

# *Ramadan is Coming*

by Donna Rhodenizer

Ramadan is not my cultural tradition or faith experience. However, it is observed by some of the students I teach. By investing time in research, I have a better understanding of something that has meaning to my students. That information helps me make a connection with them and also helps me facilitate understanding between them and their peers.

When students are able to share the things that are meaningful to them, they can feel included, heard, understood and represented.

The simple song, [\*Ramadan is Coming\*](#), is a starting point and a gateway to discussion and the search for additional information. To that end, when singing this song, information is included below to help teachers by providing a bit of background that connects to the song. Additional research is encouraged.

Songs that highlight various cultural traditions, celebrations or observances can be used to help foster community. Being part of a community is not about everyone being the same but recognizing and respecting our differences.

## **Background - Ramadan**

Ramadan is the ninth month on the Islamic calendar, which marks important holidays and events for Muslims (people who practice Islam). This is a lunar calendar, so the date of Ramadan changes from year to year.

During Ramadan people fast, or refrain from eating and drinking, during daylight hours. Once the sun sets, families meet for big meals that may include stew, rice, dates, lentils, and more. A morning meal is also shared before the sun rises.

Ramadan is a time for Muslims to focus on their faith and to perform generous acts.

Fasting is a time to remind themselves about those in the world who don't have enough to eat.



**Elements of Ramadan:**

- Fasting
- Prayer
- Community (helping others and doing kind deeds)
- Reflection
- Lighting lamps

Ramadan concludes with Eid al-Fitr, a three-day festival. Families and friends gather together to celebrate. They sometimes decorate homes with lights and exchange gifts and prepare and eat festive meals.

**Activities of Eid al-Fitr** (the festival of breaking the fast)

- Feasting
- Visiting family
- Giving of gifts
- Praise of Allah for strength during Ramadan
- Buying new clothes
- Decorating hands with henna designs
- Special prayer services at the mosque
- Fireworks display

Online source Ramadan for kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOcsbQeFTUU>

Thanks to Carolyn Duerksen and her school staff for first-person information about Ramadan.

Online source: <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/ramadan>