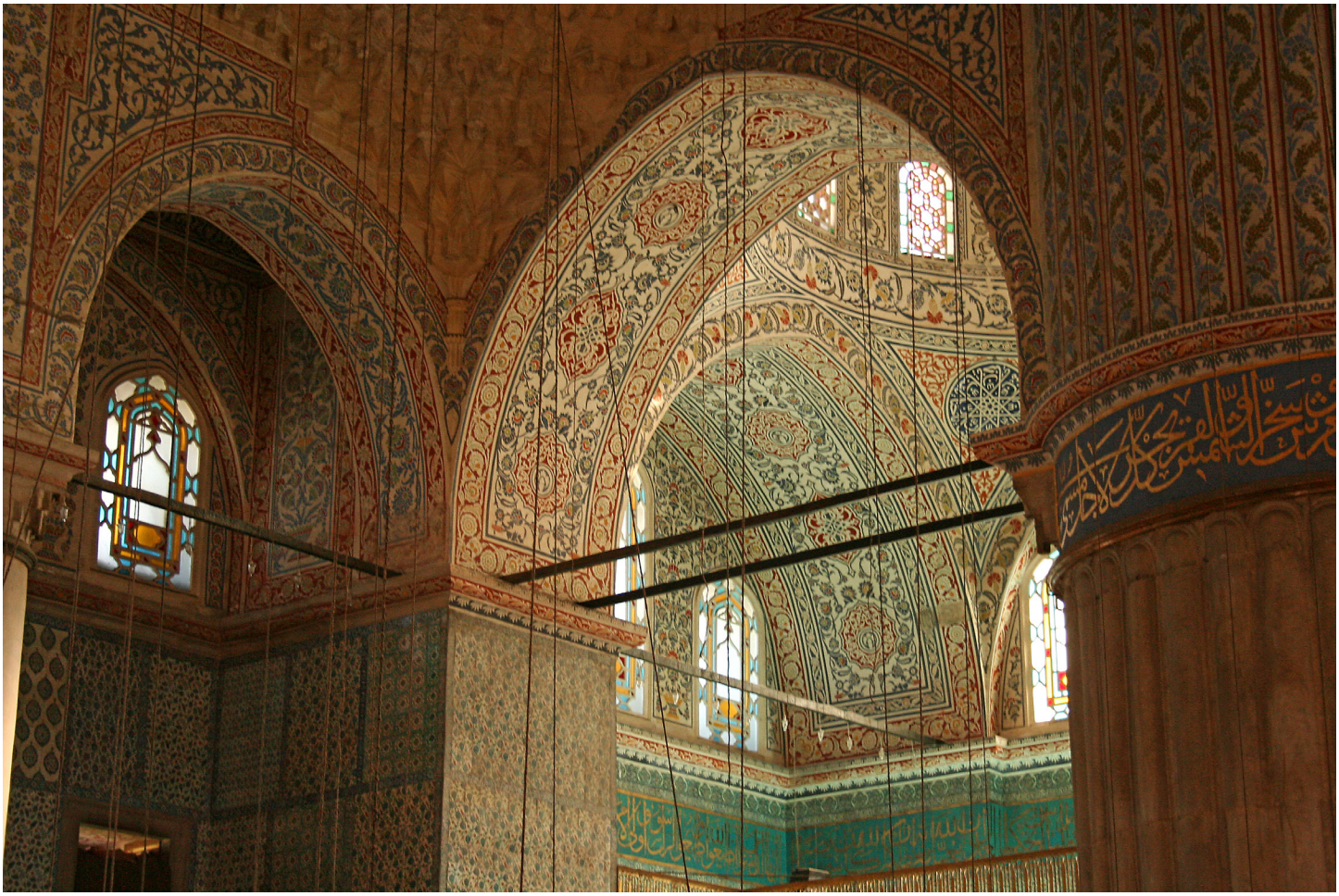
Our Creative Community:
Art for the Month of Ramadan



UMOCA Utah Museum of Contemporary Art

Welcome!

Thank you so much for joining the Emerald Project and the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art during this special month.

For the next four weeks, we will learn more about how our Muslim friends and community members observe Ramadan. We will hear from members of the Emerald Project as they share their religious traditions, then create inspiring artwork together!

We invite Muslim students to share about their Ramadan traditions, and for all students to support and learn from their peers.

Let's get started!

Week 1

Hear from our Emerald Project friends first by clicking here!

Nora and Satin told us about why Ramadan is a sacred month for Muslims. The first day of Ramadan is determined by the moon. Thus, the exact dates of Ramadan are different each year. Ramadan begins with the sighting of the new crescent moon that marks the ninth month of the Islamic Calendar. This year Ramadan begins on April 2 and ends on May 2 in terms of the Gregorian Calendar (the 12-month solar calendar traditionally used around the world). Some rely on the physical sighting of the new crescent moon, while others use the astronomical calculations of the Saudi Arabian Supreme Court.

Ramadan is the month in which the Quran was received by the Prophet Muhammad. Ramadan is a time of fasting, introspection and prayer. It is a time to focus on generosity and personal growth. The time typically spent eating meals is used instead to do acts of service, read and memorize scripture, pray, and spend time with loved ones. At dawn and dusk, observers will share a meal with family and friends to begin and end their daily fast.

The end of Ramadan is celebrated with a three-day festival known as Eid al-Fitr, or the Feast of Fast-Breaking and includes special prayers and dishes.

Lunar Mobile

Consider the importance of the lunar phases within Ramadan worship.

Materials

Black cardstock paper
White cardstock paper
Drawing compass or circular tracing template
Scissors
Glue
Hole punch
White gel pen for stars
Black string/yarn to attach moons
Round wooden dowel

Instructions

1. Using a circular template or drawing compass, draw and cut out 5 circles from black cardstock paper and 5 circles from white cardstock paper, varying sizes to make two 2.5 inch, two 3 inch, and one 3.5 inch circle in each color.

2. Cut white circles into 5 different moon phases, as shown above: crescent, quarter, half, gibbous, and full moon, and glue each onto a black circle.

3. Using a white gel pen, dot the remaining black paper to give the appearance of a starry sky

4. Punch hole in top of each finished 'moon'.

5. Cut 5 pieces of black string/yarn: two 3.5 inch, two 4 inch, and one 4.5 inch.

6. Tie one end of each string through the punched hole of each moon (with largest string attaching to largest moon, medium strings attaching to medium moons, etc.), and tie the other end of each string around a wooden dowel, so that the largest moon is in the middle, the medium moons next to it, and the smallest moons next to those.

Vocabulary

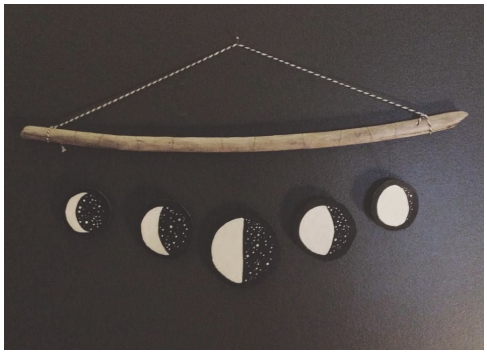
Lunar phases
The moon orbits, or circles, around the Earth. It takes approximately one month for the moon to completely orbit around the Earth. During that time, different amounts of sunlight reach the moon and are reflected off its surface.

Lunar Month
Spans about 29.5 days, with each month beginning with a new crescent moon.

Gregorian Calendar
Calendar based on movements of the Sun, linked to the change of seasons.

New Crescent Moon
the stage between the new moon and first quarter stage of the moon (when half of the moon is visible). Less than half of the illuminated hemisphere is visible

Eid al-Fitr
The Feast of Fast-Breaking, begins the day Ramadan ends, consists of three days of celebration, sharing meals and prayers with friends and family.



Week 2

Hear from our Emerald Project friends first by clicking here!

Reflect on what is most important in your life while you color or design a geometric pattern.

Just like Nora, Satin, Shayma, and Sam have explained so far, Muslims fast during Ramadan. This means they do not eat or drink anything while the sun is up. They have one meal before the sun rises, and one meal after the sun sets.

Fasting serves several spiritual and social purposes. By removing the time and distraction of eating, Muslims are more able to focus on personal spirituality, goals, and their relationship with Allah (Arabic word meaning God). Fasting is also a reminder of human frailty - just like we need food and water to survive, Muslims believe that religion is necessary to grow and thrive as a person. Lastly, fasting supports generosity and compassion. Through missing something, people often realize how fortunate they are, and their gratitude leads to service and empathy.

The type of art that decorates mosques, is decorative and intricate. The art frequently includes floral motifs, geometric designs and calligraphy, but no human or animal forms. Mosques often have arches, domes, minarets, courtyards, and distinctive tile designs.

Islamic art and architecture can be found throughout all parts of the world.

Let's color this decorative design that mimics a pattern that might be seen in a mosque. *Template on final page.*

As you color, think about these three questions...

1. What is most important to you and why?
2. What are you grateful for?
3. How can you be a better friend?

Mosque
A Muslim place of worship.

Arabesque
Arab-style". A complex, ornate design of intertwined floral or geometric forms. Usually found as decoration on the walls of mosques.

Minarets
A type of tower typically built in or adjacent to mosques. They provide a visual focal point and are generally used for the call to prayer five times per day. They may also exist as standalone structures in certain countries.

Muqarnas
Ornamental vaulting which creates a transition between the walls and ceilings of the mosque.

Mihrab
A niche in the wall of a mosque, located at the point nearest to Mecca, toward which worshippers face to pray.

The Blue Mosque, Istanbul, photo by Vince Millet

Week 3

Hear from our Emerald Project friends first by clicking here!

We just heard from Mo and Nour who told us some of their favorite things to eat before and after fasting. They both enjoy eating the food that their moms make! Food is especially important during Ramadan, because meals are only eaten twice a day, both at nighttime. Daytime is used to think, pray, and spend time with loved ones.

Fasting is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, which form the foundation of how Muslims live their lives. Living by the Five Pillars represents faith and trust in Allah.

The Five Pillars of Islam

Shahadah
sincerely reciting the Muslim profession of faith

Salat
performing ritual prayers in the proper way five times each day

Zakat
paying an alms (or charity) tax to benefit the poor and the needy

Sawm
fasting during the month of Ramadan

Hajj
pilgrimage to Mecca

Islam is the second largest religion in the world with about 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide. Scholars date the creation of Islam to Mecca, now modern day Saudi Arabia, in the 7th century.

Muhammad was born in Mecca, Saudi Arabia in 570 CE. Islam teaches that Allah's word was revealed to the prophet Muhammad through the angel Gabriel and that afterward, Muhammad shared the message throughout Mecca in 613. He taught that Muslims should devote their lives to Allah as the one true God. The Quran is the holy book of Islam and is believed to be the word of God, as received and recorded by Muhammad.

Let's create a nighttime watercolor together!

You will need:

watercolor paints

a brush

a cup of water

a piece of thick paper

salt*

*(Yes, salt! Any kind of table salt works, but coarse is best)

Watch this video or read the instructions below to create.

1. Paint a night sky using your favorite colors. Maybe you use lots of dark blues and purples, or warm colors like a sunset.
2. Sprinkle a little bit of salt all over the wet paint.
3. Wait for it to dry, then brush off the salt.
4. Add any details you want.

Vocabulary

iftar
The meal that Muslims eat after the sun goes down to end their fast

Prophet Muhammad
Considered the messenger of Allah and founder of Islam.

Monotheistic
Belief and worship of one God. Islam is monotheistic, because Muslims worship Allah as the single, all-knowing God.

color palette
The colors the artists chooses for their artwork

warm colors
Reds, oranges, and yellows

cool colors
Blues, purples, and greens

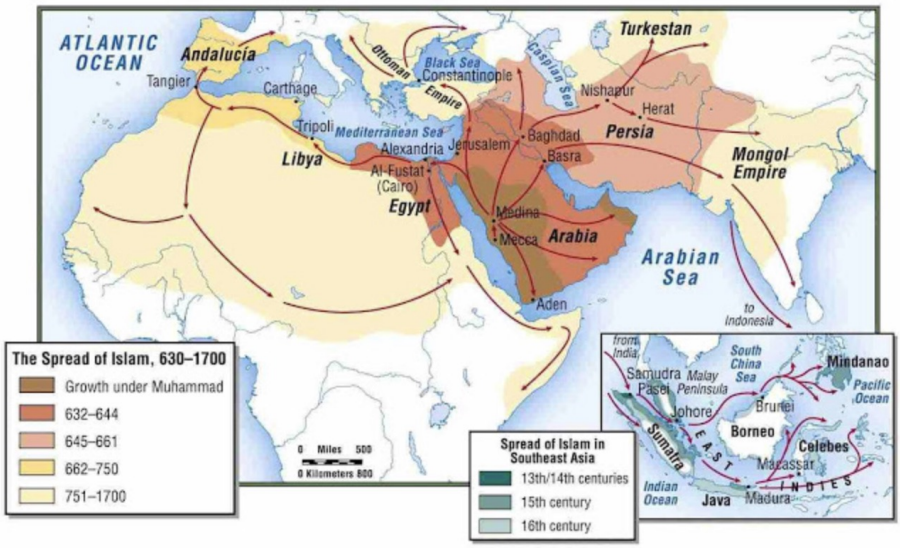
Week 4

Hear from our Emerald Project friends first by clicking here!

Maimoonah and Aya just told us about the Festival of Breaking Fast and all of the ways it is celebrated. One way they described is “Salat al Eid” or “Prayer of the Festival”, when Muslims go to their local mosque to pray on the first day of Eid al-Fitr.

Islam is a worldwide religion, but the place where Islam was founded - Mecca, Saudi Arabia - is still important. During prayer, Muslims face toward the Kaaba, the holiest mosque located in Mecca. Thus Muslims might face North, East, South, or West, depending on where they live in relation to Mecca. There are resources like qilbafinder.org that help Muslims figure out which direction to face.

This map shows the regions of the world where Islam first began to expand, under the leadership of Muhammad. The map shows the spread of Islam through 1700. Today, these countries have the highest Muslim population, but the religion has spread around the entire world!



To represent what we have learned, let's create a Compass Rose!

You will need:

white cardstock paper

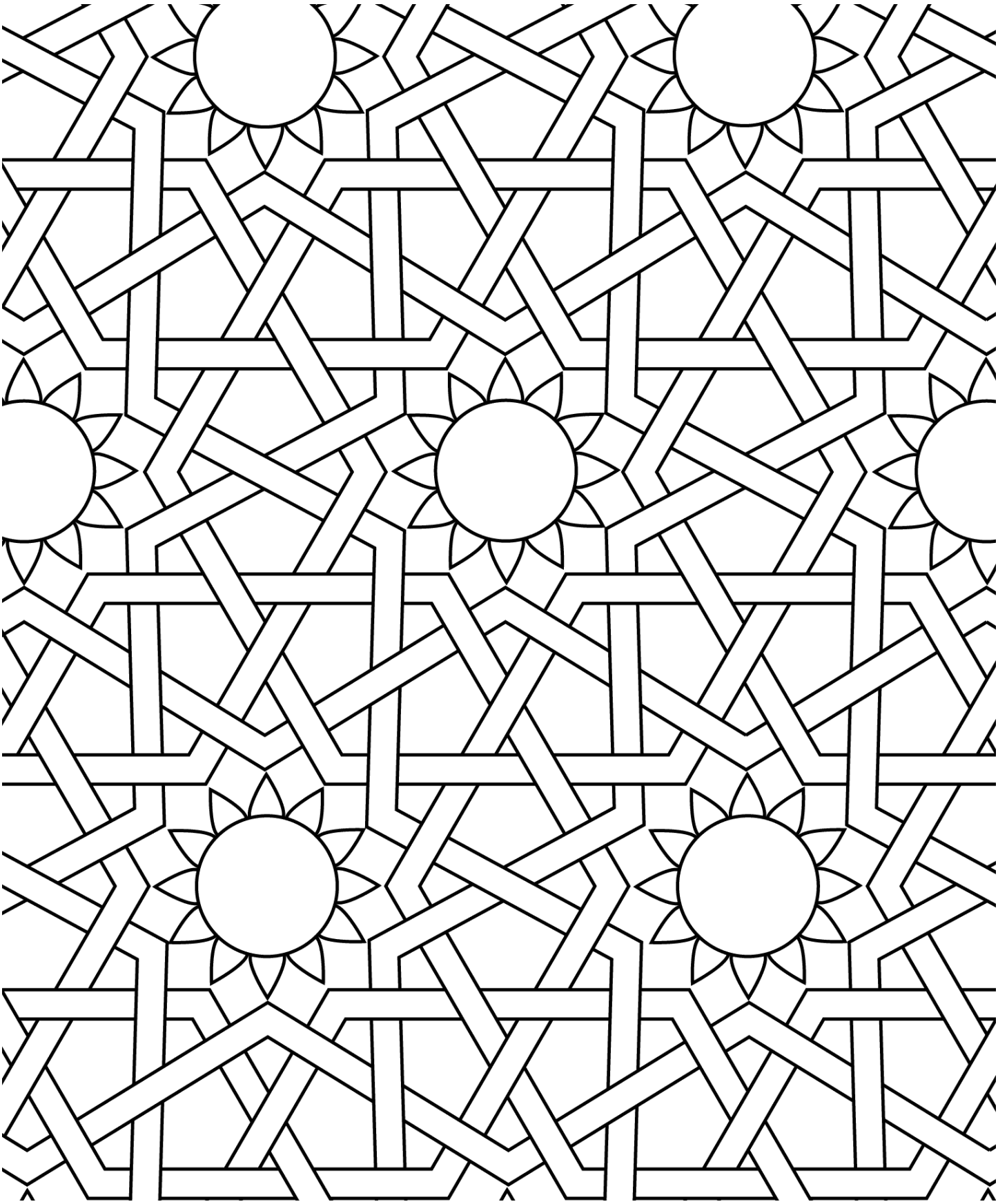
markers

scissors

optional: print out your favorite rose compass template from online section

Vocabulary

Kaaba
meaning "cube" in Arabic, the Kaaba is the holiest site in Islam, which represents the house of Allah.

Mecca
The birthplace of the prophet Muhammad and location of the Kaaba, Mecca is the holiest city in Islam.

Compass Rose
A figure on a map that shows the orientation of the cardinal directions: North, South, East, and West.