



How Teachers Can Support Students During Ramadan

By Educator Barnes – April 17, 2021

This year, Ramadan began on April 12, and it will end on May 12. It is important to note that these dates might slightly vary in some locations. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. The month begins with the appearance of the crescent moon and ends with the appearance of the crescent moon. The Islamic calendar is based on the lunar calendar and not

the Gregorian calendar. Since the lunar calendar is shorter than the Gregorian calendar, the month of Ramadan is at a different time each year.

For Muslims, Ramadan is a holy month and an opportunity to deepen their relationship with God, an opportunity to engage in more prayer, and a time to study their holy book, the Quran. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn until sunset. They eat a meal before dawn and a meal after sunset. During the day, they can have no food or drink including water. Students, who are Muslim, need the support of school staff while they are fasting.

The first step school staff can take is to be informed about what Ramadan is actually about. When traditions are practiced, holidays celebrated, or special events take place in communities other than the community school staff are part of, there can, at times, be misperceptions. The last action teachers want to take is to be part of sharing misinformation.

Muslims are not a monolith. It is important for teachers to connect with parents to understand how they can best support their children. Some parents might say their children would like to talk to their classmates about Ramadan. Other parents might say their children want to be left alone and not be the source of information about Ramadan. Knowing these perspectives will help teachers ensure students feel accepted and comfortable at school.

Since students are fasting, teachers need to be mindful of lunch and food rewards. The month of Ramadan is not the best time to have an incentive where a class can earn a pizza party. Also, sitting in the cafeteria could be hard. Connect with students to see if they would like to have an alternate location for lunch. Please, ask. Some students want to stay in the cafeteria so they can socialize with friends. Let them make the decision; teachers should not decide for them.

Be mindful of physical activity. It can be challenging for students to participate in physical education, recess, or sports while fasting during Ramadan. Students who fast during Ramadan typically try to participate in all of their normal activities. However, it is important to keep an eye out to ensure they can handle the activity and to make sure they are not in distress from the physical activity.

It is important that teachers are knowledgeable about how fasting can impact students and even fellow Muslim colleagues during Ramadan so they can be supportive and understanding.

Additional Resources

[Britannica Encyclopedia: Ramadan](#)

[Ramadan 2021: 9 questions about the Muslim holy month you were too embarrassed to ask](#) *(Note: there is a profane word in point nine. Please be mindful of this if you are choosing to share with students.)*