

Talking Points on “Why you are fasting with DC Muslims”

Learn one or more of the talking points below so you can respond to questions on why you are fasting.

I am fasting to help make others aware that:

- Anti-Muslim discrimination should not be tolerated in DC or anywhere else.
- Not all Muslims are Arab and not all Arabs are Muslim. There is much diversity in the Muslim community. Arab is an ethnic group. Islam is a religion.
- In the United States, 10 percent of physicians are Muslim Americans, which reflects the Islamic obligation of duty towards humanity.
- The best way to learn about the experience of Muslim Americans is to speak with Muslims directly.
- Being Muslim is seen as an all-inclusive way of life rather than a strict exclusive religious code because of its focus on balancing personal and public life.
- Islam’s dietary restrictions include abstaining from pork and alcohol. During Ramadan, however, Muslims abstain from all food and drink from sunrise to sunset.
- Islam encourages Muslims, both men and women, to dress modestly. Muslim men and women come from diverse backgrounds, which explains the variation in their dress codes across cultures.
- Women and men are equal in Islam. It is true that inequalities exist in many Muslim societies but it is also true that gender inequalities exist in many non-Muslim societies as well. Gender inequalities emanate from cultural practices, not from Islam.
- Muslims are not “new” to the United States. Millions of Muslims live in the United States and have been a part of the cultural landscape in America for the past four hundred or more years.
- The vast majority of Muslims do not speak Arabic as their native language.
- Anyone from any race could be Muslim; in other words, “Muslim” does not refer to a particular race.
- Islam is the fastest growing religions in the world.
- The majority of the world’s Muslim population is not in the Middle East or Africa. Indonesia has the largest number of Muslims —over a 100 million—followed by Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh.
- Muslims are very family-oriented and this also translates into a community-oriented way of life.
- Islam does not permit Muslims to treat people as sub-human. Islam teaches to treat all with respect.

BONUS

- During Ramadan, Muslims are experiencing both a personal spiritual and physical challenge — one that isn’t made any easier by the unhelpful suggestions or comments from often well-meaning people such as “Sorry to hear you’re fasting” or “wish you could go to lunch with me!” Try to be mindful.