

A CHEERFUL FACE

by Umm Ahmad

Abu Dharr, radiyAllahu ahnu, reported: The Prophet, sallallahu alayhi salam, said to me, "Do not belittle any good deed, even your meeting your brother with a cheerful face." (Muslim)

Commentary (from '100 Ahadeeth about Islamic Manners' by Darussalam): Every deed approved by the Shariah is considered good and rewarding. No matter how seemingly small people may consider it, it must not be looked at from a highbrow angle. Even to meet people cheerfully is one of the Islamic virtues, though it may appear quite insignificant to some people.

Activities

0-2 years - Imitation

Babies are good at imitation so smile at your babies often. Look into those adorable eyes and greet him/her with a smiling happy face.

3-5 years – Smile/Frown Face Experiment

1. Discuss hadeeth according to child's level.
2. Ask child to look at mummy's smiling face: "Do you like it when mummy smiles at you? Why?"
3. Now look at mummy's frowning face: "Do you like it when mummy frowns at you? Why?"
4. Ask child to show you his/her smiling happy face. Comment on the features of a happy smiling face, eg. "When you smile I can see your mouth curving up..." etc.
5. Ask child to show you his/her frowning grumpy face. Comment on the features of a frowning face.
6. Have a mirror handy. Ask your child to do a happy face again and watch the reflection in the mirror. Then do a frowning face. Ask which face your child prefers – the smiling or frowning face? Can he/she give a reason?
7. Ask your child these questions:
Do you think other people would like your smiling or frowning face?
Why?
Which face should we show to people when we meet them? Why?
8. Find some Muslims to show our smiling faces to.

9-12 years (and older) – Survey

1. Discuss hadeeth according to child's level.
2. Go to a market place, street, shops or somewhere where you'll see many Muslims that you don't know (eg. Go with mum when she's shopping).
3. Smile and give salams to a Muslim and record his/her reaction on the worksheet. Record your reaction/how you felt. Do this with at least 9 more Muslims.
4. Tally the results – how many smiled, frowned, grunted, gave no reaction etc.
5. Draw a column and a pie graph to chart the results.
6. From the results, what can you say about meeting or greeting Muslims with a cheerful face?
Is it a true representation? Why/Why not?
Do you need to get a larger sample of people?
What would happen if you tried it on 10 more people?
7. Summarise your feelings to people's reactions to your cheerful greeting.
8. Write a report on why it is important to meet your brother/sister with a cheerful face?

Parents

This is a reminder to myself as well.

How often is it that when we feel tired or upset that we frown at everyone? Or that we only reserve our smiles for people we especially like, or worst, non-Muslims whom we panda to?

The hadeeth is clear that even the simplest of actions such as a smiling face is counted as a good deed. Subhanallah, if we smiled at all our sisters each day think of all the hasana we will be getting, insha Allah!

It takes no effort at all but the effect is immediate. When we smile we feel better and the person whom we smiled at feels better too.

I remember my psychologist tutor drawing a round circle with 2 dots for eyes and a big curve of a smile. She asked us what's our reaction to this picture – and sure enough it drew smiles from everyone. She said exactly that, when you smile, people smile back. It has a psychological effect on everyone.

I guess as parents we need to have this behaviour as part of our character, then modeling it to children becomes more natural.

My aim, from today insha Allah, is to smile at all my sisters in Islam – those whom I know and those whom I do not know. Also when I see my child smiling at others I will provide positive reinforcement by saying to him, "I like the way you smiled at" or when he smiles at me I will say, "I like the way you smiled at me. It makes me feel happy."