

GUIDE TO STARTING A NEW CHAPTER



Dear Sisters,

Welcome to the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom[®]. We're thrilled you're interested in starting a chapter in your community! As a member of the Sisterhood, you'll have an opportunity to develop deep friendships with a diverse group of Muslim and Jewish women. You'll gain leadership skills to engage in thoughtful dialogue and cross-cultural exchange. And you'll be part of a growing network in North America that is committed to speaking up against discrimination and hate.

In the following pages, you'll find the resources you need to successfully organize a chapter and understand the role of a co-leader. If you have questions or concerns along the way, feel free to email Samantha at samantha@sosspeace.org. We are here for you!

Thank you for your commitment to and support of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom. We look forward to supporting you as you embark upon this unique journey.

Guide to Starting a New Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom Chapter

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Step-by-Step Guide to Creating a New Chapter

Step One: Contact the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom

Your very first step is to use the “contact us” form on the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom website: sosspeace.org/contact-us. A Sisterhood staff person will set up a time to talk with you. She’ll describe the chapter formation process, connect you with others in your area interested in starting or joining a chapter, and answer your questions.

Step Two: Learn more about the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom

Take a look at the Sisterhood website. Watch our videos and scan the online resource library: sosspeace.org/videos-guides. Think about why you want to start a chapter. The ability to communicate your passion for the mission of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom may just be your strongest asset, especially when recruiting other women to join you.

Step Three: Identify a co-organizer from the other faith

It’s important to start a chapter as **“we,” not “me.”** You don’t want to do this alone! It’s critical to have one Muslim and one Jewish organizer to model shared leadership and build trust in both communities.

Reach out to the central office and we’ll let you know if we’ve identified a woman in your area looking to start a chapter. If we don’t have a contact, reach out to your family, friends, and co-workers. Tell them about the mission of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom and how a chapter will benefit your communities. This step may take some time, so be patient. With one or more degrees of separation, it’s quite possible that you’ll find someone in your network of the other faith who will partner with you.

Part of the beauty of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom is befriending women who you otherwise might never have a chance to meet. Once you find a woman from the other faith interested in organizing a chapter with you, arrange a time to meet. Learn about her life and explore how you can share the organizing tasks, utilizing each of your strengths and expertise.

If the first woman you meet with isn’t available or interested, ask her for names of other women you can contact. And remember, any Muslim or Jewish woman can start a chapter. The co-organizers of a Sisterhood chapter are instrumental in helping form new chapters. Being a co-organizer, however, does not mean you need to become a co-leader for the chapter once it has launched, though often, this is the case.

If the thought of reaching out to someone you don't know makes your heart pound, then find a Sister from your faith to join you. In fact, you may decide to have two co-leaders from each faith. With four co-leaders, there's always backup, in case one woman needs to pull back for a time.

Step Four: Recruit sisters to join your chapter

Develop your elevator speech. When you and your co-leader(s) from the other faith are ready to invite other women to join your chapter, it's helpful to have an "elevator speech," a brief, consistent way to describe the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom and why you think they should join. It's called an elevator speech because you succinctly make your pitch in the amount of time it takes for an average elevator ride.

Below is one version of an elevator speech. Feel free to adapt or change it to match your style. What's important is to articulate your passion for the Sisterhood and why you want to start a chapter in the midst of your busy life. Here are three main points to share:

- **What:** The Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom is based upon three things: (1) building trusting relationships; (2) increasing understanding through dialogue, socialization and community building; and (3) engaging in social advocacy activities.
- **When:** Chapters meet every 4-6 weeks. Sisters share holiday gatherings, special events, attend the annual fall leadership conference, and take part in regional meetings and trainings, as available.
- **Why:** Develop beautiful friendships, create allies, engage in social advocacy, and decrease anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish sentiment.
- **Sample elevator speech:** Remember, this is about your story and why you've chosen to become involved with the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom. "I became involved with the Sisterhood because I'm concerned about rising Islamophobia and anti-Semitism as well as misunderstandings between our two communities. An "us" versus "them" mentality isn't consistent with *my* values. I believe that together, as Muslim and Jewish women, we can shine a light on a different way of interacting. We can forge relationships based on trust and respect. Our friendship will be built on a mutual commitment to protect one another and to stand together against hatred, prejudice and discrimination. When you join a Sisterhood chapter, you agree to meet once every four to six weeks and to listen to each sister with an open heart. We respect differences, share holiday celebrations and take part in community service and advocacy projects. I'd love to hear your thoughts about this vision and see if you're interested in joining me on this journey of hope."

The recruitment process

Remember, when you are forming your chapter, the most important thing is to communicate your passion! Share why you want to start a chapter. Ask questions so you can learn more about

what other women are thinking and experiencing. You may wind up talking with many women before you identify a core group of Muslim and Jewish women, roughly equal in number, to join your chapter. As you network, seek out women of different ages, religious observance, and cultural and socioeconomic background. A diverse chapter not only enriches dialogue, but also breaks down intra-religious, in addition to inter-religious stereotypes.

It may take six months or more to develop your chapter, so don't get discouraged. Think of it as part of your journey and an opportunity to speak with interesting women from many different backgrounds. You may find it useful to take note of everyone's interests and availability, so check out the sample spreadsheet in Appendix A for one way to keep track of your conversations.

Different ways to meet potential sisters

- 1. Contact the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom.** Your first step is to contact Samantha at the central office at samatha@sosspeace.org to see if there are currently any women in your area on the waitlist. If so, please give priority to women who have already expressed interest in joining a chapter. You may find that the central office already has a long list of women who want to join a chapter in your area.
- 2. Attend local events.** In addition to attending local interfaith events, many current co-leaders say that the best way to meet women who are likely to be interested in the Sisterhood is to go to community events where Muslim and/or Jewish women gather. And remember, if you don't feel particularly comfortable reaching out to people you don't know, ask your co-organizer to join you. You will make a powerful statement, going together as a Muslim and Jewish team, especially when the primary audience is the Jewish or Muslim community. Seek out programs sponsored by Muslim or Jewish organizations. You can find these community events through your local networks, as well as through the internet, by searching the names of local Muslim or Jewish organizations and houses of worship.
- 3. Reach out to your networks.** Ask family members and colleagues if they can introduce you to Jewish and Muslim women that they may know through their work, children's school, or community service organization. You'd be surprised at how, with one or two degrees of separation, you can discover new networks of women. This is especially important because your goal is to develop a Sisterhood chapter that reflects intra-faith and inter-cultural diversity.
- 4. Reach out on social media.** Share your passion! Dust off and shorten your elevator speech and post requests for Jewish and Muslim women. Invite them to learn more about the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom. Link to the [Sisterhood Facebook group](#) to connect with the greater Sisterhood network and see positive photos and videos of Sisterhood members in action. Share articles and news (good or bad) that are relevant to the Muslim or Jewish community. Highlight how the Sisterhood is addressing common concerns. "Shares" are everything!

5. Contact local synagogues and mosques. Describe the Sisterhood and ask if there are women's study or social groups that you can speak to. Focus on how the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom can help women in their respective communities strengthen their own communities by breaking down stereotypes and misunderstandings.

6. Other opportunities. Every day is another potential opportunity! Go to a halal or kosher grocery store and talk to a shopkeeper. Wander into small businesses in a known Jewish, Arab, South Asian, or West African neighborhood. Ask if you can leave a flyer (see Appendix B). Ask if there are groups of women meeting in the area. Reach out to municipal personnel and local officials to receive recommendations of local Jews and Muslims who are active in your community.

These methods and more are outlined in a short video from our Executive Director:
[youtube.com/watch?v=FICvF0Lwhrg&t=43s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FICvF0Lwhrg&t=43s)

The Sisterhood's foundation is built upon personal relationships. After you have spoken with women, send out a follow-up text or email (see Appendix C for sample). Suggest that potential sisters visit our website, www.sosspeace.org, and our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/sisterhoodsalaamshalom. Share our Twitter handle so they can see firsthand the impact of our work, [@sosspeace](https://twitter.com/sosspeace), and send them these video links: vimeo.com/136238441 and [youtube.com/watch?v=f4xxWEnhEHs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4xxWEnhEHs). They provide good background on our mission, values, and why someone would want to participate.

Every time you reach out, especially to a woman of the other faith or from a different cultural or religious practice, you are modeling the power of the Sisterhood, sending the message that, as women, we can break down barriers of suspicion and misunderstanding.

Step Five: Decide if you want to be a co-leader of your chapter

Being a co-leader does take additional time, perhaps on average, two hours/month, in addition to your actual meeting. The responsibilities are mentioned below. But the rewards are great! As a Sisterhood co-leader, you'll have the opportunity to strengthen and develop your leadership skills. You'll plan and organize chapter meetings, special events, and deepen your communication skills through facilitating chapter meetings. You'll become part of a strong network of women leaders throughout North America.

We strongly encourage co-leaders to take part in numerous leadership training opportunities provided by the central office, including: the annual Sisterhood conference; monthly co-leader webinars where you'll learn best practices and share ways to address conflicts that may arise in your chapter; regional trainings, as available; and, instructional resources on the Sisterhood website, including brief videos and written guides.

Best Practices for Chapter Co-Leaders

Co-leaders have responsibilities in three general areas: communications, logistics, and process.

Communications

- 1. Stay in touch with your Sisters.** Send out an annual or semi-annual calendar of meetings, so that sisters can set aside the time well in advance, as well as reminders before each meeting.
- 2. Develop a system for ongoing communication with chapter members.** Find out from each sister if she prefers to receive reminders and notices via text, email, or a private Facebook or WhatsApp group. Send us an email if you'd like help setting up one a Facebook or WhatsApp group. While this may take a little extra time initially, it will make your outreach MUCH easier each month. Some chapter co- leaders enjoy outreach and take it on as one of their unique responsibilities, while others rotate communicating with sisters. Decide with your co-leader(s) what works best for you, and feel free to change your system if it doesn't seem to be working.
- 3. Reach out to women who don't regularly attend meetings.** During the first six months, it's normal for membership to fluctuate. Remember that personal relationships form the heart of the Sisterhood. They take time to develop, and it's more challenging to establish trust if women drop in and out of the group. If a sister misses a meeting, or doesn't RSVP, text, call, or email her. Reaching out lets her know that her presence matters to you and to all your sisters. If she misses a couple of meetings, reach out and check in with her. Ask how she's doing. Find out if work or family responsibilities make it difficult for her to attend. If she is committed to the group, but the regular meeting time is difficult for her, talk as a group about possible accommodations. Perhaps you can alternate days (e.g. Sunday afternoons and week nights) or come up with another solution. If she feels she can't make a regular commitment to chapter meetings, ask if she would like to be invited to larger special events and celebrations. That way, she can maintain a positive connection to your chapter. Eventually, your membership will stabilize and reminder emails or texts prior to meetings or special events, should suffice. As a common courtesy, if a sister emails or calls you, we ask that one of the co-leaders gets back to her within 48 hours whenever possible.
- 4. Stay in touch with the central office.** The central office is the hub that connects all the local chapters and exists to support each individual chapter. Please send your chapter membership list to Samantha at the central office (samantha@sosspeace.org) within one month of your first meeting. Once a year, we will ask you to update your membership list and invite you to share your best practices and challenges. We'll share selected best practices each month in an email newsletter, which also includes updates about upcoming trainings, conferences, and events.
- 5. Utilize regional coordinators.** In 2019, we introduced the concept of regional coordinators, individuals who serve a select group of regions across the country and are available to

assist with challenges, activities, and programming for chapters within each region. Once your chapter is up and running, in addition to the central office, you can refer to your regional coordinator for support. Samantha Facciolo (samantha@sosspeace.org) can put you in touch with the Regional Coordinator(s) serving your area.

Logistics

As a co-leader, you aren't responsible for DOING everything. You just need to make sure that things get DONE. Here are some important logistics to consider:

1. **Group size** A stable group promotes bonding and intimacy. Consistency in membership is very important. We do not recommend people dropping in and out and suggest, once the chapter has reached a stable, core membership, closing to new members.
2. **Location** We strongly encourage you to meet in women's homes, because this setting encourages intimacy in an informal atmosphere. Make sure the host knows how many people to expect so she can prepare the space. On occasion, chapters visit a religious house of worship for a specific educational experience.
3. **Food** See below, [Guide to your First Meeting](#).
4. **Meeting times** Finding a time to meet that works for everyone can be very challenging! Many chapters have found that Sunday afternoons work well. Other chapters meet on a weeknight. With input from your chapter members, decide upon a day and time of the week that works for everyone. If there's no one time, consider alternating meeting times and days. Just remember, in the spirit of inter-religious dialogue, please don't schedule a meeting on the Jewish sabbath (Friday evening, or anytime Saturday before sundown), during Muslim Jummah prayer (Friday afternoon), or during other holidays, unless that meeting is celebrating a specific religious observance. You can find an annual [calendar of Muslim and Jewish holidays](#) on our website.
5. **Meeting themes** There are three common ways to decide upon the theme for each meeting.
 - a. The host of the meeting decides.
 - b. The chapter decides together at the end of the previous meeting.
 - c. The co-leaders decide.

Regardless of which method you choose, it's a good idea to balance time for socializing, learning, and personal sharing. Share your meeting theme with sisters at the beginning of your meeting so everyone knows what to expect. We find that the most successful chapters have a mix of themes that range from members-suggested topics, to discussions chosen from the guide, to holiday or ritual based celebrations, social action/service-oriented meetings, social activities, field trips, and more.

6. **Meeting facilitation** Best practices for meeting facilitation are available in the Running

Successful Dialogue and Effective Meetings section.

7. **Committees** Some chapters like to have small committees- a fundraising committee, for example, a Good and Welfare group, which ensures chapter members have support in the event of illness, or a death in the family, or a new baby, or a social action or social (extracurricular get-togethers) committee. Does your chapter have women with a passion for one of these, or another, subgroups? Maybe someone who has a passion for art or dance programs, or trying new restaurants, or checking in with members needing extra support. Maybe you have someone who loves putting together a simple, quarterly newsletter or birthday announcements. If so, consider adding committees of a few women who would like to spearhead specific initiatives within the group.
8. **Information Management** Each chapter decides how it wants to manage members' information and what information is collected, but at a minimum, we ask that co-leaders update the central office with a membership spreadsheet annually and whenever there are additions or losses of members. Some co-leaders prefer Excel spreadsheets or shared Google spreadsheets, but however you manage this information, you should have each woman's name, address, email address, religion, phone number, and other information as needed. Each co-leader should have access to this information, and the chapter should decide together how much information they want to share with one another- phone numbers and email addresses? Birthdays?
9. **National Initiatives** The Sisterhood has several national initiatives, including Tzedakah/Sadaqa Day projects, voter registration drive, and Rise and Respond, a step-by-step guide to responding to Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. Co-leaders don't have to lead the charge on national initiatives but we strongly encourage chapters to participate in them. These types of outreach can be great opportunities for other members to take on leadership roles and share their own ideas and skills with the group. Often, you'll be the first to know of upcoming national initiatives, projects, and news. Please monitor your inbox for emails from the central office and share these announcements with your chapter.
10. **National Leadership Opportunities** As a co-leader, you will be invited to participate in monthly Zoom calls for co-leaders. They range in topic from resolving challenges to presentations on upcoming initiatives, to sharing best practices, and panels with guest speakers. The meeting schedule is sent out several months in advance by Janet Penn. Please do your best to attend these meetings by conference call or webinar. You can reach Janet at janet@sosspeace.org.
11. **Co-Leader Facebook Group** There is a co-leader networking and support Facebook group. If you are a new co-leader, please email Samantha at samantha@sosspeace.org for an invitation to join this group. It is a great forum for discussion, troubleshooting, sharing meeting ideas, asking questions, and more.

Process

Your final area of responsibility may just be the most important part of your leadership. Thoughtful process will enhance everyone's experience in the Sisterhood. Here are some guidelines that will help you create an atmosphere of trust and respect:

- **Share leadership equally.** Commit to leading the chapter as an equal with your partner co-leader. Shared leadership models trust and respect in your chapter. Pair a sister from each faith to lead discussions. Alternate homes when and if possible.
- **Make decisions democratically.** Seek input from chapter members about programming and logistics. Remember, each sister has an equal voice and vote.
- **Balance personal sharing and learning.** Successful meetings strike a balance between sharing personal experiences, socializing, experiential programs, and discussing intellectual topics. Examples of experiential programs include: Ramadan Iftars; Sukkot dinners; community building/social action projects; attending a museum exhibit; and, screening a movie.
- **Follow guidelines.** Co-leaders agree to promote and support the Guiding Principles of the Sisterhood within their chapter.
- **Represent a positive face to the media.** You are the voice and face of the Sisterhood in your local community. When participating in media interviews, present the strengths of the Sisterhood. Internal challenges or concerns are best shared with the central office, not with the press.
- **Be thoughtful about approaching challenging conversations.** Because it can be such a divisive issue, we ask that you refrain from talking about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and having other, similarly challenging conversations until your chapter has been meeting for at least a year, has developed strong bonds, and has facilitators who have the skills to maintain a safe space. This guide contains two suggestions for structuring this conversation, *Sharing Personal Narratives* (p. 48), and *Conducting a Successful Dialogue* (p. 41). The Sisterhood has created brief videos and written guides, *Engaging in Difficult Conversations*: <https://sossppeace.org/series1/>. Feel free to contact the Central Office for additional support.

Guide to Your First Meeting

The goals of your first meeting are to: (1) help every woman feel welcome; (2) ensure that everyone understands what it means to be a member of a Sisterhood chapter; (3) begin to get to know each other; and (4) address logistics.

Staff at the central office will help you kick off your first meeting and are available by email and phone to answer your questions and suggest best practices.

Below are some best practices to address the first goal of **creating a welcoming atmosphere**.

- Before sisters arrive, ask the meeting host to arrange chairs in a circle so no one is “at the head of the table.”
- Greet each woman at the door.
- Ask her to remove her shoes if it is the custom of the house.
- Have nametags readily available.
- Invite women to take refreshments.
- Begin with a general welcome. Some chapters start and end their meeting with a Jewish and Muslim prayer.
- Be mindful of starting and ending on time.
- Maintain confidentiality. What’s said in the chapter, stays in the chapter. But feel free to share what you’ve learned far and wide!

Sharing food

Just saying the name of your favorite holiday dish can evoke warm memories of family gatherings. Food often plays a major role in our cultural and religious heritages and is a wonderful way to bring people together. As a chapter, you’ll decide whether you want to share a meal or snacks at your meetings or events. Some chapters bring potluck to each meeting. Some have the host provide snacks. But, as a part of a North American organization dedicated to honoring both Islam and Judaism, we ask that you observe the religious dietary requirements of your most observant sister. Since there may be a wide variety of observance, please ask your sisters to share their practices, to ensure that everyone is able to partake in the food that is served. Islamic jurisprudence specifies which foods are halal (lawful) and which are haram (unlawful). The laws are derived from commandments found in the Qur’an (Muslim holy book) and the Hadith (sayings of the Prophet). Kashrut is the set of Jewish dietary laws set forth in the Torah (Jewish holy book). Foods that may be consumed according to Jewish law are considered kosher,

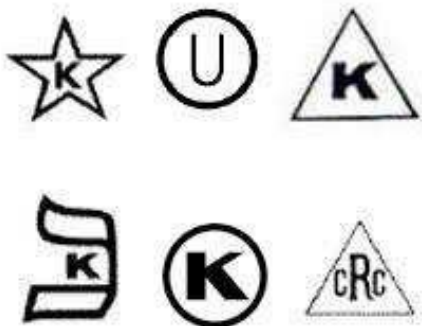
meaning fit for consumption.

Whether you are bringing food to your host's home, or you are the host, please follow these guidelines:

1. Do not serve products made with alcohol, lard, gelatin, or any other pork product.
2. If you are going to a Jewish home, check with the host to make sure it's okay to bring in food prepared in a non-kosher home or packaged food that does not have a kosher symbol. The following are common symbols on packaging that indicate a kosher product. Fruits and vegetables without wax do not require a symbol to be kosher.
3. Alcohol of any kind should never be served. If there is a need for the Jewish blessing over wine, use grape juice instead.
4. Do not serve a dish or bring a dish that mixes dairy products with meat products.
5. Do not serve or bring a dish that contains shellfish (shrimp, scallops, lobster).

Instead of viewing these as restrictions, you have an opportunity to engage in thoughtful conversation about religious dietary laws. What are they? What are people's individual practices? Have they changed over time? What does observing, or not observing, mean to them?

Commonly Found Kosher Symbols



Suggested Agenda for your First Meeting

The suggested times listed next to each agenda item are a guideline only and assume a two-hour meeting. If an agenda item takes longer, adjust the other times accordingly, unless your group agrees to stay later. Since there is a lot to cover in the orientation, simply stating the information below is sufficient for this first meeting. Or, you may prefer to just give a brief summary of the

mission, so people understand what to expect as a participant and do the rest of the orientation over a conference call, or during the next several meetings.

- **Gathering (15 minutes)**

- **Orientation to the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom (30 minutes)**

- Welcome everyone to the Sisterhood.
- Introduce the co-leaders and BRIEFLY share your excitement and hopes for your chapter.
- Show the welcome YouTube video from Co-founder, Sheryl Olitzky:
[youtube.com/watch?v=JKpJSIZ1vOk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKpJSIZ1vOk)
- Read the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom mission and give an overview of programs (chapters, annual conference, Building Bridges trip)
- Share the chapter focus on:
 - Dialogue – understanding and compassionate listening
 - Socialization – building friendships
 - Community building/life cycle events – Agree to convene at least one community building or life cycle event each year with your chapter, as well as participate in one larger Sisterhood community-building event.
 - Social advocacy – Together stand up for each other and speak out against hatred and bigotry.
- Hand out and read aloud the Guiding Principles of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom.

- **Share personal stories (45 minutes).** Choose one of the suggested themes below.

- **Review logistics (30 minutes)**

- Decide as a group, the time and day that works for future meetings. This is really important to do as a group, so please make sure to leave 15 minutes at the end. If you can't find a day and time that works for everyone, then agree to rotate days so everyone is included.
- Find a volunteer to host your next meeting. (You may want to designate a note taker to record the date and place, as well as any other important decisions.)
- Q&A
- Closing – Especially after dealing with logistics, it's nice to end with a group closing, which might include each woman sharing one sentence about her experience, or if you're short on time, sharing a group song, blessing, or prayer.

- Notice the suggested time frame next to each section. We encourage you to allocate specific time frames for each agenda item when you're planning your meeting. While your times may not be exact, setting an intention will help keep you on track.

Suggested Initial Meeting Themes for Sharing Personal Stories (Choose One)

1. INTRODUCING OURSELVES

Objectives:

- To learn about family customs through sharing the origins of each woman's name
- To begin to understand the influence of our different cultural backgrounds
- To explain how storytelling is key to building empathy and understanding

Introduction:

Our families and cultural background play a large role in the way we define ourselves, as well as the way we are perceived by others. Through exploring the origins of our names, participants can share part of their family legacy. Sharing personal stories is key to establishing each woman's equal voice, since everyone has a story, regardless of her knowledge about her religion.

Materials:

- Large sheet of post-it paper, outlining the questions for sharing
- Marker

Time required:

One hour, divided equally among sisters

Facilitator role:

- Share the objectives and introduction.
- Post the questions below on large post-it paper on the wall for easy reference.

Process:

- Ask each sister to tell the story of her name. Here are some questions she can consider:
 - How do you pronounce your name?
 - What does your name mean?
 - How did you get your name?
 - What influenced that name choice?
 - Do you prefer to go by any other name? Why?
 - What is the story of your last name? Where does it come from and what does it mean? Is it different from other family members' last names?
- Ask one sister to keep track of time. She will let the speaker know when she has spoken for five minutes, or however much time is available, given the size of your group.
- If your group is not too large, you can leave time for a one question after each person.

2. SHARING RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES – Option One

Objectives:

- To develop a basic understanding of each woman’s “lived” religion
- To begin to see one another as individuals rather than just as “Muslims” or “Jews”
- To begin the process of breaking down stereotypes

Introduction:

Through sharing the meaning of an important religious object and role it plays in your life, sisters will develop an understanding about the ways individuals practice their religion. This learning is not just about the “other” religion, but also highlights the rich diversity within our own religious communities. Sharing personal stories is key to establishing each woman’s equal voice, since everyone has a story to share, regardless of her knowledge about her religion.

Materials: You may want to post the questions on a large post-it sheet for easy reference.

Time required:

One hour, divided equally among sisters

Facilitator role:

- Prior to the session, ask participants to bring one item that symbolizes their religion.

Process:

- Ask one sister to start the sharing by presenting her religious item. Suggested questions to explore:
 - How do you use this object (e.g. daily, weekly, special holidays)?
 - How does this item capture the meaning of your religion to you?
 - Does the object have special meaning from your childhood?
- Ask one sister to keep track of time. She will let the speaker know when she has spoken for five minutes, or however much time is available, given the size of your group.

3. SHARING RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES – Option Two

Objectives:

- To develop a basic understanding of each woman’s “lived” religion
- To begin to see one another as individuals rather than just as “Muslims” or “Jews”
- To begin the process of breaking down stereotypes

Introduction:

These objectives are the same as the previous one, but the activity uses different questions to prompt sharing some of the ways each sister practices her religion.

Materials: You may want to post the questions on a large post-it sheet for easy reference.

Time required:

One hour, divided equally among sisters

Facilitator role:

- Explain the objectives of the activity.

Process:

- Ask one sister to begin, describing in detail one or more religious practices or rituals that are important to her.
 - What meaning does it/they have in her life?
 - What do you most enjoy about the practice?
 - Do you find anything difficult or challenging about the practice?
 - Was the practice part of your life growing up or has it changed over time?
- Ask one sister to keep track of time. She will let the speaker know when she has spoken for five minutes, or however much time is available, given the size of your group.

4. GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER: A HUMAN SCAVENGER HUNT

PURPOSE

To encourage getting to meet all the chapter members.

PROCESS

Give each person a copy of the questions and a pen. Their task is to go around the room and find different people who can answer 'yes' to the questions.

Once they've found someone who can give a positive answer, they should make a note of their name on the list next to that question.

Additional Rules

To encourage the players to talk to as many different people as possible, consider putting a limit on the number of times each person can appear on someone's list – between one and three times, depending on the size of the group.

For example, sister A speaks to sister B and finds that they can answer yes to 11 of the questions. Rather than them being allowed to write down that person's name 11 times, they'd be limited to a maximum of three.

Scavenger Hunt Questions

Here's a suggested list of the 25 questions to use for this game. Revise the list however you desire.

1. Have you ever been in a helicopter?
2. Were you born in a country outside of the U.S.?
3. Do you have four or more siblings?
4. Is your birthday in June?
5. Have you been to the top of the Empire State Building?
6. Is your favorite color green?

7. Can you speak three or more languages fluently?
8. Have you ridden on a motorcycle?
9. Can you play the guitar?
10. Have you ever been stuck in an elevator?
11. Have you met anyone famous?
12. Are you left-handed?
13. Are you wearing socks that aren't black or white?
14. Do you like to play soccer?
15. Have you read all the Harry Potter books?
16. Do you like to watch scary movies?
17. Have you ever been sailing?
18. Do you suffer from hay fever?
19. Have you ever gone swimming in the ocean?

20. Can you whistle using two fingers?
21. Have you ever been to Australia?
22. Were you born between 1960 and 1965?
23. Do you have no middle name?
24. Can you say the alphabet backwards?
25. Do you like Brussels Sprouts?

5. FIND SOMEONE WHO...

PURPOSE

To encourage members to find commonalities with one another and to become acquainted with all members.

PROCESS

Give each person a copy of the questions and a pen. Their task is to go around the room and find different people who can answer 'yes' to the questions. Once they've found someone who can give a positive answer, write that person's name in the blank next to the corresponding question.

Additional Rules

To encourage participants to talk to as many different people as possible, consider putting a limit on the number of times each person can appear on someone's list, say, only two or three times, for example.

Getting to Know You Questions

Here's a suggested list of the questions to use for this ice-breaker. Revise the list however you desire.
Find Someone Who:

- 1) Was born in the same city as you were _____
- 2) Loves to eat Indian food _____
- 3) Loves to go to foreign movies _____
- 4) Has a passion for golf _____
- 5) Loves to cook _____
- 6) Loves to go to museums _____
- 7) Loves to play in the rain _____
- 8) Has actually played in the rain in the last year _____
- 9) Has been teaching the longest _____
- 10) Has lived in a foreign country _____
- 11) Loves to paint _____
- 12) Who has been a pilot _____
- 13) Who has fought in a war _____
- 14) Who makes jewelry _____
- 15) Loves to study fashion design _____
- 16) Who plays the harp _____
- 17) Who served in the Peace Corp _____
- 18) Who speaks more than three languages _____
- 19) Who sings opera _____
- 20) Who is an actor/actress _____
- 21) Attended the same university you did _____
- 22) Was born in New York _____
- 23) Was born in 1964 _____
- 24) Shares your birthday _____

Appendices

- **Appendix A: Membership spreadsheet**

Please email Samantha at samantha@sosspeace.org for a copy of our chapter membership spreadsheet. Save a copy of the spreadsheet by renaming it with your chapter name, then feel free to edit it in Google Docs or in Excel, whichever you prefer. The most important categories to fill in are name, email address, mailing address, religion, and phone number. Please send this spreadsheet to the central office within a month of your first meeting. It can be emailed directly to Samantha. The central office will ask you to update your list once a year. It's important that you use our version of the spreadsheet to ensure uploading to our database will go smoothly. Thank you for your consideration of this request!

- **Appendix B: Recruitment flyer**

- **Appendix C: Recruitment follow-up communication**

Enriching Women's Souls, Shattering Stereotypes



Join us to build bridges and put an end to hate, negative stereotyping and prejudice.

- Become a member of a chapter
- Attend the annual Muslim Jewish Women's Leadership Conference
- Travel on a Building Bridges Trip
- Visit us at www.sosspeace.org
- Contact us at: samantha@sosspeace.org

Sample Follow Up to Potential New Members

Dear _____,

I really enjoyed speaking with you about the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom[®]. We look forward to starting a new chapter in your town and hope that you agree to be part of this exciting movement! It's an amazing organization that is based on a simple principle: it is easy to hate someone you do not know and almost impossible to hate someone you care about.

Through participation in the Sisterhood, you will build friendships between Muslim and Jewish women, learn how to be an advocate of interfaith-based issues, participate in community building activity, and engage in dialogue, compassionate listening, and social advocacy. Our ultimate mission is to combat anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish sentiment together.

I look forward to getting to know you. Please feel free to contact me if you'd like more information or have any questions.

In sisterhood,

(Your Name)