



Name: _____

Date: _____

Qur'an: Sacred Scripture of Islam The Qur'an and Learning

Directions: Read through the background explanation below before beginning the activity. Then, with your partner, review the passages from the Qur'an in the first column carefully. Look up any words with which you are not familiar. Discuss with your partner the general meaning of each passage and summarize this in the second column. An example is given in the first row.

Muslims believe the Qur'an is the word of God, revealed to Muhammad by the Angel Gabriel. For Muslims, the Qur'an provides the foundation for living a good life and pleasing God. Arabic, the language in which the Qur'an was revealed, has become a common language for Muslims all over the world. The verses of the Qur'an describe God's nature and powers, human accountability to God, and reward or punishment in the Afterlife. The parables and stories in the Qur'an are similar to those found in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testaments and many of the people mentioned in the Biblical tradition – Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Mary, and Jesus – are mentioned in the Qur'an. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have much in common.

The word Qur'an means "recitation" or "reading." Muslims believe the Qur'an records the very words of God revealed to the prophet Muhammad from 610-632 CE. A common religious practice among Muslims is to recite verses from the Qur'an in a melodic fashion. This is a way of honoring the text by trying to make it sound pleasing to the ear and inspirational in the heart. School children begin learning the Qur'an at an early age by reciting the verses orally. Often, the reading technique involves a slight swaying of the torso to match the rhythm of the reading tone and speed. For Muslims, reading the Qur'an in this manner helps one contemplate the divine quality of the scripture. Many Muslims memorize the entire Qur'an as an act of devotion. Passages from the Qur'an are recited on many different occasions: during the five daily prayers, the birth of a child, during marriage ceremonies, funerals, and other events. Verses of the Qur'an also appear on mosques and public buildings, in the form of calligraphy. Much respect is given to physical copies of the Qur'an. Before picking up a Qur'an, Muslims practice the ritual of washing and preparing their mind, body, and spirit for prayer. Care is taken to make sure the Qur'an does not get dirty or placed on the ground.

Islam has, throughout its history, emphasized the importance of learning. The Qur'an is filled with references to learning, education, observation, and the use of reason. Many Muslims emphasize the importance of acting on these passages in order to play a constructive role in various societies today.

Passage from the Qur'an	The meaning of the quote
1. "In the name of thy Lord who created man from a clot. And thy Lord is the Most Generous Who taught by the pen, taught man that which he knew not." (Qur'an, 96:1-5)	God created man and taught him knowledge through writing of things he didn't know.
2. "And they shall say had we but listened or used reason, we would not be among the inmates of the burning fire." (Qur'an, 67:10)	
3. "Are those who have knowledge and those who have no knowledge alike? Only the men of understanding are mindful." (Qur'an, 39:9)	
4. "And whoso bringeth the truth and believeth therein such are the dutiful." (Qur'an, 39:33)	
5. "My Lord! Enrich me with knowledge..." (Qur'an, 20:114)	