to come to church and not feel pressured to.

9. Answering difficult questions:

- Do not panic. Ask God for help.
- Do not feel obligated to answer every question. You can say "I don't know."
- Change the topic if necessary.
- Ignore the question and say what you want to say.
- There is a more important question to ask.
- I want to answer you, but this is advanced. You need to know basics first.
- I have a short answer and a long answer. Which one would you like?
Two minute or two hour answer?
- Before I can answer your question, can you first answer this question for me?
- Before I answer, I want to explain something first... (as a pre-requisite)

This material is copyrighted by Horizons International and is taken from the *Engaging Islam* training (see www.engagingislam.org). It may not be reproduced in whole or in part, or sold without the written permission of Horizons International.