

OUR SINGAPORE:

ONE PEOPLE, MANY CULTURES.

Friday prayers
at Sultan Mosque

Muslim men are expected to go to the mosque for Friday prayers. The prayers follow fixed movements taught by the Prophet Muhammad, who received the spiritual revelations known as the Quran around 1,400 years ago. Women may also join the prayer, but they go to a separate section of the mosque. Besides the Friday prayers, most Muslims are taught to pray five times a day.

Calligraphy in the Arabic language is the most common decoration inside mosques. At the centre is the Arabic word "Allah", which means God. Arabic has a special place in Islam as it's the language of the Quran, Muslims' holy book.

The mihrab is a niche in the wall of the mosque indicating the direction of Mecca. When Muslims pray, they face Mecca, their holiest city. Mecca is also the destination for the important pilgrimage called haj.

The session is led by a prayer and worship leader called an imam.

The star and crescent is a common symbol of Islam. It is featured on the flags of some countries in the Muslim world, such as Malaysia, Pakistan and Mauritania. However, the symbol was initially used by a variety of people ranging from the Greeks to the Persians before being associated with Islam.

Worshippers come into the mosque barefoot. They must also perform wudu, a ritual washing, before they pray. They wash their faces, arms, head and feet in a special way to ensure their body is cleansed before performing their prayers. Every mosque has a washing area outside the hall for this purpose, called an ablution centre.

Picture and research: ADELINE ONG

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