

Witnessing to Muslims

Leading Muslims to Christ is possible when Christians are sensitive to Muslim culture and religion. The following tips will help.

General principles

1. **Prayer.** Pray for Muslim friends and acquaintances. Everything we do depends on the intervention of the Holy Spirit.

2. **Have a specific goal.** God wants to use us to make Jesus Christ known to Muslims through the gospel, so focus on making the gospel message understandable and accessible.

3. **Be open to personal and human contact.** We must love Muslims sincerely, manifesting our love through kindness and respect in relationship with them. Sharing faith in the context of friendship requires time to understand and appreciate our Muslim friends.

4. **Be patient.** We can speak freely of our faith, but most Muslims will need to hear us many times before

they even begin to consider believing in Christ. Do not be discouraged by objections.

5. **Explain the gospel in a very simple manner.** Don't get lost in "Christian-ese." Explain terms such as sin, prayer, God, Son of God and faith.

6. **Give your friend a New Testament or a Bible.** Reading these books gives Muslims new perspectives on Christianity. Encourage a regular reading of the Gospels.

7. **Emphasize God's perfect holiness.** Muslims and Christians agree that God calls for righteousness. But Christians acknowledge human unrighteousness and slavery to sinful attitudes. Only a new birth can change this, not education or moral action.

8. **Speak of God's interventions in our own lives.** Tell of His faithfulness, His love, His justice. Muslims do not understand God as one who gives and keeps promises. Your testimony of a real and active faith is very important.

9. **Answer objections with kindness.** Do not let yourself be carried away into passionate discussions.

10. **Do not be naïve if our Muslim friends express a belief in Jesus Christ and the Bible. Muslims do believe in Jesus and the Bible.**

But their faith is different from what the Bible teaches, particularly concerning a living relationship with God as we believe. Jesus said that eternal life is to know God (John 17:3); this refers not merely to knowing certain things about God, but to know Him personally.



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What should we avoid?

1. Do not attack the person of Mohammed, but do not accept him as a prophet either.
2. Do not criticize the Qur'an.
3. Avoid politically-sensitive subjects and praising Israel.
4. Do not insist on Jesus as being the Son of God. A Muslim will not understand or accept this affirmation. Later, when he has read the Bible or the gospels, you can give him the necessary explanations.
5. Do not enter into discussions about pork and wine. We, as Christians, are sent to proclaim Jesus.



Specific guidelines

1. **Begin with areas of agreement.** Explore common beliefs, such as the belief in one God, the God of Abraham. (Both Muslims and Christian Arabs use the Arabic word for God, or Allah.) Other common beliefs: God made the world; He knows all things; He is just and almighty; there are angels and demons; there will be a last judgment; and Allah spoke through prophets such as Abraham, Moses, David, Noah and Jesus. We can agree on these points while not ignoring important differences. For example: Muslims do not believe in the

Trinity. Muslims often feel rejected by Westerners, affirming our common beliefs builds bridges, promotes understanding, and leads to greater openness.

2. **Present Christ in a simple and clear manner.** For instance, take a passage of the Bible. John 5:24 and Romans 6:23 have been used with good results.
3. **Use stories.** Muslims often use stories in speaking about their own faith, so tell stories about the life of Jesus and other men and women in the Bible. Learn to use parables, stories and examples from your own daily life to share your message. In this way your Muslim friends will also retain your words better.
4. **Cultural sensitivity.** It is important to understand Muslims' culture, their ways of thinking, and their historic and religious background. Learning Arabic is also very useful.
5. **Literature.** Keep an assortment of Gospels, the "Jesus" film, cassettes, CDs and DVDs available in various languages.
6. **Seek them out.** Do not be afraid to visit them in their homes and invite them to your own home. If you invite them for a meal buy your meat in a Muslim butcher shop or serve fish. Do not serve alcoholic beverages to Muslims.
7. **Don't argue.** You have little chance of convincing Muslims by reasoned argument. Western logic does not carry the same weight with Muslims and may not even be understood by them. Love your Muslims friends and avoid getting into disagreements that will push them to defend Islam.
7. **The Qur'an.** You may read it, but do not necessarily use this as the basis of witness. Muslims need to meet the Jesus who is revealed in the Bible. If you reads the Qur'an or

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visit a mosque it is advisable to pray for God's protection and understanding (Eph 6:10–18).

8. **Men witness to men and women to women.** Extended witness across gender lines is discouraged, even by correspondence.

9. **Prepare them for their first visit to church.** It is advisable to prepare Muslims for their first visit to a Christian church or gathering. You need to explain to them briefly what will happen and what they should and should not do.

Muslim opposition to Christianity

When you witness to Muslims they will probably raise objections which form the basis of their conviction that the Christian faith is unacceptable for them. Christians need to know about these objections and be prepared to deal with them correctly.

Common problems

1. **The Bible.** Muslims believe that the Bible has been altered and corrupted. They will deny its authority because they see it as not being authentic.

2. **The Trinity.** Muslims believe the Holy Trinity implies a belief in three gods. Many Muslims believe that the Christian Trinity is made up of the Father, Mary (the virgin) and the Son (Jesus).

3. **The divinity of Jesus.** They believe it is blasphemy to affirm the divinity of Jesus and to give Him the title "Son of God". Many believe this implies that God had sexual relations with Mary and that a son was born physically through this relationship

4. **The cross.** Muslims believe it is impossible that God would allow His prophet Jesus to die on the cross. For Muslims, the cross is scandalous and foolish. One should not speak of the cross without speaking of the resurrection. Christ was victorious over sin, death and the devil.

5. **Knowing God.** Muslims believe that God is the God of Abraham, but also that God will not allow people to draw near to Himself or know Him in the Christian sense.

6. **Christian deception.** Muslims believe that Christians are deceived and must convert to Islam. For many Muslims, the word "Christian" equals "Western," which means corrupt materialism, a lack of spirituality, moral failure, sexual perversion, alcohol abuse, pornography, and superficial religious practice. On the other hand, many Muslims do not practice their own religion. They find themselves torn between Islam and Western culture.

Relationships between Muslims and Westerners often exhibit tension, suspicion, rejection, feelings of injustice, and possibly hatred. The differences between the two cultures are the cause of many problems and misunderstandings. May God cause Christians to become people who make peace (Matt 5:9).

