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## Islam For Life: A Model of An Effective Islamic Studies Program

“Islam for Life” is a model of teaching Islamic Studies that is designed by the Brighter Horizons Academy’s Islamic Studies Department in Dallas, Texas. This framework aims to provide the basis of effective learning of Islam in the classroom. The framework is supported by a curriculum and series of textbooks, workbooks and teacher guides.

### What Does “Islam for Life” Mean?

“Islam for Life” reflects the following philosophical beliefs:

1. Islam is way of life, not only a religion.
2. Islam provides a better meaning for life
3. Islam provides its followers a content and happy life in this world and the hereafter.
4. Islam is a life time commitment

### This is A “Tarbiyah” Framework

Viewing Islam as a way of life entails implementing its guidance and principles in our daily life. Living Islam, therefore, requires discipline and character building or Tarbiyah.

### Islamic “Tarbiyah” Defined

The **diligent effort** that parents and educators exert in order to develop a new practicing Muslim generation based on profound **Iman or faith**; It is the use of all available, legitimate means in order to Develop the **well-rounded Islamic character** of learners and **motivate** them to adopt **habits of success in this life and the next**.

### Goals of Islamic Education

- Raising well-rounded and coherent Islamic personalities able to achieve their full potential on earth.
- Developing a Nation of believers to function as a role model for mankind.
- Creating a prosperous Islamic human civilization.
- Fulfilling the objectives of Islamic values in daily life.
- AND..

The Ultimate Goal is...

*Paradise for All*

### The Cycle of Islamic “Tarbiyah”

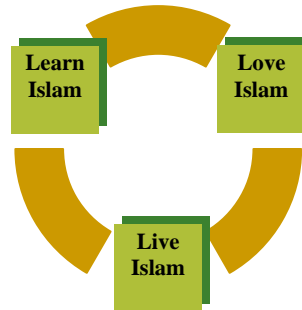
- Information Transfer
- Spiritual involvement
- Behavioral Change



## ‘Islam for Life’ Model

The Islam for Life model comprises three interrelated stages through which learners are encouraged to:

- Learn Islam
- Love Islam
- Live Islam



### Stage 1: Learn Islam

Instruction vs. Learning

**Teachers’ responsibility does not end at simply *instructing* students about Islamic concepts. Rather, this responsibility extends until the students actually learn, understand and internalize the concepts.**

Helping learners to internalize Islam through:

1. Presenting proper and *authentic* knowledge of Islamic tenets.
2. Appealing to multiple learning styles
3. Promoting *understanding* and comprehension.
  - Understanding develops in an environment that is:
    - Active
    - Engaging
    - Social
    - Authentic
    - Inquiry-Based
4. Demonstrating **application** of theoretical lessons in students’ daily life
5. Emphasis on students’ **Internalization of** Islamic principles and ethics
6. **Inclusive** approach to major schools of fiqh and thought and Avoidance of controversial issues
7. Laying out Islamic concepts in a **thematic** methodology.
8. **Integrating** other disciplines into Islamic studies and vice versa.
9. Proper **spiral scope and sequence**.
10. Dialogue, class discussion, debates, and various types of class interactions to achieve the educational objectives of this curriculum, and to create a **vibrant and rich educational atmosphere** in the classroom.
11. **Project-based** education to help students to retain and internalize their lessons in a motivating teamwork atmosphere.

## **Stage Two: Love Islam**

This is an essential element in teaching Islamic Studies. Islam is a character building subject where students need to develop an emotional link with every aspect of Islam. This heartily link would function as a motivational factor and encourage learners to implement various Islamic principles and practices. Islamic Studies curriculum should obviously aim to instill love in the heart of learners toward Allah, prophets, Qur'an, and Islamic principles in general. Following are some strategies that help create such an emotional link.

1. Heart Capturing Teacher
2. Role Model teachers and parents
3. Attractive and user friendly Books and Materials
4. Instructional techniques that encourage Strong *emotional connection* between the learner and Allah, Prophet Muhammad, Sahabah and Al-Qur'an.
5. Light but class work beneficial and homework
6. Strong Interaction with nature and the universe.
7. Strong Connection with the Muslim World

## **Stage Three: Living Islam**

Preparing Learners to Practice and Live Islam Through:

1. Emphasizing the wisdom and the *spirit* of Islamic principles and practices
2. Action oriented instruction
  - Iman & Love
  - Love & Obedience
  - Obedience & Action
  - Action & reward
3. Islamic Habits Formation
4. Creating an Environment Conducive to Practicing Islam
5. Rehearsal and Practice

## **Philosophical Framework**

### **ISLAM:**

- **The final message:** Islam is the final revealed divine message and the only remaining authentic religion for mankind.
- **The Perfect Way of Life:** Islam is the only perfect and comprehensive way of life that secures happiness, contentment, and satisfaction to man in this life and beyond.
- **The call to Peace and Justice:** Islam calls for purity, peace, justice and all high moral principles.
- **Faith and Action:** Islam is an action oriented religion and can only be fully observed when faith is demonstrated through daily life actions.
- **Comprehensive Guidance:** Islam guides spirituality, education, science and technology, economy, politics, law, entertainment, social affairs, and all other aspects of our life in an encompassing and integrated manner.
- **Success and Happiness:** Real success and happiness can be attained when succeeding in this life and in the hereafter, and that is what Islam aims to achieve.
- **“Islam First”:** Islam must be the Muslim’s first priority.
- **The Religion of Human Brotherhood:** Islam considers all human as equals. Racism and discrimination on the basis of race, color, or ethnicity is alien to Islam. Believers in Islam are brothers and sisters.
- **Mainstream approach:** This curriculum should adopt the Islamic beliefs and principles upheld by the mainstream world Muslim community.

## **Developing Islamic Studies Curriculum**

- The Dilemma
- Lack of Ideal and professional curriculum on Islamic Studies
- Brief Historical Background; Attempts at creating Islamic Studies Curriculum
- The Need for Islamic Studies curriculum and Materials
- Current Status

## **Developing Islamic Studies Curriculum/Textbooks**

- **Efforts of Islamic Services Foundation/Brighter Horizons Academy**
- **What has been done so far?**
- **Action Plan: The Road Ahead**
- **Team Members**

## **What makes our effort different?**

### **General Advantages**

- **Supportive organization**
- **Dedicated Team**
- **Qualified Professionals**
- **Field Testing Ability**
- **Cutting Edge Methodology**
- **American Context**

### **Production Process**

- Curriculum Design Stage
- Writing Stage
- Design and layout Stage
- Printing Stage
- Marketing Stage
- Evaluation Stage

### **How is this framework organized?**

This framework is organized into three consecutive stages; Primary, Middle, and High School levels:

<b>1-5: I Love Islam</b>
<b>6-8: Learning Islam</b>
<b>9-12: Living Islam</b>

### **Subjects in Primary and Middle school levels:**

- **Qur'an**
- **Sunnah**
- **Fiqh Al-Ibadat or the Jurisprudence of Worship**
- **Akhlaq or character education**
- **Iman or faith**
- **Prophets, Seerah or Early Islamic history**
- **Islam in America and around the world**

### **Courses in High School Level**

**Islamic Studies Curriculum of the high school level is organized in 8 courses of study. Students study one course in each semester, that is two courses in each academic year:**

1. ***Fiqh-ul-Ibadat* or the Jurisprudence of Worship**
2. ***Akhlaq* or character education**
3. ***Iman* or faith**
4. ***Seerah* or Early Islamic history**
5. ***Fiqh ul-Mu'amalat* or Jurisprudence of daily life**
6. ***Da'wa* or outreach ethics and techniques**
7. **Islam in America**
8. **Islam and contemporary issues.**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Course</b>
9th	<b>Fiqh Al-Ibadat or the Jurisprudence of Worship</b>
9th	<b>Akhlaq or character education</b>
10th	<b>Iman or faith</b>
10th	<b>Seerah or Early Islamic history</b>
11th	<b>Fiqh ul-Mu'amalat or Jurisprudence of daily life</b>
11th	<b>Da'wa or outreach ethics and techniques</b>
12th	<b>Islam in America</b>

12th **Islam and contemporary issues.**

### **Content Advantage**

Following is a general overview of curricular content students learn through the application of "Islam for Life" curricula:

#### **I. Qur'an**

- Memorizing and understanding around 4 Juz's or parts of the Qur'an
  - Ahkam-ut-Tajweed
  - History of Qur'an revelation and documentation
  - Basics of Oloomul-Qur'an

#### **II. Sunnah**

- Memorizing and understanding of more than 300 Hadeeth and Dua'as
- History of Hadeeth Documentation
- Basics of Oloomul-Hadith

#### **III. Faith**

- Articles of Faith
- 99 names of Allah
- 25 prophets of Allah
- 70+ Shu'abul-Iman, branches of faith

#### **IV. Fiqh**

- Fiqhul-Ibadat: Pillars of Islam
- Daily Life Jurisprudence
  - Major practical Fiqh topics (Marriage and family
- law, Business transactions and ethics, Criminal justice, etc.
  - Major Sins, Kaba'ir
- History of Islamic Jurisprudence Development

- Basics Usoolul-Fiqh Principles
- Maqasid Al-Shari'ah, the aims of Islamic

## **V. Seerah**

### **Details and lessons of the Seerah**

- Profiles of Al-Khulafa' Ar-Rashideen
- Major Sahabah profiles
- Major Muslim scholars and reformers

## **VI. Islamic ethics & character education**

- Core Islamic Manners
- Islamic Etiquettes

## **VII. Da'wah**

### **Presenting Islam to the American audience:**

The Message

Skills and techniques

## **VIII. Islam In America**

- Roots of Islam in America
- Development of Muslim communities and organizations
- Islam and Contemporary Issues
- Current information connecting students with challenges facing Muslims in America and on the global scene.

## **IX. Islam and Contemporary Issues**

- Family
- Women
- Peace and War
- Bioethics
- Environment
- Science and Technology
- Social Justice
- Democracy and Freedom

## **Product Advantage**

- **Professional Design and art work**
- **Elegant Student textbook**
- **Continuous, Coherent Sequence from Year to Year**
- **Teacher Manuals**
- **Student workbooks**
- **Islamic songs CD**