

The Constitution of Madinah: A Multi-faith Society

Suggested Duration: 60 minutes

Learning Objectives

- ▶ To learn about the world's first attempt to lay down the principles for a multi-faith society
- ▶ To appreciate that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ encouraged all people living in Madinah to exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities

Key Words

- ▶ Sahifah (page/document), constitution, rights and responsibilities, ummah, hijrah, Ansar (Muslim residents of Madinah who helped the refugees from Makkah), Muhajirun (Muslim refugees who fled from Makkah to Madinah)

Islamic Values

Islam teaches us to obey the law and let people of other faiths practise their religion in the way they want.

Citizenship Values

A British citizen must obey the law and be free to practise their religion in the way they want.



ams:uk
ASSOCIATION OF MUSLIM SCHOOLS



NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR
CITIZENSHIP FOUNDATION

continYOU
Changing lives through learning



M (B)



Resources

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.1301:
Lesson Objectives

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.1302:
Freedoms List

Pupils' Activity Sheet: 3.1303:
Key Messages from the
Constitution of Madinah

Activities

Ask some quick questions to recap the last lesson.

Share the lesson objectives.

A Starter Activity

Recap:

- ▶ In the previous lesson we looked at 'community cohesion'. What does that term mean?
- ▶ What was the name of the country in which people of different faiths lived and worked closely and well together? (Andalusia/Spain).
- ▶ Why is it rather like Britain today? (Because all the people lived and worked harmoniously, they obeyed the laws, they enjoyed their cultural heritages and practised their religions freely.)
- ▶ In Lesson 1 we looked at the rights and responsibilities of individuals and the government. Do you remember what those terms meant? (Refer back to the first lesson and explain the term BIRR.)
- ▶ Most countries have a set of principles and rules, known as a constitution, which helps its government to run the country. Do you know who devised the first multi-faith and multi-cultural constitution in the world that gave people their rights and outlined their responsibilities? (Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in Madinah.)

B Development

Activity 1: Freedoms List

Using Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.1302, ask the class to work in smaller groups and list the freedoms they would want to have as British citizens, for instance:

- ▶ We would like the freedom to worship.
- ▶ We would like the freedom to ...
- ▶ We would like the freedom to ...

Take feedback and emphasise that in our country we want the freedom to worship, learn, speak, travel, work, and so on.

Activity 2: The Constitution of Madinah – the Sahifah

Remind the class of the story of Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ migration from Makkah to Madinah (the Hijrah).

Madinah was originally called Yathrib and there were Jews, Arabs and others already living there. Some of the people there had also accepted Islam. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ had the difficult task of bringing together the Jews, Ansar and the Muhajirun so that they could live together in peace and harmony.

In order to do this he laid down several principles and rules over a period of time, which later became known as the 'Sahifah', which is Arabic for page or document. This document is said to be the first written constitution ever that gave rights and responsibilities to all citizens.

The key points of the Sahifah/constitution of Madinah were:

- ▶ The three groups living there (Jews, Ansar and Muhajirun) were described by Prophet Muhammed ﷺ as one community.
- ▶ Everybody living in Madinah agreed to accept the final authority of God and His Messenger.
- ▶ Everybody agreed with the choice of the twelve people who would organise the community.

- ▶ Everybody agreed to co-operate to ensure law and order.
- ▶ Everybody was entitled to protection and support.
- ▶ Everybody was entitled to pray as they wished.
- ▶ Everybody was expected to defend Madinah.
- ▶ Everybody was expected to pay their taxes.

Activity 3: Islamic Guidance

Below are several passages taken from the Sahifah.

The ICE project has taken these texts from the book *Constitutional Analysis of the Constitution of Madinah*, written by Dr Muhammad Tahir ul-Qadri. This book relates the Madinah Constitution to modern terminology and context. You can download the complete document from the ICE website.

Ask a few pupils to read the articles (they may also visit the website for more examples):

Article No 30: Guarantee of freedom of religion for both the Muslims and non-Muslim minorities (the Jews)

'The Jews of Banu Awf (non-Muslim minorities) shall be considered a community along with the believers. They shall be guaranteed the right of religious freedom along with the Muslims. The right shall be conferred on their associates as well as themselves except those who are guilty of oppression or the violators of treaties. They will bring evil only on themselves and their family.'

Question: What did Prophet Muhammad ﷺ mean when he said: 'The Jews have their religion and the Muslims theirs'?

Suggested answer: Everybody has the freedom to practise their religion.

Article No 45: Compulsory mutual help to one another in case of war

'There shall be mutual help between one another against those engaged in war with the allies of this document.'

Question: What is 'mutual help'?

Suggested answer: To help each other

Article No 58: The basic constituent members of this document and their associates shall possess equal constitutional status

'The Jews of Aws (one of the basic constituent members of this document) and their allies shall possess the same constitutional status as the other parties to this document, with a condition that they should thoroughly be sincere and honest in their dealing with the parties.'

Question: Did Prophet Muhammad ﷺ give equal rights to Muslims and others under the Constitution of Madinah?

Answer: Yes.

Resources

Pupils' Activity Sheet: 3.1304:
Islamic Guidance

Resources

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.1305:
Constitution of Madinah and
British Society

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.1306:
Feedback

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.1307:
Follow-up Worksheet

Activity 4: The Constitution of Madinah and British Society

Ask the class to work in small groups and write down why they think the Constitution of Madinah is so important for Muslims in Britain today.

Take feedback and emphasise that it is important because it:

- ▶ provides an Islamic model that shows how a state should be run
- ▶ guarantees religious freedom
- ▶ stresses that all communities have rights and responsibilities to the state and to each other
- ▶ stresses that people should respect the law
- ▶ encourages groups to consult with each other.

C Plenary

To recap, ask the following questions:

- ▶ What is a constitution? (A set of laws and systems for a government)
- ▶ Who devised the first written constitution in the world which gave rights to Jews and Muslims? (Prophet Muhammad ﷺ)
- ▶ Who were the three groups living in Madinah? (The Ansar, the Muhajirun and the Jews)
- ▶ What does the word 'Sahifah' mean? (Page or document)
- ▶ What was Madinah originally called? (Yathrib)
- ▶ Who is responsible for the things you do? (You)

Invite pupils to complete Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.1306.

Suggested Follow-up Work

Give instructions for follow-up work:

Talk to your parents about why it is important to respect the law.

Download *Constitution of Madinah* from the ICE website, and identify the articles which encourage Muslims and non-Muslims to live together in peace.

Use Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.1307 to report your comments.

Lesson Objectives

- ▶ To learn about the world's first attempt to lay down the principles for a multi-faith society
- ▶ To appreciate that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ encouraged all people living in Madinah to exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities



Freedom List

List the freedoms that you would like to have as British citizens, for example: We would like the freedom to pray.

▶ We would like the freedom to ...

Key Messages from the Constitution of Madinah

- ▶ The three groups living there (Jews, Ansar and Muhajirun) were described by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as one community.
- ▶ Everybody living in Madinah agreed to accept the final authority of God and His Messenger.
- ▶ Everybody agreed with the choice of the twelve people who would organise the community.
- ▶ Everybody agreed to co-operate to ensure law and order.
- ▶ Everybody was entitled to protection and support.
- ▶ Everybody was entitled to pray as they wished.
- ▶ Everybody was expected to defend Madinah.
- ▶ Everybody was expected to pay their taxes.

Islamic Guidance

The ICE project has taken these texts from the book *Constitutional Analysis of the Constitution of Madinah*, written by Dr Muhammad Tahir ul-Qadri. This book relates the Madinah Constitution to the modern terminology and context. You can download the complete document from the ICE website.

Article No 30: Guarantee of freedom of religion for both the Muslims and non-Muslim minorities (the Jews)

'The Jews of Banu Awf (non-Muslim minorities) shall be considered a community along with the believers. They shall be guaranteed the right of religious freedom along with the Muslims. The right shall be conferred on their associates as well as themselves except those who are guilty of oppression or the violators of treaties. They will bring evil only on themselves and their family.'

Article No 45: Compulsory mutual help to one another in case of war

'There shall be mutual help between one another against those engaged in war with the allies of this document.'

Article No 58: The basic constituent members of this document and their associates shall possess equal constitutional status

'The Jews of Aws (one of the basic constituent members of this document) and their allies shall possess the same constitutional status as the other parties to this document, with a condition that they should thoroughly be sincere and honest in their dealing with the parties.'

Constitution of Madinah and British Society

Why do you think that understanding the Constitution of Madinah is important for British Muslims?

- ▶ It teaches us to live in peace with people of other faiths.

▶

▶

▶

▶

▶

Feedback

Lesson Title: The Constitution of Madinah: A Multi-faith Society
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: The Constitution of Madinah: A Multi-faith Society

Name:

Madrasah/Organisation:

Task:

Talk to your parents about why it is important to respect the law.

Download the *Constitution of Madinah* from the ICE website, and identify the articles which encourage Muslims and non-Muslims to live together in peace.

Your comments: