

Great Ramadan Reads for Kids of All Ages

13 books about the Islamic month of Ramadan celebrate Muslim identity



BY GEMMA ALEXANDER



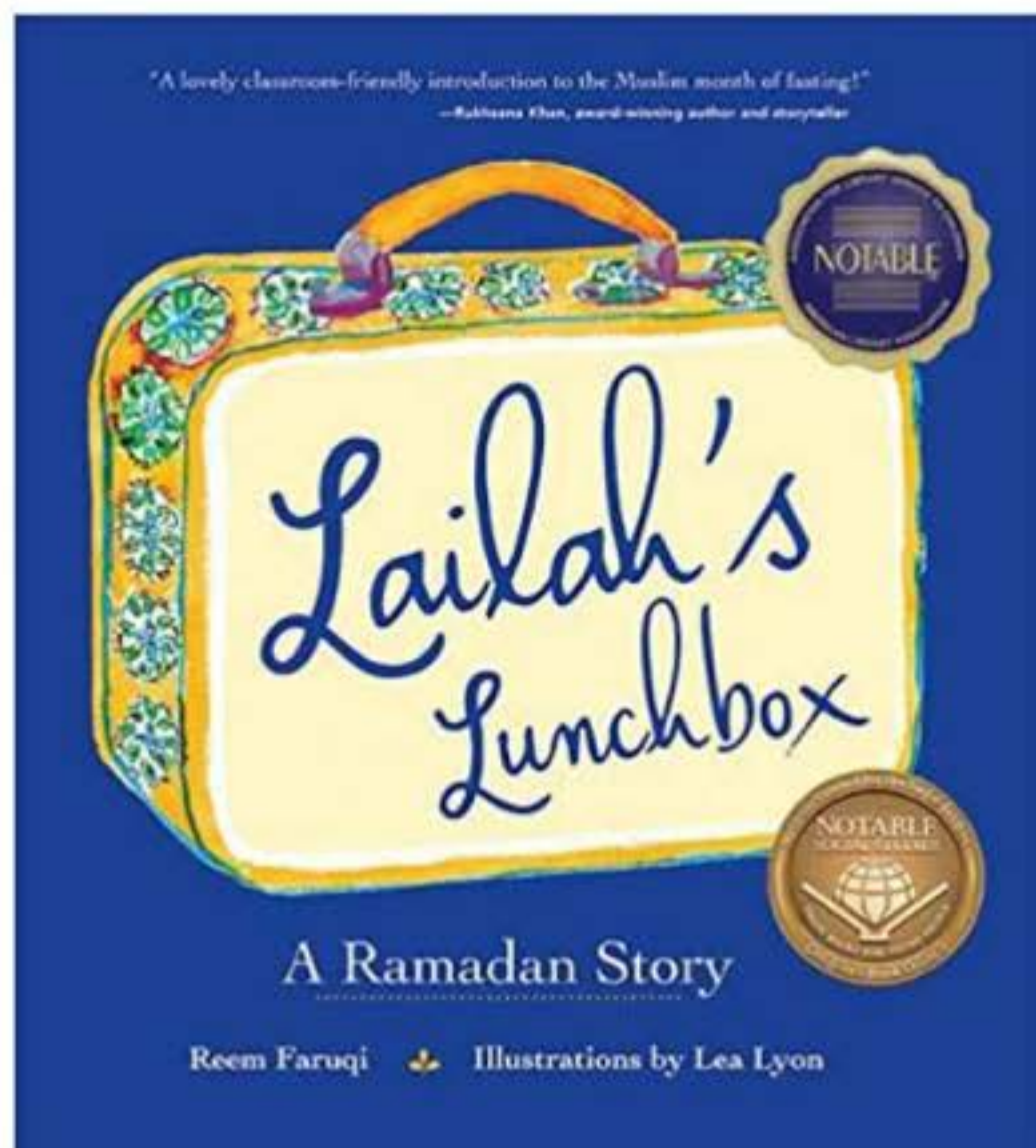
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Great Ramadan Reads

Growing up Muslim in the Pacific Northwest [isn't always easy](#). This year's Ramadan (April 23–May 23) won't present Seattle families with some of the usual challenges – kids won't have to take high-stakes tests or compete in sports championships while fasting, and parents won't have to worry about negotiating with schools for [better support](#) of their fasting children. But this year, Muslim families face a whole raft of new pandemic-related worries that are familiar to all of us. Whether you are Muslim and looking for books to help your child celebrate Ramadan at home, or you belong to another faith and want your child to better understand their neighbors, we've rounded up a list of Ramadan-related books for all ages with the help of Seattle Public Library's children's librarians.



Picture Books

[Ramadan](#) by Julie Murray

Part of a children's book series on holidays, Julie Murray's "Ramadan" simply presents the basics of Ramadan with text on one side of the page and illustrations on the other. Look for a code in the back of your copy that will unlock access to crafts, videos and games online.

[Lailah's Lunchbox: A Ramadan Story](#) by Reem Faruqi

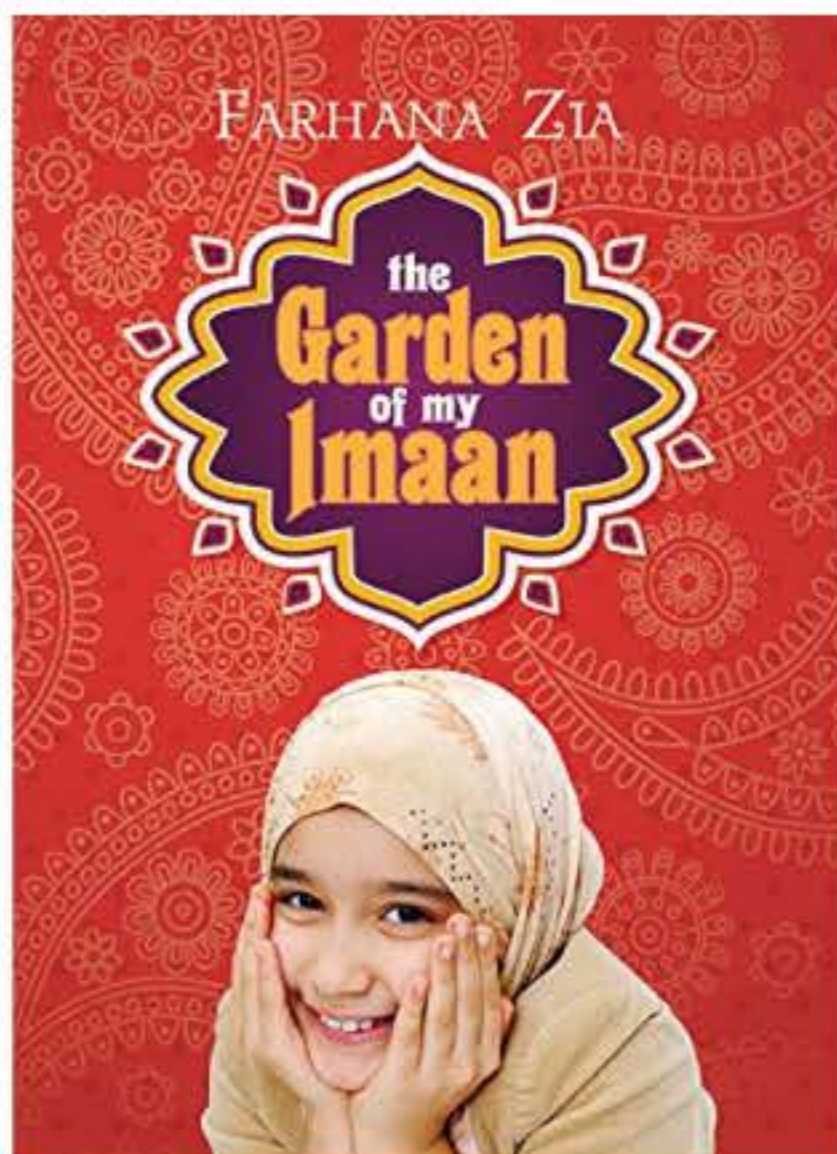
In this modern classic, Lailah has recently moved from Abu Dhabi to Georgia. She's excited about her first year participating in the fast. But she's afraid of how her new classmates will react, until a helpful librarian shows her how to explain Ramadan in a way they can understand.

[Rashad's Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr](#) by Lisa Bullard

Talking about Ramadan without talking about Eid is almost like talking about Lent without Easter. In "Rashad's Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr," Rashad is too young to fast, but Ramadan is also about prayer and kindness. Rashad tries hard to be good for the entire month of Ramadan. In the end, he gets to play and feast in celebration of Eid al-Fitr.

[Under the Ramadan Moon](#) by Sylvia Whitman

"Under the Ramadan Moon" is not quite a book in verse, but its lyrical language paired with soft pastel illustrations tells a gentle story about a modern family's celebration of the month-long holiday. A lengthy note at the back of the book provides more information about the holiday, but be aware that some reviewers found a number of the details in this section to be inaccurate.



Middle-Grade Books

[Ramadan: The Holy Month of Fasting](#) by Ausma Zehanat Khan

Roughly one in four humans on this planet is Muslim, so there are inevitably variations in practice. Khan's chapter book addresses the different ways Muslims honor Ramadan, featuring the experiences of children from different countries, as well as those of one famous woman – Olympic sabre fencer Ibtihaj Muhammad. And while most books focus on the fast, this one also discusses the importance of (and recipes for) the Iftar meal that breaks the fast each sundown.

[The Garden of My Imaan](#) by Farhana Zia

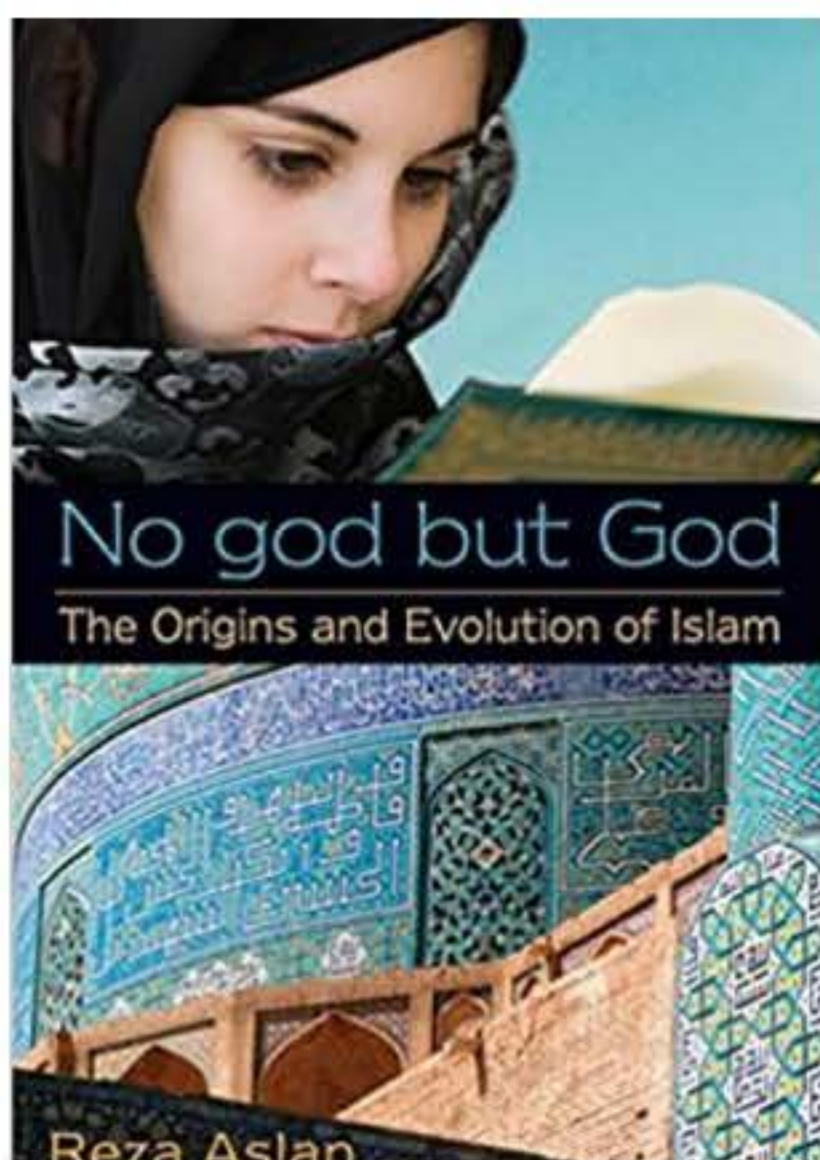
Muslim-American Aliya isn't quite sure where her faith fits into her life, or where she fits in at school. The arrival of a transfer student who shares Aliya's faith, but not her culture, pushes Aliya to start figuring out how the pieces of her life fit together. In the tradition of "[Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret](#)," Zia provides insight into life as an adolescent Muslim while acknowledging the vast diversity of American Islam.

[A Long Pitch Home](#) by Natalie Dias Lorenzi

While this book does not deal specifically with Ramadan, it does focus on one young boy's struggle to navigate and reconcile the differences between his birth culture in Pakistan and his new life in America. Bilal's father has to stay behind while the rest of his family joins relatives in the United States, where there isn't even a cricket team to join. Instead, Bilal joins the baseball team and begins to make friends.

[Muhammad](#) by Demi

Books by the artist Demi straddle the line between picture book and art book. Although the text is simple enough for younger readers, the gorgeous artwork will appeal equally to adults. One of her many biographies of historic figures, "Muhammad" depicts events in the life of the prophet while adhering to the Islamic tradition of using gold leaf instead of images of his face. You can't understand Ramadan without knowing about the life of Muhammad. This book is a beautiful place to start.



Young Adult Books

[No god but God: The Origins and Evolution of Islam](#) by Reza Aslan

Reza Aslan is an internationally acclaimed scholar of comparative religion. In this YA adaptation of his book of the same title for adults, Aslan covers the religion's origins, history, rituals and traditions. This is not a book of faith, but a scholarly work that will provide youths of all faiths a deeper understanding of Islam.

[All-American Muslim Girl](#) by Nadine Jolie Courtney

In this semi-autobiographical novel, Courtney examines Islamophobia, white privilege, identity and erasure through the experiences of a white-passing, mixed-race Muslim teen. When she becomes aware of the Islamophobia in her own town, Allie must choose between her comfortable anonymity and standing up for her faith. While this novel does not specifically address Ramadan, it is all about the hard choices young people must face to live as Muslims in a Christian-dominant culture.

[Bestest. Ramadan. Ever.](#) by Medeia Sharif

This #OwnVoices book takes a humorous look at Ramadan through the irreverent eyes of adolescent Almira Abdul, whose perspective is a Muslim-American corollary to Louise Rennison's English teen Georgia Nicolson. Even more than fasting, Almira is dismayed that Ramadan means a month of no dating. What if her best friend – or worse, the new Muslim girl with less strict parents – catches her crush's eye before Eid? How will she navigate generational and cultural conflicts when she's so hungry?

[The Taqwacores](#) by Michael Muhammad Knight

This stereotype-busting novel may not represent the kind of behavior parents encourage during Ramadan – or ever – but there are as many ways to be Muslim as there are to be human, and for some people that includes punk rock. Billed as “The Catcher in the Rye’ for young Muslims,” “The Taqwacores” was, in true punk fashion, originally self-published. Its characters are as nonconformist and antiestablishment as their nonreligious peers, but like true punks everywhere, they are deeply concerned with questions of spirituality.

[Arab in America](#) by Toufic El Rassi

This groundbreaking graphic novel illustrates the prejudice and discrimination El Rassi faced growing up Muslim in America and the way this treatment got worse after 9/11. He also provides context on Middle Eastern history and the influence of popular media on perceptions of Islam and Arabic people.



Further Reading

If these books have sparked your child's interest, Seattle Public Library children's librarians have put together longer Ramadan reading lists just for ParentMap readers. Check out their suggestions for [Young Readers](#), [Middle-Grade Readers](#), and [Young Adults](#). Still looking for more? The local mom behind the website A Crafty Arab maintains a [complete list](#) of every Ramadan-related children's book she finds.