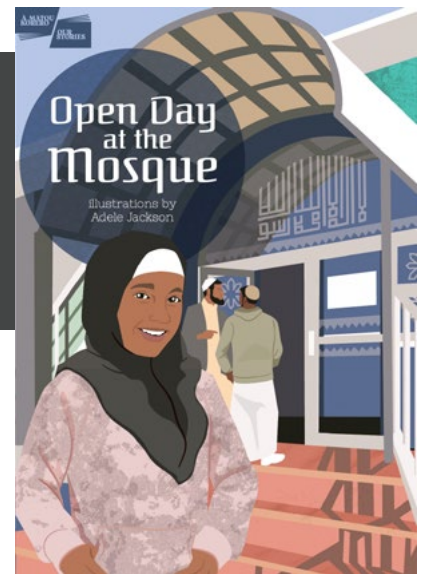


Kaiako Support Material

Open Day at the Mosque
illustrations by Adele Jackson



Open Day at the Mosque is one of a series of picture books intended to support, reflect, and celebrate the Muslim community of New Zealand. The series focuses on wellbeing, resilience, diversity, and inclusion and is intended for use with children in early learning settings and at Level 1 of The New Zealand Curriculum.

In *Open Day at the Mosque*, a young girl describes how the people of her mosque prepare for an open day. She tells the reader about the people who attend, what happens during the day, and the parts she enjoys most. The book provides an opportunity for children to see the mosque through the perspective of another child and to learn about Islam and the Muslim community.

This story aims to represent and reflect the culture of Muslim readers. It gives non-Muslim readers a chance to “learn about others so that they are no longer others”, to see the diversity of people in the Muslim community, and to break down any negative stereotypes. It lets all readers enjoy a fun occasion where a local community shows its unity and shares culture and learning in a positive way.

When sharing the story with children, your purpose and approach will vary depending on the group. However, the first time you read the story, it is likely that you will focus on conveying the storyline, making connections, and building understanding. Later, you can go deeper into the perspectives of the characters and the story’s message.

Reading books together and discussing them fosters children’s oral language, social and emotional development, self-concept, and sense of belonging. It’s not always necessary to read the whole book at once. You could read and discuss just a few pages and/or illustrations. See Te Whāriki Online “[Talking together: Te kōrerorero](#)” for more on this.

Your learning community will have its own ways of thinking about, talking about, and making real the values and messages in this and the other stories. You could incorporate the following ideas in your talk and your planning around the story.

Curriculum links

Whether you work in an early learning or school setting, this book offers rich opportunities for learning across the curriculum.

In terms of **Te Whāriki**, the book connects most strongly to the principles of **Empowerment | Whakamana** and **Holistic development | Kotahitanga** and the strands of **Belonging | Mana whenua** and **Exploration | Mana aotūroa**.

In terms of **The New Zealand Curriculum**, the book connects most strongly to the competencies of **thinking, relating to others, and participating and contributing** and to the following sub-strands of the Health and Physical Education Curriculum: **relationships; identity, sensitivity, and respect; and community resources**.

Read *Open Day at the Mosque*

Prepare for the reading by practising reading the book aloud, checking your use of voice and gesture, and thinking about the prompts you might use. If you’re not sure of the pronunciation of the names and words in Arabic, check them online or ask an expert.

Pronunciation guide

hijab (he-jaab)

imam (i-maam)

injera (in-jair-a)

Qur'an (ko-raan)

Ramadan (raa-ma-daan)

If there are Muslim children in your classroom, they may be willing to share their own and their families' expertise. However, first check that they are able and willing to do this.

Tell the children the title and prompt them to activate their prior knowledge of mosques and open days.

- *What is an open day? Have you been to an open day? What happened?*
- *What do you know about mosques? What other places do people go to worship? What happens when people worship there?*

Take the children on a picture walk through the cover and first two pages. Prompt them to notice details and to use these as clues for what the book will be about. This will also help you to identify aspects that are familiar to the children and concepts and practices that they may not know about.

- *What can you see in this picture? Who are these people? What are they doing?*
- *Who do you think is telling the story? How can you tell?*
- *What can you see in the pictures that is interesting or surprising?*
- *What do you want to know more about?*

Clarify that people who are Muslim follow the Islamic religion. They are not all from one country.

As you read the story, use questions and think-alouds to prompt connections and foster empathy. Model taking notes about unfamiliar words and concepts to go back to later.

- *It's a lot of work to get ready for an open day. I wonder why they do it?*
- *I don't know what an imam is. Do you? Let's write the word down and come back to it later.*
- *I know about sausage sizzles and noodles, but I've never eaten a samosa or an injera. I wonder what they taste like.*

At the end of the reading, have a think, pair, and share.

- *They have lots of activities at the open day. Which would you like to do most? Why is that?*
- *What did you find out about the mosque and why it holds open days?*

Talk about the story

Look at the list of unfamiliar words and concepts and discuss what they might mean. Skim the book again to help the children recall and share their own thoughts and wonderings and add these to the list. Also recall and discuss the visitors' questions, what the responses might be, and any further questions they prompt for the children.

- *The visitors asked lots of questions. Do you know the answers to their questions?*
- *Do you have any questions you would like to ask if you visited the mosque?*
- *Where might we find answers to these questions? Who do we know who could help?*

Check that the children understand that a holy book is one that is special for a particular religion and that the Qur'an is the most important holy book for Muslim people.

- *What are some other holy books you know about?*
- *Why do you think the Qur'an is written in so many languages?*

Discuss why Arabic is the most important language at the mosque. (This is because the Qur'an was first revealed, written, and recited in Arabic.) If some children speak or are learning Arabic, invite them to share what they know about the language.

Discuss the story's message about the value of diversity, drawing on the sense of connection and empathy the children have established with the girl telling the story.

- *The girl says, "We do some things differently, but mostly, people find out that we're a lot like them." Do you agree? How were things different from the way you and your whānau do things? What was similar? Let's list those things. Are they the same things for all of us?*
- *We learnt about the girl and Muslim culture. Now, what have we learnt about each other that we didn't know before?*
- *Imagine if we lived in a world where everyone looked the same, spoke the same language, ate the same food, and dressed the same way. Do you think you would like that?*

Discuss the book's messages about kindness, hospitality, and inclusion. Introduce the idea that some people are not always kind to others who seem different.

- *How do the people at the mosque treat their visitors? How do they make them feel welcome?*
- *What values are important for us? How do we want people to feel when they visit us here?*
- *Some people are unkind to people who seem different. What can we say or do if we see someone being unkind to others? What are some ways that we can make sure everyone feels they are included and that we care about them?*

Take action to build understandings and connections

(See “Where to go for more information” at the end of this KSM for resources to support these activities.)

Support the children to review the list of questions and wonderings and agree on those questions they would like to ask about Muslim culture. Invite someone from your local mosque to visit or arrange to visit a local mosque so that the children can ask their questions.

Ask the children to suggest other places where people gather to share knowledge, to worship, and to experience love, peace, and a sense of community (for example, a church, marae, temple, or synagogue). Choose two, find out more about them, and make a Venn diagram to explore similarities and differences.

Use the World Religions Map to show the children some of the places mentioned in the book. Help them choose two or three places where Islam is the predominant religion and support them to inquire into the culture in these places (for example, food, clothing, music, celebrations, and greetings). The inquiry could include opportunities to try some of the food or activities that are available to people attending Kilbirnie mosque's open days.

Show the children a video or pictures of mosques around the world. Talk about how the architecture and interior designs vary depending on the mosque's location and the culture of the people. Explain that Muslim artists are not allowed to include representations of people in their holy places. They use their knowledge of geometry to make stunning patterns. Initiate an activity where the children explore shapes and patterns to create their own designs.

Explain that henna designs often reflect patterns in nature. Introduce some examples of symbols and patterns used to make henna designs and model how to draw them. Give the children a hand template or have them make hand tracings so they can create their own designs. Have them draw their patterns in pencil and then fill in the shapes with vivid markers. They can brush tea over the design to give the hand an orange colour. While completing this task, you might talk about numeracy concepts, such as how each symbol can be reflected, translated, or rotated. After completing it, you could discuss patterns that we see in traditional Māori art.

Talk about what makes Ramadan such an important month for Muslims. Explain that during Ramadan, Muslims read and learn more about the Qur'an and they fast, pray, give to charity, and focus on how to become a better person. At the end of the month, Muslims celebrate with the four-day celebration of Eid al-Fitr (eed-all-fit-tr), gathering for prayers and special meals and often exchanging gifts. Emphasise that while fasting is demanding, Ramadan is a time of happiness and peace. Discuss how your learning community might support Muslim people during this time. Consider holding or participating in a cultural festival during Eid.

Reflect on the cultures in the story and the ways these are expressed, such as through language, food, and clothing. Have the children form pairs to find out about each other's culture. Each pair could then partner with another to share what they learnt. (If most of the children share a similar cultural background, you might widen the idea of culture to include the culture of a family, looking at favourite foods, sayings, routines, and special places that make each family unique.)

The children could create posters of themselves wearing their traditional clothes. Around the outside, have them write how they would greet other people in the languages they use. Have them share their poster with a buddy and learn how to greet them.

Where to go to for more information

Te Whāriki Online draws together research, digital resources, and examples to support early learning kaiako in implementing a rich curriculum for all children. See especially the sections on “[Identity, language, and culture](#)” and “[Self-management and regulation](#)”, and “[Talking together: Te kōrerorero](#)”.

He Māpuna te Tamaiti is intended to support children's social and emotional competence, engagement, and learning.

For Each and Every Child is a bilingual picture book explaining the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in child-friendly language.

Sparklers offers a range of activities to support children's wellbeing, including suggestions for how to be kind and build friendships.

PBS Learning Media: World Religions Map shows the distribution of religions around the world.

For information on Ramadan, see:

- [Asia Media Centre: explainer: What Is Ramadan?](#)
- [Ramadan Explained: There's Fasting, Spiritual Detox, and Religious Observance, But Also Memes and Community](#)
- [Ramadan in NZ.](#)

See the following sources for pictures of mosques and information about Islamic Art. The final item could be adapted to design learning experiences that connect art with mathematics.

- [25 Stunning Mosques around the World That'll Take Your Breath Away](#)
- [Introduction to Islamic Art](#)
- [Islamic Geometric Art Lesson for Children.](#)

See the following resources for information and ideas about creating henna hand designs:

- [Henna Hand Designs Art Lesson: Henna Hand Designs Art Lesson](#)
- [Kid World Citizen: "Henna Hands": A Simple Craft.](#)

The [Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand](#) is a federation of several regional New Zealand Muslim Associations. Its site includes contact details for [Islamic Centres in New Zealand](#).