



— GET TO KNOW ISLAM

# Your first 30 days as a Muslim

Welcome. This booklet walks you through the first practical steps: washing for prayer, the five daily prayers, learning Al-Fatihah, and finding your place in a community. Take it one step at a time.

[gettoknowislam.com/library/](https://gettoknowislam.com/library/)

Free to share unchanged and free of charge · CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

# Contents

**1** Welcome: one step at a time

---

**2** A fresh start: the full bath (ghusl)

---

**3** Wudu: washing before prayer

---

**4** The five daily prayers

---

**5** How to pray two units (rak'ahs), step by step

---

**6** Learning Al-Fatihah

---

**7** Al-Fatihah (The Opening)

---

**8** Friday, Ramadan and community

---

**9** Food and everyday life

---

**10** When it feels hard

---

**11** A simple 30-day plan

---

**12** Why do Muslims wash before prayer?

---

**13** Why do Muslims pray in Arabic if they don't speak it?

---

**14** Do children, the sick, and pregnant women fast in Ramadan?

---

# Welcome: one step at a time

Becoming Muslim is the beginning of a path, not an exam you must pass on the first day. The Prophet said: “Make things easy for people and do not make them difficult; give good news and do not drive people away” (Bukhari 69).

The Qur’an says that God does not burden a soul beyond what it can bear (Qur’an 2:286). Learn a little at a time, ask questions, and be patient with yourself.

Your past is not held against you. The Prophet told a companion who was worried about his past that accepting Islam wipes out what came before it (Muslim 121).

## A fresh start: the full bath (ghusl)

When Qays ibn ‘Asim accepted Islam, the Prophet told him to take a bath (Abu Dawud 355; Tirmidhi 605). Scholars differ on whether this bath is required or recommended for someone becoming Muslim, but they agree that it is a good way to begin, and that the testimony of faith does not depend on it.

The Prophet’s bath is described like this: he washed his hands, performed wudu as for prayer, then poured water over his head and the whole of his body (Bukhari 248). Make sure the water reaches all of the skin and hair. A short intention in your heart is enough.

## Wudu: washing before prayer

Prayer needs ritual purity. The Prophet said that the prayer of someone who has broken their wudu is not accepted until they perform wudu again (Bukhari 135).

The Qur’an names the essential parts: wash the face, wash the arms up to the elbows, wipe the head, and wash the feet up to the ankles (Qur’an 5:6).

The Prophet’s complete wudu, as ‘Uthman showed it, goes in this order: wash the hands three times, rinse the mouth and nose three times, wash the face three times, wash each arm up to the elbow three times starting with the right, wipe the head, then wash each foot up to the ankle three times starting with the right (Bukhari 159). Begin with “Bismillah”, in the name of God.

Wudu is broken by using the toilet, passing wind and deep sleep. Scholars differ about a few other things, so ask a teacher at your local mosque.

# The five daily prayers

Prayer “has been decreed upon the believers at specified times” (Qur’an 4:103). The five prayers are Fajr at dawn (2 units), Dhuhr after midday (4 units), ‘Asr in the afternoon (4 units), Maghrib just after sunset (3 units) and ‘Isha at night (4 units).

Times change with the sun and the seasons. Use a timetable from a local mosque or a trusted prayer app.

Before praying, make sure your body, clothes and place are clean, and face the qiblah, the direction of the Ka’bah in Mecca. Men cover at least from the navel to the knees; women cover the whole body except the face and hands.

## How to pray two units (rak‘ahs), step by step

The Prophet said: “Pray as you have seen me praying” (Bukhari 631). When he taught a man who prayed hastily, he described the steps below and told him to be calm in each position (Bukhari 757).

1. Stand facing the qiblah and make the intention in your heart. 2. Raise your hands and say “Allahu akbar” (God is greater). 3. Recite Al-Fatihah, then a short passage of the Qur’an. Al-Fatihah is essential in every unit (Bukhari 756).
4. Bow with your hands on your knees and say “Subhana rabbiyal-‘azim” (Glory be to my Lord, the Most Great). 5. Stand up again. 6. Prostrate with your forehead, nose, palms, knees and toes on the ground and say “Subhana rabbiyal-a’la” (Glory be to my Lord, the Most High) (Muslim 772). 7. Sit up briefly, then prostrate a second time.
8. Stand for the second unit and repeat steps 3 to 7. 9. Then sit and recite the tashahhud, the testimony taught by the Prophet (Bukhari 831). 10. End by turning your head to the right and then to the left, saying “As-salamu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullah” (Muslim 582).

For prayers of three or four units, sit for the tashahhud after the second unit, then stand for the remaining units, usually reciting only Al-Fatihah in them. Small details, such as where to place the hands, differ between the schools of law; each follows the Prophet’s example in its own way.

## Learning Al-Fatihah

Al-Fatihah is seven short verses. Its Arabic text and meaning are on the next page.

Pronunciation: Bismillāhir-raḥmānir-raḥīm. Al-ḥamdu lillāhi rabbil-‘ālamīn. Ar-raḥmānir-raḥīm. Māliki yawmid-dīn. Iyyāka na‘budu wa iyyāka nasta‘īn. Ihdinaṣ-ṣirāṭal-mustaqīm. Ṣirāṭal-ladhīna an‘amta ‘alayhim, ghayril-maghḍūbi ‘alayhim wa laḍ-ḍāllīn.

Until you have learned it, do not wait to start praying. A man once told the Prophet he could not memorise any of the Qur’an, and he taught him to say instead: “SubhanAllah, Alhamdulillah, La ilaha illallah, Allahu akbar” (Abu Dawud 832). Many new Muslims also pray while reading from a card.

# Al-Fatihah (The Opening)

1 بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

---

2 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds,

---

3 الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful,

---

4 مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

Master of the Day of Judgment.

---

5 إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help.

---

6 اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

Guide us to the straight path,

---

7 صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

the path of those whom You have blessed; not of those who incurred Your Wrath, or of those who went astray.

---

Translation: Rowwad Translation Center (QuranEnc)

# Friday, Ramadan and community

On Fridays, Muslims gather for the midday congregational prayer and a short sermon (Qur'an 62:9). It is required for men and open to women.

Find a mosque near you and ask whether it runs classes or support for new Muslims. Many do, and you will be welcomed.

When Ramadan comes, the fast is from dawn to sunset. People who are ill or travelling may make up the days later (Qur'an 2:184–185), and scholars also exempt women who are pregnant or nursing if fasting could harm them, and women during menstruation. Ask your community about iftar gatherings: they are a wonderful way to meet people.

## Food and everyday life

Muslims avoid pork, alcohol and meat not slaughtered in the permitted way (Qur'an 5:3; 5:90). Most other foods are permitted.

Before eating, say “Bismillah” and eat with your right hand (Bukhari 5376). Small habits like these bring remembrance of God into ordinary moments.

## When it feels hard

Questions and doubts are normal, especially at the beginning. Keep learning, keep praying, and talk to people you trust.

Stay kind to your family, even if they do not share your faith. The Qur'an tells believers to keep company with their parents in this world with kindness (Qur'an 31:15).

If you slip, turn back to God. His mercy is wider than any mistake.

## A simple 30-day plan

Week 1: say the shahadah, take the bath, learn wudu and read the meaning of Al-Fatihah.

Week 2: start praying, reading from a card if you need to. Begin with the prayers you can manage and build up.

Week 3: aim for all five daily prayers, and learn the first verses of Al-Fatihah by heart.

Week 4: join a Friday prayer, introduce yourself at the mosque, and keep one small daily habit of remembrance.

## Why do Muslims wash before prayer?

Before formal prayer Muslims perform wudu: washing the hands, mouth, nose, face, arms to the elbows, wiping the head, and washing the feet. Qur'an 5:6 prescribes it. Wudu remains valid until broken by using the toilet, passing wind, deep sleep, and similar things, so a person does not necessarily wash before every prayer.

Washing marks a transition from ordinary activity to worship and expresses the idea that one approaches God clean in body as well as intention. Where water is unavailable or harmful to use, a symbolic cleansing with clean earth, tayammum, takes its place. A fuller bath, ghusl, is required after sexual activity, menstruation, and before Friday prayer by recommendation.

**Sources & further reading:** Qur'an 5:6 · Sahih al-Bukhari 135

## Why do Muslims pray in Arabic if they don't speak it?

The formal prayer, salah, includes recitation of the Qur'an, which Muslims believe is God's word in Arabic; reciting a translation would be reciting a human interpretation. The Arabic phrases needed for prayer are few and are learned early, with their meaning, so that a Muslim in Jakarta and one in Lagos pray in the same words.

Outside the formal prayer, Muslims speak to God in whatever language they think in. Supplication, du'a, has no required language, and most Muslims' most heartfelt prayers are in their mother tongue. Understanding what one recites is strongly encouraged, which is why translations and classes exist everywhere.

**Sources & further reading:** Qur'an 73:20 · Qur'an 2:186 · Qur'an 14:4

## Do children, the sick, and pregnant women fast in Ramadan?

Fasting is required of adults who are physically able. Qur'an 2:184–185 exempts the ill and travellers, who make up the days later, and says that God intends ease, not hardship. Tradition extends accommodation to pregnant and nursing women, the elderly and chronically ill, and women during menstruation. Those who can never fast may feed a person in need for each day instead.

Children are not required to fast until puberty, though many practise with shorter fasts as they grow older, often with pride. Anyone whose health would be harmed by fasting should not fast; doctors and religious teachers are consulted together. No one is expected to injure themselves in worship.

**Sources & further reading:** Qur'an 2:184–185 · Sahih al-Bukhari 1946



## **Keep exploring**

More guides, answers to common questions and a glossary are free at [gettoknowislam.com](https://gettoknowislam.com). You are welcome to print, copy and share this booklet unchanged and free of charge (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).

[gettoknowislam.com](https://gettoknowislam.com)