**Islam Overview**

Islam asserts there is one God who spoke his word and revelation through Muhammad. Islam literally translated is “submission to God”. A follower of Islam’s goal is to worship and submit to God. They do this through five acts, commonly referred to as the five pillars:

1. Testimony/Shahadah (sha-HAA-da)
	* Creed under oath, “I testify that there is none worthy of worship except God and I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.”
2. Prayer/Shalat (sa-LAAT)
	* Ritual prayer performed facing Mecca and spoken in Arabic.
	* Observed five times a day: dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, late evening
3. Fasting
	* Fasting from food, drink, smoking, swallowing saliva, and sex is performed from dawn to dusk for a month. This month is referred to as Ramadan.
4. Alms-Giving
	* Give 2 ½% of their wealth to the poor.
5. Pilgrimage to Mecca
	* Make a pilgrimage to Mecca, the holy city, once in their lifetime. This is commonly known as the Hajj.

These five acts are watched and counted by Allah. If at the end of one’s life, the good acts out way the bad acts, Allah may grant entrance into heaven. However, this is not a guarantee – only Allah knows. Heaven is a place where the men are greeted by 70 virgins.

**Outward Customs**

Customs you may observe in a Muslim context:

* Muslims abstain from pork and in many countries, alcohol.
* In some countries, only the right hand is used.
* Men and women do not make eye contact nor touch in greeting.
* Men and women may meet and dine separately.

**Denominations**

Shi’a – 10-20% of Muslims (generally Iran, ½ of Iraq, Azerbajian)

* Believe top religious leader speak for God today

Sunni – 80-90% of Muslims (rest of Muslim world)

* Believe that the Quran is the final word from God

**Shared Views with Followers of Christ**

* God is the creator.
* God is all powerful, all knowing, and communicates with us through His word.
* Belief in angels, demons, prophets, and a final judgment day.

**Common Views of Jesus (depending on country & region)**

* Best person who ever lived.
* Did not die, just went to heaven and will return again someday.

**Common Views of Christianity (depending on country & region)**

* Trinity is disrespectful – how could there be 3 gods.
* New Testament has been changed over time and cannot be trusted.
* Christians want to take over the country and make it like “the west” (America and Western Europe).
* Christians believe that God came down and had sex with Mary.

**Definitions**

Allah – the name of God

Hadith – collection of writings about Mohammad’s life (equal to Quran in reverence)

Islam – religion through teachings of Mohammad

Quran or Koran – writings of Mohammed, Allah’s revelation to man

Mohammed – prophet of Islam

Mosque – place of worship

Muslim – follower of Islam