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Making a Summer Dream Board



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When I think of summer, my mind immediately drifts back to a few beloved childhood memories: the smell of salty air and coconut lotion at the beach, jumping off the side of my father’s fishing boat for a quick swim in the ocean, eating LOTS of frozen popsicles, and riding around the neighborhood in my rollerblades until the sun started to drop out of the sky and the street lights turned on, signaling that it was time to head back home.

Summers were the best when I was a kid. As a parent, summers can be tricky. I definitely did not appreciate the amount of work and planning it must have taken my parents to craft a wonderful summer until I was an adult with children of my own.

And unfortunately, the time of children wandering hopefully around their neighborhoods, knocking on doors for other children to come out and play, whether they knew them or not, is nearly extinct. Summer fun doesn’t often just happen anymore, it must be planned.

Enter the Summer Dream Board.

Encouraging a Growth Mindset

A few years ago, a friend turned me on to the company [Big Life Journal,](https://biglifejournal.com/) an online website dedicated to creating growth mindset journals and other products for children and teens.

Growth Mindset is an underlying belief that people can have about themselves. If you believe that your talents, efforts, and thoughts about yourself can be cultivated and improved upon, then you have a growth mindset. If, however, you believe that your talents, thoughts and efforts are how they are and can never change or improve, then you have what is referred to as a Fixed Mindset.

Proponents of growth mindset, like Big Life Journal, believe that teaching children to have a growth mindset can help them grow in facing adversity, developing self-confidence, their desire to learn new things, and even in the way they internalize mistakes, criticism, and failure.

But what does all of this have to do with having a great summer?

Making Your Summer Dream Board

One of the strategies used by Big Life Journal with children is visualizations, the practice of picturing your goals in front of you to help make it easier to work toward them. They do this through creating Vision Boards, collage style posters of found or created images that depict the child’s goals and dreams in different categories, even for summer vacations.

Your Summer Dream/Vision Board can be as simple or as complex as you like it to be. The pictures your children add can be magazine cutouts, images printed from the internet, or even hand-drawn.

Big Life Journal suggests including four categories on the board:

1. Fun Things to Do
2. Places to Go
3. Things to Get Better At
4. New Things to Try

In our house, we like to make one board (a piece of paper really) for all of us so it becomes a family activity.

First, we begin with a list of all the things we want to include. Second, we sketch out our goals, mural style, onto our board in pencil. Third, we make *dua* or supplication to Allah to bless us with a wonderful summer and make it easy for us to accomplish our goals, to remember Him, and to be grateful to Him for all of the blessings that He gives us.

I find that as Muslims, making sure to include dua as an integral part of our efforts is an important step in not only developing a growth mindset, but also having a *barakah* (blessings) mindset that recognizes all bounties, success, and opportunities are from Allah, the Most High.

Dream Board Ideas

In case you’re having trouble coming up with what to put on your dream boards, I included a few ideas for each category suggested above.

**Fun Things to Do:**

* Fishing at the lake
* Kayaking
* Collect seashells by the shore
* Ride a rollercoaster
* Road trip
* Sell homemade treats to the neighbors
* Ride my bike

**Places to Go**:

* The beach!
* Visit a family member who lives out of state
* Waterpark (for bigger kids)
* Splashpad (for little ones)
* Masjid youth group camping trip
* Hiking to a nearby waterfall

**Things to Get Better At**:

* Cleaning my room
* Helping with housework
* Sharing with my siblings
* Rubix cube solutions
* Sketching
* Reading Quran

**New Things to Try**:

* Memorize a new surah
* Face a fear
* Play a new sport
* Learn 3 common phrases of a new language
* Find a new book genre you’ve never read before

Finally, once our board is set, we start planning out each item and taking steps to make it happen. Once we accomplish something from our board, we take turns coloring it in so by the end of the summer, our dream board becomes a lively and colorful depiction of all that we were able to experience by the permission of Allah.

Wishing your family a joy and growth-filled summer, inshaAllah!

*Melissa Barreto is a homeschooling mother of five children and the Co-Founder of Wildflower Homeschool Collective, a homeschool organization based in Northern New Jersey.*

Tips for Traveling Overseas with Kids this Summer



[**Umm Ahmed**](https://www.soundvision.com/authors/umm-ahmed)

After more than two years of pandemic life, *Alhumdulillah*, all praise be to Allah, we are now witnessing the easing of restrictions and resumption of activities toward normalcy. And, this includes travel.

With more people fully vaccinated and children also gaining access to the vaccine, families are becoming comfortable with the idea of being able to travel again. For some people who were born overseas, the past few years have been challenging and halted any chances of visiting family and spending quality time with them back home. Even though many turned to online tools to communicate, the comfort that comes from being surrounded by your loved ones is incomparable.For others, who enjoy globetrotting, it was a major setback, too.

Preparing for the Travel

Preparation for travel with children, is a must. Before you set foot to travel, here are some helpful tips to get you in the groove.

1. Be Mindful of the Details.

As you begin to gear up for the travel, you must remember that the pandemic is not over yet. Hence,  it is important to consider the risks associated and try to minimize them.

Among other things like checking up on testing requirements, be prepared for Lay-by or transit (for long haul travel) - airports tend to have a higher footfall, now that testing is not deemed essential prior to travel for most countries. Avoid crowded lounge spaces, keep your own snacks handy, if possible. Use the sanitiser and keep your masks up at all times! Research suggests that disposable masks are safer in comparison to cloth masks. Sanitizer sprays are also good for disinfecting surfaces like seats, tray tables and arm rests (which are high bacteria carriers). Wipes come in handy too.

It would be wise to ring up the hotel a day or two in advance to get updated information regarding indoor/outdoor restrictions.

2*.*Keep the Kids in the Loop.

Before you start off your journey, it's always best to have a discussion as a family so you're all on the same page. Giving a heads up on what to expect and be prepared for can really help with travel anxiety. For instance, letting the kids know that airports and crowded public spaces are still high risk places and that safety precautions will need to be followed.

3. Have a ready plan.

Having a plan in mind is very different to having it written on paper. Planning your itinerary BEFORE you travel can save you from a lot of adhoc stress. Jot down the places that you'd like to visit, keeping your children's interests and energy levels in mind (and the weather, too!). This way, even if you have to make any adjustments it'll be relatively easier to work around the days.

4.Teamwork!

It's also a good idea to allocate responsibilities between yourself, your spouse, and kids. For example, one can be in charge for ensuring that all members of the family are sanitizing hands regularly, another ensuring that everyone has their masks handy and one when necessary. Similarly, staying hydrated in the summers is also absolutely essential and helps keep the mucus membranes of your nasal passages moist so they can catch viral invaders before entering your body.

5. A Special Word of Advice.

For those who are travelling to visit family, it is important to keep SOP's in mind and go prepared. It might take up extra courage to stand up for yourselves as others in the family may not necessarily think the same way. You could be on totally different mindsets in terms of being cautious, so be wary and do what you must to make the trip memorable and safe.

6. Keep up the Vitamins.

Multivitamins are a must, if you do not want to compromise on your immunity whilst you're travelling. Alongside the usual cold and flu meds, be sure to keep some of these gummies/chewables for the kids. The good thing is they tend to remember to have them even if it skips your mind! For adults,  effervescent tablets (Vitamin C with Zinc) are a convenient option as they dissolve in water.

7. Other Essentials.

Some other medical necessities includeathermometer, paracetamol, ibuprofen, anti-allergen, band aids, disinfectant spray for wounds, insect spray, and tummy bug medication.Again, be sure to pack extra masks and hand sanitizers too**.**

Additionally, keeping a small box of powdered detergent always comes in handy when travelling with or without kids. You can choose to purchase it from a local store or carry it along with you in your luggage. Its vital to consider keeping yourselves and your clothes clean (especially with the highly contagious variant spreading - change as soon as you get to your destination and dump the clothes in a separate plastic bag for washing).

8. Minimal Cash Exchange.

Its preferable to use the card instead of cash, as much as possible. This will help limit the chances for cross-infection, through exchange.

9. Be flexible.

When it comes to routines or habits, you've got to allow yourselves to be less rigid and more flexible for the trip's sake. A bit of rule-bending here and there won't hurt anyone, in fact, you will realize it can actually alleviate the stress.  For instance, if your kids refuse to eat a meal, follow their gut call or let them have the ice cream before the meal if that helps. Packing some healthy non-perishable snacks from home can be helpful, too, like granola bars or whole wheat crackers.

It is important to remember that kids tend to mirror your anxieties, so the more relaxed you are, the more they will be, too. Whether it is a missed nap or a late meal, remember that you are on vacation, and the day-to-day rules don’t need to apply.

Enhancing your Travel

Traveling with kids sure isn't always as smooth, but it is definitely amazing and rewarding, too. There are times when there is an unsatisfying marathon of treats, unpredictable trips to the bathroom, and moments where you may find that your level of frustration during a trip increases when you have to accommodate your children’s whining. But in the end, its the happy memories that leave their mark. Plus, all that time that you spend together helps to nurture the bond between you as a family.

In addition to all the fun and excitement, the greater good that can potentially come out it is by making use of plenty of opportunities for learning. Here are some ideas to help you get thinking.

1. Keeping the kids busy.

First and foremost, whilst you're waiting at the lounge before boarding why not make use of the time and help your kids sit tight. We all agree that gadgets are an excellent resource for keeping us and our kids entertained, and what better way than to use it to watch videos and have a discussion about aircraft or runways, take off/landing, etc. There are tons of areas to look into for inspiration. However, be sure to make it age-appropriate.

With younger kids, playing games like 'I Spy' can be fun and help teach them new vocabulary and build on existing one. There are many others, too.

2. The places we go.

Travelling exposes us to a host of experiences. It widens our horizons and helps us think from different perspectives. Especially when we travel to new places, we are forced to be outside of our comfort zone and we learn about different cultures, traditions, languages, food, places of worship, and how people around the world do things differently than what we are accustomed to seeing.

The more the children are exposed to differences, the more open-minded they become and less rigid toward change. So, whilst travelling make sure that you are comfortable yourself and not draw attention to the minor details such as the people's accents, their clothing or other cultural practices. The intention here is not to be judgmental but rather to value the diversity amongst us.

3. Connecting with our Roots.

For those, who live across the oceans and miles away from their family and only get to visit occasionally, family trips can provide the opportunity to allow your children to learn more about their family roots. With older kids, you can help them fill in gaps in the family tree or find ancestral anecdotes. With younger ones, its best to start by making them visit the elderly and people from the extended family as it helps them to become familiar and connect. Children can learn a great deal about family values just by interacting.

You could also schedule day trips and show them around the old city areas, whilst you recall your childhood memories, giving them a glimpse of your own childhood days. Children tend to be really inspired by stories, so make use of all those good memories that you have and teach them a thing or two on a lighter note. For instance, how you always used to race across the street to be the first one to enter school - because your dad was very particular about reaching places on time (lesson on self-discipline).

4. Wonders of His Creation.

As we wander on the land and around the world, we are exposed to the magnificence and beauty of our Creator. The varied skin tones, facial features, accents, physical geography, colors of nature, the sky, nighttime views, other creatures, and a lot more. Provoking our children to ponder over these signs can help teach them God-consciousness and also acknowledge how Allah has designed everything for a purpose and for reasons best known to Him only.

5. An Attitude of Gratitude.

Some unpleasant experiences can also serve as valuable teaching lessons. For instance, one may find that the street food in your destination has a pungent smell which makes you not want to eat anything from there at all. Or the poor sanitary hygiene in a small village area can be off-putting. These instances remind us that we must learn to appreciate and be thankful for access to good food and nutrition, pleasant living conditions, and a religion that prioritizes cleanliness.

6. Maintaining a Travel Journal.

This can be a fun and productive way to let the kids organize their travel memories. You can purchase a journal for each member of the family. Younger children can be encouraged to draw pictures. To help engage kids, let them take photos and you can even use those to compile a travel video when you get back home.

Post-travel, you can sit down together as a family and reflect on all the beautiful memories and jot down the key takeaways. These might be the good things that you observed and would like to adopt in your own day-to-day lives.

7. Making dua*.*

Along with endless opportunities for learning, parents must be mindful of enlightening children through the lense of Islamic guidance. It is widely believed that the supplications of a traveller are answered by Allah, therefore we are encouraged to make lots of duaas while we are on a journey. There are also some specific duaas for seeking Allah’s protection when we are travelling. Make it a habit to recite these and help your children memorize them as well.

In conclusion, whether it is that you’re travelling back home to visit family or venturing to a new place, remember that things may not go as expected or planned. Don’t be too hard on yourselves or the kids, afterall its not everyday that you get to be together on vacation! So, relax, enjoy, and be safe. Bon Voage!

*Umm Ahmed is an early childhood educator and mother of three boys. Always on the quest to learn, she is passionate about seeking knowledge and passing it on to others. A writer in the making, she draws inspiration through deep conversations, laws of nature, and her own children. She and her family are currently living in Abu Dhabi,*

Sound Vision’s Summer Programming Has LOTS to Offer!



[**Zahirah Lynn Eppard**](https://www.soundvision.com/authors/zahirah-lynn-eppard)

Summer has finally arrived and the heat is on - that is the heat for parents to find ways to ensure their children are busy and productive! Sound Vision has put together an array of amazing summer camp sessions to keep kids of all ages engaged in an Islamic learning environment and having FUN! Parents love the content and students keep coming back for more!

Check out the details for your own family.

Adam’s World Club 2022 Summer Camp

At the top of our list is the biggest offering - our Adam’s World Club 2022 Summer Camp session. Amazing host teachers and role models use creative methods - songs, stories, art and cooking projects, and more - to make learning about Islam relevant and FUN.

The 6-week program is designed for children ages 4-7 and offers engaging segments to increase both knowledge and love of Allah. These include:

**Special Lessons for Eid-ul-Adha** - Our first week of class will focus on lessons related to Eid-ul-Adha. We will cover several stories that relate Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, and his family to the Hajj pilgrimage. And wrap up the week with an Adam’s World Eid party in our LIVE Friday sessions.

**Knowing Allah through His Creation** - We take an in-depth look each week at six of the animals named in the Quran - camel, spider, dog, wolf, donkey, cow - and the special characteristics that  Allah has given them. Students will learn the names of these animals in Arabic and be encouraged to practice their Arabic writing skills.

**Nurturing Creativity**- We love to encourage our students to be creative and they love have something to show for their efforts. Each week there will be an art project connected to the lesson that makes use of simple household items and supplies.

**Celebrating Diverse Cultures**- Exploration is a great way to also teach young Muslims to value the diversity among us. Each week we will journey to a distant land - Senegal, Argentina, Brunei, Maldives, Oman, Uzbekistan - to learn about the geography, the animals and plants of that region, and the people and their culture. A weekly cooking demonstration of a local favorite dish also encourages students to build skills in the kitchen and try something new and delicious.

**Learning Science from the Quran** - The lessons about scientific discoveries found in the Quran are profound, especially considering they were recorded more than 1400 years ago! In this segment, we will focus on elements connected to our universe - planets and stars, our planet Earth, oceans and rivers, continents and climates, mountains, and plants. Our goal is to help our students build knowledge, understanding and respect for the Quran as a source of guidance.

**LIVE Show & Tell sessions every Friday**bring students together to build community and encourage students to make connections with their teachers and their peers. Students can attend at a time that is most convenient - either 12Noon or 6pm (Eastern Daylight Time).

Convenience and Flexbility

Now everyone can benefit from top-notch Islamic children’s programming.

The AWC 2022 Summer Camp is an online program which allows students from all over the world to benefit from engaging lessons in the comfort of their own homes. The pre-recorded video instruction can be viewed on a schedule that works for every family, at a time that of their choosing. There is a cost to the programming, however, the affordable tuition price applies to the entire household, making it a wholesome learning experience for the entire family. Partial and full scholarships are also available based on financial need.

Visit [Adam's World Academy](https://academy.adamsworld.org/) for more details and to register online.

Additional Mini Courses

In addition to the AWC 2022 Summer Camp, content from previous offerings has been repurposed into mini-courses for children ages 5-12. These cover a wide variety of topics including:

**Knowing Allah through His Creation** - The same type of instruction as described above that focuses on five different animals from the Quran - mosquito, bees, elephant, snake, whale. There is an art project for each lesson, too.

**Celebrating Diverse Cultures**- The same type of journey to distant lands that focuses on five different countries - Morocco, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Palestine, Tanzania. There is a cooking demonstration for each country, too.

**Muslim Inventors that Changed the World**- In this course, we focus on the amazing contributions of Muslim scientists, doctors, and educators whose five inventions - hospitals and medicine, flying machine, toothbrush and hygiene, university, and optics - changed the world and are still utilized today. Muslim children are often amazed to learn how we have positively contributed to our world. There is an art project for each invention, too.

**Sweet Treats: Baking with Hanifa**- Hanifa is not a trained chef, just a teen that LOVES baking and who wants other children to love it, too. Join her to bake five delicious treats, learn cooking skills and some interesting facts about ingredients, and have something tasty to share with the family, too.

Muslim children need Islamic programming that is age-appropriate, relevant to their daily lives, delivered by charismatic teachers who engageThese mini-courses can be great to take along on a family vacation, as entertainment for a play group, as a special treat in the late afternoon or after dinner. The flexibility means that they can be used at your convenience and also used over and over again.

Visit [Adam's World Academy](https://academy.adamsworld.org/) for more details and to register online.

Halal Fun and Indoor Play



[**Wendy Díaz**](https://www.soundvision.com/authors/wendy-d-az)

Summer is all about fun in the sun - traveling, water play, and getting some exercise outdoors. Some families are off to visit relatives, taking much-needed vacations, or even planning for umrah and Hajj. For most of us, however, summer months are nothing more than a staycation for our children – a few weeks of downtime after a very hectic school year. Parents are generally still working while their kids are settling into a routine of sleeping in and lounging the rest of the day in their pajamas. Younger children may be attending daycare or summer camps while older siblings enjoy some autonomy.

Yet, there are plenty of summer days when parent’s and kids’ schedules overlap, leaving space for quality time with family. Extremely hot or rainy days can sometimes ruin our summertime plans, but not if we are prepared ahead of time. These can be the best opportunities to incorporate Islamic teachings into indoor play.

To help kiddos make the most of this time, here are 16 faith-based learning games and activity ideas tried and tested in my own home:

1. Build a mosque out of blocks, Legos, or empty boxes.

What child does not love playing with boxes? If you have any empty boxes or building blocks, have your children build their very own masjid. There are a great variety of blocks out there to choose from, whether they be wooden, foam, or plastic. Even a few shoe boxes will do! The kids can build a beautiful mosque they can pray in themselves, or one in which they can have their action figures, Lego men, or stuffed animals pray. Don’t forget the minaret!

2. Make your own prayer rug.

With a rectangular sheet of paper or fabric, design a prayer rug. Modify this activity depending on the age of your child - younger children can use paper while an older child can learn how to knit or sew their own rug. Cut fringes into the opposite shorter sides with scissors or use a hole puncher to add yarn for the fringe. After completing the prayer rugs, the whole family can practice praying with them or using dolls or stuffed animals to demonstrate how to pray properly. This activity is great to motivate young children to pray and for older siblings to help them learn.

3. Construct masks of the animals in the Quran.

Children love to dress up. Why not take that as an opportunity to teach them something about Islam? Find construction paper, cardboard, or cardstock; scissors; string or elastic; a hole puncher or stapler; markers, crayons, or colored pencils; and any other decorative items you can use to make a cute animal mask. There are 25 animals mentioned in the Quran, so plenty to choose from such as cows, camels, sheep, elephants, bees, ants, and more. Your child can draw the animal face or color it after you draw it, cut it out, and add the eye holes using scissors. Punch holes on the sides and add your string or elastic band to hold the mask in place. Discuss the animal and its importance in the corresponding verses of the Quran. Voila! You have a fun activity and an awesome lesson all in one. Make sure to take pictures and ask your child to tell other relatives about their mask, why they chose that particular animal, and where they can find more information about it in the Quran.

4. Eat like the Prophet, peace be upon him.

Do your daughters love a good tea party? Level it up by preparing a meal using an ingredient that the Prophet Muahmmad, peace and blessings be upon him, loved like dates or honey. Sit on the floor to eat and decorate the area with cushions, a mat, or cloth as it may have looked during the time of the Prophet. Talk about good Islamic manners during your meal like saying *Bismillah,*in the name of Allah, and eating with the right hand, etc.

5. Become a calligraphy artist.

Research different calligraphy styles with your child. Use watercolors, markers, or ink pens, and while looking at examples (there are also videos online), paint Arabic letters on paper or paper plates. For younger children, you can also find coloring pages with Islamic etiquettes in calligraphy on them. Hang your artwork on the wall to impress family members and friends.

6. Scavenger hunt.

A scavenger hunt or a treasure hunt can be a ton of fun for your little ones. Grab some Islamic-themed items from around your home or draw them on index cards. Put some maps in each room, along with an object you hide for the kids to find. Start in one area of ​​your house with the first map. The objective is to collect all the items. One example for a scavenger hunt theme can be Hajj – hide some white towels or sheets (ihram), a model of the Kaaba, a toy airplane, a postcard from Makkah, some pebbles (for throwing at the Shaytaan), etc. Make the game as easy or as complicated as you want depending on your child’s age and abilities.

7. Gingerbread Muslims.

Prepare and decorate gingerbread cookies in the shape of Muslim men and women. You can easily get a recipe online or buy the dough already made. The frosting (sugar cream) can also be bought ready to decorate, as well as sprinkles, colored sugar, candy, and anything else you need. Create beards, hijabs, abayas, thobes, buttons, turbans, kufis, and more. Not only will your child enjoy baking and decorating their gingerbread Muslim, but also eating it! This idea can also be used with sugar cookies since gingerbread is more of a Fall and Winter treat. Either are fun and delicious!

8. Play Islamic dress-up.

Dig into mom and dad’s closet or have your children design their very own Islamic traditional clothing with old t-shirts, fabric, scarves, and accessories. Have them pick out or make their own abaya, hijab, thobe, or turban. While we know there is no one style of clothing that can be deemed “Islamic,” discuss with your child how the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and his companions or other important Muslim figures in history dressed. Have them choose a style they love to dress themselves or their favorite toys. For older children, have them use a needle and thread to sew pieces of fabric together. They can then engage in imaginative play where they imitate great Muslims from our past. Sword battles are especially popular in my house!

9. Make a “Muslim puppet” out of a paper bag or sock.

Get all the tools and decorations you'll need like glue, markers, pens, construction paper, buttons, feathers, googly eyes, yarn, and scissors. Design an animal or “human” puppet (with few features). A good idea is to make a bird by gluing on lots of colorful feathers (real feathers or cut construction paper can be used). Upon completion of the puppet, choose an Islamic theme that your child can present with the puppet. Children can put on a puppet show for their siblings or for their parents.

10. Create an Islamic mosaic with pieces of cereal boxes.

Cut and save shapes out of cereal boxes or any other type of colorful, thin cardboard box. On a piece of paper, you or your child can draw the outline of a mihrab or prayer nook. You may also look up and print a black and white coloring page of a mihrab online. Using glue or a glue stick, place shapes into a pattern around your mihrab. Once all the colorful pieces of cardboard are glued onto the mihrab outline, you should have a lovely design. Talk to your child about all the beautifully decorated masajids around the world. Together you can search for some online and compare your own mosaic to some of the intricate tiles of the world’s most famous mosques.

11. Use playdough to make Arabic letters.

Make learning the Arabic alphabet fun and engaging with playdough! Using different colored playdough, have your child shape the Arabic letters. Place them on wax paper or regular white printer paper. Identify each letter and practice putting them together so your child knows how and where letters connect to form Arabic words. You can also make the diacritical marks with a different colored playdough and practice the sound each letter makes depending on the diacritical mark.[Here](https://livingwellmom.com/easy-homemade-playdough-recipe/) is a recipe for making your own playdough!

12. Shaving cream fun.

Speaking of Arabic letters, here is another example of an exciting way children can practice their Arabic writing using shaving cream. On a flat surface like a table or the bathroom tiles, spray a bunch of shaving cream and spread it out with your hands. Allow your children to use this shaving cream “whiteboard” to write letters or draw with their fingertips. This activity is a hit during bath time. I recommend spraying the shaving cream on the bath tiles for easy cleanup. You could also put it in a large baking try.

13. Make Muslim wood peg dolls.

Search on Amazon or any craft store for wood peg dolls. They are often sold in sets of a dozen or more and they come in varying sizes, from 2 inches to 4 or 5 inches in height. Your children can use paint or even sharpie markers to paint their wood peg dolls. They can paint colorful kufis, khimars, and dresses on these dolls to make them little Muslim figurines. The simplicity of the peg dolls makes for an Islamically permissible alternative to other action figure style toys. Depending on the scholarly opinion you hold, you may opt to keep the dolls’ faces completely blank. The goal is to let your children spend some time designing their dolls and having halal fun. And then creating make believe scenes with their Muslim community.

14. Create your very own dua book or journal.

Gather white paper (either lined or blank). Make a cover using colorful construction paper or cardstock. Staple together or punch holes on the side and tie together with ribbon or yarn. Decorate with glitter, stickers, drawings, etc. Children can jot down special duas or reminders inside their personalized dua book or journal. Want to skip the creative process? Purchase a journal for each of your children and instruct them to write at least one page a day reflecting on their summer break. This can be a great opportunity to get your children to start journaling.

15. Indoor camping adventure.

Camping does not have to happen outside. Be inventive and build a campsite indoors with your children. If you prefer to be hands-off, let your child or children take lead to set up a tent and gather their supplies. Use your basement, living room, dining room, or any room in your house that you deem fit as your campsite. Keep the lights off in the evening and allow the kids to use flashlights and lanterns. Let them sleep in their makeshift tents for a night or two. Talk about Muslim nomads of the past and refugees of today and how they managed to live in tents. Offer hot chocolate, smores, barbecued hot dogs or burgers to enhance the camping experience.

16. Explore other languages.

Plan to learn a few simple words in different languages. Identify a few languages and print out new words or phrases. You may also use an app like Duolingo. Teach your child to say things like greetings, “my name is,” “thank you,” and “please.” You can turn it into a geography lesson, as well, by studying the countries where these languages are spoken and searching for them on a map. It is vastly important for Muslim children to know about other nationalities and languages to build their tolerance and sensitivity toward people outside their own culture. After all, Muslims are everywhere in the world and we are all brothers and sisters to one another.

These are just a few ideas of things you can do indoors with your children this summer. There are plenty of other awesome activities, lessons, and arts and craft ideas you can find online. Remember, first and foremost, summertime is about winding down after a chaotic ten months of rigorous study. It is called a “break” for a reason – to break free from the stress of work and responsibilities. Most children need a breather after all that learning. Allow them to set the pace and discuss with them before you plan out a schedule of activities. It is perfectly ok to have lots of downtime and even for them to whine, “I’m bored!” Boredom breeds creativity and creativity leads to learning and enjoyment.

May your summer be filled with opportunities for fun, family, and building great memories, *inshaAllah*, God willing.

*Wendy Díaz**is a Puerto Rican Muslim writer, award-winning poet, translator, and mother of six (ages ranging from infant to teen). She is the co-founder of Hablamos Islam, a non-profit organization that produces educational resources about Islam in Spanish (hablamosislam.org). She has written, illustrated, and published over a dozen children’s books and currently lives with her family in Maryland. Follow Wendy Díaz on social media @authorwendydiaz and @hablamosislam.*

What does Loyalty Really Mean



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Xenophobic “loyalists” have long co-opted America’s definition of a “patriot”.  Perhaps the most well-known racist political party was that of the 1850s “Know Nothing Party”.  Their stated objective was to fight against ‘foreign’ influences (meaning America’s ethnic and religious minorities, and non-European immigrants) and define American culture solely within the boundaries of  ‘whiteness’.

Of particular interest was how the “Know Nothing Party” seized the language and symbols of patriotism and furthered the ‘us vs them’ attitude that was already part of the American psyche. The ‘us vs. them’ morphed into a separatist philosophy which actually excluded non-whites from ever being able to be fully viewed as “patriotic” and indeed true Americans.

This contemptuousness toward America’s non-white minorities and immigrants helped fuel the Jan 6, 2021 insurrection by Trump loyalists, who, with incontrovertible fanaticism, felt they were defending America from unpatriotic sources - a mirrored philosophy and attitude of the Know Nothing Party from 165 years prior. Even though the U.S. government reports that over 86 million people have been voluntary immigrants to America since 1783, anti-immigrant sentiments have always been part of America’s history, especially non-white immigrants and involuntarily immigrants captured and later enslaved.

“Patriotism” as a word aligns with loyalty and trust. Loyalty is faithfulness and commitment.

Good Americans grapple with the exposure of treason, abuse of power, hypocrisy, and the betrayal of the public trust from some of its highest public officials. For Muslims, the realities and consequences of oppression and disloyalty have already been taught to us from the life example and teachings of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the words of the Quran.

Those people in power who mislead and deceive their followers about the true nature of things cause chaos, just like what we saw on January 6, 2021. As Muslims we possess a transnational identity that frowns upon an “us vs them” philosophy defined by our cultural or ethnic bearings. We are one in service to Allah. As this community of believers with a like mind, when we look to the Quran, in the second chapter, Surah al Baqara, we find in the eleventh verse, that Allah teaches the Muslims about the behavior of the hypocrites

***When they are told, “Do not spread corruption in the land,” they reply, “We are only peace-makers!”***

(Quran 2:11)

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was reported to have warned the believers that, “The signs of a hypocrite are three: Whenever he speaks, he tells a lie; and whenever he promises, he breaks his promise; and whenever he is entrusted, he betrays (proves to be dishonest)” (Sahih Al-Bukhari – Book 73 Hadith 117).

Islamic teaching forbids all forms of treachery and rebellion, even if it is against our own nation. Insurgencies threaten the natural peace and security of our fellow citizens.  Misguided loyalties, xenophobia, hypocrisy, and disloyalty severely compromise the guarantee of a shared freedom space within a nation. With that being the case, the citizens of a nation need to uphold honesty, morality, patience, and obedience to the laws of the land. For Muslims, we are guided and taught how to be good citizens.

Obey Those In Authority Over You

The Quran states:

***“O ye who believe, obey God and obey the Prophet and obey those in authority from among you”***

(4:60)
Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared: “Whoso obeys the ruler obeys me, and whoso disobeys the ruler disobeys me” (Muslim).

Stay steadfast in honoring the best way of life and fight against oppression and wrongdoing.

*“You who have believed, whoever of you should revert from his religion – Allah will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who will love Him, who are humble toward the believers, steadfast against the disbelievers; they strive in the cause of Allah and do not fear the blame of a critic. That is the favor of Allah; He bestows it upon whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing*.”

(5:54)

Anas ibn Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or is being oppressed.” It was said, “O Messenger of Allah, we help the oppressed, but how do we help an oppressor?” The Prophet said, “By seizing his hand.”  (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 2444, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2584).

The distrust and chaos that has gripped some members of this nation is tragic. The word “patriot” actually is not English, but rather derives from French, with roots in fatherhood and familial relationships. This kinship is bound by shared existence and values. A patriot defends the rights of others and supports and loves his or her fellow citizens.

The Islamic concept of “Al-Walaa” which means support, loyalty, or “to follow” means unwavering allegiance and obedience to Allah and whatever is pleasing to Him. As we fulfill this aspect of our*Iman*(faith)and*Ibadah* (worship), we also embrace connectedness and closeness with each other and an obligation to each other. The understanding of how to maintain trustworthiness and fealty within the Muslim Ummah is found in both the Quran and reported sayings of the Prophet.

Respect: Due Regard For The Feelings, Wishes, Rights, Or tRaditions Of Others

*“And the believing men and the believing women are friends and allies to each other. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and establish prayer and give charity and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah will have mercy upon them, for Allah is almighty and wise.”*

(Quran 9:71)

*The believers are but brothers, so reconcile between your brothers and fear Allah that you may receive mercy.*

 (Quran 49:10)

Protected From Harm From Another Muslim

The Prophet said: "The Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the people are safe, and the believer is the one from whom the people's lives and wealth are safe" (unan al-Nasā’ī 4998, Grade: Sahih)