



Questions about Islam

Clear answers for anyone curious about Islam, with Latin communities in mind.

Start with any question. Read at your own pace and follow the sources to explore further.

Inside this booklet

Belief and revelation · 2

Mary, Jesus and prayer · 3

Fasting and pilgrimage · 4

Identity and first steps · 5

Sources and next steps · 6

What do Muslims believe about God?

Muslims believe in one God, the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists, and worship God alone. The Qur'an describes God as one, without offspring or parent, and unlike anything else. Allah is the Arabic word for God, or Dios in Spanish. Arabic-speaking Christians also use Allah. Sharing a word does not mean all religions have the same understanding of God.

Sources: Qur'an 112; language source, p. 6.

Who is Muhammad?

Muslims regard Muhammad as God's final prophet: a human messenger, not a divine being. They believe he received the Qur'an as revelation from God. His teaching and example, known as the Sunnah, help Muslims understand how to live their faith. Reports of his words and actions are called hadith. Their reliability and interpretation require careful scholarship.

Sources: Qur'an 33:40; 18:110; 33:21.

What is the Qur'an?

The Qur'an is Islam's central scripture. Muslims believe it is God's revelation to Muhammad in Arabic. It speaks about God, worship, moral responsibility, earlier prophets and the life to come. Translations allow readers to explore its meaning in other languages, including English and Spanish. Because translation involves interpretation, read passages in context and seek a reliable explanation when something is unclear.

Sources: Qur'an 12:2; 2:185.

How does Islam understand Mary and Jesus?

Mary, called Maryam, is deeply honoured in Islam. The Qur'an describes her as chosen and purified, and its nineteenth chapter bears her name. Muslims believe Jesus was born to Mary without a father, through God's power. They honour him as the Messiah and a messenger, and believe he performed miracles by God's permission. Muslims do not worship Jesus as God or regard him as God's son. There is common ground with Christianity, alongside differences that deserve clear, respectful discussion.

Sources: Qur'an 3:42–49; 19:16–36; 4:171.

Why do Muslims pray?

The five daily prayers provide regular moments to worship and remember God. They include recitation, standing, bowing and prostration. Prayer is one of Islam's five pillars, alongside the testimony of faith, obligatory giving, fasting in Ramadan and pilgrimage for those able. Worship is connected with character: the Qur'an places prayer alongside generosity, keeping promises and patience. Someone beginning to pray can learn gradually with help from a knowledgeable teacher.

Sources: Qur'an 20:14; 2:177; Sahih al-Bukhari 8.

Must I change my name or learn Arabic?

Becoming Muslim does not normally require a new name or an Arabic name. The Prophet changed some names because of their meaning; a name that raises a religious concern can be discussed with a knowledgeable teacher. You can begin learning Islam in English or Spanish. The Qur'an is recited in Arabic, and Muslims learn the passages used in formal prayer step by step. You do not need to speak Arabic fluently before you begin.

Sources: Sahih Muslim 2139; Qur'an 30:22.

What is Ramadan?

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, associated with the revelation of the Qur'an. Fasting is one of Islam's five pillars. Those required and able to fast abstain from food, drink and sexual relations from dawn to sunset. It is also a time for prayer, generosity and growing in awareness of God. The Qur'an allows people who are ill or travelling to make up days later. Other exemptions and alternative duties depend on circumstances; ask a qualified teacher about individual situations.

Sources: Qur'an 2:183–187.

What are Hajj and Umrah?

Hajj is the pilgrimage to Mecca at a set time in the Islamic year. It is one of Islam's five pillars: a duty once in a lifetime for adult Muslims who are physically and financially able. Pilgrims from many countries perform the rites together, expressing shared worship before God. Umrah is a shorter pilgrimage to Mecca that can be made at other times of year. Scholars differ about whether Umrah is obligatory; it should not be confused with the once-in-a-lifetime obligation of Hajj.

Sources: Qur'an 3:97; 2:196.

Can I remain Latin and Muslim?

Yes. Being Latin describes heritage and cultural identity; being Muslim describes faith. You do not need to become Arab or erase your family history. The Qur'an presents the variety of human languages and colours as signs of God, and peoples and tribes as an opportunity to know one another. Religious learning may lead you to reconsider specific practices, such as drinking alcohol or eating pork. It does not require rejecting your whole heritage. Questions about particular customs deserve thoughtful, individual answers.

Sources: Qur'an 30:22; 49:13; 5:90; 2:173.

How can I explore further or become Muslim?

Read, ask questions and take time to understand. You can explore Islam without making a commitment. The Qur'an states that there is no compulsion in religion. Becoming Muslim involves sincerely accepting the testimony of faith: that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, and that Muhammad is His messenger. If you are considering this, ask for a clear explanation and support for the next steps. You do not need complete knowledge before you begin learning. Contact LMA through the website with your questions.

Sources: Qur'an 2:256; Sahih al-Bukhari 8.

Sources and next steps

Reading the references

Qur'an references give chapter and verse. Passages are summarised in our own words rather than quoted from a particular translation. Read verses in context.

Qur'an

quran.com: text, translations and explanations. English and Spanish can be selected.

Hadith

[Sahih al-Bukhari 8](#): the five pillars.

[Sahih Muslim 2139](#): a change of name because of its meaning.

Allah: language and history

Society of Saint John Chrysostom, [The use of the word Allah by Christians in history and today](#).

Keep exploring with LMA

latinmuslimassociation.org.uk/discover/

Read more about identity, Mary, Jesus and resources.

latinmuslimassociation.org.uk/contact/