

# What is Citizenship?

**Suggested Duration: 60 minutes**

## Learning Objectives

- ▶ To introduce the Islam and Citizenship Education (ICE) project and the pupils' role within it
- ▶ To understand what citizenship is

## Key Words

- ▶ Citizenship, responsibility, rights, active, tolerance (to accept differences and not just put up with them), BIRR

## Islamic Values

Islam encourages us to know and understand each other's communities and to look after each other, regardless of our faith, as a shepherd would look after His sheep. Islam commands us to work for the common good.

## Citizenship Values

Citizenship promotes: actively taking part to help everybody; knowing your rights and responsibilities; serving the community; and respecting all.



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M (B)



## Resources

Pupils' Activity Sheet 2.0101:  
Aims of the ICE Project

Pupils' Activity Sheet 2.0102:  
ICE Definition of Citizenship

## Activities

Welcome pupils to the Islam and Citizenship Education (ICE) project. Using Pupils' Activity Sheet 2.0101, explain the aims of the ICE project.

### A Starter Activity

Ask pupils what they think citizenship is all about. Use the following statements to initiate discussion.

Is citizenship about:

- ▶ what we eat in the UK?
- ▶ learning about the geography of a country?
- ▶ being a good person?
- ▶ learning about the rights of others?
- ▶ learning about one's responsibilities?
- ▶ taking part in politics?

Take feedback, and emphasise that citizenship is about all aspects of life.

### B Development

#### Activity 1: What is Citizenship?

Read through the definition of citizenship, and introduce the term BIRR (B=Belonging, I=Interacting, R=Rights, R=Responsibilities). Each of these terms is discussed in this lesson.

Note that the word BIRR in the Qur`an refers to goodness and the common good.

Explain that as the course goes on, they will unpick all these ideas and examine them from an Islamic point of view.

Also refer them to Maurice Irfan Coles' article *Islam, Citizenship and Education: When Hope and History Rhyme*. This article gives more detailed arguments about Islam and citizenship and is available on the ICE website: [www.theiceproject.com](http://www.theiceproject.com).

#### ICE Definition of Citizenship

**Belonging** to our country, city, town, community, religion; sharing our country's values in things like respect, tolerance, freedom and equality.

**Interacting** taking part in the life of our country and communities and interacting with others so that we can help each other to make it a better place for all to live in.

**Rights** your right to live and worship in the country freely, give your views on political issues, take part in democratic elections; the right to justice and to democracy; government rights over you – for example, making sure you obey the law and pay your taxes.

**Responsibilities** responsibilities towards each other, caring for the environment, caring for other people, not interfering with the rights of others, obeying the law, going to school; government responsibilities – for example, spending your taxes in an appropriate way on such things as health care, schools and security; and protecting the rights of citizens – for example, ensuring you can live and speak freely and worship peacefully.

Ask pupils the following questions and encourage them to refer back to the BIRR definition for answers:

- ▶ Where do you belong?
- ▶ What do you do to make your school/home/neighbourhood a better place?
- ▶ What are your rights?
- ▶ What are your responsibilities?

### Activity 2: Islamic Guidance

Ask a pupil to recite the following verses. Explain the meaning.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَى  
جَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ  
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

*'O mankind! We created you from a male and a female and We made you into races and tribes so that you may know each other; the most noble of you in the sight of God is the one who is the most righteous. Indeed God is All-knowing, All-aware.'*  
(Surat al-Hujurat 49:13)

Explain that it is God's wish that we are different and have different backgrounds. It is His wish for us to make an effort to know and understand different communities. It says that the best of all our communities are those that are most righteous.

**Question:** Why do you think God says that the best of us are the most righteous, rather than the best of us are the English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, Asians, Africans or Arabs?

**Suggested answer:** God is telling us that the greatest duty we have is to worship and praise Him, be righteous and live our lives helping everybody.

*'Every one of you is a shepherd and each of you will be asked about the people you are responsible for.'* (Bukhari)

**Question:** Why did Prophet Muhammad ﷺ compare each of us with a shepherd? Are you therefore a shepherd? Who are you responsible for?

**Suggested answer:** By 'shepherd', Prophet Muhammad ﷺ meant that each of us has the role of a carer, whether this is within our home, community or country.

*'Treat others similar to the way you would like them to treat you.'* (Bihar al-Anwar)

### C Plenary

Sum up the key points of the lesson.

Ask pupils how they feel about taking part in the project and what they are hoping to learn.

Refer them to the Key Stage 2 Programme of Study. Share a few lesson titles with the pupils and inform them that there are about twenty lessons in total.

### Suggested Follow-up Work

Give instructions for follow-up work:

Visit [www.theiceproject.com](http://www.theiceproject.com) and register yourself in the 'Students' area.

## Resources

Key Stage 2 Programme of Study



### Aims of the Islam & Citizenship Education (ICE) Project

The ICE project aims to:

- ▶ educate children and young people about their roles and responsibilities as Muslims within British society
- ▶ encourage children and young people to link and share experiences they have in their madrasahs and schools
- ▶ make children and young people aware that to be a good Muslim you need to be a good citizen and vice versa
- ▶ take on board any comments, suggestions and recommendations made by children and young people about the ICE materials.



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