



# THE ART OF KNOWING

LESSON THREE

**"I'M JUST A ROCK"**

Created by The Art of Knowing Collaborative  Arshad I. Ali, Ebtissam Oraby, Samuel Burmester

[www.ArtOfKnowingCurriculum.com](http://www.ArtOfKnowingCurriculum.com)



## OBJECTIVES

- ◇ To reflect on the concept of life as more than physical
- ◇ To relate to and think from the perspectives of things around us

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

- ◇ Materials from Alive/Not Alive
- ◇ Copies of the Poem "I am Just a Rock"
- ◇ Student Journaling Materials

## LESSON OVERVIEW

- ◇ Lead in: Revisit Alive/ Not Alive
- ◇ Extend thinking: "I am Just a Rock" reading and discussion
- ◇ Follow up Activity: I am Just a \_\_\_\_\_

## WARM- UP

Revisit the Alive/ Not Alive activity from lesson 2

Have students take a few minutes to independently think about the following reflection questions:

- What makes something alive or not alive?
- What responsibilities does it put on us if something is alive? Is this different

### Discuss:

- Students share their criteria for what makes something alive or not alive. List responses on a board or poster.
- Once the list is complete, engage students in exploring their responsibilities toward things/beings that are alive and not alive?

## ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION

Revisit the first part of the story of Hayy from last class before telling part two

## SECOND READING OF HAYY

### ASK DURING AND AFTER READING:

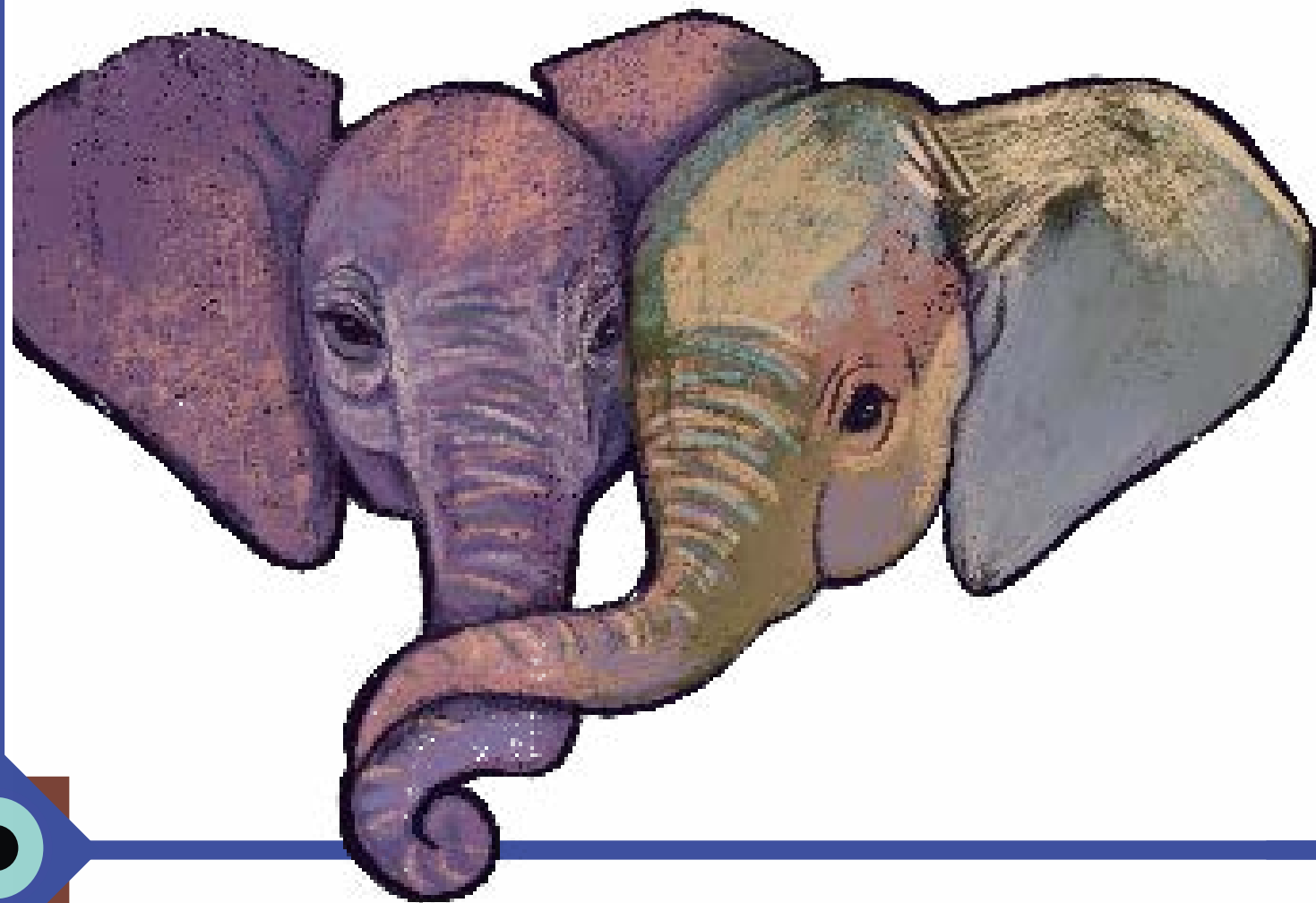
- What conclusion does Hayy have when studying animals and creation around him?
- What does Hayy learn from animals, stars, etc?
- How did Hayy think of the universe as one being ?
- Why does Hayy make sure to plant the seed after eating a fruit? Why does he decide not to eat meat so often?
- How does Hayy's understanding shape his relationship with his environment and the way he used his knowledge, tools, and power? [discuss the difference between: mastering/utilizing vs. being responsible for the environment]

CAN YOU THINK OF STORIES FROM YOUR TRADITION THAT TALK ABOUT ROCKS, TREES, MOUNTAINS, PLANTS, OR OTHER THINGS WE DON'T NORMALLY THINK OF AS BEING ALIVE, AS BEING ALIVE?

## "I AM JUST A ROCK"

Introduce the activity:

We are going to keep thinking about what makes something alive or not alive and even if there are things that are somewhere in between alive and not alive. We will read the poem I'm just a rock. While you listen, think and take notes about if the rock and the tree in the poem are alive or not alive (or something else) based on the lists we made or other thoughts you have.



I am just a rock  
And everyday I sit and watch the sky  
I sleep here in the sun and rain  
And do not question why  
I don't want to be a bird  
'cause us rocks were never meant to fly  
But you can sit and rest on me  
When you pass by

Alhamdulillah, alhamdulillah, I'm a rock  
And that is all Allah asks of me  
Alhamdulillah, alhamdulillah, I'm a Muslim  
And there's nothing else I'd rather be

I am just a tree  
And this is the only life I'll ever know  
I bow my boughs in worship  
Whenever I feel the wind blow  
And my purpose in life  
Is to grow when Allah says grow  
And be a home for the birds and shade  
For folks below

Alhamdulillah, alhamdulillah, I'm a tree  
And that is all Allah asks of me  
Alhamdulillah, alhamdulillah, I'm a Muslim  
And there's nothing else I'd rather be

I am just a person  
And my life is full of opportunity  
I can travel through the world  
Over land and over sea  
But will I choose the path of Truth  
Or a path to misguide me?  
Sometimes I wish I had a simple life  
Just like a rock or a tree

But alhamdulillah, alhamdulillah, I'm a person  
And Allah has given me a choice that's free  
So, alhamdulillah, I choose to be a Muslim  
And there's nothing else I'd rather be

## CLOSING

### "I'M JUST A ..."

Students choose an object or thing from the alive/not alive activity and write one stanza (at least 4 lines; but more is okay too!) of a poem about that object or thing in the style of I'm just a rock. Encourage students to include illustrations as a part of their poem.

Prompt: What you would be thinking and doing if you were that thing? Also think of how you would like to be treated if you were that thing. Include those details in your poem!

Students who are comfortable can share poems and explain their reasoning.

For additional lesson plans and more information please visit [www.artofknowingcurriculum.com](http://www.artofknowingcurriculum.com)

#### WHAT IS THE ART OF KNOWING?

The Art of Knowing Curriculum is designed as a supplement to elementary science education. It intentionally places Muslim Ways of Knowing at the center of science learning. It is designed to engage students in exploring "how we come to know" by asking questions about when, where, and why we use various ways of knowing through stories, art, and discussion. We offer suggestions for how to incorporate the curriculum as a once-weekly class, but the curriculum and other resources can be taken up in a variety of ways that suit the needs of your community.

#### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

We developed a curriculum that bridges science pedagogy and Muslim Ways of Knowing.

Through this research and teaching project, we explore the possibilities of teaching science through a non-western perspective and creating a space for young people to imagine possible futures through thinking not only about what is taught, but also about the teaching practices, activities, and artifacts in the classroom. Through engaging with art and storywork, we produced a curriculum that draws from classical Muslim systems of knowledge. We engage pre-colonial literature from the Muslim world to explore how young people come to know and how they relate to, and act on, what they know.

Our larger research project aims to open the space for interdisciplinary scholarship that focuses on inclusive STEAM education; offer non-Eurocentric approaches to science education; and, appreciate multiple, and culturally-situated, ways of understanding science.

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The Art of Knowing Curriculum was developed in conversation with Ahmed Ghassab, and Mary Catherine Flynn while teaching at the MEDINA MONTESSORI SCHOOL in Falls Church, Virginia

#### ART DIRECTION & ILLUSTRATION

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#### SUGGESTED CITATION

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