

The Night of Power – Time to Wonder (Godly Play).

*You will need a sand tray or bag, and a small square of black or brown felt folded into a triangle to shape into Mount Hira, a candle and a scroll with the writing on from the first Sura to be revealed. You may want to also use a simple card outline for the city, and maybe duplo cube for the Ka'ba. **In Islam there must be no representation of the prophet Mohammad**, although he can be represented by a polished stone with his name on (in Arabic) or you can just indicate his presence and movements with your fingers and hand.*

Move your hands through the sand in circular motions as you describe the opening part of the story

It was a very hot day in Arabia. It was hot in the countryside, it was hot in the city of Makkah,...and there were noisy crowds of people everywhere. But it was not just the heat or the crowds that were bothering Muhammad. He was tired of the greed he saw in the city; of the wealthy merchants who were only interested in wealth and power. They cared nothing and did nothing for the many people in the city who were desperately poor. They were arrogant and self-centred. They lived lives of luxury, while others starved.

He saw the people travelling miles to come to worship the idols at the Ka'aba (*place the cube onto the city*). Muhammad came to see these as nothing more than pieces of pottery and stone- (*place a stone on the Ka'aba*) they could not help people live their lives. He began to believe in one God.

Muhammad longed to be somewhere quiet and peaceful where he could be alone to talk to God. He told his wife, Khadijah, that he was going to a cave where he often went to pray and think in the nearby mountains. The cave was quiet and cool. At last he had some time to pray and to be alone to think. He stayed there for days, thinking about his city, its people and the one God

Add the felt representation of Mount Hira.

It was cool in the mountains and it was dark. But Muhammad found it was peaceful ... and quiet. Now he could be still. Now he could think. He had come to realize that the idol worship of his fellow Arabs was wrong and he began to think more and more about belief in one God.

Do you have a special place? Do you have somewhere you can go to be quiet and think?

Suddenly he realized that he wasn't alone - someone else was there! He turned around, and he saw something amazing. It looked like a person - except that they seemed to be clothed in brilliant bright light. Muhammad's heart pounded with fear....

Introduce tea candle.

There in front of him was an angel - a messenger of God! The angel's name was Gabriel (Jibril), and he held out a scroll of paper which had words written on it.

Introduce a small scroll of paper

'Read this, Muhammad,' the angel said. 'But I can't read', replied Muhammad. Once again the angel told him to read the words on the scroll and, once again, Muhammad told the angel that he could not read.

A third time the angel told him to read the scroll, "In the name of the Lord who made the world". This time Muhammad found that he could read the words on the scroll, and as he read them he knew that the words he was speaking were true and the most important words he could ever hear....He knew they came from God. Muhammad repeated the words, and then he knew that he would never forget them.

I wonder... have you ever been asked to do something and you said ...I can't? Perhaps someone said ... yes you can Just try

I wonder if you have ever heard something you felt was really important to you....words you knew to be true...

I wonder how Muhammad felt as the angel left...and he was left with the words of Allah...Confused? Afraid?

What words do you think Muhammad was being asked to read?

Show Muhammad returning to the city.

Eventually Muhammad left the cave and made his way home. He was wondering about all that had happened. Why did the angel do that? What did it mean? Muhammad told his wife, Khadijah, all about what had happened to him in the cave. The words were very beautiful - but she knew immediately they were also very important. These were indeed the Words from God and Muhammad, her husband was His prophet.

I wonder does God speak to people? If He does ... how? How might people speak with God? How might they try to listen? Does it help to have a special quiet place to go?

The following months and years Muhammad received many more words from God, and he told them to many people who also believed they were from God. Years later, Muhammad died. Then the people who believed what he had said wrote down all the words that Muhammad had been told by the angel Gabriel (Jibril), so that the words would never be forgotten. The book they were written in is called the Qur'an. The word Qur'an means 'that which is read or recited'. Today the events of this amazing night are celebrated at the festival of Lailat al Qadr on the 27th day of the month of Ramadan.

To Muslims, the Qu'ran is the most important book of all. They read and remember it. They try to let it guide them everything that they do.

I wonder ... do you have a special book ... perhaps a special person? That guides you?