



Elementary Book Lesson

Book Title

Lailah's Lunchbox: A Ramadan Story by Reem Faruqi,
Illustrations by Lea Lyon

- Link to a video of the author reading the book:
<https://youtu.be/UBx1YDit2ds> (starts at about 3:12)
- About the author: <https://reemfaruqi.com/about/>
- About the author's writing journey:
https://youtu.be/brRY2Osz_0A

Recommended Ages

3 – 12 years old

Book Summary to Share With Children

Lailah, a Muslim girl, recently moved from Abu Dhabi, a country in the Middle East to Peachtree City, Georgia. As the Islamic holy month of Ramadan begins, Lailah is excited to fast for the first time in her life but she worries about what her teacher and classmates might think. Listen to find out how Lailah learns to feel confident in who she is and finds the courage to speak up for what she needs and wants.

Reflection Questions for the Caregiver/Educator

- When you were young, what were you taught about different religions? How has your understanding of religious differences grown?
- Think about the children in your classroom, neighborhood, or community. What do you know about their understanding of multiple religions/belief systems?
- What else do you need to learn about different religions in order to support the religious/faith identities of your child(ren)?

Reader's Note

Religion/faith is a part of cultural identity and daily life for many children. Intolerance to religious differences is often based on a lack of understanding. Reading books that share different religious/faith practices and beliefs, especially those in non-dominant religions, exposes children to another area of diversity in our world. Unpacking the tenets of a religion and looking at similarities and differences between religions can help go beyond the tourism (heroes and holidays) approach to diversity and allows children to develop understanding and acceptance of differences. Books that share stories about people from varying religions help children connect to the similarities and the humanity we all share.

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Read the **Author's Note** in the back of the book, which includes information on Ramadan, the practice of fasting, the importance of a child's first time fasting, and definitions of *sehri* and *iftar*.

Connection to Social-Emotional Learning and Anti-Bias Education

SEL

- ✓ Self-Awareness
- ✓ Self-Management
- ✓ Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making

ABE

- ✓ Empathy and Understanding
- ✓ Healthy Complex Identities
- ✓ Respect Across Differences
- Notice, Name, and Reject Bias
- ✓ Responsiveness and Action

Discussion Questions

1. Why is fasting this Ramadan so special to Lailah?
2. Why didn't Lailah give Mrs. Penworth the note about fasting from her mother?
3. Her classmates offered to share their lunches with Lailah, but she refused and didn't explain why.
 - a. What emotions do you think she was feeling about that?
 - b. How do you think her classmates felt?
 - c. How would you have felt if you were in Lailah's situation? In her classmates'?
4. The librarian advises Lailah to write her thoughts down when she has trouble telling them. What can you do when you have a difficult time expressing your thoughts or feelings?
5. How does writing and sharing the poem help Lailah feel good about who she is?

Journal Questions

1. Make a list of things you can do when you have a difficult time expressing your thoughts or feelings.
2. The first time fasting for Ramadan is a special time, and it signals growing up. What kinds of special things does your family practice as part of your growing up?
3. Watch this [video](#) from PBS Learning Media on Ramadan and check out additional resources on Understanding Islam.

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