



Ask our children:

1. Can a Muslim have a friend who is not a Muslim?
2. Why is it important to have the right friends?

Now tell them the story:

There was once a girl named Faatimah who lived in a block of flats. Faatimah had no brothers and sisters, but because she had so many neighbours in all the different flats, she was never bored. She loved going from flat-to-flat, playing with all her friends. There was Hassaanah, and Saalihah, and Humairah and Aakifah and so many others!

One day, during the holidays, Faatimah was bored. All her normal friends were gone on holiday with their parents, leaving Faatimah with no one to play with. Faatimah did not know what do to, so she came out from the flat and began to walk through the building. As she came to the courtyard with the washing lines, she saw three girls who all seemed to be her age. However, she had never spoken to them or played with them before.

The girls saw her and were very friendly. One of them called her and said, "Aren't you Faatimah? My name is Mary, and this is Sunita. Come and play with us." Faatimah had never heard names like Mary and Sunita before, so she asked them, "Are you Muslims like me, because Mary and Sunita don't sound like Muslim names!" As Faatimah asked, they explained to her that they were not Muslims. Mary was a Christian,

and Sunita was a Hindu.

They both went to the same school, and that was how they became friends.

Faatimah spent the rest of the day playing with her new friends. They played hopscotch, they jumped rope and also played hide and seek. Finally, around 'Asr time, Faatimah went back to her flat.

Over the next few days, Faatimah continued playing with her new friends and even went to play in their flats. But there were some things that made her feel very uncomfortable. When she went to Sunita's flat, she saw idols inside, and when she went to Mary's flat, she saw a big, wooden cross hanging on the wall.

Seeing the idols and the cross, Faatimah's heart felt wrong, and she felt like she should not be there.

Faatimah knew, in her little heart, that these friends were not good for her, but because she was bored, she carried on playing with them.

Finally, a few days later, Faatimah's uncle came to her flat to visit. Faatimah was very excited that he was visiting with his family because she had not seen her cousins in such a long time. After her uncle came, and they had all enjoyed the tea and desserts, her uncle asked her, "So Faatimah, tell me how many friends do you have!" Faatimah replied, "My normal friends are Hassaanah, and Saalihah, and Humairah and Aakifah!

But they are on holiday, so now I have new friends. Their names are Sunita and Mary. Sunita and Mary are not Muslims, but they are nice to play with."

Faatimah's uncle looked at her and said, "Faatimah! There is something very important that you must understand. A Muslim must not have friends who are non-Muslims. If you meet a non-Muslim, then you must be polite and must have good manners. You must also be kind. But you must never become friends with a non-Muslim.

You must never go to their house to play, or call them to your house, or tell them your secrets, or like them in your heart. That is not allowed."

Faatimah thought about this and then asked, "But why not?" Her uncle said, "As Muslims, we believe that Allah Ta'ala created us. He made us strong and intelligent, and He gave us everything that we enjoy. We understand that we must worship only Allah Ta'ala, and we must do whatever He tells us. However, Christians and Hindus do not worship Allah Ta'ala. Hindus worship idols, and Christians worship Nabi 'Isa ('alaihi salaam) who they say is the son

of Allah Ta'ala and was killed on a cross.”

Faatimah replied, “Yes! I saw the idols in Sunita’s house, and the cross in Mary’s house. In my heart, I knew I shouldn’t be there! I felt that Allah Ta’ala will be angry with me!” Her uncle continued, “Allah Ta’ala does not like the Christians and Hindus because they do not want to worship Him alone and accept Nabi Muhammad (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) as His prophet. As Muslims, we cannot be friends with people who Allah Ta’ala dislikes and is angry with. Do you understand now?”

Faatimah answered, “Yes! I understand! I must only be friends with Muslims, not non-Muslims!” Then, she asked her uncle, “What must I do now?” Her uncle said, “You must speak to these girls nicely, and you must be kind to them. You can even share your sweets with them! But you must not be friends with them, go to their house, or call them to your house.”

Faatimah had listened carefully to her uncle, and she knew that what he said was right. She wanted to make Allah Ta’ala and Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) happy, and so she tried to make sure that she only had Muslim friends.

Lessons:

1. We must be kind and good to all people, whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims.
2. A Muslim must only have Muslim friends. A Muslim must not have friends who are not Muslims.

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