



#BeWithHim Campaign Events & Thematic Youth Activity Guide

October 2021

Overall Objectives: Raise awareness about the status of orphans and our responsibility to orphans as understood in our deen, inspire community to work together for the sake of Allah (swt) and sponsor orphans through Islamic Relief (jumpstart their “competition” with other chapters), provide experiential understanding opportunities for youth to connect with the cause, spread understanding about misconceptions and barriers in the foster care and adoption system (especially for Muslim youth).

Campaign Awareness and Engagement Events

These are types of events that can be organized to raise awareness about themes within this campaign, jumpstart important dialogues, and rally people to get involved and sign up to sponsor an orphan through Islamic Relief.

If you have questions about getting involved in the national campaign please do not hesitate to reach out to MYM at: mk@muslimamericansociety.org and mounira.m@muslimamericansociety.org

- Invite a representative from Islamic Relief in your community to present on the #BeWithHim campaign in addition to spiritual message by engaging spiritual leader in your community - (MYM can help facilitate this if you need us to reach out and coordinate a representative from IR)
- Invite a speaker from a local foster-care or adoption organization to raise awareness about the number of children in the US alone who are seeking placement, the challenges facing Muslim children within the system (especially children who are refugees from Muslim countries), and to share stories highlighting the impact of serving this cause (with optional Q&A) followed by an engaging speaker in your community making the spiritual connection and offering the audience a way to get involved *now* by sponsoring an orphan through Islamic Relief, while urging any family who is interested in doing more to take the first step toward learning about being a foster or adoptive parent here in America.
- Panel discussion and community reflection session including panelists who can speak to any of the following topics: obligations in our deen, the psychological impact of trauma and significance of stability and love, the role of the Muslim American community in addressing this issue, personal stories from community members who are comfortable sharing their experiences related to the campaign topic matter (experience , someone who was adopted/fostered, stories of people

Thematic Youth Activity Guide

These are activities that can be used for youth from middle school on up to college or young professionals (with variance in facilitation style). This may be used as a stand-alone 1.5-2 hour program, a starting point for a series (orphans in the Quran for example), or integrated in your monthly Qiyam if your center is currently holding overnight events for youth.

1. Experiential Ice-breaker - Blindfolded Guiding Activity (25 min)

Objective: This activity allows the participants to bond in addition to creating an experience that highlights what it is to be without support and guidance and what a difference a support system can make in someone's journey.

Preparation Needed: cloth to use as blindfolds or eye masks, ensure there is enough space or areas to do multiple groups at once or adapt to do activity as a whole group together if you have limited space - there needs to be enough space for each group to make a large circle around one person who will be moving from one point to another with a blindfold on.

Directions: Divide the group into small groups asking them to stand in a circle, put a piece of tape or sticker on the starting point and a piece on the destination point, ask each group to identify the person who will be blindfolded, ask the person who will be blindfolded to stand on the starting point and put the blindfold on. Explain that the first time the person blindfolded will try to go from the starting point to the destination point without any guidance from those around them. Start a timer and tell all those blindfolded to start trying to get to the destination point within 3-5 minutes by themselves. The only thing those in the circle can say is "no" or "not this way" if the blindfolded person is nearing the circle parameter of people. Once time is up, tell participants you will do this activity again, but this time the group can provide guidance. Ask all those with blindfolds to go back to the starting point and put their blindfold back on.

Repeat this two more times - the second time all the group can provide guidance (but do not give them time to plan how they will guide the one who is blindfolded beforehand). The third time the group will get 3-5 minutes to talk about how they will organize giving verbal guidance to the one who is blindfolded - helping them arrive at the destination point. (If you don't have time for three iterations, just do the first and last one).

Connection: In this exercise, the person who was blindfolded is much like many of our dear brothers and sisters who are orphaned. This is to show that without any support and with barriers (trauma, language, etc. - ie: the blindfold) can be extremely lonely and make it challenging to navigate your journey. The second iteration is to show how people may try to help, but being told "no" or "not this way" may seem like help to others, but it was more negative than helpful. Similarly, for the group giving "guidance", this allows them to reflect on the meaning of truly working together in jamaaa. The third iteration highlights how much easier things are, despite the challenges one faces, with guidance from people actually working together (ie: support system or functional family).

2. Reflection Session - Blindfolded Guiding Activity Take-Aways & Share-Out (20 min)

Upon conclusion of the experiential ice-breaker, facilitate a discussion first asking those who were blindfolded about how they felt during the first non-guided portion, ask the other participants how they felt watching the blindfolded person struggle. Then, ask those who were blindfolded what helped them in the guided portion and how it felt to have that support, ask the other participants how they felt being able to help in the guided section.

Prompt participants to think about how being blindfolded with no guidance is similar to the feeling many children and youth experience being orphaned. This is a good time to show a video from YouTube that would resonate with your group hearing testimonials from orphans themselves.

3. Qur'anic Connections - Orphans in the Qur'an (30 min. Total w/tarbiya takeaways)

Objective: This activity highlights the examples of orphans found in the Quran while also challenging the way society typically views orphans - as being inadequate, unworthy etc. This is meant to increase participants' knowledge in the Quran, how Allah (swt) teaches us the opposite of society, and the lessons we can learn from these role models...who began their lives as orphans.

Preparation Needed: Write one of the following facts about each example below on a board or poster sheets.

Directions: Explain to participants that we find many inspiring examples of orphans and those who cared for them in the Quran. Prompt participants to see if they can think of who in the Quran matches each fact on the board/poster sheet. After matching, make the connections outlined in the Objective. Continue and share the commonalities and take-aways/references listed below. (Optional print-out for participants to take home to reference).

Musa	To Asiya and the pharaoh he was an orphan that they reared in their palace
Maryam	Her father, Aaron, died while she was still in her mother's, Hannah, womb She was raised in the monastery and Zakariah watched over her
Muhammad	His father, Abdullah, died when he was still in his mother's, Aminah, womb He grew up first in the house of Halimah, then his mother, then his grandfather, Abdul Mutallib, then his uncle, Abu Talib
Yusuf	Abandoned by his brothers as a young boy he is raised in the house of the Azeez

4. Tarbiya Takeaways - (Commonalities the aforementioned figures shared)

- a. *Complete trust in Allah alone, He is the only constant in their lives*
 - i. Surah Maryam (19:16-34)
 - 1. Maryam's trust in Allah when her baby is born and she presents him to her people
 - ii. Dua of Yusuf when he feels alone and powerless
 - 1. "Creator of the heavens and the earth, You are my protector in this world and in the Hereafter. Cause me to die a Muslim and join me with the righteous." (12:101)
- b. *Complete certainty that Allah is the one who provides for them*
 - i. So her Lord accepted her graciously and blessed her with a pleasant upbringing—entrusting her to the care of Zachariah. Whenever Zachariah visited her in the sanctuary, he found her supplied with provisions. He exclaimed, "O Mary! Where did this come from?" She replied, "It is from Allah. Surely Allah provides for whoever He wills without limit." (3:37)
 - ii. Dua of Musa: O my Lord! I am indeed needy of whatever good You may send to me. (28:24)
- c. *They were the chosen, the protected, the guided by Allah*
 - i. 1. By the forenoon (after sun-rise);2. And by the night when it is still (or darkens);3. Your Lord (O Muhammad ()) has neither forsaken you nor hated you.4. And indeed the Hereafter is better for you than the present (life of this world).5. And verily, your Lord will give you (all i.e. good) so that you shall be well-pleased.6. Did He not find you (O Muhammad ()) an orphan and gave you a refuge?7. And He found you unaware (of the Qur'an, its legal laws, and Prophethood, etc.) and guided you?8. And He found you poor, and made you rich (self sufficient with self contentment, etc.)?9. Therefore, treat not the orphan with oppression,10. And repulse not the beggar;11. And proclaim the Grace of your Lord (i.e. the Prophethood and all other Graces). (93:1-11)
 - ii. And [mention] when the angels said, "O Mary, indeed Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds. (3:42)

5. Experiential Advantage Check Activity (30 min.)

Objective: Remind participants of the responsibility that comes with privilege and the opportunity to connect with and help others. If there is time, follow-up and brainstorm a community service project everyone can do together (this is a great opportunity to rally your youth to be involved in a friendly “competition” between chapters to engage sponsors for the #IRorphan/#BeWithHim campaign).

Advantage Check Activity Guide

Objective: This is an example of an effort to help participants reflect on the "unequal playing field" that benefits some while making it more likely that others will be left behind.

Preparation Needed: tape, 3 colors of index cards (in the instructions it is red, yellow, and blue), hand out more yellow (or whichever color you are substituting for yellow) than blue and red.

Place a piece of tape on the floor in the center of a large room. Then ask participants to line up shoulder-to-shoulder across the room. The participants in the middle of the line should be standing on the taped line on the floor so that the group is shoulder-to-shoulder in a line across the center of the room. Ask participants to listen carefully and to follow the instructions given.

**For a shorter version (ideal for younger grades, if pressed for time, or if in a small room), only read the prompts with * in front of them.*

Instructions/Prompts for participants:

- If you have a blue card you grew up speaking English as your first language—take two steps forward. If you have a yellow card you grew up speaking English as a second language, but eventually learned English well—take one step forward. If you have a red card you never really learned English until you were an adult—take one step backwards.
- *If you have a yellow card your family owned a car when you were growing up—take one step forward. If you have a blue card your family owned two or more cars simultaneously—take two steps forward. If you have a red card your family didn't own a car and you were dependent on public transportation or rides from others—take a step back.
- If you have a red card you had to go through winters without heat and summers without air conditioning—take a step back. If you have a blue or yellow card you did have these things—take a step forward.
- If you have a blue or yellow card you had your own bed growing up and didn't have to share with your siblings or parents—take a step forward.
- If you have a blue card you were able to travel on an airplane as a child to go on a trip, see new places, visit relatives, etc.—take one step forward.
- *If you have a red card you lived in an unsafe area plagued by violence—take three steps back. If you have a yellow card you sometimes had to worry about your safety growing up—take one step back. If you have a blue card you never had to worry about safety growing up—take a step forward.
- *If you have a yellow or blue card you had health insurance and access to a doctor or hospital if needed when you were growing up—take a step forward. If you have a red card you didn't have these things—take a step back.

- If you have a blue or yellow card you breathed clean air growing up—take a step forward. If you have a red card you lived, played, and went to school in a place where the air was very polluted—take a step back.
- Every person with a red card, you or your parent was disabled—take a step back.
- *If you have a blue or yellow card you were able to go to school every day as a child and had a decent education growing up—take a step forward.
- *If you have a blue card you were also able to go to a four-year college—take two steps forward. If you have a yellow card, you went to technical school or perhaps received your associate's degree from a community college. Take a half a step forward. If you have a red card, you did not have any further education after graduating from high school. Take one step back.
- *If you have a red card and are standing to the left of the middle line, take another step back. You didn't receive a good education in grade school or high school. You may have lived in an area with a failing school system, or your school may have had very limited resources and students did not have access to the materials or education needed to succeed—take another step back. Or, perhaps you did not have regular access to education because of money, sickness, or another reason at some point in your life.
- If you have a red card your family didn't have access to a phone or television when you were growing up—take one step back.
- *If you have a blue or yellow card you always had access to a computer and the internet when you needed it—take two steps forward. If you have a red card you didn't have this access—take a step back.
- If you have a red card you or your family members have been denied the opportunity to vote despite being of voting age—take a step back.
- *If you have a yellow or blue card you always knew where your next meal would come from—take a step forward. If you have a red card you sometimes had to skip meals because your family didn't have enough money—take a step back.
- If you have a red card, the community where you grew up experienced severe drought which limited your access to food, or flooding which destroyed homes—take a step back.
- Every fourth person with a red card, your family migrated as a result of poverty or conflict—take two steps back.
- If you have a blue or yellow card you went on vacation growing up—meaning that you went somewhere new and enjoyed or learned about another place or culture—take one step forward.
- *If you have a red card you were homeless as a child or had to live with relatives, another family, or in a shelter—take three steps back.

- *If you have a blue card you had a bank account, savings account, or some other financial savings created for you as a child—take two steps forward. If you have a yellow card your family saved some money for you in a college fund—take one step forward.
- If you have a red card your family did not have a checking account or paid cash for large and small purchases—take three steps back.
- *If you have a red card your family was affected by high levels of debt growing up, such as credit card debt, difficulty making mortgage payments, or fear of (or actual) foreclosure on a home—take two steps back.
- *If you have a blue or yellow card you made visits to the public library to check out books, borrowed or bought books from elsewhere, or had a habit of reading regularly as a child—take two steps forward.
- If you have a blue card you had a stable family and grew up with both parents present—take two steps forward. If you have a yellow card you had one parent present, but a stable and loving home life—take one step forward.
- *If you have a red card you grew up in a poor community where industrial pollution from factories or chemical plants caused sickness or disease in your community—take one step back.

6. Facilitated Group Discussion and Call to Action

Discussion Questions - final one leading into khatira or inspirational talk reminding participants of the responsibility that comes with privilege and the opportunity or blessings that can be facilitated by Allah (swt) through our hardship.

- "What thoughts or reactions do you have to this activity? What surprised you?
- "Did your perspective about your own or others' privilege (or lack of) change as a result of the activity?
- "Which "step backwards" statements were most memorable for you? Why?
- "How might some of the "step backwards" experiences be related to what orphans experience?
- "If you mostly stepped forward during this activity, how did you feel while moving ahead of the pack?
- "If you mostly stepped backward during this activity, how did you feel about slipping behind the pack?
- "What might be some barriers that orphans experience that were not mentioned during this activity?
- "If you were someone who mostly stepped forward rather than backward, what responsibilities go along with the privileges you have received?"

7. Khatira/Khutbah Connections & Resources

The Responsibility and The Reward

- Quranic Ayat on our responsibility towards the orphans:
 - Surat al-Baqarah 177, 215, 220
 - 76:8
 - Surat al-Ma'un (107) - addresses the relationship between ibadat and being good to those in need - continuously checking and refocusing our intentions. Allah (swt) states that the person who "prays" but whose prayer does not lead to better care of those in need will be punished. Questions to ask: Why are we praying, for whom, for what, does it change us for the better, if not - what can we do to improve upon our prayer?
- <https://muslimhands.org.uk/latest/2020/04/10-benefits-of-sponsoring-orphans-in-islam-quran-and-hadith>
- <https://onepathnetwork.com/5-rewards-for-raising-an-orphan/>
- Tell the stories:
 - Salim Mawla Abu Huthayfa
 - https://www.beautifulislam.net/sahabah/salim_mawla_hudhayfah.htm
 - The children of Jafar ibn Abi Talib

Let us Do Our Part and the Rest is up to Allah

- Only Allah knows what will come
- Only Allah knows when it will come
- Allah only asks us what we did towards our responsibilities
- Allah rewards us based on our intentions and deeds
- "Actions are but by intention and every man shall have but that which he intended."
- "None of you (truly) believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself."
- In this section we will focus on our call to action: sponsor an orphan and only Allah knows how much you will be rewarded and who this orphan will grow up to be!

8. Call to Action

This is an opportunity to engage youth in the broader National #IRorphan/#BeWithHim campaign either seeking sponsorships for orphans through Islamic Relief while "competing" with other chapters to do the same or choosing to sustain and connect with an orphan your youth group sponsors (one or a few) throughout the year together.

Depending on what you discussed throughout the evening or series and the connections you are making with your youth around this topic, you can customize the specific call to action and/or open this time up for brainstorming ways to get involved with your youth.

Another good action item stateside is to volunteer or organize activity days with local organizations that provide services for orphaned children. The group can also connect with local organizations to find foster families to support- we don't all have the means and time to be foster families, but we can rally around those who are providing a home for orphans and help them out - send a meal, offer to babysit, offer to help clean house, sign up to be a support person and help with driving.