

Events Pack



Sunday 18th February 2018

Congratulations on signing up to take part in #VisitMyMosque 2018! The Prophetic mosque was a space for the whole community and was an interfaith hub. It's great that your mosque is taking steps to do the same thing.

The next few pages contains advice and guidance on how to make the most of your mosque open day inshaAllah!

1 What

On Sunday 18th February 2018, hundreds of mosques will be taking part in the fourth annual **#VisitMyMosque Day**, where mosques will open their doors to the general public for tea, refreshments and an insight into the day-to-day life of the Muslim community.

2 Why

- ✓ To allow the local community around you to see what actually goes on in a mosque and to understand its role in Muslim life
- ✓ To interact and engage with people of other cultures and faiths
- ✓ To encourage deeper cultural and religious understanding
- ✓ To promote community cohesion.

Important to Note

When you invite your neighbour's there may be some reluctance to visit your mosque for a range of reasons. Please help put them at ease by explaining that your intention is not to convince them of your own faith but simply to engage and interact with them.

On the day of the event, it is important to impress upon your team that they should not engage in theological discussion unless it is **prompted** and then only to **inform** rather than **convince**.

3 How

This is a national event, and we want to help promote your mosque on the day. If your mosque has not already received the 'Upon Registration' email, please fill in this online form:

www.visitmymosque.org/register

Once you've confirmed and put down a named contact person, the below is a useful quick guide of the key points to remember.

1. Choose a time

You may wish to hold it for the whole day or allocate a set time for visitors to come. This will allow you to organise your volunteers and activities accordingly. Once you've chosen your time, email us

on visitmymosque-admin@mcb.org.uk and let us know so we can update our website accordingly.

2. Inform your congregation (Jama'ah).

Friday prayers, religious classes and/or other activities during the week would be a good time to inform members of your community, and encourage them to get involved. As well as explaining your plans, you can appeal for volunteers and encourage all of them to bring a friend, neighbour or colleague.

Both brothers and sisters should play an active role in your open day so do recruit volunteers accordingly.

3. Invite, Invite, Invite

- Ensure that your key invitees receive written invitations (either letters or emails – see templates below) that outline all the details of the day.
- Encourage your congregation to invite their friends, neighbours and colleagues too.
- Follow up with a personal phone call. Always have a single named person that the media and visitors can contact.
- Inform your guests of Mosque etiquette before they arrive. For some of your visitors this may be the first time they have been in a Mosque and by providing them with details in advance, visitors will feel more at ease and you will avoid any unnecessary embarrassment.

Groups/individuals you may like to approach include: (see template letters below)

a) Local stakeholders:

MPs, Mayor, Councillors, NHS health professionals (doctors, nurses, dentists, managers and support staff), Schools and teachers, Police or police community liaison officers/Safer Neighbourhood team, Fire Brigade Officers

Important to Note:

Make sure your local Safer Neighbourhood team is aware that you are holding this event, and try to ensure you have the contact details of a relevant liaison should this be needed.

b) Local community groups:

Neighbours of the mosque building, Faith groups and religious leaders, local support and development organisations, tenants and residents organisations, Cultural community groups, local charities and voluntary organisations, sports groups, local businesses and shop owners, local residents and neighbours whether Muslim or non-Muslim.

4. Publicise

- Create a poster and send to neighbouring institutions (see templates below). **Please do include both the Visit My Mosque and Muslim Council of Britain logo (on the 'mosque log-in portal'.**
- Make sure the Mosque notice board and internal newsletters have the Mosque open day well publicised.

- Check your website has details of the event and instructions for people whom wish to attend, especially contact details of relevant persons responsible for the day.
- Advertise on your mailing lists and social media and use the hashtag **#VisitMyMosque**

5. Preparation

- Make sure the mosque is clean - first impressions last.
- Make sure the bathrooms are usable for guests and there is no unnecessary clutter.
- Select and prepare your volunteer team who will help on the day. There should be diversity in the team, male and female, young and old, a reflection of the community in which the Mosque is functioning.
- If possible set up a display board with key information on Islam and the mosque.
- Brief the volunteer team, and make sure everyone has a name tag.
- Be ready to answer questions about prayer, separation of men and women and other common questions/FAQs from visitors.
- Put signs up to help guests navigate e.g. bathroom, prayer area, male and female entrances etc.

6. On the day

- Everybody should speak English on the day as much as possible.
- It is important to have friendly greeters who will make guests feel welcome.
- Give each guest a brief description of the Mosque and the religious rituals you carry out. Make sure sisters are available to make female guests feel welcome.
- Provide snacks and drinks to your guests.
- Make sure your volunteers are engaging with the guests as much as possible, encourage them to be friendly and approach people.
- Allow guests to listen to a recitation from the Holy Qur'an followed by an English translation.
- If reciting prayers, try and provide a translator (or have on a screen) for the *Adhan* (call to prayer) and *Salah* (daily prayers). This can be a very moving and deep experience and a responsible person needs to be on hand to explain the rituals and their significance in Islam.
- Make sure the last visitors are as well looked after as the first.
- Encourage guests and volunteers to post their thoughts, reflections and photos on social media using hashtag **#VisitMyMosque**
- Take plenty of photos yourself! Ideally recruit a dedicated volunteer to act as photographer or videographer for the day and send them to us on visitmosque-admin@mcb.org.uk
Example photos from previous Visit My Mosque days can be viewed in the gallery at www.visitmosque.org

5 Next Steps

Once you have decided what time your open day will take place between, email us on visitmymosque-admin@mcb.org.uk so that we can update our website accordingly.

After the event, please do share your photos, reflections and summaries with us by emailing visitmymosque@mcb.org.uk or posting directly on Social Media with **#VisitMyMosque**

6 Exhibition materials and leaflets

If you'd like information or advice on exhibition materials, contact [Exhibition Islam](mailto:umar@exhibitionislam.com) on: umar@exhibitionislam.com or [Discover Islam](mailto:info@discoverislam.co.uk) on: info@discoverislam.co.uk

For free leaflets and other materials, please visit: iera.org/shop/ or contact iERA on a.khairdeen@iera.org

For queries, contact the #VisitMyMosque Coordinator, Hassan Joudi on visitmymosque@mcb.org.uk.

7 Sample Letters and Templates

Templates letters can be downloaded from www.visitmymosque.org or click on the links below:

Before the Event

- [MCB logo](#)
- [#VisitMyMosque logo](#)
- [Project checklist, budget and volunteer roles sheet](#)
- [Sample Invite Letter: Generic](#)
- [Sample Invite Letter: For Local Faith Groups](#)
- [Sample Invite Letter: For Local Stakeholders](#)
- [Sample Poster](#)
- [Sample Press Release](#)
- [Sample Friday prayer speech \(Khutbah\)](#)
- [Sample Name badge for volunteers](#)

During the Event

- [Sample Feedback Form](#)
- [A4 #VisitMyMosque poster for inside mosque](#)

After the Event

- [Sample Thank You Email for Attendees](#)
- [Sample Feedback form analysis](#)
- [Sample Thank You Email for Volunteers](#)

7 Support and Guidance

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) will be:

- Publicising and advertising all the events to the national media and press.

- Listing all mosques taking part on www.visitmymosque.org. (However please remember this is not a replacement for local advertisement, so make sure you get your poster out there and your name in the local press too!)
- Arranging regional training workshops with further advice/support on organising an open day. Dates will be announced soon, if you are interested in attending a workshop please contact the #VisitMyMosque Coordinator on visitmymosque-admin@mcb.org.uk
- Posting leaflets to your mosque that can be given to guests on the day.

MCB can also help you with inviting your local MP, Councillors or other local dignitaries. If you would like support with this please contact the #VisitMyMosque team on visitmymosque-admin@mcb.org.uk

8 Statement of Understanding

Finally we ask that all participating mosques agree to the following:

- I agree to arrange an open day at my mosque on 18th February 2018 and nominate one contact person to liaise with the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB)
- I agree that the open day will consist of, as a minimum, invitations/advertising to local neighbours and community groups, tea/coffee/refreshments table, male and female volunteers to welcome visitors and answer their questions.
- I agree that any material or activity of a nature that may bring the mosque and open day into disrepute shall be avoided.
- I understand that the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) is only facilitating this day by coordinating a common day for mosques to hold open days, providing suggested resources and templates and advertising to the national media.

9 Contact

For further queries, contact the #VisitMyMosque team on visitmymosque-admin@mcb.org.uk