



## THE STORY OF ISLAMIC STORYTIME

One of the Community Engagement Strategies for Al Siraat College is to connect our school community with one another in meaningful ways and, more importantly, connect them with the musallah.

Islamic Storytime was initially launched as a grassroots approach to connecting the youngest members of our community with the masjid, instilling a love for our faith, our values, forming those first *Sunnah* habits, and forging those first friendships before *big school*.

There are many benefits to making the musallah or masjid the centre of the community; The place where we pray, learn, socialise, celebrate, grieve, grow and connect.

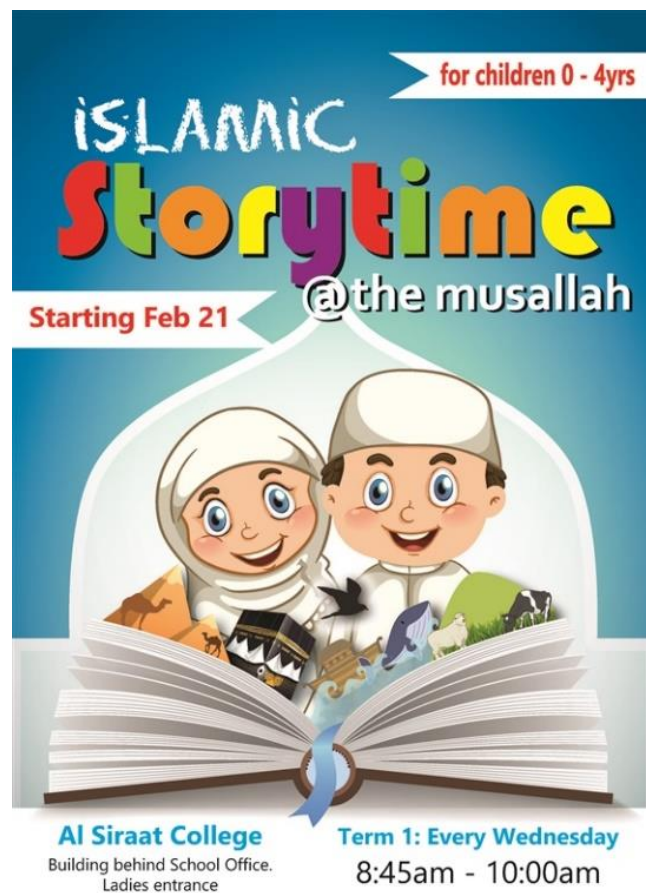
It is early in the morning and curious little feet are walking into the Musallah of Al Siraat College. Books and toys fill a chest along the back wall, matts lined in a circle, arts and craft activities for little fingers, bubbles, songs and stories with an Islamic twist: Welcome to Islamic Storytime @ The Musallah. The ad reads, "We welcome you and your bubs to use this space to connect through crafts and free play, and forge friendships with other mums within our College. We aim to further strengthen our school community and make the Musallah a familiar place for our younger children."

In October of 2017 Al Siraat College hosted their very first Islamic Storytime session with over twenty small children, between the ages 0 – 4 years, together with their mums. Session times were scheduled right after drop off times, early in the morning, so mums could bring along their youngest children once a week, after dropping off older children.

Islamic Storytime, from its early days, has always been a collective effort, built through the support of parent volunteers, passionate teachers, enthusiastic storytellers, who each worked together in launching this program with a shared vision.

Despite early teething stages the program is today such an incredible success. It draws mums and bubs not only from the school community but also from the broader community within the region.

Islamic Storytime very quickly became a flagship program for Al Siraat College through which now various events are celebrated like Eid and Neighbour Day and a sting of workshops were hosted including Peaceful Parenting workshops and how to prepare Healthy Lunchboxes. It was also a brilliant opportunity to any prospective new parents to engage with the Al Siraat College community before their child was even old enough to attend school.



## Islamic Storytime: Eid Celebration

The Islamic Storytime Eid Celebration was a wonderful success with over almost 50 mums and bubs attending, with the little ones dressed in their beautiful Eid clothes.

We sang our trade mark Salaam song, read our stories, had plenty of bubbles and made our eid cards for our families as our art and craft activity for the day. We shared a wonderful morning tea altogether in the Islamic Centre and ended the day with a jumping castle set up for the little ones.

We would like to thank the Department of Premier & Cabinet for their funding support which went towards our jumping castle and catering. SubhanAllah so many mums also brought a plate to share.



## Islamic Storytime Celebrates Harmony Day 2018

Mums and bubs from our community had a wonderful session celebrating Harmony Day.

Children arrived in their traditional clothing or fancy shmancy clothing to celebrate the day. We shared stories and songs, had face painting for the kids and henna art for mums, plenty of balloons and bubbles, good food and good company.



## Islamic Storytime Celebrates Neighbour Day 2018

Islamic Storytime celebrated National Neighbour Day (25 March) with a well-deserved morning tea for mums sponsored by LendLease . It was another wonderful Islamic Storytime session as we wrap up Term 1.

Being neighbourly is sunnah and we took the opportunity to talk about showing respect, being helpful and courteous to our neighbours and reading a story to our children about "being helpful to others."

Alhamdulillah, we have a new series of books on Islamic values available which we have started with today. As of next term, we will focus on a new value each week, inShaAllah, as a part of our Islamic Storytime program.



### Islamic Storytime Contributes to Time Capsule 2040 (2018)

Islamic Storytime contributed to the City of Whittlesea's "Time Capsule" which is due to be reopened in 2040. The Children's names and ages were included in the children's artwork which will be digitally stored for decades.

Islamic Storytime continues to be a popular program for mums & bubs both from within our school community and the local community, now held every Friday morning during the school term starting 8.30am.

Contributions to the time capsule included letters, poems, stories and artwork.

## Islamic Storytime Excursion: Strawberry Farm 2018



30 November 2018

Our mums & bubs group of 40 people had our very first excursion to a strawberry farm and orchard in Bacchus Marsh.

This Islamic Storytime Mums & Bubs Group initiative was proudly supported by the City of Whittlesea's "Sustainability Outreach Whittlesea (SOW)", a City of Whittlesea initiative.

The children got to watch a film on the hour long trip using one of our comfortable school buses driven by Br. Shukran. We had a picnic at a nearby park and everyone got to take plenty of fresh and ripe strawberries home.

We look forward to organising more of these excursion for our Islamic Storytime guests.