GHAMIDI CENTER OF ISLAMIC LEARNING

Sunday School
SYLLABUS

Course Name: Holding onto the Rope of God
Course Stage: Intermediate
Stage Theme: Understanding Islam in the light of the Quran and Sunnah
Level: Covers topics for L1 – L6 with customization
Ages: 15 – 18 years
Version: 1.0

www.ghamidi.org/sunday-school

Al-Mawrid USA
Ghamidi Center for Islamic Learning

Overview:

Holding onto the Rope of God is a newly introduced specialized course that addresses your needs growing up in Western societies in your late teens. This course will equip you with the foundational knowledge necessary to attend the GCIL Advanced level, Levels 7 through 9. However, this specialized course not only summarizes Level 1 through Level 6 of GCIL Sunday School but will also cover relevant topics in general that will help you navigate the challenges you may face with your beliefs and identities.

We at GCIL understand the importance of creating a space where young students like yourself can comfortably explore and discuss various aspects of your religion. Like all our courses, this course aims to cultivate critical thinking and teach you how to cherish it to become comfortable with your Muslim identity in the Western context. You will engage in lively and thought-provoking discussions on various topics ranging from the core tenets of Islam to contemporary issues relevant to teenagers.

Objectives:

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Develop a good understanding of religion and the need for religion in the 21st century
- Concept of faith in Islam and understanding fundamental Islamic beliefs
- Understand the concepts like God, Messengers, worship rituals, the pillars, and the wisdom behind these rituals and perform these religious rituals correctly, e.g., ablution and prayer
- Improve your interaction and relationship with Allah and the people around you
- Understand the main target of religion, which is upholding high moral standards. This will introduce the concept of morality in Islam and how to develop the human character that the Quran wants from us
- Understanding the concepts of reward, punishment, hellfire, and heaven, directly related to moral behavior and how to navigate the challenges in Western societies
- In the end, learn the tools that will help you build a lifelong relationship with the Last Book of God on earth, the Quran.
- Appreciate why the Quran is a unique book and how it should be approached when understanding
- Know the principles of understanding the Quran
- Apply the knowledge gained about the sciences of the Quran to the selected passages of the Quran
- Join GCIL Sunday School Advanced level classes (L7-L9)

Modules:

The following major topics are covered in three modules:

Module A: Introduction to the Religion of Islam

- Religion, Faith and Beliefs
- God and His Messengers
- Islam is the only True Religion

Module B: Islam, Morality & Accountability

- Ethics, Morality, and Islam's Moral Standards
- Building Moral Character and Challenges in the Western Society
- Concepts related to Reward and Punishment

Module C: Understanding the Quran

- Introduction to the Quran
- The Sciences of the Quran
- How to approach the Quran
- Applying the principles through examples from the Quran
- Selective Study of the Quran

Delivery Method:

The course will allow you to share your perspectives, ask questions, and discuss in a supportive in-person and virtual environment. From multimedia presentations to interactive quizzes and dynamic discussions, this course leverages various resources that resonate with the tech-savvy generation. You will experience learning in a way that feels relevant and enjoyable.

Assessment

Interactive quizzes and discussions.

Note: *In this course, the teachings and guidance provided by Islam in various aspects of knowledge and actions are based on its two authentic sources, the Quran and Sunnah. However, the interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah is taken from the works of the Farahi School of Thought, represented today by the renowned Islamic scholar Javed Ahmed Ghamidi.*

Course Outline:

The following list is comprised of suggested topics for the course. The topics may be slightly adjusted based on the needs of the class. Additional reading material (if needed) for each session will be available for download from the web portal a week before the session.

Orientation and Exploratory Session

- Introduction (Students and Teacher)
- Why are you starting this course?
- What are your expectations?
- The main objective(s)
- What will be covered in this course?
- The length and number of sessions
- How progress will be evaluated
- Suggestions and Input

Module A – Introduction to the Religion of Islam

1. The Concept of Religion

- The definition of religion
- Why do we need religion?
- Human nature and religion
- Why did God give us a religion to follow?
- What role does religion play in your daily lives?
- Is there a purpose in life that religion is targeting?
- Can you have doubts while still believing in a religion?
- Is it OK to question religion or faith or religious practices?
- Why is religion still and would be relevant?
- Is Islam just a religion among many other religions?

2. Islamic Faith and Beliefs

- What is Islam?
- The role of faith in Islam
- Does Islam promote blind faith?
- Summary of beliefs in Islam
- The concept of righteous deeds/acts
- How are your beliefs and actions related to each other?
- What role do Islamic rituals play in our lives?
- Islamic rituals
    - Salah – Prayers
    - Sawm – Fasting
    - Zakah – Charity

- Hajj – Pilgrimage to Makkah
- Other Islamic practices
- Eid Al Fitr and Eid Al Adha

3. The God of Islam is the God of the Universe

- Who is our Creator, Allah, the God?
- How do we know our Creator?
- The concept of Rabb (The Lord)
- What does He want from us?
- How does God describe Himself in the Quran
- Why faith in one God is so critical in Islam
- God's two important practices in this world
    - Tests and Trials
    - Guidance and Error

4. Prophets & Messengers

- How does God communicate to us?
- The concept of Prophethood
- Why does God send Prophets?
- Difference between Prophets and Messengers
- Examples of Prophets and Messengers
- The role of Messengers in understanding the case of religion
- The Messengerhood of Prophet Muhammad
- Prophet Muhammad is the last Prophet
- Why did God seize the prophethood?

5. Islam is the True Religion

- The questions that everyone is trying to answer
- Who has the answers?
- Revealed vs. 'Other' religions
- Mysticism and revealed religion
- Abrahamic religion(s) Islam, Judaism, and Christianity – the relationship
- "I am spiritual but not religious" group
- The appeal of areligious life
- Dangers of areligious life
- Religion and Science
- Why Islam is the ONLY divine religion

Module B – Islam, Morality and Accountability

6. Ethics and Morality – Setting the Foundation

- Ethics and morality – the definitions and difference
- Human vs. animals – what sets us apart?
- Who sets the standards for right and wrong?
- Islam's approach towards ethics and morality
- Relations and Morality
- God's attributes, human nature, and morality
- Religious and cultural etiquette
- Examples of religious etiquette and cultural etiquette

7. Important Attributes of being a Muslim

- Allah SWT's stress on justice
- Quran's demand on truthfulness
- Humility is the hallmark of servants of Allah (Quran called them I'baad-ur-Rahman)
- Gratitude to fellow human beings
- Gratitude to our parents
- Arrogance is the mother of all evil
- Show off – Its dangers
- Patience is the most admirable quality of a believer
- Forgiveness in Quran
- Charity in Islam
- The concept of modesty / Haya in Islam

8. Islam's TEN Commandments

- A common word in Abrahamic religion
- Ten Commandments of the Quran (Surah 17, Verses 22-39)
    - Worshiping God alone
    - Treating parents with kindness
    - Spending in the way of God
    - Immoral behaviour (Remaining Chaste)
    - Sanctity of human life
    - Misappropriating the wealth of orphans
    - Keeping promises
    - Honesty in business and dealings
    - Speculation and suspicion
    - Pride and vanity

9. The Concept of Accountability in Islam

- The Day of Judgement and the Hereafter
- Significance of the Day of Judgment
- Why should there be a Day of Judgment?
- The Evidence for the Day of Judgment
- Judgment through Prophet Muhammad

› How does the belief in Hereafter influence our lives?

10. The Hereafter and the Heaven & Hell

› The concept of reward and punishment
› Heaven & Hell in Islam
› Who are the dwellers of Hell?
› Description of Heaven in the Quran
› Dwellers of Heaven
› Is heaven solely for Muslims?
› Deciding people's fate in this world
› How hard is it to be successful?
› Why is there an 'eternal' punishment of hell for some crimes?

Module C – Understanding the Quran

11. Introduction to the Quran

› The environment of revelation
› The final book on Religion
› Quran is divine
› Its relevance is eternal
› The text of the Quran is protected and preserved by God
› God protects the language of the Quran
› Its relationship with other divine Books

12. Style of the Quran

› Genre
› The Quran is a sermon given by a Powerful Orator
› The Royal "We"
› Dialogues
› The rhymes and rhythms
› Narratives and stories
› Similes/Allegories
› Details of the unseen world

13. The topic of the Quran

› History of Islam and God's Scheme
› God's law of conclusive communication of the Truth
› The journal of the Prophetic mission
› Key considerations when understanding the Quran

14. How to Approach the Quran

- Quran explains itself
- General and Specific
- Status of reasoning of revelation
- Relationship between Hadith and Quran
- Role of previous divine Books in understanding the Quran
- Importance of the context
- Significance of Alif Laam

15. The Selective Study of the Quran

- Examples from the Quran – Applying the Principles
- The rights of parents in the Quran
- The life of this World
- Predestination and God's scheme
- Characteristics of a believer
- Features of a Muslim society
- The Satan in the Quran and its mission

16. Review and Exam