



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Qur'an: Sacred Scripture of Islam Madrasahs**

The word “madrasah” means school or university. The term has come to the attention of many in the aftermath of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. Individuals connected with these schools are alleged to be involved in the preaching of terrorism. But madrasahs have a long and distinguished history in the Muslim world as centers for learning and discovery. The video and transcript from *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly*: “Madrasahs” describes the rich history of the madrasahs and their connection to learning in the Islamic world. You will learn about some of the discoveries spawned from these schools which became major contributions to the world and helped advance the European Renaissance.

### **1. Vocabulary**

Directions: Work in groups of two or three to find the following words used in the video segment. Watch the video and listen to how the word is used. Mark the words on the transcript as you hear them so that you can review them later. After the video is completed, 1) review with members of your group how the words were used and 2) develop statements that explain the definition of the word and its use in the video.

The words:

Madrasahs

Qur'an

Muhammad

Ulema

Jurisprudence

Mosque

Hellenistic

Aristotle

Crusades

Mongols

Puritanism

Pilgrimage

**Directions for sections 2-5:** In your small groups, answer the questions from your assigned section below after you review the video *Madrasahs*. You may use the transcript of the program to assist you. Use extra sheets of paper if necessary. After your group has completed the questions, put together a small presentation to present to the class.

### **2. The Qur'an School**

1. What is the first thing students learn to do at a madrasah?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Why do Muslims believe it is important to learn the literal meaning of the words in the Qur'an?

3. How would some of the subjects students learned at a madrasah to help them interpret the Qur'an and understand their religion?

### **3. Muslim Accomplishment in Learning**

1. By 1100, many of the madrasahs had become an integral part of every important Muslim town. What services did madrasahs offer to students and teachers and how would these help advance their education?
2. Describe some of the advancements and innovations Muslims made to higher learning in the areas of ethics, mathematics and astronomy.
3. Explain the importance of translating Greek learning into Arabic and give examples of how Islamic education took ideas from other cultures.

### **4. Historical Events**

1. Explain how events in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries would cause the Muslim world to close in upon itself. What was the result these events had on learning in the madrasahs?
2. In what ways did the madrasahs eventually limit the type and application of algebra and astronomy for Muslim students?
3. By 1400, the madrasahs had grown uninterested in new discoveries from elsewhere and eliminated discussion of ideas. Explain the consequences this had on the Muslim world in later centuries.

### **5. Limiting education and the potential effect of new technologies**

1. What was the reaction of many madrasah scholars to some Muslim countries that instituted public education independent from the madrasah schooling?
2. How did this reaction foster a stricter teaching of Islam and a rejection of anything from non-Muslim countries?
3. What evidence is there in many Islamic countries that Muslims want free access to information? Explain how this technology can provide this access.