**· Guidelines for Reaching Muslim Students ·**

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# **General Guidelines in Conversations and Relationships with Muslims**

* You want to bring up faith sooner rather than later in your conversations with Muslim friends. Don’t “use” friendship as a way to talk with them about faith, unless you sincerely desire to continue a friendship. Don’t feel guilty if you don’t. Just establish sooner rather than later that you are interested in faith conversation. Let’s re-define “friendship evangelism”- we will be closer friends to those who have an interest in faith conversation.
* Guys should reach out and befriend guys, and girls should reach out and befriend girls. If someone of the opposite gender comes up to you, respectfully offer to connect them with a friend of their gender.
* Don’t do this alone. Luke 10:1 shows us Jesus sending out people in pairs. This is also important for passing the vision along and training others, as well as for encouragement for both of you. Make sure the friend you bring is the same gender as you, for the same reasons as above.
* Pray before you meet with your friends, during it, and after. As one person is talking, the other can be praying. God works through prayer and it is vitally important. Remember you are in a spiritual battle. The enemy would love to interfere.
* For girls: It’s best to avoid wearing shorts, tank tops, or low-cut shirts. Muslims have a very conservative standard of modesty. This advice is not about being legalistic. The heart behind this is going the extra mile to remove a distraction and barrier to the gospel. In taking the step to be extra modest, it allows our friends to listen to our words rather than be distracted by our choice of clothing. (See I Corinthians 8:9-13)
* Most Muslims girls will not want to shake hands with guys. Guys, if you meet a Muslim lady, put your hand on your heart as you introduce yourself. (If she sticks out her hand first, you can go ahead and shake it.)
* Many Muslims will not eat any meat here, in addition to avoiding pork. Also, they won’t eat gelatin, or things that have had alcohol in it (i.e. vanilla!). If cooking for Muslims, ask beforehand which dietary restrictions they follow.
* Remember to look at your Muslim friends as people, not projects!
* Be willing to listen and learn about Islam. Ask questions when you don’t understand something. Learn what they believe, without making it seem like you want to convert.
* Do not do their ritual Islamic prayers with them. That is something that only Muslims do, kind of like communion for Christians. It signals that you are a Muslim.
* Don’t be argumentative with them. Speak the truth in love. The gospel does need to be communicated, but if you win the debate, you may lose the friend or the chance to share the gospel later. Try to work spiritual matters, Jesus stories, and the gospel in *as* you are in regular conversation.
* Always remember to smile when you’re talking about difficult issues. 90% of communication is body language, so smiling helps hard truth to be heard a little easier.
* Pray for them, especially for tests, stressful school situations, health issues, etc. Seek these moments and see them as an opportunity from God! If they tell you about a worry or concern, ask them if you can pray for them. Then, right then and there, pray for them in Jesus’ name! This is an opportunity for Jesus to show himself powerful.
* For us, we do not invite our Muslim friends to church. This is because there are many aspects of American church that can distract them from rather than drawing them toward Jesus. These are things like how we set our Bibles on the floor or our chairs, the sometimes immodest dress, it seeming like a concert, etc. For us, if a Muslim friend asks us to come to church with us, we will welcome them to join us, but we try to explain that this is how an American church looks, and thus if there were a church in their country it would look very different. We explain the essence of church to them, which is where several believers meet together and praise God and learn about him together.
* Be solid on what the gospel is so you can distil and simplify it for yourself and others. Even though your Muslim friends may be very good, moral, and genuinely nice people, they need Jesus because he is the ONLY way to God.
* You aren’t trying to attract your friends to “Christianity;” you’re trying to attract them to Jesus. The character of Jesus is very appealing to many Muslims, so spend more time talking about him and his life and what he said, more than discussing theological points.
* Discipleship is important—be discipling them even before they come to follow Jesus.
* Many Muslims come from a culture where it is very hard to trust. Remember this in your friendships with them. Trust within friendships that has been built for a long time can be broken down easily if you aren’t careful. This means we need to pray a lot and be careful and considerate.
* Remember the Holy Spirit is going ahead of you, preparing people’s hearts. It’s His job to convict, not you.

# **Ideas for Meeting/Befriending Muslims**

* Offer to help a new student in conversational English. Find out what needs they have, and see how you can help. Take them shopping.
* If you see a Muslim or someone who looks Arab, just go up and say hi. If you don’t know what to say, just say “How are you? Where are you from? Tell me about your country.” And after you’ve talked for a bit, exchange phone numbers.
* Find them in coffee shops.
* They are in a foreign culture, which can be really hard. Go the extra mile to make them feel welcome. In their cultures, you bring something when you go to someone’s house. So make a dish, or pick up some chips or sweets from the store on your way over.
* Take them to watch sporting events with you, or play soccer with them.
* Invite them over to celebrate holidays or just visit your family.

# **Spiritual Bridges for Getting to Sharing the Gospel**

# After asking about their country, family, studies, perception of America, goals in life, etc., it would be appropriate to ask them about faith. You could read books about Islam, but it will be a great springboard for spiritual conversation if you ask your Muslim friend about their faith yourself. Any question is okay if asked respectfully with a smile. If you want some basics to start with, see Islam 101 in the resources.

* “What do you believe is the purpose of life?”
* “Where are you on your personal spiritual journey?”
* “As a Muslim, do you pray 5 times a day? What happens to Muslims who do not pray 5 times a day?” (same question with pilgrimage to Mecca or fasting Ramadan)
* “May I tell you what I have learned about Islam, so that you can correct me if I am wrong?”
* “Why you believe that the Qur’an is from God?”
* “Would you agree with me that the person who knows only one faith does not have a choice in life?”
* “I follow God according to the Bible. Have you ever learned about the Bible from a Christian, or only from other Muslims?”
* “What did you learn that caused you to believe that the Bible was distorted or changed?”
* “If your life ended today, what do you think would happen to you?”
* “What do you think that we must do so that God will erase our sins?”

**If a Muslim friend seems very interested in the Christian faith….**

* Arrange for you and him to meet with someone who has experience discipling believers from Muslim background (BMBs). This can be done by speaking with your campus ministry leader or contacting us at director@lovesaudis.com.
* Warn them of spiritual attack and pray for/with them.
* It’s better not to immediately broadcast in any written form, online, or even mention from a church pulpit that they have converted. This is because it could ruin their ability to go back to their home country as a witness. Similarly, it’s better to not have the church put them on a pedestal, at least before they have been discipled.
* It is important to intentionally address persecution. II Timothy 3:12 tells us that everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus WILL be persecuted. Religious freedom is a concept not taught in Scripture, and it *is* something that they will face.

# **Security**

***Your actions have far-reaching consequences*.**

Sharing email addresses or names of other people involved in ministry with Muslims could jeopardize their careers overseas or friendships they’ve been building with Muslims here. Both Muslims and other Christians can jeopardize ministry opportunities. Be careful of sharing information with Christians who don’t realize they can’t talk about this with just anyone, and obviously don’t talk about ministry plans with Muslims.

***Things not to do:***

* Do not mention missions organizations in conversation with or in front of Muslims, or in emails.
* Do not talk about others who are ministering to Muslims in emails or conversations without their permission.
* If you send emails or updates or you blog, do not use real names for your Muslim friends (for their security). Also, be careful in sharing stories where it’s too easily identifiable who it is.

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# **Resources**

* [SAN Interactive Training Video](http://vimeo.com/62606299)- 25 minutes, password “lovesaudis”
* [Islam 101 videos](http://creed26.com/#/videos/islam)- short videos that teach you the basics of Islam
* [Messaging Muslims](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZbMD6Qg6M15NT1OsncD0wcbU_jAJXRbCCbkwQSY8eO4/edit)- short replies to common Islamic objections … with a search engine
* [Prayer video for Saudi Arabia](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pntzTJpaBww)- 2 minutes
* [Prayer video for Saudi students](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=GKM--PJTDso#at=43)- 3 minutes
* [Answering Islam](http://www.answeringislam.org)- a library of article on Islam… with a search engine
* [Arabic/English Bible](http://www.youversion.com)- copy/paste verses in Arabic (click "Parellel" icon and choose "SAB")
* [Brother Elijah’s story](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=myEN9bkWfVg)- former Muslim from Saudi Arabia (11 minutes)

