



In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Council on American-Islamic Relations  
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# Ramadan Publicity Resource Kit

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Dear Imam, activist, community leader, committee, brother or sister:

*Salaam Alaykum.* Peace to you.

This resource kit has been developed to assist your community in publicizing Ramadan events and activities. It is designed to provide you with the raw materials with which you can contact the media and, through them, the non-Muslim community in your area.

**HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE KIT:**

1. Read the "Ramadan Publicity Campaign Summary and Tips" provided in this kit. You will probably not achieve all these objectives, but the list will give you an idea of what is possible. Also study the "Talking Points" at the bottom of that page. These are the key points you will want to pass on to non-Muslims.
2. Photocopy pages such as "Ramadan Q&A," "Facts About Ramadan" and "Islam in America - The Facts." These pages can be distributed in the materials you send to the media and hand out at open houses. The announcement for Ramadan will be sent to national and regional media by CAIR, but the local communities should make contact with local media. (Call CAIR if you need a local list of media addresses and phone numbers.)
3. Re-type the "Media Advisory" and the "Public Service Announcement" on your group's letterhead. If this is too difficult, you may just fill in the blanks on the originals and send them that way. This is not the best approach, but it is better than nothing. NOTE - If you would like these materials on computer disk (Microsoft Word 6.0) send a blank disk and a self-addressed stamped envelope to CAIR at the above address. The text can also be downloaded from MSA Net.
4. Print copies of the Mosque Open House brochure for distribution at your Islamic center's event.
5. Distribute your announcements to the media no later than **TWO WEEKS** before any event.
6. Make phone calls to follow up with editors, producers, talk show hosts, etc.
7. Call CAIR if you have any questions, or if you do not understand any part of the Resource Kit.
8. Clip news articles and record TV items. Send clear copies to CAIR.

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## RAMADAN PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN SUMMARY AND TIPS

### Objectives

**Newspapers (Each editor needs to be contacted individually by phone and fax or mail.)**

- Feature article on Muslim community - Contact "Feature Editor" and "Religion Editor"
- Food section article on Ramadan recipes - Contact "Food Editor"
- Calendar items on open house and Eid prayers - Contact "Community Calendar Editor" and "Religion Calendar Editor"
- Letters to the editor about true image of American Muslims - Contact "Letters Editor"
- Opinion articles about stereotyping of Muslims - Contact "Editorial Page Editor"
- Photograph of Eid prayers and/or Eid bazaar - Contact "City Desk" and "Photo Editor"

### **Television**

- News package (approx. 1.5 minutes in length) about local Muslim community and Ramadan - Contact "News Assignment Editor"
- 30 second video item on Eid prayers/open house/bazaar - Contact "News Assignment Editor"
- Announcements at beginning of Ramadan and time of sunset each day - Contact "Meteorologists" and "Anchors"
- Daily "Ramadan" announcements - Contact "Public Service Director"

### **Radio**

- Talk show appearances by community leaders discussing Ramadan - Contact "Show Producer"
- Public Service Announcements (free announcements by radio station) of Ramadan activities - Contact "Public Service Director"

### **Schools**

- Lectures on Ramadan in religion and social studies classes
- Bringing Eid treats to co-workers and classmates of Muslim students
- Convincing school administrators to allow Muslim students to attend Eid prayers and adjust homework load

### **Hospitals**

- Visiting sick Muslims
- Discussing Ramadan needs of Muslim patients with administrators

### **Other**

- Delivery of iftar meals to the homeless and canned food drives for the needy

### **Messages or "Talking Points" to be Used When Communicating with Non-Muslims**

- Muslims are a growing segment of American society.
- Muslims are productive members of the society who contribute much to the general welfare.
- Islam is a belief system that has much to offer in terms of providing solutions to problems such as crime, drug abuse and family disintegration.
- Muslims are reaching out to people of other faiths to help them better understand the Islamic community in America.

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## STEPS TO TAKE

- 1) Form a local committee to handle publicity for Ramadan activities. Make sure the committee has representatives from all local communities. Do not waste time and energy setting up a formal structure. Just choose a coordinator and include people who are willing to do the work.
- 2) This committee should have a name such as Seattle Ramadan Information Committee, etc.
- 3) Decide which activities your community will undertake. The main suggestions are:
  - Ramadan "Taste of Islam" open house at the Islamic Center
  - Eid Bazaar
  - Public lectures on Ramadan and Islamic solutions for societal problems
  - School presentations by parents and students
  - Iftars for the homeless
  - Canned food drive
  - Eid treats for non-Muslim classmates
- 4) To publicize these events, modify the attached materials for your own organization's use. Use these materials when contacting the people listed in the "objectives" section. To find the phone and fax numbers for these people, just call the media outlet in question and ask. You may also call CAIR at 202-638-6340, to ask for a customized local media list with the names, addresses and phone numbers of the media in your area. Use your "talking points" whenever communicating with the media.
- 5) **TIMING** - Don't wait until Ramadan to start calling faxing and mailing materials to the media. Calendar editors need at least two weeks lead time to publish an item. Feature editors and others need at least that long to develop and schedule stories. Public service announcements also need time to be approved and scheduled. Make initial contact as soon as you can and then follow up with phone calls to the same people a couple of days before each activity. When you make calls close to the day of any event, focus on the television news assignment editors and newspaper city and photo editors.
- 6) **IMPORTANT** - Make sure you send a copy of all your announcements and news releases to the ASSOCIATED PRESS "DAYBOOK" EDITOR at the Associated Press office in your area or in the nearest large city.
- 7) Clip copies of any news articles and tape any broadcast reports. Send copies of these to: CAIR, 511 K Street, N.W., Suite 807, Washington, D.C., 20005

0012 0073



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 3, 1995

## American Muslims to Begin Month-Long Fast of Ramadan

WASHINGTON, D.C. - On February 1\*, the Muslim community in America and around the world will begin the month-long fast of Ramadan (rom-a-don). Ramadan is the month on the Islamic lunar calendar during which Muslims abstain from food, drink and other sensual pleasures from dawn to sunset.

The fast of Ramadan is performed in order to learn discipline, self-restraint and generosity while obeying God's commandments. Fasting (along with the declaration of faith, daily prayer, charity and pilgrimage to Mecca) is one of the "five pillars" of the Islamic faith. Those exempted from fasting include young children, the elderly, travelers, the sick and pregnant or nursing women.

Throughout the month, Muslims participate in special prayers and exchange visits for sunset meals, or *iftars*. Individual families gather for *suhoor* (sa-hoor) the pre-dawn meal. Each part of the Muslim world has its own special foods that are eaten during Ramadan.

Muslims are encouraged to read or recite the entire Quran, Islam's revealed text, during Ramadan. When able, some Muslims follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad and retire to mosques for spiritual contemplation during the last 10 days of the month. Muslims also mark one of the last odd-numbered nights of the Ramadan as *Lailat ul-Qadr* (lie-lat-al-codder), or "night of majesty," the night Muhammad first received revelation from God.

When the fast of Ramadan is completed, the entire community gathers for communal prayers on the first day of the three-day *Eid ul-Fitr* (eed-al-fitter) holiday. During Ramadan or just before "Eid," Muslim heads of households donate a small sum in charity to help those in need enjoy the holiday.

-END-

**Note** - Because the beginning of Islamic lunar months depends on the actual sighting of the new moon; the start date for Ramadan may occur as late as February 2.

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## FACTS ABOUT RAMADAN

### **Period of Fasting**

- From the break of dawn to just after sunset each day during the month
- Ramadan may last either 29 or 30 days.

### **Who Must Fast?**

- Fasting is compulsory for those who are mentally and physically fit, past the age of puberty, in a settled situation (not traveling) and are sure fasting is unlikely to cause real physical or mental injury

### **Exemptions from Fasting**

- Children under the age of puberty (Young children are encouraged to fast as much as they are able.)
- People who are mentally incapacitated or not responsible for their actions
- Those who are too old or feeble to fast
- The sick
- Travelers who are on journeys of more than about fifty miles
- Pregnant women and nursing mothers (optional)
- Women who are menstruating
- Those who are temporarily unable to fast must make up the missed days at another time.

### **Special Events**

- Special prayers, called *taraweeh*, are performed after the daily nighttime prayer.

### **Traditional Practices**

- Breaking the daily fast with a drink of water and three dates
- Reading the entire Quran during Ramadan (for this purpose, the Quran is divided into 30 units, one for each day of the month).
- Social visits are encouraged.

### **Other Prohibited Actions**

- Those who are fasting should not raise their voices in anger.

### **Eid ul-Fitr ("Festival of Fast-Breaking") Prayers at the End of Ramadan**

- Eid begins with special morning prayers on the first day of Shawwal, the month following Ramadan on the Islamic lunar calendar, and lasts for three days.

It is forbidden to perform an optional fast during Eid because it is a time for relaxation.

- During Eid Muslims greet each other with the phrase "Eid Mubarak" (eed-moo-bar-ak), meaning "blessed Eid."

0012 0075

## Ramadan Q&A

**Q: How did the fast during Ramadan become obligatory for Muslims?**

A: The revelations from God to the Prophet Muhammad that would eventually be compiled as the Quran began during Ramadan in the year 610, but the fast of Ramadan did not become a religious obligation for Muslims until the year 624. The obligation to fast is explained in the second chapter of the Quran:

*"O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint... Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Quran, as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). So every one of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting..."* (Chapter 2, verses 183 and 185)

**Q: What do Muslims believe they gain from fasting?**

A: The main benefits of Ramadan are an increased compassion for those in need of the necessities of life, a sense of self-purification and reflection and a renewed focus on spirituality. Muslims also appreciate the feeling of togetherness shared by family and friends throughout the month. Perhaps the greatest practical benefit is the yearly lesson in self-restraint and discipline that can carry forward to other aspects of a Muslim's life such as work and education.

**Q: Do people normally lose weight during Ramadan?**

A: Some people do lose weight, but others may not. It is recommended that meals eaten during Ramadan be light, but most people can't resist sampling special sweets and foods associated with Ramadan.

**Q: Why does Ramadan begin on a different day each year?**

A: Because Ramadan is a lunar month, it begins about eleven days earlier each year. Throughout a Muslim's lifetime, Ramadan will fall both during winter months, when the days are short, and summer months, when the days are long and the fast is more difficult. In this way, the difficulty of the fast is evenly distributed between Muslims living in the northern and southern hemispheres.

**Q: What is Lailat ul-Qadr?**

A: *Lailat ul-Qadr* ("Night of Majesty") marks the anniversary of the night on which the Prophet Muhammad first began receiving revelations from God, through the angel Gabriel. An entire chapter in the Quran deals with this night: *"We have indeed revealed this (Message) in the Night of Majesty; and what will explain to thee what the Night of Majesty is? The Night of Majesty is better than a thousand months. Therein come down the angels and the Spirit by God's permission, on every errand. Peace!... This until the rise of morn."* (Chapter 97) Muslims believe *Lailat ul-Qadr* is one of the last odd-numbered nights of Ramadan.

**Q: Isn't it difficult to perform the fast in America?**

A: In many ways, fasting in American society is easier than fasting in areas where the climate is extremely hot. This year at least, the number of daylight hours will be less than when Ramadan occurs during the spring or summer. The difference is that in Muslim countries, work days are shortened and a slight decrease in productivity is considered normal. Because most people are observing the fast in Muslim countries, there are also fewer temptations such as luncheon meetings, daytime celebrations and offers of food from friends. Many Muslims would prefer a daytime work shift during Ramadan so that they may break the fast with their families and attend evening prayers.

**Q: How can non-Muslim co-workers and friends help someone who is fasting?**

A: Employers, co-workers and teachers can help by understanding the significance of Ramadan and by showing a willingness to make minor allowances for its physical demands. Special consideration can be given to such things as requests for vacation time, the need for flexible early morning or evening work schedules and lighter homework assignments. It is also very important that Muslim workers and students be given time to attend Eid prayers at the end of Ramadan. Eid is as important to Muslims as Christmas and Yom Kippur are to Christians and Jews. A small token such as a card (There are Eid cards available from Muslim bookstores) or baked goods given to a Muslim co-worker during *Eid ul-Fitr* would also be greatly appreciated. Hospital workers should also be aware that injections and oral medications break the fast. Patients should be given the opportunity to decide whether or not their condition exempts them from fasting.

0012 0076

**(Insert Your Local Organization Name and Address Here)**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January \_\_, 1995

----- **MEDIA ADVISORY** -----

**Local Muslims Celebrate End of Month-Long Fast  
with Prayers and Multicultural Bazaar**

**What:** On March 2, the Muslim community in \_\_\_\_\_ will celebrate the end of the month-long fast of Ramadan with communal prayers and a multicultural bazaar. Ramadan is the month on the Islamic lunar calendar during which Muslims abstain from food, drink and other sensual pleasures from break-of-dawn to sunset.

The prayers mark the beginning of the three-day *Eid ul-Fitr* (eed-al-fitter) holiday, in which Muslims exchange social visits and seek to strengthen bonds of brotherhood in the community. During this holiday, Muslims greet each other by saying "Eid mubarak" (eed-moo-bar-ak), or "blessed Eid."

The multicultural bazaar will feature games for children, Islamic books and clothing, and foods from around the Muslim world. The bazaar is free and open to the public. People of all faiths are encouraged to attend and sample the diversity of Islamic culture. (Note - Islam is the fastest growing religion in this country and around the world. There are \_\_\_\_\_ Muslims in \_\_\_\_\_ and some 1.2 billion worldwide.)

**When:** **March 2**  
Community gathers at \_\_\_\_ a.m.  
Prayers begin at \_\_\_\_ a.m.  
Bazaar opens at \_\_\_\_ a.m. and lasts until \_\_\_\_ p.m.

**Where:** Prayers - Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bazaar - Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact:** For more information, call \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ (not for publication), or call \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ (for publication).

**Photo Opportunity:** Each year, Muslims from America and many different countries come to the prayers in the colorful dress. The prayers themselves are quite visual, with worshipers arranged in neat rows and bowing in prayer in unison. Participants exchange embraces at the conclusion of the prayers.

**Note:** **Because this is a religious service, reporters and photographers of both sexes should dress modestly.** That means no shorts for men or short skirts for women. Female reporters and photographers may be asked to put a scarf over their hair while in the actual prayer area. Photographers should arrive by \_\_\_\_ a.m. to get into position for the best shots. Photographers are advised not to step directly in front of worshipers and to ask permission for close-up shots.

-END-

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In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

**(Insert Your Local Organization Name and Address Here)**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January \_\_, 1995

**--- PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT ---**

**Local Muslim Community Holds Mosque Open House**

"A Taste of Islam" organizers seek to increase understanding between faiths

**What:** On Saturday, February \_\_, the Muslim community in \_\_\_\_\_ will hold an open house offering people of other faiths an introduction to Islamic culture. The free event, called "A TASTE OF ISLAM," will feature displays of Islamic handicrafts, clothing and books as well as samples of foods from around the Muslim world. The open house is designed to help people of all faiths gain a better understanding of the positive role Islam can play in American society.

Demographers now say Islam is the fastest growing religion in this country and around the world. There are \_\_\_\_\_ Muslims in \_\_\_\_\_ and some 1.2 billion worldwide.)

**When:** Saturday, February \_\_  
6-9 p.m.

**Where:** Location:  
Address:  
Directions:

**Contact:** For more information, call \_\_\_\_\_.

-END-

0012 0078

Sample Script for Phone Conversations With the Media

**You speaking to receptionist at newspaper:**

"HELLO...COULD I HAVE THE NAME AND DIRECT PHONE NUMBER OF THE FOOD EDITOR (OR RELIGION EDITOR, ASSIGNMENT EDITOR, ETC.)?"

**Operator:**

"YES THE FOOD EDITOR'S NAME IS MARY SMITH...HER DIRECT LINE IS 543-1234...WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO CONNECT YOU?"

**You:**

"YES"

**Food Editor:**

"THIS IS MARY SMITH..."

**You:**

"YES...MY NAME IS ANISA ABDULLAH...I AM A MEMBER OF THE SEATTLE RAMADAN INFORMATION COMMITTEE...OUR COMMITTEE THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN DOING A STORY ABOUT THE SPECIAL FOODS MUSLIMS ENJOY DURING THE UPCOMING MONTH OF RAMADAN...ARE YOU AWARE OF WHAT RAMADAN IS?"

**Food Editor:**

"YES...I KNOW A LITTLE ABOUT THE FAST OF RAMADAN AND MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN DOING SOMETHING WITH IT...CAN YOU SEND ME SOME INFORMATION?"

**You:**

"YES...I HAVE FACT SHEETS AND BACKGROUND MATERIAL DEALING WITH RAMADAN...I CAN ALSO PUT YOU IN TOUCH WITH MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY WHO COULD PROVIDE RECIPES FOR RAMADAN SPECIALTIES FROM AROUND THE MUSLIM WORLD."

**Food Editor:**

"THAT'S GREAT...SEND ME THE MATERIAL AND I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO"

**You:**

"I'LL SEND IT OUT TODAY...OR I COULD FAX IT TO YOU IF YOU WOULD PREFER...I'LL ALSO CALL BACK IN ABOUT A WEEK TO SEE WHAT YOU THINK OF THE MATERIALS..."

0012 0079