

Islam in Albania cheat sheet

Beliefs

- The Shahada - most basic Muslim creed
There is no god but God. Muhammad is the messenger of God
- Reject “Polytheism”
- this includes the trinity
- Jesus was a prophet - NOT God. Nor did he ever claim to be God.
- Works-based salvation – no assurance (5 pillars, divine scales of justice)

Islam = Culture = Identity

Being a Muslim is everything. It’s their family, their culture, the way they interact with their world. It’s who they are.

Stories are important

- Honor/Shame culture
- Oral tradition
- Huge respect for authority

They don’t primarily reason via facts and arguments. They reason via stories & experiences.

Family & Authority

- Defer to authority figures – “My imam could answer that question”
- Haram (forbidden) to go against the will of the father of the family

Functional Atheists

Individual Albanians may only show some of these characteristics, rarely will you run into a full-fledged Muslim believer.

Most Albanians live without thinking about faith hardly at all. They are more influenced by pop-culture ideas and MTV than they are by Islam.

How you respond

- Don’t disrespect Muhammad
- Avoid saying “Jesus is the Son of God” – likely to lead you into the wrong argument
- Know some verses where Jesus talks about Himself as God and be able to find them in your Bible.
Mark 14:62, Luke 22:67-70, Matt. 26: 63-65, John 8:56-58

- Don’t go on offense against Islam!
Don’t threaten the core of who they are.

- Tell your story!
- Tell parables or stories about Christ
 - Prodigal Son
Luke 15
 - The Great Dinner
Luke 14:15-24
 - Wicked Tenants
Mark 12:1-11

- Ask them about their family – this may lead you past an impasse when discussing reasons they don’t believe
- Ask about other teachers/influencers on their life
- The Koran teaches that the Bible is a holy book with authority – use it!

- Ask lots of questions
“Do you read the Koran?” “What do you think about Allah?” “What do you believe about Jesus?”
- Tell them what America is really like – i.e. that it’s not like MTV
- Talk about your hope not being found in the world/materialism