

Informed Decisions and Responsible Actions

Suggested Duration: 60 minutes

Learning Objectives

- ▶ To understand how to make informed decisions and to take responsible actions
- ▶ To learn that Islam encourages us to research and seek the truth

Key Words

- ▶ Appropriate choice, informed decision, seeking knowledge, people of knowledge

Islamic Values

Islam teaches us to enquire and research before making a decision and taking action. It also encourages us to seek knowledge and explore the truth.

Citizenship Values

Citizenship teaches us to recognise the different risks in different situations and then to decide how to behave responsibly when making decisions.



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M (B)



Resources

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.2101:
Lesson Objectives

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.2102:
Conclusive Statements

Activities

Ask some quick questions to recap the last lesson.

Share the lesson objectives.

A Starter Activity

Make a controversial statement that will split the group into two. For example, you might say: 'Fish and chips are better than a doner kebab', 'Manchester United is better than Chelsea', 'Women are better teachers than men'.

Ask those who agree with the statement to go to one side of the room and those who disagree to go to the other side. Select three or four pupils at a time to give reasons for their opinion.

Ask pupils whether they should try to gather any information before making their decision. Tell them that the purpose of this exercise was to illustrate how people sometimes respond and make choices without thinking things through properly.

B Development

Activity 1: The Difference Between an Informed and an Ill-informed Decision

Ask pupils to complete Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.2102, which contains a series of statements. Some are informed decisions based upon factual information, and others are ill-informed decisions based upon immediate reactions, hearsay evidence and emotional reactions.

Explain the activity to pupils and ask them to write the reasons for their choice in the appropriate column.



Activity 2: Islamic Guidance

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

هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

'...Are those who have knowledge equal to those who do not have knowledge?...' (Surat al-Zumar 39:9)

This verse shows that Islam encourages us to gain knowledge (material and religious) and find out about things, and that those who engage themselves in research, reading and fact-finding are better people and preferred by God.

Question: What does God mean by those who 'have knowledge' and 'those who do not'?

Suggested answer: Knowledgeable people and ignorant people.

Question: How can you find out about something that you do not know?

Suggested answers:

- ▶ Asking those who know – teachers, scholars, parents
- ▶ Going to the library to research
- ▶ Reading books, journals and newspapers
- ▶ Listening to scholars
- ▶ Visiting recommended websites – be careful with all search engines because not everything that you read on the internet is always correct

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ
فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا
عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ

'O believers! When a corrupt person comes to you with news, verify it in case you harm people out of ignorance and you end up regretting what you have done.' (Surat al-Hujarat 49:6)

The Qur`an instructs believers not to take information from unreliable sources and to investigate fully before arriving at any conclusion, and not to believe immediately in hearsay evidence.

'The cure for ignorance is to question.' (Abu Dawud)

'Half of knowledge is gained through questioning.'

(Nahj al-Balaghah)

'Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.' (Ibn Majah)

Resources

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.2103:
Islamic Guidance

Resources

Story from the Sirah – 1

Tell pupils the following story:

'After the miraculous Night Journey (Mi`raj) of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Abu Jahl, a well-known enemy, went to Abu Bakr and asked: "What would you say of someone who claimed to have travelled overnight from Makkah to Jerusalem?" Abu Bakr paused, thought and said: "I would ask, who said it?" When he was told it was Muhammad, he said: "I believe he spoke the truth."

It was this response of Abu Bakr that earned him the title Al-Siddiq (Testifier).'

Question: What do we learn from this story?

Suggested answers:

- ▶ Muslims are encouraged to investigate and not jump to conclusions, no matter how strange the claim may seem.
- ▶ Muslims should not be agitated and rise to people who are deliberately trying to cause tensions. Abu Jahl was a staunch enemy of Islam and was trying to mock and incite Abu Bakr, but Abu Bakr remained calm and responded to the argumentative question with due consideration and care.

Story from the Sirah – 2

Tell pupils the following story:

'After the Battle of Badr, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ promised the prisoners of war (who were non-believers) freedom if they agreed to teach the Muslims how to read and write.'

Question: What do we learn from this story?

Suggested answers:

- ▶ Prophet Muhammad ﷺ always encouraged people to learn and to better themselves so that they could make better informed decisions.
- ▶ Religion should not be a barrier to receiving knowledge and information.

Activity 3: Taking Appropriate Actions

Explain that Islam encourages us to take appropriate actions based upon each person's individual capacity.

Invite pupils to consider the different ways of responding to the situations listed on the Activity Sheet, based on the hadith 'If you see evil, change it with your hand if you can, if not, with your tongue; if not then with your heart.' (Muslim)

Ask pupils to complete Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.2104. (The activity sheet has been provided courtesy of the IHNA Education Programme, developed by Building Bridges Pendle.)

Ask them to justify their reasons.

C Plenary

Sum up and stress that Islam constantly encourages us to make fully informed decisions and not to jump to conclusions. We are also encouraged to do the right thing and to take responsible actions that are appropriate to the individual's ability.

Invite pupils to fill in Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.2105.

Suggested Follow-up Work

Give instructions for follow-up work:

List seven things you would like to change in your community for everyone. Use Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.2106.

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.2104:
Appropriate Responses

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.2105:
Feedback

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.2106:
Follow-up Worksheet

Lesson Objectives

- ▶ To understand how to make informed decisions and to take responsible actions
- ▶ To learn that Islam encourages us to research and seek the truth



Conclusive Statements

For each statement below, decide whether you think it is a well-informed or ill-informed decision. Write your reasons for your choice in the appropriate box.

Statement	Informed Decision	Ill-informed Decision
Manchester United is the best team in the world because they've won more Premiership titles than anyone!		
I support the Pakistani cricket team because my family is from Pakistan.		
People who wear glasses are clever.		
Gordon Brown is not a good Prime Minister because I don't like him.		
It is easier to practise your faith in the United Kingdom because the law protects religious freedoms.		
I'm going to smoke because everyone does!		
I wear a scarf because it is fard (a religious duty).		

Islamic Guidance

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Story from the Sirah – 1

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Story from the Sirah – 2

'After the Battle of Badr Prophet Muhammad ﷺ promised the prisoners of war (who were non-believers) freedom if they agreed to teach the Muslims how to read and write.'

Appropriate Responses

For the following 'bad actions', decide what is the best response that you can make. You must give a reason for your choice. The first one is done for you.

Note: This activity has been provided courtesy of the IHNA Education Programme, developed by Building Bridges Pendle.

Bad Action	Hand	Tongue	Heart
You see lots of litter on the street near the local church.	Pick it up		
	Because the Prophet  said that removing harmful things from the street is an act of charity.		
You see a fight between two groups of young people who are much older than you.			
You are walking in the shopping mall and your friend spits on the floor.			
You see a drunkard on the floor near your front door.			
You see a homeless person begging for money on the street.			

Feedback

Lesson Title: Informed Decisions and Responsible Actions

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: Informed Decisions and Responsible Actions

Name:

Madrasah/Organisation:

Tasks:

List seven things you would like to change in your community for everyone.

Answers: