

My Prophet: A Collage

(taken from <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/growmama/lite/my-prophet/>)

It's important that we seek creative ways of imparting the knowledge of our deen. We must help our children by keeping things relevant and relatable. Here's a simple project idea that we can use to cultivate and deepen our connection and love for the Prophet (peace be upon him). Let's help our kids build a personal connection to their Prophet by creating their own artwork about him. This project is especially useful in this month of Rabi' al-Awwal, as people remember and revere the birth and life of our beloved Prophet in many different ways.

Below you will find the basic steps to creating this calligraphic collage. Please do not feel limited by the instructions provided. Use your creativity to adapt the project to different age groups, and to extend the project beyond what's listed below.

Before you start:

Before starting this project it's important to let the kids tell you about their Prophet. Ask them open-ended questions, let them tell you what they know, and share their love for him. It's great to see how excited the kids get when they get to talk about the Prophet. You can share some stories, poetry, or descriptions of him.

Materials and steps:

- glue (glue stick is best, but liquid glue works too)
- paper
- scissors
- magazines and/or newspapers
- cardboard or poster paper (optional)
- paint (optional)

1. Print out a image of the Prophet's name in calligraphy. You can do a Google search or use [this example](#).

2. Enlarge the print out and use it as your collage base, or use the print out as a guide for your child to practice their own calligraphy. You can choose to do your own calligraphy on poster paper or cardboard. Once you have the calligraphic image printed or drawn to the exact size that you want the collage, you're ready to start!

3. Cut out the calligraphy with scissors (cut around the outline of the calligraphy so the background is no longer there). Fold the head

of the meem (the first letter) and make a small cut in the center so you can open it up and cut out the rest of the inside circle. (You can choose not to cut out the image, and just work within the lines of calligraphy on the solid sheet)

4. If your calligraphy cutout is on cardboard or poster board, you may choose to paint a colored background. Although it's not necessary, especially if you plan to cover the entire base with words.

5. Go through magazines or newspapers and find any words that you feel tell you about the Prophet. Start cutting! Clip out words, or even images of any size and collect them.

6. If you have enough words, start gluing some onto the calligraphy cutout. You may want to glue larger words first, but it will work either way. Don't worry if the word goes off the edge of the cutout, just have fun gluing!

7. Keep cutting and pasting until you feel you've completed the collage. The last step is to turn it over and cut off the excess magazine clippings that you see cross the edge of the base.

8. Turn it around and look at the wonderful piece you've created. You can mount the calligraphy on a board, hang it on the wall, or even place it in a glass clip frame! A beautiful work of art, and a timeless reminder of our beloved Prophet.

Things to keep in mind:

With proper modifications, this project can be done with almost all age groups. Some children may need help cutting, and pasting. If you have children that cannot read, they can help clip out images, or glue the words.

For older children, you may have them discuss the different names of the Prophet (pbuh). And maybe instead of doing a calligraphy with the name Muhammad (pbuh), they will feel they relate more to the name 'Al-Ameen (or another of his names). Make sure to leave it open ended so the children can use their creativity and imagination and really OWN the piece.

Be patient, and understand that art is about the process. You may find your child chooses a word that you don't think is befitting. DON'T immediately disregard it. Find out what thought process lead your child to choose the word they did, and discuss it with them. It's a great learning experience, and most of all, your patience and care with them will show them that you are trying to emulate the Prophet (pbuh).

Take every moment as an opportunity for learning. The end result of your work is a tangible piece, but the memories and experiences built are part of the process – not the product. Use this project as a way to build connections, not only with our Prophet, but also with each other.

Beaded Timeline of Prophet's Childhood

<http://www.muslimcongress.org/contentmc/media/20425/grade%201%20activity%20book.pdf>

Purpose: To create a visual representation of Prophet Muhammad's formative years.

Materials: A variety of beads, thick string, hole-punch, small thin strips of cardstock



Method

1. Lay out a pre-made beaded timeline and explain its contents.
2. Present a tray of sorted materials. This may include a variety of beads, tags, and a piece of string – enough for each child to make his/her own timeline.
3. Explain: “For each formative stage of the Prophet’s early life, we will choose several beads of the same type. For example, I might choose four red beads to mark the Prophet’s early life with lady Amina, etc.
4. To remember the names of the adults in Rasulullah’s(s) life, create name tags that can be hole punched at one end, and strung into the timeline. For example, first tag would read, *Prophet Muhammad is Born*, four beads, second tag: *First four years with his beloved wet-nurse, Halima*, two beads, third tag: *Two years with his loving mother, Amina....etc.*
5. Once you have helped the children create their tags and string their beads, and everything is complete, you could ask the children if anyone wanted to share their timeline with the group and explain why they chose certain beads from each person in the Prophet’s life.

