

School Council and Shura

Suggested Duration: 60 minutes

Learning Objectives

- ▶ To explore the nature of citizenship in the context of the school and to show that this is similar to what goes on in local and national government
- ▶ To provide some examples of shura and show how this helps to build a stable and happy community

Key Words

- ▶ Consultation, democratic, democracy, shura – to seek advice from one another, mutual consultation

Islamic Values

Islam encourages us to engage in dialogue with each other, consult widely, and try to reach some common ground between us.

Citizenship Values

Citizenship encourages us to work closely together, to come to agreed decisions and, if a common view cannot be found, then to agree to differ.



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M (B)



Resources

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.0401:
Lesson Objectives

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.0402:
School Scenarios

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.0403:
Benefits of School Councils

Activities

Ask some quick questions to recap the last lesson.
Share the lesson objectives.

A Starter Activity

Present the following scenarios – two different methods of running a school.

School 1

This is a very formal school, where the teachers direct everything and the pupils do as they are told without questioning. There is no school council and little pupil involvement, but the school has very good results and the parents love it.

School 2

This is a much less formal school. It is pupil centred and the pupils have a very active part in their learning, and are encouraged to engage in dialogue. There is a very strong school council, which really does have an influence over the life of the school. Results are average; some parents love the school, but others want the school to be more formal.

Ask pupils to discuss in groups what they think is the best type of school and why. Ask them to give five reasons.

Take feedback and ask pupils to raise their hand if they think School 1 is better and then do the same for School 2. Explain that pupils have just taken part in voting and have given their opinion freely.

B Development

Activity 1: School Councils

Ask pupils:

- ▶ how many of them have a school council
- ▶ how many of them are involved in it
- ▶ how elections are conducted
- ▶ how decisions are made
- ▶ what the benefits of a school council are.

List the benefits of school councils – they are there to influence decision making about, for example, school dinners, sports activities, and so on. They also reflect the democratic processes (make a quick reference to local councillors and MPs).

Offer this simple definition of democracy:

The school council is, therefore, a form of what we call democracy, which means rule by the people. It comes from the Greek words Demos (people) and Kratia (strength).

Ask pupils if they know what Islam says about democracy, about consulting with people, and about trying to come to an agreed decision. Use the Islamic references on the following page.

Activity 2: Islamic Guidance

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

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ
فَطَّاءً غَلِيظًا لَّفَنَفِضُوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ
فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي
الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

(O Prophet Muhammad ﷺ) 'It is by the mercy of God that you are gentle with people; had you been harsh and hard hearted they would have run away from you. So pardon them and seek forgiveness for them; and seek their advice on issues and once you have made a decision then put your trust in God, indeed God loves the trusting.' [Surat Alee Imran 3:159]

Emphasise that in this verse the Qur`an guides us to be gentle in our dealing with others and encourages us to seek advice, but ultimately to have faith in God and put our trust in Him.

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

'And those who answer the call of their Lord and establish prayer, and who conduct their affairs by consultation, and who spend of what We have given to them.'
[Surat al-Shura 42:38]

'Imam Ali Ibi Abu Talib asked Prophet Muhammad ﷺ :
O' Messenger! If we have a matter in which we do not find a command or prohibition then what is your advice?' He replied: 'Consult the righteous wise people and do not depend upon individual opinions.' (Tabrani)

This demonstrates that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ encouraged consultation and dialogue. Everyone was given an equal opportunity to express their ideas and views.

'People are equal to one another in rights.' (Nahj al-Sa`adah)

By being proactive (which means you taking the lead, not waiting to be told by someone else) in your school and community, you are helping to raise concerns that affect you and others around you.

Explain that, in Islam, the process of consultation is known as 'shura'.

Resources

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.0404:
Islamic Guidance

Resources

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.0405:
Feedback

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.0406:
Follow-up Worksheet

C Plenary

Sum up the key learning points:

- ▶ Making collective decisions in all our affairs helps to bring people together and create unity, leading to respect for each other's opinions.
- ▶ Consultation and making collective decisions gives us a sense of community. Your school is a type of community and your school council (because it consults with everybody) is a type of shura.
- ▶ Shura is the mutual consultation carried out to make collective decisions and these can be at different levels. For example, the local council practises shura when its members discuss and engage in dialogue before making a decision on behalf of the people who elected them.

Invite pupils to complete Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.0405.

Suggested Follow-up Work

Give instructions for follow-up work:

Find out who the leader of your local council is.

Your madrasah has been given a £500 donation for the decoration of the madrasah. Consult and decide together how you will spend it. How and who will you consult with, in order to ensure a collective decision?

Use Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.0406 to give your answer.

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Benefits of School Councils

There are many reasons why you should join a school council. Some of the benefits are:

- ▶ being involved in decision making that affects the running of the school
- ▶ raising concerns that affect you and your friends
- ▶ linking with other pupils, teachers and governors
- ▶ having a say in what happens/takes place in your school and classroom.

Islamic Guidance

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'And those who answer the call of their Lord and establish prayer, and who conduct their affairs by consultation, and who spend of what We have given to them.' (Surat al-Shura 42:38)

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'People are equal to one another in rights.' (Nahj al-Sa`adah)

Feedback

Lesson Title: School Council and Shura

Name:

Madrasah/Organisation:

Today I have learnt about:

As a result of this lesson I have learnt that a good Muslim should:

I am going to follow up this topic in my home/school/community by:

Follow-up Worksheet

Lesson Title: School Council and Shura

Name:

Madrasah/Organisation:

Tasks:

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Write your answer here.