



Bismillah ar Rahman ir Rahim



## Islamic Perspectives on Talking with Your Children During Times of War & Stress

Muslims know that we face many tests in life. This is particularly true during times of war and other crises. Our children also face tests and need our support and guidance in dealing with them. As parents, we have an obligation to help our children cope and flourish. Here are some suggestions that you might find useful.

### Remember Allah SWT as a Family

- **Remembering Allah SWT is a comfort** and cure for our hearts, especially when we are upset, afraid or sad as in times of war, discrimination, and stress.
- **Pray as a family.** Let your children see you praying and making du'aa. This will give them a sense of security and trust in Allah SWT.
- **Read Quran with the whole family** every day. Consistency is better than quantity: Try spending just 5 or 10 minutes *every* morning or evening!
- **Talk with your children about Allah SWT's qualities** of Peace (al Salaam), Mercy (ar-Rahman), Generous Compassion (ar-Rahim), and Justice (al Adl). Give examples of Allah SWT's Mercy and then ask your children for more examples.
- Remind your children that **Allah SWT controls everything** and that we put our whole trust in Him alone. Give examples of how Allah SWT cares for His creation, like how Allah SWT provides food for the birds. Ask your child for more examples.
- **Teach and practice with your children what to say when scared, mad, or sad:**
  - *La hawla wa la qawata illa billah* (There is no strength or power except for Allah)
  - *Audhubillahi min al Shaytan ir rajeem* (I seek refuge in Allah from Shaytan the rejected)
  - *Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raja'uun* (From Allah we have come and to Allah we return)
  - *La illaha il Allah* (There is no diety except for Allah)
  - *Last 3 Surahs of Quran: al Ikhlas, al Falaq, and an-Naas.*
- **Give them encouragement** and congratulations every time they remember Allah SWT. Let them know that **when they remember Allah SWT, Allah SWT remembers them!**

## Follow the Examples of the Prophets (AS)

- **Let your children tell you what they know about specific prophets (AS).** Pretend to be the “student” and let them be the “teachers” who teach you!
- **Read stories about the prophets (AS)** and how they faced and overcame their tests. Emphasize that they were active – in solving problems, standing up for what is right, helping others and encouraging others to do good.
- **The story of Prophet Yusuf (AS) and his brothers is the most beautiful story.** It gives great lessons about fighting, trusting in Allah SWT, and how conflicts can be resolved in the end, with Allah SWT’s help.
- **Talk about how the prophets (AS) had to face many difficult situations,** even though they were excellent people and Allah SWT loved them very much. They even felt afraid sometimes, but Allah SWT always helped them to be patient and succeed.
- Talk about how, **even when the Prophets (AS) were tested by some people, other people loved them and assisted them.** Give examples, such as the companions and helpers of Prophet Muhammed SAWS.
- **Show how Allah SWT’s help can come in amazing ways** – for example, the story of how an elephant and birds helped protect the Ka’ba, or how the spider spun a web that helped hide Prophet Muhammed (SAWS) and Abu Bakr (RA).
- **Have your whole family learn du’aas made by particular prophets** such as Prophets Ibrahim (AS), Yusuf (AS), and Muhammed (AS).

## Get Active in Helping as a Family!

- **Explain how the Muslims are like one body.** That when one part hurts, the whole body feels the pain and tries to help out in healing.
- **Make du’aa with your children for the Muslims who are suffering** as refugees or in war – for example, ask Allah SWT to guide the leaders, protect the Muslim children and families, and grant paradise with Allah SWT for those who die.
- **Provide your child with positive Muslim male role models.** During war, strong male figures dominate the news. Male and female children may glamorize and imitate these male figures and may admire their power and prestige. It is crucial to provide children with positive Muslim male role models. Fathers should participate in family life as much as possible. Maintain other positive role models in your children’s life including grandfathers, imams, teachers, and coaches. Make positive statements about Muslim males – comment on how much you enjoyed the imam’s khutba, praise your husband’s hard work and caring, admire a teacher’s learning, a coach’s commitment and a big brother’s sense of responsibility. Read, watch videos, and talk about positive male Muslim role models in current affairs and from Islamic history.

- **Give examples of Muslims who are helping other Muslims** – like doctors who help the sick and wounded, or relief workers who bring food and supplies. Talk to your children about the work of Muslim activists, such as those at Muslim organizations like CAIR.
- **Let them know that non-Muslims also help Muslims and work for peace.** And that Muslims should care about suffering non-Muslims as well.
- **Become involved as a family in sadaqa projects** to help the Muslims who suffer in war and poverty – for example, by coordinating relief kits.
- **Show your children different ways of being active**, for example by responding to CAIR’s action alerts or writing to the President, senators, and congressmen.
- **Teach older children about dealing with discrimination and how to report hate crimes.** Empower them with information and a sound plan of action.
- **Read the paper with your children** – it is less graphic than television. Many papers even have a kids’ section, usually on the weekend. Invite your children to express their own thoughts and feelings about what you read together. Set an example for your children by writing a “letter to the editor” or better yet – help your children write their own letters to the editor!
- **Get your children involved in giving charity** – by giving away money, choosing the donation amount (\$50 or \$75?), or picking the charity. They can bake cookies for the needy, visit the sick and elderly, give away toys, and even give away smiles!
- **Brainstorm ideas with your children** – think of ways your family can get involved in helping needy Muslims in your community and in other countries.
- **Set up a weekly family meeting** to talk about what is going on and consult with each other about what you can do. The meeting can be 10 to 15 minutes long for younger children or ½ hour to ¾ hour for older children. Ask your children what they already know about a particular situation. Gently correct any misinformation. Ask for their opinions and concerns. Listen to them. Stay flexible and relaxed. Use simple words when you speak and don’t give them more information than age-appropriate.
- **Give your children plenty of hugs, affection, smiles, and encouragement!** Prophet Muhammed SAWS was very loving and affectionate with his community, his family and with children. Your children might express their stress and anxiety in ways that you find disturbing or irritating. For example, they might seek attention and reassurance by misbehaving more than usual. **Be extra-patient and gentle during times of stress.** Allah SWT loves gentleness, and gives to gentle people that which is not given to others.

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