III. The Spread of Islam and the “Holy Wars”

Cross-curricular Teaching Idea

In conjunction with your discussion of Islamic art and learning, you may wish to teach the Visual Arts section “Islamic Art and Architecture,” on pp. 258–268.

days of Islam, these prohibitions varied from place to place and from time to time. For example, Iranian artists and artists in the Mughal Empire in India developed a style of miniature painting that included humans as subjects. The buildings in Cordoba, like the Great Mosque, reflect the traditional Islamic style.

The architecture of Islamic civilization produced two of the most beautiful buildings in the world. In Granada, Spain, the Alhambra is a palace and fortress built in the 13th century that still astonishes visitors. The Mughal Empire in India produced the Taj Mahal. For more information on these buildings, see the Visual Arts section.

The citizens and visitors of Cordoba included the poet and theologian Ibn Hazim and the philosopher Ibn Arabi, as well as the Jewish poet Judah ha-Levi and philosopher and poet Ibn Gabirol.

C. Wars Between Muslims and Christians

The Holy Land and Jerusalem

The term Holy Land refers to an area off the eastern Mediterranean Sea that comprises parts of the West Bank of the Jordan River (Palestinian territory) and the modern nations of Israel, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. Jews, Christians, and Muslims consider this area sacred because it contains many sites associated with events described in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic scripture. Jerusalem, one of Islam’s three holy cities, is located in the Holy Land and is also considered sacred by Jews and Christians because it is the location of many monuments associated with scriptural events, such as the Wailing Wall (all that is left of the Second Temple), which is sacred to Jews, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, containing the tomb of Jesus, which is sacred to Christians. These sites are also sacred to Muslims, who accept the Jewish and Christian figures as great Islamic prophets. Muslims also cherish the Dome of the Rock and other sites in Jerusalem. The Dome of the Rock is a sanctuary over a spot visited by Muhammad on his spiritual night journey (see “Islamic Art and Architecture,” pp. 258–268).

The Crusades

The Crusades were invasions of the Middle East by European Christians from the 11th–13th centuries and beyond. There were eight major Crusades fought over 200 years. The ultimate goal of the Crusades was to free the Holy Land from Islamic control. The First Crusade was begun by Pope Urban II to answer the Byzantine emperor’s appeal for help in ensuring safe passage for Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem (discussed earlier on p. 135). The Seljuk Turks had captured the Holy Land, and there was concern that they would bar Christians.

The Crusades were unsuccessful in achieving their original goal, but they did result in increased trade between Europe and the Middle East. Many Crusaders remained in the Middle East and established lucrative businesses. The remains of many Crusaders’ castles can still be seen in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. However, the Crusades are also controversial, since they resulted in many atrocities, including attacks on Jews and Christians, as well as Muslims.
Salah al-Din (Saladin) and Richard the Lion-Hearted

Of the many warriors who fought on either side in the Crusades, two stand out: Richard the Lion-Hearted and Salah al-Din. Richard the Lion-Hearted, King Richard I of England, led the Third Crusade against Salah al-Din—known as Saladin to Europeans—and his Muslim forces. As one writer noted, Salah al-Din “was famed for his chivalry.” An example is Salah al-Din’s gift of a horse to Richard after Richard’s horse had been killed in battle. Salah al-Din said that a warrior of Richard’s caliber should not have to fight on foot. When Richard became ill, Salah al-Din sent him fruit and his own doctor to take care of him. Another example of Salah al-Din’s chivalry was his toleration of Christians and his agreement to allow pilgrims access to the holy shrines of Jerusalem. This contrasts sharply with the actions of the Christian conquerors of the First Crusade who killed many civilians, including Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Richard was an able rival to Salah al-Din but was deserted by his co-leader, King Philip Augustus of France. Still, Richard might have prevailed, but troubling news from England, where his scheming brother Prince (later King) John was undermining his government, caused Richard to seek the best peace he could make with Salah al-Din.
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Teaching Idea

Use the overhead of Instructional Master 18, *European Trade Networks in the Middle Ages*, and the maps from Instructional Masters 20a–20c, *The Crusades*, to compare the areas in Europe from which Crusaders set out for the Holy Land and the new trade networks that grew up during and after this period. What conclusion can students reach in comparing the two maps? (New trade routes grew up in areas that sent Crusaders to the Holy Land.) Point out that students have identified a potential cause-and-effect relationship. Ask if this was an intended or an unintended result of the Crusades.

The Big Idea in Review

Islam was founded by the prophet Muhammad in Arabia around 610 CE and grew into one of the three major Western religions.

East and West: Trade and Cultural Exchange

After numerous attempts, the Crusaders failed to achieve their objective of taking control of the Holy Land from the Muslims. However, there were a number of unintended benefits for the Europeans. As noted in Section II, “Europe in the Middle Ages,” (pp. 101–127) the contact between East and West broadened the worldview of western Europeans. The volume of trade between Europe and Asia by way of the Middle East grew, as did the variety of goods available in Europe. Sugar, salt, silks, rice, perfumes, and similar luxury items now appeared for sale in the growing towns of western Europe. Western scholars began to study the writings of Muslim and Jewish scholars and, through them, the knowledge of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Much of the original work of the Muslim and Jewish scholars influenced Western philosophy, medicine, science, and mathematics for centuries.

Review

Below are some ideas for ongoing assessment and review activities. These are not meant to constitute a comprehensive list. Teachers may also refer to the Pearson Learning/Core Knowledge History & Geography series for additional information and teaching ideas.

- Create an alphabet book of Islam by assigning individual students or groups of students letters from the alphabet. They should search for an aspect of Islam to write about using that letter. For example, the letter A could stand for *Allah*. Then ask students to write a short paragraph about their topic. Collect these into a book for the classroom.

- Ask students to search magazines or newspapers to find current events articles about some aspect of this unit of study. *National Geographic* magazines might be especially useful. Have students write a paragraph summarizing the content of the article. Pick one day a week to have a current events day and share the articles aloud. You may want to post these on an ongoing current events bulletin board.

- The nature of Islamic art with its geometric patterns provides a way to incorporate the geometry section from Grade 4 mathematics. The lines, patterns, and shapes that dominate the walls of mosques and other buildings are an excellent way to introduce segments, rays, lines, and the types of lines (horizontal, vertical, perpendicular, parallel, and intersecting). Use art from buildings to identify and draw these shapes and lines. You may also practice finding the area of shapes and using square units. Students may create word problems based on the art and create pictures with geometric measurements.

- Have the class write poems based on this unit of study. Create a pattern for them to follow, such as an acrostic poem. Use the name of a place or person from this section, such as *Islam* or *Cordoba*, to write down the left side of a piece of paper. Brainstorm a list of words that describe the person or place and post them at the front of the room. Then have students write sentences or phrases using the letters of the person or place as the first letter of each sentence or phrase. Post these around the classroom or share them with another Grade 4 class.