

RAMADAN EXPLAINED...

One of our Muslim foster carers, Asif Ali, who has been fostering along with his wife, Benish and their 3 daughters since 2019, very kindly agreed to an interview explaining Ramadan and what it means to a Muslim family. Asif and Benish currently foster RJ who has shown a particular interest in fasting this year.

What is Ramadan and how long does it last?

Ramadan lasts for 30 days and takes place during the 9th month of the Islamic calendar. Muslims will fast from dawn to dusk, also known as "the God's month" for the duration which means no food or drink can be consumed between those times then at dusk we come together to prepare and enjoy our food. The act of fasting is not simply so we know how poor people feel but it is a reminder to us of the less fortunate and to reinforce the need to be thankful. Fasting is also one of the Five Pillars of Islam, along with daily prayer, declaration of faith, charity and performing the Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

Why is it a different date each year?

The date differs every year for Ramadan because it is based around the lunar calendar dependant on the moons cycle. Ramadan is a way for us to get closer to religion and increase our good deeds and its purpose is to develop God-consciousness, or Allah's awareness ("Taqwa" in Arabic) We use prayers and reflection throughout as a reminder of the year to come.

Should all Muslims fast?

Fasting during the month of Ramadan is expected for all healthy adult Muslims. Those who should not fast are the elderly, sick, diabetics, pregnant women, and children under 12 years old. It is important for us to be sure that our children, including RJ will be able to cope and manage the fasting process. RJ has said he would like to fast this year, so he is learning the fasting prayers.



What is Eid?

Eid is a celebration at the end of Ramadan. It is a feast of thankfulness, and we say the Eid prayer, a holy holiday prayer in the Islamic tradition, in which we ask God to accept everything we did. Charity is the celebration.

As a Muslim, education is paramount, and Ramadan is a very spiritual month for us. We read and reflect continually, and it is also a very sociable gathering. We attend mosque in the evenings and listen to Quran readings. Some Muslims choose to spend the last 10 days of Ramadan in the mosque, for us Islam is a way of life. This is not a race it is a marathon, perfecting our characters, teaching us discipline. Ramadan is simply the training we do to ensure we are living our best lives and treating everyone as we wish to be treated ourselves. The 9th month of the Islamic calendar is the month the Quran was first revealed, known as the month of revelation and although we have not completed a pilgrimage yet, it is certainly something as Muslims that should be undertaken once in a lifetime.

