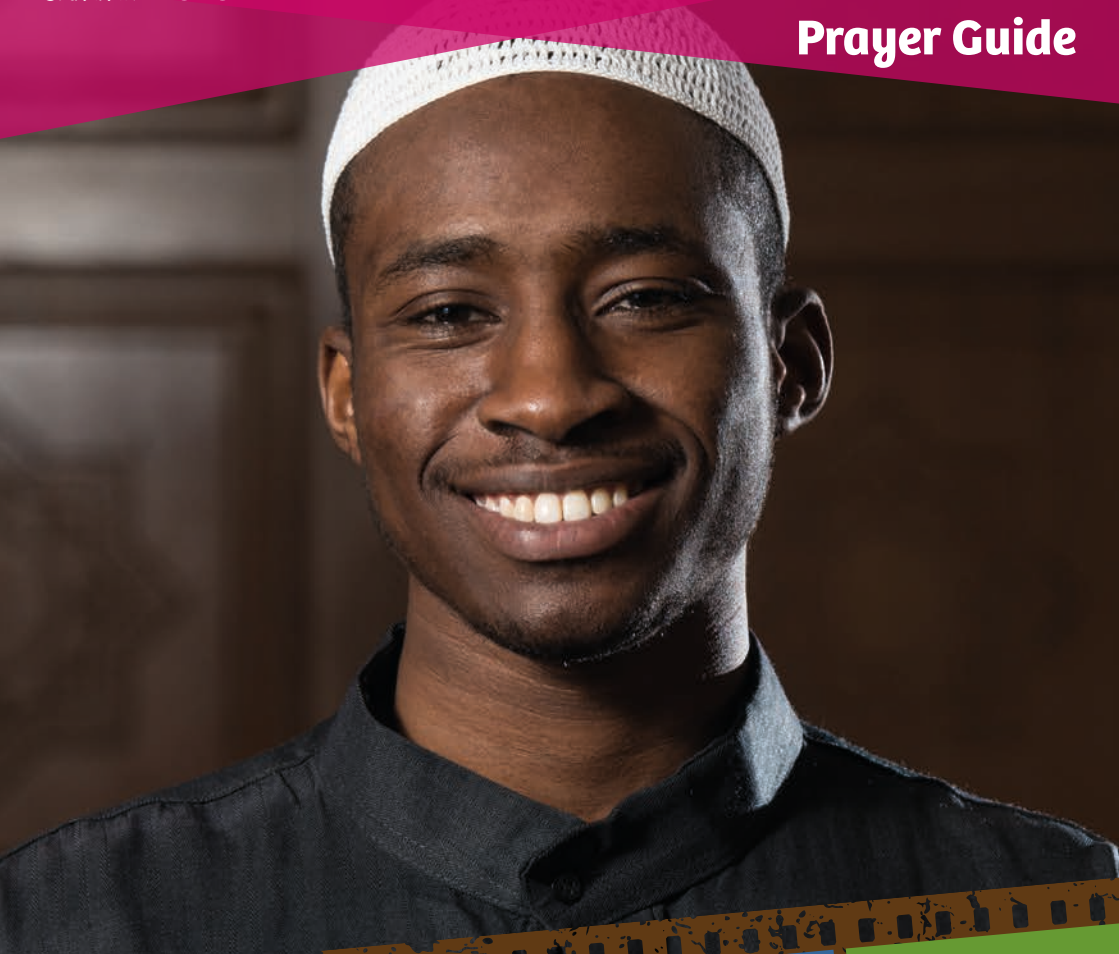


MEMO

Summer 2020

middle east
media

+ **The Ramadan
Prayer Guide**



*In this
Special issue:*

**The Bible Project
Arabic YouTube
Channel Launch**

**Nisa'a
Responding to
Coronavirus**

**The Ramadan
Prayer Guide**

Dear Friends,

This is a very special edition of our MEMO Newsletter. Not only does it include your Ramadan Prayer Guide, but we've also tried to make it quite interactive as we're aware that many people are on lockdown at the moment across the world. We have recommended books about the region on page 9, some of our video work you can find online (read more on pages 3&4), and some recipes and cultural insights throughout the Ramadan Prayer Guide.

I have also been hugely encouraged to hear how our field teams are responding during this crisis. Specifically, our Nisa'a online magazine, who have adapted to the current circumstances and are now finding ways to support, empower, and reach women across the region through their website and social media. You can read more on pages 5-8.

I pray that this finds you well and I hope that you're finding ways of coping during these difficult times. As a staff we gather together weekly to pray for our ministry and you, our supporters. If you would like us to pray for you during this time, please send me an email.

James Baldock
Communications Manager
comms@mem.org



Move *For* Change

Due to the Coronavirus we have adapted *Move For Change* so that you can fundraise for our ministry from inside your house or garden. To hear more and read stories of how people are doing this please head over to mem.org/move-for-change

Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.

- Luke 9:23



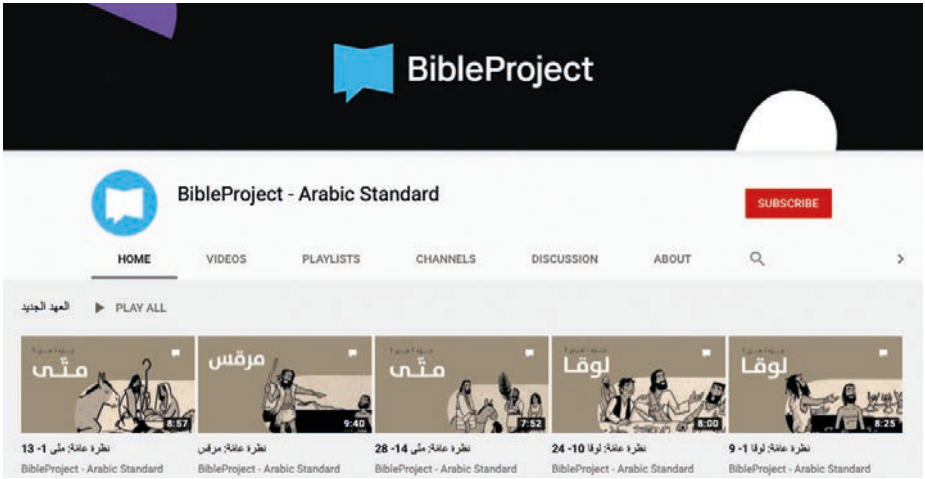
The Bible Project's Arabic Standard YouTube Channel Launches

"The Wait is Over! Our team has some great news! After working for more than a year to translate and localize our videos for Modern Standard Arabic speakers, we have officially launched our first videos on YouTube. Our plan is to continue to upload new videos on a regular schedule." - *The Bible Project*

We are very excited that after a year of working with *The Bible Project*, they have now launched their Arabic Standard YouTube channel featuring the animations our team have translated. *The Bible Project* started in 2014 with the vision to help people read through scripture while avoiding common pitfalls and misunderstandings. They combined biblical understanding with visual story-telling and have since created over 140 videos and 200 podcasts. With over 100 million views across all of their media channels in over 200 countries, they are teaching the Bible in a pioneering and attractive way to a new generation of people aged 18 to 45. We have been commissioned to do 99 episodes for them and the first 18 are close to completion.

This launch is very timely with the Coronavirus causing people to stay indoors and isolate themselves. Digital media has become a much larger part of Middle Easterners' lives and we hope that over the coming weeks these innovative and culturally relevant animations will be a real blessing for Christians in the region. With nearly half of the population of the region being under 24 years old, and readily using technology, we believe that these animations will enrich many people's discipleship journeys.

Our animation and translation teams have worked tirelessly to make sure that these innovative animations are correctly translated and communicated to reach Arabic-speaking audiences. As they continue to create more videos for *The Bible Project*, please pray that these animations would go on and reach thousands of people across the region. We are believing that God will use them to speak to people and we're really excited to start hearing stories back from Arabic-speaking people who have experienced life transformation because of them.



Animation: Arabic version of *The Bible Project* “Philemon”.



Animation: Arabic version of *The Bible Project* “Romans Part 1”.

You can go to thebibleproject.com/languages and click on ‘Arabic Standard’ to watch some of the first videos. Don’t forget to share them with your Arabic friends!



Nisa'a Online Magazine Responding to Coronavirus

As the world has been gripped by the necessary isolation due to the Coronavirus, our teams in the field have been looking at ways that they can support individuals across the region who are living very different lives now. One of the ways that we're responding is to reach out to, and empower women across the Middle East. By using our online magazine and social media platforms, our Nisa'a team have been writing articles to help women to cope and flourish.

“Our Nisa'a team have been uploading articles to help women during this time of isolation. Whether they are single, wives, or mothers, we have been creating content to help during this difficult period. Articles about how to handle the overwhelming fear of the current situation, what is real and what is fake news from our media, how to keep a daily routine to ensure productivity, staying healthy and keeping others around you safe, and answering the questions of your kids: “is God punishing us?”. We want our online platform to emphasize hope vs. all the other social media bombarding them with news.” - *Renee Cloud, North Africa Director*

In a region that is highly religious, Muslims are claiming that the Coronavirus is a punishment from God, whereas some Orthodox Christians are saying that it is God's judgement on humanity's sin. In either case, as well as the negativity of mainstream media reporting the fearful side of the virus, there is a loud parallel message from religious leaders saying that in one way or another, God is doing this to us. This is unfortunate on several levels, with one of the main probable consequences being that people across the Middle East will see God as vengeful, or at the very least, unloving and heartless.

*Continued on next page.

Although we don't have the power to stop people promoting these theories about God, our Nisa'a team have been committed to showing God's compassion and love for the people reading their online magazine. They've also written articles to help women talk to their children about the current circumstances and provided them with the tools to reassure them in this fearful time. Children are very vulnerable emotionally, mentally, and spiritually in these times as they are largely unaware of what's going on and they are being forced to live very isolated lives.

It is vital for children's futures that they do not start to believe that God is punishing them, as this can become a serious barrier for them to understand and accept Jesus as their Saviour later on in life. Mothers are in a perfect place to explain the situation and describe it in a hopeful way so that this period can be a time of family bonding and fun, rather than fear and feeling isolated from what they knew before. Psychologists and family specialists in the region have also warned that at this time it is important that parents assume the role of informing kids of God's love, gentleness, and kindness.

As Isaiah 63:7 says: *"I will tell of the kindness of the LORD, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the LORD has done for us - yes, the many good things he has done for Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses."*

Thankfully, our team are spreading God's hope during this time. They have a transformative message that thousands of Middle Eastern women are reading, engaging with, and learning from.

Nisa Statistics 2019

- » 507,172 visits to our website to read articles written by our Nisa'a writers.
- » 902,850 Facebook engagements on our Facebook page with people commenting, liking and sharing our content.
- » 435,832 people following our Facebook page and receiving regular updates and posts.

Another important aspect that the team are trying to communicate is that families should have fun during this time and be joyful. On the Nisa'a social media platforms they are encouraging women to video and photograph their families doing fun activities together. This campaign includes competitions for the best music talent and best stories written by teenagers. We believe that this will reduce stress and anxiety in this time and also reinforce that this is a time of opportunities, rather than limitations.

Through all of our projects, we aim to bring Middle Easterners closer to the loving God that we serve. Our hope and prayer is that even as women read these articles and realise that God is not punishing them, they will question their Islamic upbringing and beliefs, while moving closer to faith in Jesus Christ. Please join us in praying for the points below and believe with us that God is using this time in history to reach people in new ways and even more so through media in the Middle East..

Prayer Points

- » Pray for the writers of our online magazine. Pray that they would continue being creative in the articles they write and hear from God during this time.
- » Pray for the women in the Middle East who are now living very different lives than they were before. Pray that they would find family restoration in this time and find our online magazine a tremendous blessing.
- » Pray that God would use this time to draw women and families to Him. Pray that people across the region wouldn't believe that He is punishing them, but that He loves them and wants the best for their lives.

Middle East Book Recommendations

If you find yourself having spare time during the quarantine, it could be the perfect time to learn more about the Middle East, understand some of the culture and history, as well as hearing about God in the region. Several of our team are avid readers and here are some personal recommendations below.

Books

Under Their Very Eyes: The Astonishing Life of Tom Hamblin, Bible Courier to Arab Nations - Deborah Meroff

Sacred Misinterpretation: Reaching across the Christian-Muslim Divide - Martin Accad

Cross and the Crescent: Responding to the Challenges of Islam - Colin Chapman

The Arabs: A History - Eugene Rogan

A Wind in the House of Islam - David Garrison

Son of Hamas - Mosab Hassan and Ron Brackin



Ramadan Prayer Guide

23rd April - 23rd May

Ramadan is the holiest month of the Islamic year, during which over a billion Muslims from around the world fast from sunrise to sunset. As well as providing guidance for you to pray throughout Ramadan this year, we are also encouraging you to embrace the cultural aspects of Ramadan and the focus on family. As such, we have included recipes for Middle Eastern food, reflections, and cultural insights.

This year Ramadan will look very different for many Muslims with the threat of the Coronavirus. Please join with us as we pray through this guide that the disruption in people's practices will be an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to speak to Muslims and draw them close to Him.



Days of Mercy

23rd April - 2nd May

Ramadan can be divided into three 'ashras' (the Arabic word for ten), with each ashra having a different spiritual focus. The exact dates are uncertain as the month begins with the first sighting of the crescent moon, but we have started our guide on the probable first day of Ramadan, 23rd April.

Significant Dates

23rd April - 2nd May - The first ten days are the days of mercy and heavenly rewards, during which Muslims seek Allah's mercy and endeavour to show mercy to others.

Prayer Points

- As Muslims confess their sins and reflect on their lives in the first few days, pray that they would encounter God during this time and question their traditions.
- Muslims believe that fasting and giving charitably during these days of mercy will help to redeem themselves. Pray that they would encounter and start to understand God's grace for them.
- While Muslims spend time in reflection and prayer, ask the Holy Spirit to draw near to them and reveal the truth of who God is; their loving heavenly Father.
- As Muslims face the disruption of the Coronavirus during Ramadan, pray that it would serve as a way for them to question Islam. Pray that they would come to know the God of mercy.

Community

Why not bake some Ramazan Pide for your family/friends and share with them what the days of mercy look like to Muslims? You could then pray with them for Muslims across the world.

For the Lord your God is gracious and compassionate. He will not turn his face from you if you return to him.

- 2 Chronicles 30:9b

"When I was growing up in Turkey, Ramazan (Turkish word for Ramadan) was always in the Autumn time. Ramazan's date changes each year as they follow a lunar calendar which is on average 11 days less than the Gregorian calendar. This means that each year the date of Ramazan changes in the Gregorian calendar. One of my strongest memories of my time in Turkey was going to the bakery just before Iftar to get Ramazan Pide. Ramazan Pide is a flat bread which is generally only made during Ramazan. It was always so warm and comforting during those colder months."



"Why not make some this Ramazan? You can have it all to yourself or share it with friend, family and neighbours."

Jess Davidson
Development Manager
Middle East Media

Ramazan Pide Ingredients

450 gr Plain Flour, 7 gr Dried Yeast, 1/2 Tsp Sugar, 175ml Lukewarm Water, 1 Tbsp Salt, 2 Tbsp Thick Yogurt, 2 Tbsp Olive Oil, 1 Beaten Egg, 2 Tbsp Nigella Seeds, 2 Tbsp Sesame Seeds.

Steps

1. Preheat oven to 400F/200C.
2. Mix the yeast and sugar in half of the lukewarm water and leave.
3. Sift the flour with the salt and make a well in the middle. Pour in the yeast mixture, olive oil, yoghurt, and the rest of the water. Mix together with your hands and knead until smooth and in a ball.
4. Continue to knead on a lightly floured surface until the dough is elastic and smooth. Roll it in the few drops of olive oil in the bowl, cover with a damp towel and leave to prove in a warm place for 1-1.5 hours.
5. Preheat 2 baking trays.
6. Once doubled, push the dough down, knead again and divide into two pieces. Knead each piece well. Flatten them out with the heel of your hand and stretch them into large, uneven ovals, creating a thick lip around the edges. Indent the dough with your fingertips.
7. Lightly oil the two baking trays and place them in the oven for 2 minutes. Place the Pide on them and brush the Pides with the beaten egg. Then sprinkle the nigella seeds and sesame seeds over the top.
8. Bake the Pides for 18-20 minutes until lightly golden with a crisp crust around the edges. Transfer them to a wire rack for cooling.

Days of Forgiveness

3rd May - 12th May

The second ashra of Ramadan is forgiveness. Over these ten days, please join us in praying that Muslims will learn about the true forgiveness that they can have in Jesus.

Significant Dates

3rd - 12th May - The second ten days are the days of forgiveness. This is the time to repent of sins, as well as forgive fellow Muslims. It is said that during this time, Allah's forgiveness is at its peak.

8th May - Many Muslims aim to read the whole Quran during Ramadan, by day 16 many will be reading Surah 19, which tells the story of Jesus' birth and life.

Prayer Points

- This is a time where Muslims repent of their sins and forgive other Muslims, as they believe at this time Allah's forgiveness is at its peak. Pray that during this time, many Muslims would come to know God's unchanging forgiveness and love for them.
- As Muslims read about Jesus during this time, pray that they would be inspired to know more about His life, death, and resurrection.
- Pray for believers from a Muslim background (BMBs) today. As they gather with family, pray there would be forgiveness and reconciliation.
- Pray for protection of BMBs and Christians across the region, including Basma's two children currently in custody.

Community

If you have Netflix, why not sit down and watch a episode of 'Secret of the Nile' and see what Muslims watch during Ramadan? If not, organise some activities that your family enjoys doing and spend some quality time with them.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. - 1 John 1:9

“One of the major things that has always stood out to me is the focus on family during Ramadan. When I visited North Africa earlier this year, some of my colleagues got into a TV show on Netflix called “Secret of the Nile”. It was created as a special series and had 30 episodes to span the 30 nights of Ramadan in 2016. The idea is that families would sit down to watch it together each night. I found out that many of the best TV shows are created just for Ramadan as something to enjoy during this special time.”

“If you have Netflix, why not watch a few episodes of “Secret of the Nile” and experience some of the Middle Eastern culture through this series.”



James Baldock
Communications Manager
Middle East Media



Days of Refuge

13th May - 23rd May

The last tens days of Ramadan are believed to be the most blessed days of the entire Muslim calendar.

Significant Dates

13th May - 23rd May - These are “Days of Refuge”, where Muslims seek Allah's blessing and ask for safety from hell, as Muslims have no guarantee of going to heaven.

19th May - This night is the holiest night of the year, Laylat al-Qadr, when the gates of heaven open and forgiveness is poured down.

23rd May - On the 29th day of Ramadan, after sunset, people go outside and look for a new crescent moon. If sighted, the end of Ramadan and Eid are declared.

Prayer Points

- Pray that many Muslims would have revelations about Jesus during Laylat al-Qadr, and that they would have the courage to become followers of Jesus whatever the cost.
- Pray that God would reveal to Muslims that they can only find assurance of salvation in Him.
- This is a special time for families as they celebrate together. Pray for families who might have lost loved ones recently - may they know the comfort and refuge they have in God.
- God is love. As you pray, thank God for His love for each and every person across the Middle East and North Africa.
- Pray that BMBs would find refuge in the midst of difficult circumstances.

Community

Whether for breakfast, lunch, or dinner - why not make some healthy Red Lentil Soup and pray with your family and friends for Muslims across the world to find salvation and hope in Jesus?

The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
- Psalm 18:2

“On my recent trip to North Africa I sadly found myself catching a bad cold and I was aching to have some healthy nourishing food. I normally would not eat soup for breakfast, but when my hosts offered a freshly cooked lentil soup with a spray of lemon on the top, I could not resist. It felt like I was eating a proper dose of vitamins. Later I found out that lentil soups, especially red lentil, are the most popular during Ramadan. Not only nutritiously healthy, but also quick and easy to cook, and tastes divine! And I hope you will enjoy it too.”



Jolita Paton
European Director
Middle East Media

Red Lentil Soup

Ingredients

1/1.5 cup(s) Red Lentils, 1 Onion, 1 Tomato, 1 Peeled Carrot, 1 Potato, 3 Crushed Garlic Cloves, 2 Tablespoons Plant Oil, 1 Teaspoon Cumin Powder, 1 Teaspoon Hot Sauce (optional).

Steps

1. Wash the lentils and put in a pot with all the washed vegetables + salt and pepper as desired.
2. Cover with hot water and boil for 20 minutes. *Note:* lentils will expand so make sure they are covered with 2cm of water at all times.
3. In a small pan stir the crushed garlic in oil until golden, take the pan off the stove then add the cumin and hot sauce and stir for about 10 seconds.
4. Add this to the lentils and vegetables. Turn off all heat and either blend by hand or with a blender.
5. Serve in a bowl and add lemon juice on top as desired.

Help us to *empower women* **and** *bring hope*
to families across the Middle East



Nisa'a Online Magazine Responding to the Coronavirus

You may have read earlier in this MEMO that our Nisa'a online magazine team is responding to the Coronavirus by creating an online campaign to empower women and provide support to families across the Middle East. During this urgent period, it is vital that we continue to...

- 1. Dis-spell the belief that God is punishing people with the Coronavirus.**
- 2. Bring messages of hope to a region that is hearing negative coverage from other media sources.**
- 3. Empower Middle Eastern women to cope during this time and show them how this time is an opportunity to bring families together.**

How you can help

During this important time in history it's paramount that we are God's light and hope in dark places. The Middle East is responding very differently to here in the West, with the popular view that God is punishing them through this virus. We need to keep producing content and empowering women to have, and spread, hope throughout their homes.

The first thing we ask is for you to pray with us for this particular project and the women producing the content for the online magazine. Secondly, if you're able, we would like to encourage you to give financially towards this project. With the current climate and changes in our society, we are uncertain as to how our funding will be effected this year. However, we believe that God is working through our ministry, especially now, and we want to continue to empower women and bring hope to families across the Middle East.

You can use the giving form that came with this MEMO Newsletter and post your gift to us, call us on 01223 901137 or you can go to mem.org/give and make a donation online - thank you.

Give

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Pray

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news blog
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advocacy page
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Thank You

Your giving, prayers, and advocacy for MEM, are what make it possible for us to do our vital work across the Middle East and North Africa.

Sowing seeds of transformation

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