

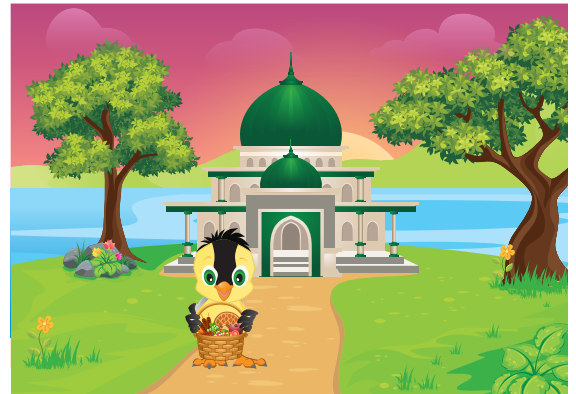
Goldie at Home Activity: Celebrating Ramadan

Activity Overview: Have you ever heard of Iowa described as a “[salad bowl](#)?” It is a metaphor, and it can mean a place where we are all together, exchanging and combining ideas and beliefs, but we also have distinct cultural identities that make us all unique. Iowans may live together but practice different cultures, religions and holidays - including Ramadan. This is a celebration that happens during the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, and it is exceedingly holy for the world’s roughly 1.8 billion Muslims.

To recognize the end of Ramadan on May 23, this Goldie at Home activity will teach you about Iowa’s unique Islamic history through primary sources. You will also make a Good Deed Tree, which incorporates the concepts of kindness, generosity and discipline that are encouraged during Ramadan.

Connection to Iowa History

In 1895, the first immigrants from what is now known as Lebanon (and present-day Syria) fled their homeland to find refuge in Iowa. Many of the immigrants, who were Muslim, settled in Cedar Rapids. By 1934, they had built the [Moslem Temple](#), which was the first building designed and constructed specifically as a place of worship for Muslims in America. Now called the [Mother Mosque of America](#) in recognition of its historic significance, the building is used today as a mosque and Islamic cultural and heritage center. The building was added to the [National Register of Historic Places](#) in 1996.



What is Ramadan?

Ramadan (April 23 - May 23, 2020) is sacred to the Muslim community, who spend it fasting from dawn to dusk. The practice is designed to bring them closer to God, to remind them of the suffering of those less fortunate and to spiritually purify and focus on what’s really important. Fasting is just one aspect of the holy month, which also encourages people to reflect, connect and be charitable. Muslims wake up early to eat a pre-dawn meal called suhoor, and they break their fast with a meal called iftar, typically with their family or with the local community. Following the final day of Ramadan, a three-day-long holiday known as Eid al-Fitr takes place. Different cultures also have different traditions during Ramadan, such as special food or eating iftar with the extended family.

Pre-Activities

Learn more about the Mother Mosque of America. Read aloud the “Connection to Iowa History” section above. It will provide helpful context about this historic site in Iowa. Using the [Visual Literacy worksheet](#), analyze the photograph of the [Mother Mosque of America](#). Use the questions below to reflect on what you have learned:

- What might the significance of the name “Mother Mosque” be? Why “Mother?”
- What do you notice about this photo that makes Mother Mosque unique compared to other buildings of worship you have seen in Iowa?
- Why do you think this building is significant enough to list on the National Registry of Historical Places?

Reflect. The month of Ramadan is a time of self reflection. Use these questions to help you think about how you treat yourself and others.

- How have you been kind to others?
- How have you been a responsible citizen?
- Describe how you feel when someone has done something nice for you. Describe how you feel when you have done something nice for someone else.
- What could you do to improve?

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Instructions

- 1 Create tree trunk.** One way to reflect on the principles associated with Ramadan is to create a Good Deed Tree. You have three options to erect your Good Deed Tree. You can:
 - Print off the [blank template](#). You will glue the leaves onto the paper.
 - Get crafty and create your own tree with colorful construction paper.
 - If you don't have access to a printer, use the [fillable PDF of the tree template](#). You can fill out the leaves directly on your computer.
- 2 Decorate tree trunk.** If you print out the tree, you can color and decorate the trunk. Feel free to use markers, crayons, colored pencils, stickers - whatever is available to you.
- 3 Print and/or fill out "good deed" leaves.** A good deed is something that is done, performed or accomplished to help yourself or others. There are [pre-filled](#) and [blank "good deed" leaves](#). You can use both or choose one to fill your Good Deed Tree with leaves. If you are using the blank leaves, take some time to think about good deeds that you can accomplish on a day-to-day basis. Write these good deeds on the blank leaves.
- 4 Decorate and cut out leaves.** Color and decorate the leaves to make a colorful tree. Then use your scissors to cut out the "good deed" leaves. Store these leaves in a small container or paper clip to the tree trunk so you have them in a handy place to store them before adding them to the tree.
- 5 Glue or tape leaves.** As you perform the good deeds on your leaves, tape or glue them to the tree.
- 6 Set a "good deed" schedule.** You can choose how often you plan to add a good deed to the tree. It could be once a day, once a week or however often you would like. Typically, you would fill the tree with good deeds throughout the holy month of Ramadan.
- 7 Share!** After you fill out your tree, share your work with the State Historical Museum of Iowa. Email a photo of your Good Deed Tree to museum.education@iowa.gov. We want to share your creation with others!

Materials

- Tree template ([print-off](#) and [PDF version](#))
- [Blank leaves](#)
- [Pre-filled leaves](#)
- Glue or tape
- Scissors
- Optional: Markers, crayons, colored pencils, construction paper

Questions to Spark Learning

- Think about holidays you celebrate and traditions you have learned from your family. What kind of traditions do you have? Why are these traditions special to you?
- Are there any special foods you eat or games you play in honor of a holiday? If yes, describe these foods or games.
- Why do you think it is important to learn about different cultures and traditions - even if you don't practice them?
- Ramadan focuses on principles like kindness, generosity and discipline. Name three core principles - like these three - that you practice every day. Give a real-life example for each.

If your young historian wants to learn more about Ramadan and the history, cultures and lives of Muslims in Iowa and the United States, additional resources are located on the next page.

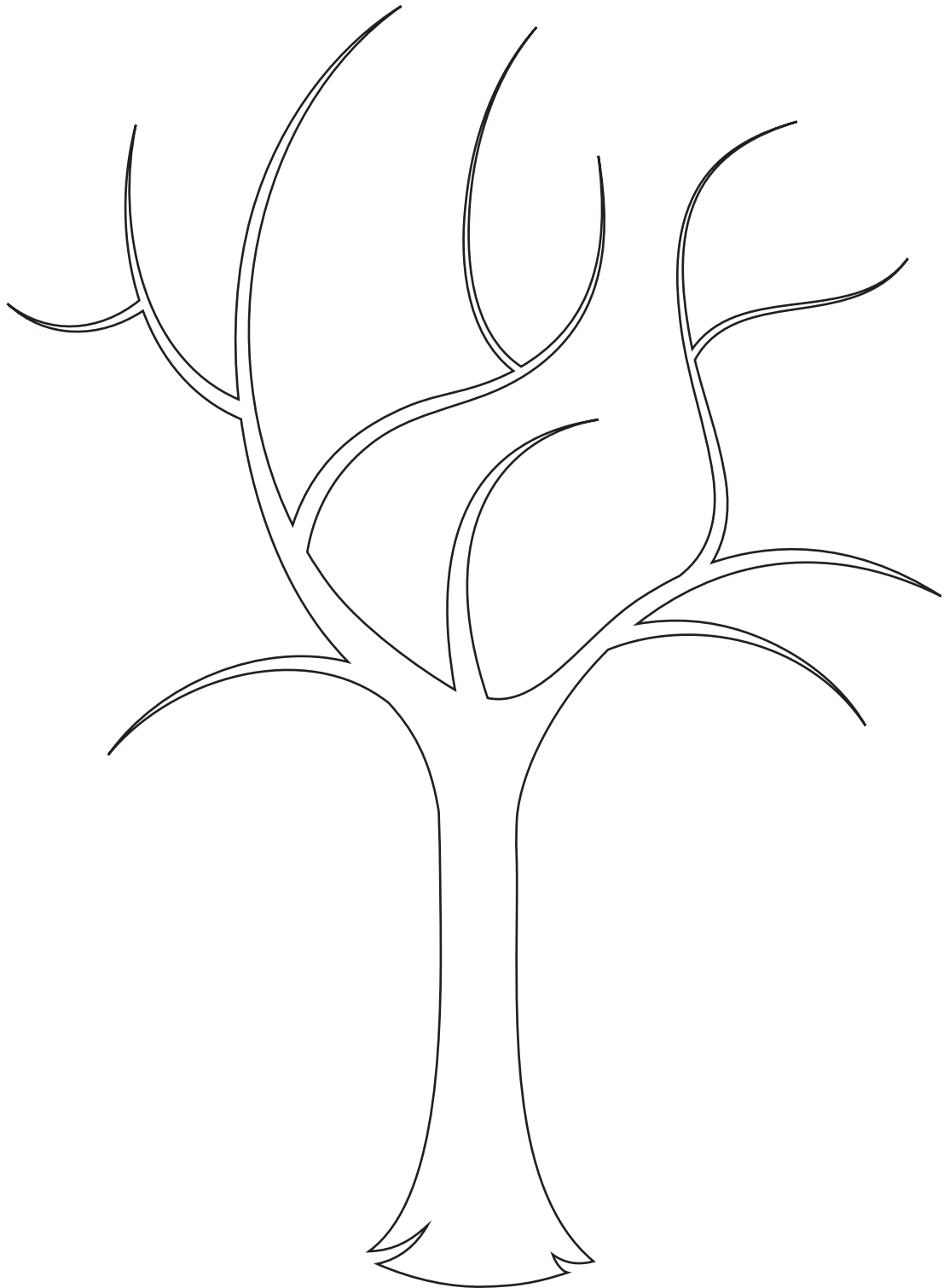
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Instructions continued

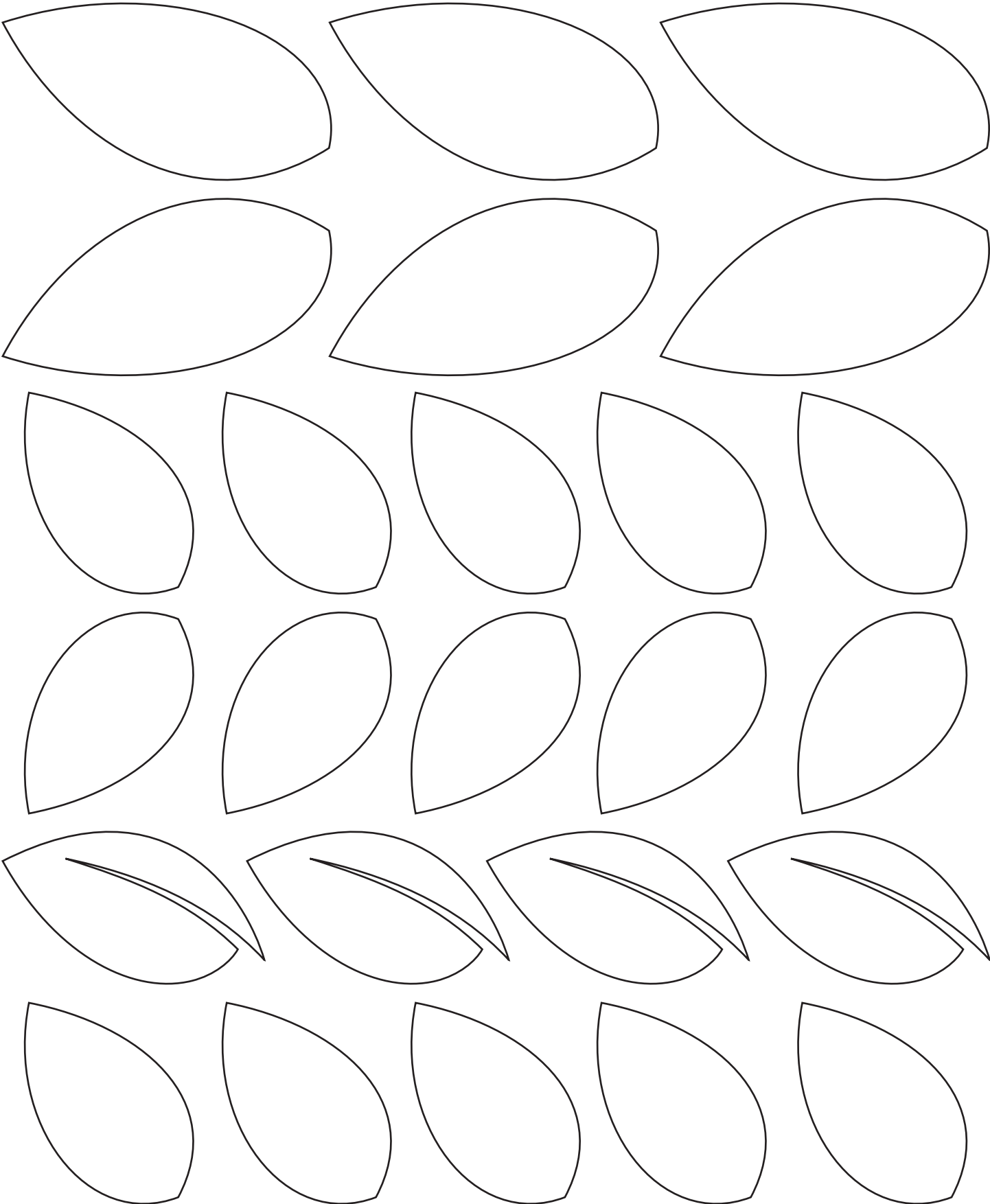
Additional Resources

- [Ramadan Book List from PBS Kids](#): Here are eight Muslim-authored books for children celebrating and highlighting Ramadan.
- [“Being a Muslim in Iowa” Series](#): This 2011 five-part series from Iowa Public Radio highlights Iowa’s rich Muslim history.
- [American Iftar Dinner](#): Read this magazine piece by Iowan Fez Zafar, a 2020 graduate of Roosevelt High School, about why he and other Iowa students started the American Iftar Dinner in 2018. It has grown into a national movement to bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds and religious faiths once a year for a gathering to encourage unity, tolerance and understanding.
- [Digital Stories from Drake University’s Muslim Student Association](#): Five Muslim students at Drake University created digital stories about some of the principles and practices of Islam within a Midwestern American context. Several students have traveled from long distances to study in America, others were raised within the local community.
- [Scholastic - Books and Activities to Teach About Islam](#): This Scholastic blog post includes read aloud books and activities to teach children about the world religion of Islam, cultural awareness and the advantage of diverse perspectives.

Good Deed Tree



Good Deed Leaves (Blank)



Good Deed Leaves (Pre-filled)

Do a chore for someone without them knowing.

Look in the mirror and give yourself a compliment.

Set the table for dinner.

Tell someone why they are special to you.

Write encouraging chalk messages on the sidewalk.

Read a book or short story to someone.

Make someone else's bed.

Turn off the water while brushing your teeth.

Write your mail carrier a thank you card.

Make someone else's bed.

Clean up your room without being asked.

Teach someone something new.

Reuse paper when you are drawing.

Write a poem for a friend.

Pick five toys you are willing to donate.

Walk or feed a pet in your household.

Smile at everyone you see for a whole day.

Share your snack with someone.

Wash your hands for one minute.

Compliment four people today.

Call a friend or relative, and tell a joke.

Pick up litter.

Be extra patient.

Play a game, and let someone else go first.

Unplug your devices when not in use.

Mother Mosque of America in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, October 1950

PRE-ACTIVITY



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, October 1950