



***Questions to help youth Leaders develop ethical and theologically considered approaches to ministry with young people of Muslim heritage.***

***Introduction***

Below you will find nearly 40 questions that are intended to help youth leaders think through some of the implications of their ministry with Muslim young people who may be exploring faith in Jesus Christ. These questions are split into two sections.

- 1. Questions for youth leaders to consider either **individually or within a team**, focusing on some of the foundational issues involved in youth ministry within an Islamic context.*
- 2. Questions for youth leaders to use **with a Muslim young person** who is exploring what faith in Jesus might mean for them and their families.*

These questions are not designed to provide answers to all the questions we might have. They are designed to help youth leaders think through some of the challenging issues involved in youth ministry within this context.

It is important to recognise that every situation is different. Some questions may not be appropriate within your context of ministry, while others might be. You need to make your own decisions, based on your experience and local understanding.

Please feel free to use and share these questions with others you are working with. Also, come up with your own questions that may be more relevant within the specific context in which you serve and minister.

**A note on the use of language.** In these questions we make the distinction between 'Christianity' [an organised religion] and Christ followers [anyone from any religious background who has committed their life to following Christ]. 'Conversion to Christianity' may be viewed as an extremely negative action in many contexts, and particularly for children and young people from Muslim families. Becoming a follower of Jesus [or *Isa*] may be viewed differently. As such, we do not consider 'converting to Christianity' something that is always necessary for someone who becomes a follower of Jesus. Jesus is above all religions, and not contained or confined within one religious tradition.

**Questions for the youth leader to consider individually or within the context of a ministry team**

The following set of questions are designed to help anyone wanting to participate in any form of Christian or Jesus focused witness, evangelism or discipleship, with young people from Muslim heritage. The questions are not designed to highlight a particular model of youth ministry, but to help youth leaders to reflect on some of the important issues involved in ministry to, for and with Muslim young people. It is hoped that this reflection process will inform an approach to ministry that encourages sensitive, ethical and theologically thought through practice and furthermore seeks to reduce the potential for harm to the young person, their family and community. Ideally these questions will be used within a team context in which accountability and transparency are encouraged.

- *In what ways will you seek to support a young Muslim in their growing understanding of and commitment to Jesus Christ?*
- *What factors do you consider important in regards to the spiritual growth of a young person from a Muslim heritage?*
- *What helpful models, and role-models of spirituality and faith does the young person have? How can you support a growing awareness of such models and role-models?*

- *In what contexts would you expect to disciple a young Muslim who has expressed an interest in, or commitment to Jesus Christ?*
- *In what ways can you encourage the young person to grow in faith and wisdom in Christ, whilst at the same time seeking to ensure a healthy and positive witness within their family that is unlikely to cause conflict and tension?*
- *What practical advice will you give to a young person considering coming to faith in Christ in regard to maintaining their relationship with their parents, and wider family and community?*
- *How will you seek to encourage the young person you are seeking to disciple to maintain their existing friendships, while at the same time developing friends who will support and encourage their faith development?*
- *In what ways will you seek to ensure your relationship with the young person from Muslim background is not viewed as one that is seeking to encourage social and religious conversion out of Islam towards Christianity, and with the risk of family disruption and conflict?*
- *In what ways do you see your relationship with a particular young person from Muslim heritage as contributing to risk factors for that young person? How do you think others might view your relationship with that young person?*
- *What potentially negative consequences could you foresee if a Muslim young person wanted to convert to Christianity? Are there ways to alleviate some of these potentially negative consequences?*
- *What potentially positive consequences could you foresee if a Muslim young person wanted to convert to Christianity? Are there ways in which potentially positive elements could be encouraged, without the need for the potentially damaging aspects that would likely follow if such a young person were forced to leave their family and community as a result of social, cultural and religious conversion?*

- *How will you seek to develop your relationship with the parents and family members of the young person you are seeking to disciple?*
- *Would you like to see this young person involved in Church based youth ministry activities, or not? What are the potential implications in either case? What alternatives might there be were they not to participate in Church based activities?*
- *Who can be involved in supporting both you in your role as a discipler, and the young person you are discipling? What different roles may become significant in this process?*
- *How will you seek to grow in your own understanding of the Muslim faith and culture and in particular the social context of the young person you are witnessing to?*

**Questions for a youth leader to consider and discuss with a Muslim young person exploring faith in Jesus Christ.**

These questions are designed to be used by a youth leader *with* a young person of Muslim heritage, although could potentially be adapted for use with young people from other faith traditions. In asking these questions, the youth leader is encouraged to allow the young person to answer - or not answer - in their own time and as a result of careful consideration, ideally within the framework of an ongoing dialogue within a trusting and supportive relationship.

The questions are provided as a tool to help the youth leader support a young person to come to a well thought out and informed position in terms of their faith in relationship to both their Islamic heritage and their potential newfound faith in Jesus Christ, however this may be expressed. The intention is that these questions help form the basis of an ongoing process of exploration between the youth leader and the young person. Do not attempt to ask all these questions to a young person during one meeting!

These questions relate to the previous questions, in that they will help the youth leader reflect on their own approaches to ministry within the given context.

- *What is it that attracts you to Jesus?*
- *What are some of the elements of 'Christian faith' that have attracted you towards it?*
- *Do you regard Christianity as the same as following Jesus? How might these be understood differently?*
- *Do you believe that becoming a Christian will in some way make your life easier or harder? In what ways?*
- *Who do you view as a positive spiritual role-model? What is it about that person that inspires you?*
- *What factors are important for you in regards to your own spiritual growth?*
- *Honouring our parents is one of God's many significant commandments. In what ways, motivated by your faith, could you seek to honour your parents?*
- *How would you seek to explain the message you have discovered in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ? In what ways are these messages common within your understanding of Islam?*
- *How would you seek to explain the impact Jesus has had on your life, in ways that your parents would not only likely understand, but that would please them?*
- *In what ways could you practice disciplines, such as prayer, fasting, generosity, love of God and neighbour, forgiveness and others, that are common within both Islam and Christianity.*
- *What are some of the practices that you would seek to demonstrate as a follower of Jesus, that are also clearly desired within Islam?*

- *What do you think are the implications were you to convert to the religion of Christianity?*
- *In what ways can you maintain your everyday life within your family and community, whilst at the same time modeling the life and teachings of Jesus to those around you?*
- *Are there elements of your existing [Islamic] faith which you are struggling with? What might these be?*
- *Is belonging to a Christian church important for you? Why or why not? What might the implications of this be for your family or community?*
- *Do you feel the need to be baptised? Why or why not? What might the implications of this be?*
- *How do you think your family would respond if you told them you wanted to become a Christian? Why do you think they might respond this way?*
- *In what ways do you view Islam and your faith in Jesus as similar?*
- *In what ways do you view Islam and your faith in Jesus as different?*
- *Do you think it is possible for you to remain as a Muslim whilst at the same time being a follower of Jesus? What might this look like for you? What challenges do you think you might face?*
- *Can you think of contexts where your faith in Jesus could be nurtured that would not cause difficulties for your parents were you to participate in activities there? What might these contexts be?*
- *In what ways can Christian youth leaders support and encourage your faith in Jesus in ways that are not threatening to your family?*