Islam is the world’s second largest religion with about 1.8 billion followers. **Muslims** are people who follow Islam.

Muslims believe in **Allah** (the Arabic name for ‘God’) who created everything.

**Muhammad** (a messenger of Allah), is seen as the final prophet following Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and others.

It is believed that Muhammad founded the faith of Islam about 1,400 years ago. The holy book is called the **Holy Qur’an**.

A **mosque** is a place designed for worship.

**Ummah** is the worldwide community of Muslims.

### The Five Pillars

The framework by which Muslims must live their lives.

- **Shahadah** - Faith (Declaration of faith) ‘There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger.’
- **Salah** - Prayer. It is their duty to pray to Allah five times each day.
- **Zakah** - Giving money to charity.
- **Sawm** - Fasting during the month of Ramadan.
- **Hajj** - Pilgrimage to **Makkah** for those who are able, where the Prophet Muhammad was born.
Rites of Passage

Birth - At birth many Muslims will speak the words of the Adhan (call to prayer) in the ear of a baby so Allah is present in their life from the start. There is an Aqiqah ceremony on the seventh day after birth. The baby is given a name, their hair will be shaved and the equivalent weight of gold or silver given to charity and gifts given to the parents.

Marriage - Nikah. Marriage is expected for all Muslims. It is intended to be:
• for the mutual love and support of the husband and wife
• raising of children
• to support a stable society

Marriage celebrations are traditionally simple events performed at the bride's home and led by a respected member of the Muslim community.

Death - When a person is dying, if they are able to, they should say the Shahadah. For a Muslim, death is the end of life on Earth but not the end of a person's existence. Akhirah is the Muslim belief in life after death. When a person dies, Muslims believe they enter an intermediate phase in the grave, waiting for Day of Judgement, when Allah will raise the body.

Greater Jihad

The spiritual struggle or effort of every Muslim to follow the teachings of Allah in their own lives e.g. overcoming anger, greed, pride, working for social justice etc. is called ‘Greater Jihad’.

Muslims believe Allah will judge them when they die and weigh up the good things they have done against the not so good. This judgement will determine whether they go to heaven after they die.