



Neighbours and Guests

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 1

Students should understand:

- The importance of goodness to neighbours
- The ways of being good to neighbours, most importantly not harming them
- That Islam encourages us to have guests and to be good hosts

In Islam our neighbours are the next forty houses from each direction, not just the ones next door.



Neighbours and Hosting

Neighbours are important. Before we move in to a house, we try to find out if the neighbours are nice people. A good neighbour can make our life easy, and a bad neighbour can make life hard!

This is why our religion tells us to be the best neighbours we possibly can, so that we can make the life of those who live around us easier.

Islam also encourages to be good hosts: to invite people to our home and to make them feel welcome and be generous towards them.

In this lesson, we will discuss neighbours, and in future years, we will discuss the rules of hosting in more detail

GOOD NEIGHBOURS

When we think of our neighbours we usually remember the people that live next door. Although they are our neighbours it is important to remember that it is not only our 'next door' neighbours who are our neighbours.

GOODNESS TO NEIGHBOURS

In Islam Allah (SWT) teaches us how we should behave with different people in our life and who we should pay extra attention to. The Holy Qur'an teaches us that it is important to be good to our neighbours.

“Be good to...the neighbour who is a relative and the neighbour who is a stranger...” (4:36)

ALL OUR NEIGHBOURS

Allah (SWT) has ordered us to be good to all of our neighbours, whether they are related to us or not, whether they are Muslims or not. This means that whoever our neighbour is we must always be good to them.

For example if our neighbour is not Muslim or if we do not know them this does not mean that we can play on their lawn or throw things over the fence or even be very noisy and disturb them. We must make sure that they are happy to be living next to us.

CLASS ACTIVITY

As a class brainstorm some examples of bad neighbours and good neighbours.

NO HARM TO NEIGHBOURS

There are many ways that we can be good neighbours but the best thing we can do is to not harm our neighbours. This means that we try our best to make sure our neighbours are not hurt or affected by the things which we do or even our visitors.

For example, if we know that we are going to have many visitors for a Majlis or maybe a party it is part of being a good neighbour to let our neighbours know that there will be many cars on the street for what reason. This way they will not get upset when they go outside and see the street full of cars without knowing why.

It is also important that we warn our visitors to park properly so that they do not disturb the neighbours. Even when we go to the mosque or Islamic centres we should always make sure our parents park the car correctly and that we do not make noise or leave rubbish around which may disturb the neighbours of the mosque.

HELP WHEN NEEDED

Other than not harming our neighbours we should also help them if they need help or visit them when they are sick. The Ahlul Bayt were always very good to their neighbours.

Imam al-Ḥasan (as), our second Imam, had a neighbour who was Jewish. Every now and then the Imam would see that the rubbish of his neighbour would come onto his side. The Imam's servants would complain to him but Imam would just tell them not to worry and to clean it up.



They continued to do this until one day the wife of his next door neighbour realised that their rubbish was going to the Imam's house.

She became very worried and went to the Imam to say sorry. The Imam told her not to worry and that it had been happening for a long time and they were cleaning it up.

She then told her husband about what happened and he became worried that he would get into trouble but his wife told him how nice the Imam was. The Jewish man went to see the Imam and again the Imam was very friendly. The Jewish man was so happy with the way that he was treated that he became a Muslim.

Class Activity

Your teacher will give each of you a role, and you can act out the story above.

THE PROPHET'S KINDNESS

The prophet had a neighbour who he would pass every day when he would walk to the mosque. This was a lady who did not like Islam or the prophet and would throw rubbish at him every day. The prophet never got angry or annoyed at her, he would just pass by quietly every day.

One day the Prophet walked past her house and she was not there to throw rubbish at him. The Prophet, instead of cheering, actually asked about her and wondered what had happened to her. He was told she was ill, and so the Prophet decided to go and visit her. When he went inside her house the lady thought that he came to take revenge now that she was sick. Instead, the Prophet was kind and warm towards her, and told her that he was only there to visit her and see if she needed anything.

The lady was so happy with the way the Prophet treated her that she decided to become Muslim.

Review Questions

Q1. Why should we be good to our neighbours?

- Allah tells us to in the Holy Qur'an
- So they don't harm us
- So we can borrow things from them when we need them

Q2. Who are our neighbours?

- The ones that live next door
- The 40 houses from each direction around house
- The entire street