

CHILDREN



FRONT AND CENTER IN FAMILY LIFE



CHILDREN IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

The saying that “children should be seen and not heard” does not ring true in the Muslim world! Children are front and center in family life: a blessing at birth, a constant presence in daily life, and a built-in social safety net when their parents grow old.

Visit any Muslim family, and you will experience their vibrancy morning, noon, and night! Childlessness is considered a shameful adversity.

As in every society, children in the Muslim world learn right and wrong as they grow up in the context of the family. They know what is acceptable and unacceptable by how their mothers, fathers, siblings, and extended family act and react to events in daily life.

In the Muslim world in general, the birth of boys is especially celebrated while the birth of girls is relatively unremarkable and sometimes regrettable. In more traditional societies, girls’ lives revolve around the home and taking care of others, while boys have more freedom in the outside world.

Sisters often have to yield to the needs and wishes of their brothers, even if the boys are younger. This can foster in boys a sense of entitlement early in life, as they realize they have power over the women of the household, even their mothers.

WHAT DOES ISLAM TEACH ABOUT CHILDREN?

Islam teaches that every child on earth is born a Muslim, but regrettably, they become whatever faith tradition they grow up in. When a child is born in a Muslim family, the father will whisper the words of the call to prayer (adhan) in the baby's right ear.

On the seventh day, a name will be chosen, and sometimes a family will offer a meat sacrifice in celebration. Boys are often circumcised on the seventh day. The new mother will be at home for forty days, and many female relatives and friends will come to visit.

According to Islamic tradition, children are not held accountable for their bad deeds until they reach puberty. Boys experience life with few limitations, while girls often live with many restrictions. Girls are responsible for preserving the honor of the family, so sometimes they are circumcised (known as "female genital mutilation") to reduce their sexual desire.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant, and they said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read, “Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise?” — Matthew 21:15-16

But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." — Matthew 19:14

And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. — Matthew 18:2-6

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. — John 1:12

For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself. — Acts 2:39

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. — Ephesians 5:1

Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. — 1 John 3:18

Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.

Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth.

Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! — Psalm 127:3-5a

PRAYER POINTS

“IF YOU ASK ME ANYTHING IN MY NAME, I WILL DO IT.” JOHN 14:14

- ❖ Pray for exposure to the Gospel of Jesus at an early age.
- ❖ Pray for cycles of abuse to end as the traumatized and wounded find healing in Jesus.
- ❖ Pray for the faith of children to lead entire families and even communities to Christ.