What is Eid al-Fitr?

Eid al-Fitr is a Muslim festival to celebrate the end of the month of Ramadan. During Ramadan adult Muslims fast from dawn until dusk. The fast is intended to bring Muslims closer to God, who they call ‘Allah’, by reminding them to think about those less fortunate than themselves. Muslims often donate food and money to charity during Ramadan.

To celebrate the end of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr is a time of feasting, family and fun. In preparation for Eid, homes might be decorated with brightly-coloured streamers, tinsel, bunting, lanterns called fanoos, paper chains, balloons, fairy lights and signs saying ‘Eid Mubarak’ – Happy Eid! Women and girls have their hands painted with henna in intricate patterns which are called ‘mehndi’. Just like at other festivals like Christmas, homes are filled with delicious cooking aromas. You might smell things like spicy chicken tagine, chilli beef or delicious sweets and truffles. Traditional sweets include barfi which are made with sweet, condensed milk and crunchy, sugary baklava.

People send cards and buy themselves sparkly, traditional clothes in captivating colours. The day itself begins with prayers at the mosque. Girls and women pray in one room, and men and boys in another. After prayers everybody comes together again to chat and hug. Eid is about celebrating with the whole family – grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, brothers, sisters and parents. There is a vibrant atmosphere of music, dancing, feasting, games, laughter and conversation.

In some countries the festival lasts for three days!
What is Eid al-Fitr?

Read the information about Eid al-Fitr, and then see how much you can remember by writing the answers to the questions below into your book.

1. What event does Eid al-Fitr immediately follow?
2. Talk about four ways in which Muslims prepare for Eid.
3. How do you think Muslim children and adults feel in the run up to Eid? Why?
4. How do Muslims begin the Eid?
5. With whom do Muslims celebrate Eid?
6. What sorts of things might Muslims do to celebrate Eid in their homes?
7. Name two foods that might be eaten during Eid.
8. How long can Eid last?
9. Think about a festival that you celebrate. How does your festival compare to Eid? How is it similar? How is it different?
10. If you celebrate Eid, how are your family celebrations similar and different to those described above? Write about your day.
What is Eid al-Fitr? - Answers

1. What event does Eid al-Fitr immediately follow?

   *Eid al-Fitr follows the month of Ramadan.*

2. Talk about four ways in which Muslims prepare for Eid.

   *To prepare for Eid, Muslims decorate their homes, cook special food, make traditional sweets and women and girls decorate their hands with mehndi patterns using henna.*

3. How do you think Muslim children and adults feel in the run up to Eid? Why?

   *In the run up to Eid people may feel excited about seeing family members they haven’t seen for a while. They may also be looking forward to wearing their new Eid clothes. After fasting during the month of Ramadan, they may be looking forward to celebrating with some delicious food and eating special sweets.*

4. How do Muslims begin Eid?

   *Eid begins with prayers at the mosque.*

5. With whom do Muslims celebrate Eid?

   *Muslims celebrate Eid with their whole family.*

6. What sorts of things might Muslims do to celebrate Eid in their homes?

   *Muslims might play games and eat food together to celebrate Eid.*

7. Name two foods that might be eaten during Eid.

   *During Eid people might eat spicy chicken tagine or chilli beef.*

8. How long can Eid last?

   *Eid can last for three days in some countries.*

9. Think about a festival that you celebrate. How does your festival compare to Eid? How is it similar? How is it different?

   *Various answers.*

10. If you celebrate Eid, how are your family celebrations similar and different to those described above? Write about your day.

    *Option question with various answers.*
Let's celebrate! – choose an event or festival and plan your celebration.

It’s ……………………………., and you are in charge. Yes, that’s right! Use the planner below to help you get ready. After all, you don’t want to forget anything do you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cards</th>
<th>Decoration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Names:</td>
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<tr>
<th>Food and Drink</th>
<th>Entertainment</th>
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<th>Idea</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Idea</td>
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<tr>
<th>Music</th>
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Let's celebrate! – the big day!

You’ve planned your celebration and now the big day is here at last. Write a few paragraphs describing the party scene. Transport your reader into the festivities by describing sights, smells, feelings and sounds. Bring the fun to life!

Let's celebrate! – my Eid al-Fitr inspired Sweets

Congratulations, you have successfully invented your own sweets! Now you need to record the recipe so that others can enjoy your treats. Remember to lay out the recipe clearly thinking about examples that your teacher has shown you.

My recipe for ..................................................................................................................................................
Make a fanoos – teacher guide

Fanoos are special lanterns that decorate some Muslim homes during Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr. The word ‘fanoos’ means ‘light’ or ‘lantern’. Fanoos represent ‘the light of the world’ and are a symbol of hope. Here’s how to make your own:

You will need:

- A4 coloured card
- Glue
- Scissors
- Cellotape
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Stick-on gems or sequins

Instructions:

1. To make the fanoos handle, draw a line 2cm from the edge of the card and cut.

2. Fold the card in half width ways. Draw a line along the top of the card 2cm from the edge. We will call this the finish line.

3. Draw parallel lines along the width of the card approximately 4cm apart (or the width of the ruler).
4. Starting at the fold, cut along each pencil line but do not cut past the finish line.

5. Unfold the card and decorate with stick on jewels.

6. Tape the edges together and affix the handle in place.
Make a fanoos - instructions

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2. .......................................................... ..........................................................
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6. .......................................................... ..........................................................
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What is Eid al-Fitr? – teaching notes

If possible, open the topic by inviting somebody from the Muslim community to come and speak to the children about Eid, sharing their experiences and using photographs and props to bring the talk alive. Although aimed at younger children, the CBeebies website has some fascinating short films showing how a little girl celebrates Eid: www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/watch/lets-celebrate-eid. These short clips will help to immerse children into the celebrations, capturing their interest in preparation for the activities here. You could also share Rashad’s Ramadan and Eid Al-Fitr by Lisa Bullard, Cloverleaf Books, 2012. The resource below gives children an overview of Eid-al-Fitr celebrations and then assesses their knowledge and understanding with comprehension questions.

Let’s celebrate – teaching notes

Begin by asking children to talk in pairs about how their families prepare for a festival (e.g. Christmas). They might talk about buying/making decorations and decorating the house, cooking, writing and sending cards, buying and wrapping gifts, food shopping etc. Say that they are going to pretend that it is their job to organise the entire day. In the activities below children practise their English skills by planning and writing about a celebration, writing instructions for a fanoo decoration and by turning into budding Heston Blumenthals as they invent and write up their own Eid-inspired sweets. For the recipe, provide a selection of ingredients that don’t need cooking. You might include bananas, food colourings, peppermint extract, desiccated coconut, milk, condensed milk, icing sugar, cocoa powder and hundreds and thousands. Before children begin experimenting give them some traditional Eid sweets to sample for inspiration such as baklava or barfi. Discuss how to lay out recipes by displaying a recipe on the interactive whiteboard.

Conclusion

Say to children that you were going to ask them some questions about Eid-al-Fitr but you have decided not to. Instead you want them to write down some questions to ask each other. Give children mini-whiteboards on which to write as many questions as they can think of in five minutes (turn a sand-timer). Once finished, children walk around the room asking and answering questions.

Make a fanoo – teaching notes

Model how to make a fanoo, or Eid lantern, using the instructions provided, explaining the steps to the class as you do. Then ask the children to cut out and reorder the images correctly on the blank instruction sheet provided and then write their own instructions for how to make a fanoo.

Conclusion

Follow up by asking children to use Google Images to find and print a picture of a fanoo that captures their imagination. Use these pictures as a stimulus for story writing. You could give a title such as ‘The Missing Fanoo’ and provide a writing frame, or leave the activity entirely to children’s creativity. Start by asking children to verbally describe their fanoo and the story behind it to a friend: What does it look like? What does it feel like to touch? Where does it come from? Who does it belong to? Is it special to this person? Why is it special to this person?

Image acknowledgments

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