

A photograph of Imam Warith Deen Muhammad is the central focus. He is an older man with a grey beard, wearing a white kufi and a dark suit. He is looking upwards and to the right with a thoughtful expression, holding an open book (the Quran) in front of him. The background is dark with many small, out-of-focus golden lights, creating a starry or night sky effect. A large, thin green L-shaped graphic element is overlaid on the left side of the image, framing the text below.

# THE LEGACY OF IMAM WARITH DEEN MOHAMMAD

**REVIVE PACK**

LESSONS | QURAN & HADITH REFERENCES | ACTIVITIES | RESOURCES



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# Using this Revive Packet



In honor of Black History Month (BHM), this month's Revive packet is focused on a pivotal Black Muslim leader in American society, ***Imam Warith Deen Muhammad (WDM)***.

While this revive packet can be utilized throughout the year, we have included a brief synopsis of BHM for educational purposes. An appendix is also included on the development of the Nation of Islam (NOI) until WDM's leadership. This appendix is more suitable for older groups. It can be utilized to give context to WDM's legacy, initiate discussions on race relations in our community and society, and provide insight into the experience that WDM extended and applied in his life-long service to the Muslim American society at large.



## Black History Month

noun

is a month-long recognition of Black Americans, their contributions, and their critical role in the founding and shaping of the United States of America.

Black History is American history. First celebrated as a week-long recognition, BHM was founded by historian Carter G. Woodson and the prominent minister Jesse E. Moorland to promote achievements made by Black Americans and encourage the teaching of Black history in American schools. February was chosen due to its inclusion of the birthdays of President Abraham Lincoln and renowned abolitionist Frederick Douglas. '

As the civil rights movement grew in the 1960s, this week became BHM across college and university campuses. In 1976, BHM was officially recognized by President Gerald Ford, who urged Americans to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history."

Each year, BHM is assigned a theme by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH); last year's theme was Black Resistance, meant to honor those whose resistance led to justice and freedom for Black Americans, and this year's theme is African Americans and the Arts.



# Imam Warith Deen Mohammad



## **IMAM WARITH DEEN MOHAMMAD (10/30/1933 - 09/09/2008)**

Imam Warith Deen Mohammed was born as Wallace D. Mohammed, as the seventh child of Elijah and Clara Muhammad. He was a Black American Muslim theologian, philosopher, and community leader. He was instrumental in reforming the Nation of Islam after the death of his father. Imam Warith Deen Mohammad returned to Allah (swt) on September 9th, 2008. He left behind a rich legacy that has shaped the Muslim community for decades to come.



## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Influential Black American Muslim theologian, philosopher, and community leader
- Upon his father's passing in 1975, he was voted leader of the Nation of Islam and immediately reformed the organization, saying, "That which is consistent with the Qur'an we will keep, and that which is not, we will let go."
- Published over 25 books on religion and society
- Led the largest delegation of Muslim Americans in history to Hajj in 1977
- Encouraged civic engagement, calling his supporters to vote in elections by holding up the American flag and establishing New World Patriotism Day in 1977

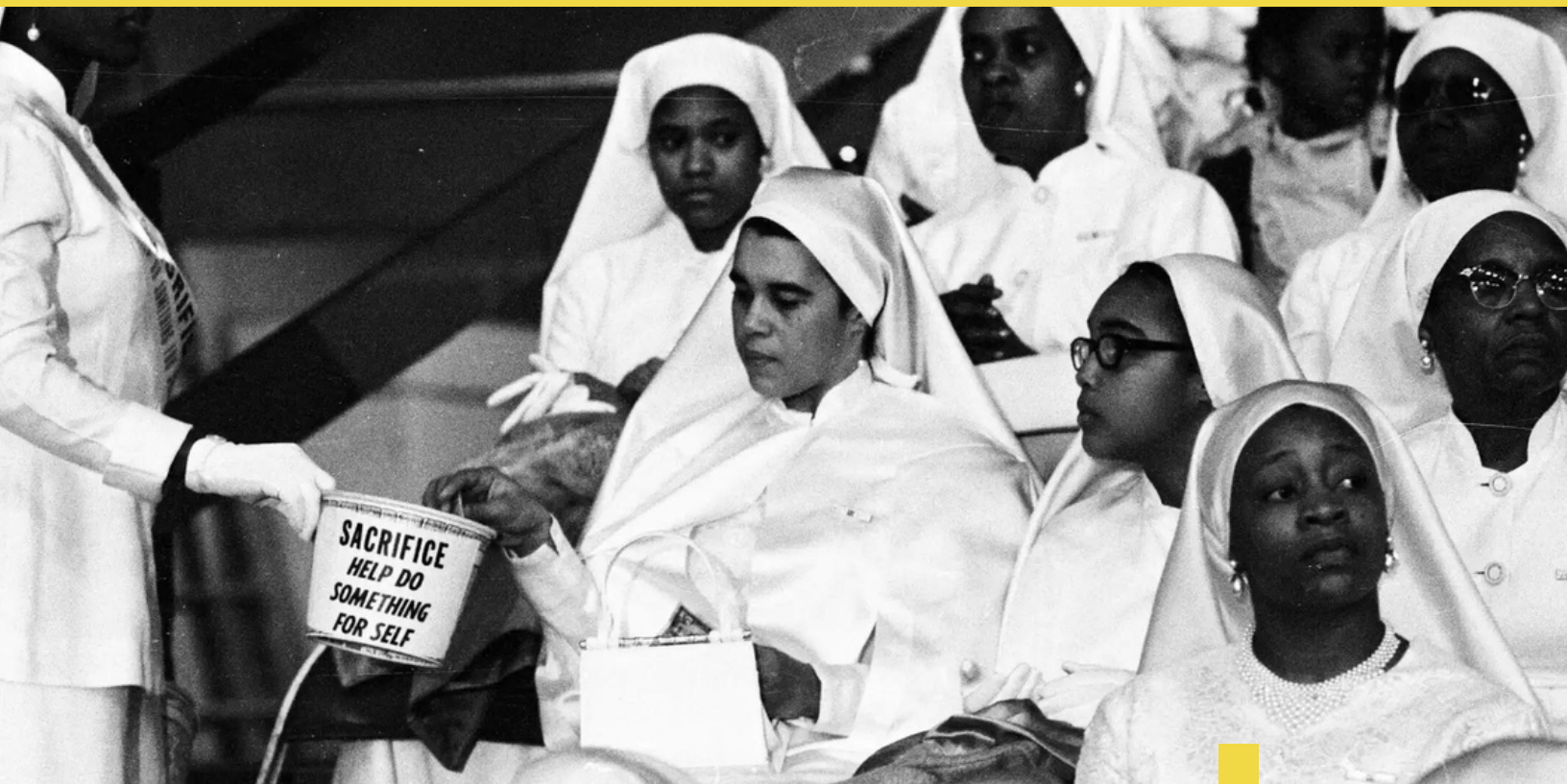
- Initiated The Committee to Remove All Racial Images of Divine (CRAID) in 1978 – energizing significant dialogue among Christian and Muslim leadership regarding the effects of racial images in worship, sparking the removal of Caucasian-centered religious imagery from numerous churches.
- For the first time in American history, WDM took a delegation of 10,000 Muslims to the Nation's capital for the first Muslim Political Convention in 1984.
- The first Muslim to offer the Invocation in the United States Senate in 1992
- Served as leader of the Parliament of the World's Religions in 1995
- The only African American and Muslim to speak from the pulpit of the Vatican by invitation of Pope John Paul II in 1999.



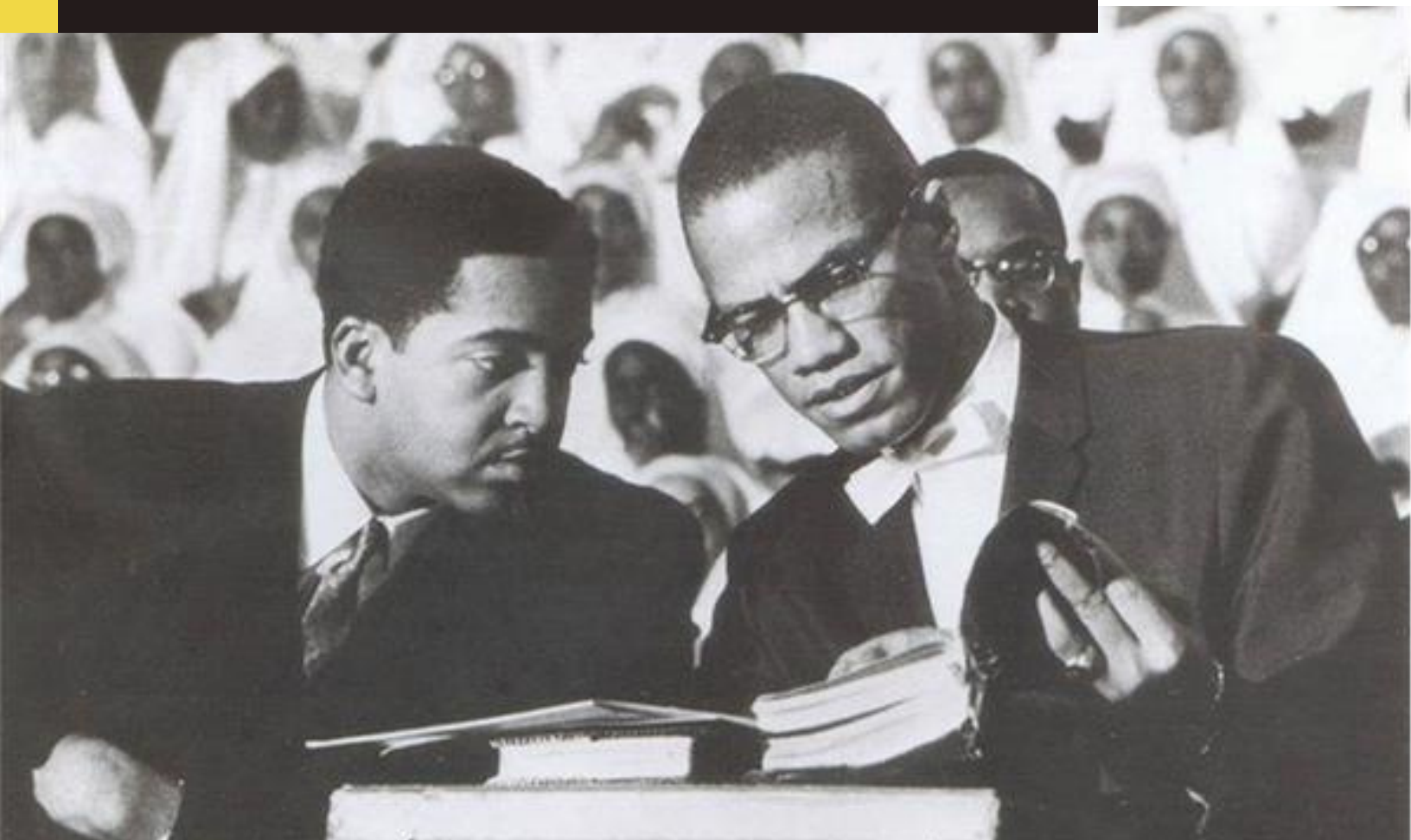


## BELIEFS:

- Believed in the guidance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, spurring his reformation of the NOI and subsequent organizations.
- Viewed the Qur'an as the verifiable authority that human identity comes from Allah (swt) and human beings were created in excellence.
- Championed the cause of women, establishing the Committee to Enhance the Role of Women in Society (CERWIS) to address the larger social issues that hindered the elevation of women in society.
- Stressed the importance of moral behavior, family life, education, and economic stability through do-for-self ownership and collective economics.
- Worked to establish Muslim life in America and freedom, justice, and equality for all peoples.
- Emphasized there was no contradiction between living a Muslim life and that of an American citizen.
- Traveled America and the world promoting interfaith cooperation for the common good of all so that humanity might achieve human excellence.



# WARITH DEEN MOHAMMAD'S NOI LEADERSHIP AND TRAJECTORY:



At a time when internal fragmentation was increasing in the Nation of Islam (NOI), Elijah Muhammad died in 1975, and his son, Wallace Deen (known as Warith Deen Muhammad - WDM), took leadership and quickly worked to reform the NOI.

Heavily influenced by both Malcolm X and the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah, WDM attempted to reform the NOI by discarding the racial supremacism and black nationalist ideology in addition to publicly renouncing the NOI's original religious ideology, attributing prophethood to Elijah Muhammad and reforming the organization's foundations to align with the Qur'an and Sunnah.

He initially renamed the NOI as the World Community of al-Islam in the West in 1976, changing it to the American Muslim Mission in 1981 (which he dissolved and from which he resigned in 1985), and finally, the American Society of Muslims in 1988.



# WARITH DEEN MOHAMMAD'S NOI LEADERSHIP AND TRAJECTORY:



WDM's attempt to reform, rebrand, and reposition the NOI ultimately led to a major split in the organization, and, in effect, WDM's organization and its members became a splinter group of the NOI. During this time of change, both John Muhammad, Elijah Muhammad's brother, and Silis Muhammad, a NOI leader, formed two new organizations, both called the Nation of Islam, that continued the teachings of Elijah Muhammad.

Although WDM reconstituted the original NOI movement, it was clear there were strong, large bases in both camps. As a result, Farrakhan, backed by such a base, led a successful effort to revive the movement with its original ideology, resurrecting the NOI in its third iteration under the namesake in 1977.

# WARITH DEEN MOHAMMAD'S NOI LEADERSHIP AND TRAJECTORY:



Meanwhile, WDM continued efforts to maintain what was now an informal movement based on orthodox Islam while working to retain the original NOI's assets; however, in 2003, Deen resigned from the leadership of the American Society of Muslims and established a separate organization, The Mosque Cares, that continues today.

Despite the informal nature of the movement's continuation under WDM's leadership, as of 2002 the numbers of the American Society of Muslims were estimated at nearly 2.5 million people "with a percentage of immigrant and naturalized American citizens from various Muslim ethnic peoples, European Americans, and a majority of African Americans representing five generations since the earliest history of Elijah Mohammed's leadership (1933) and in some cases before."

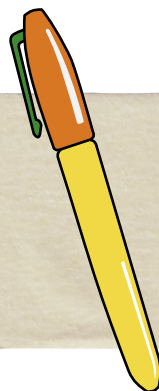
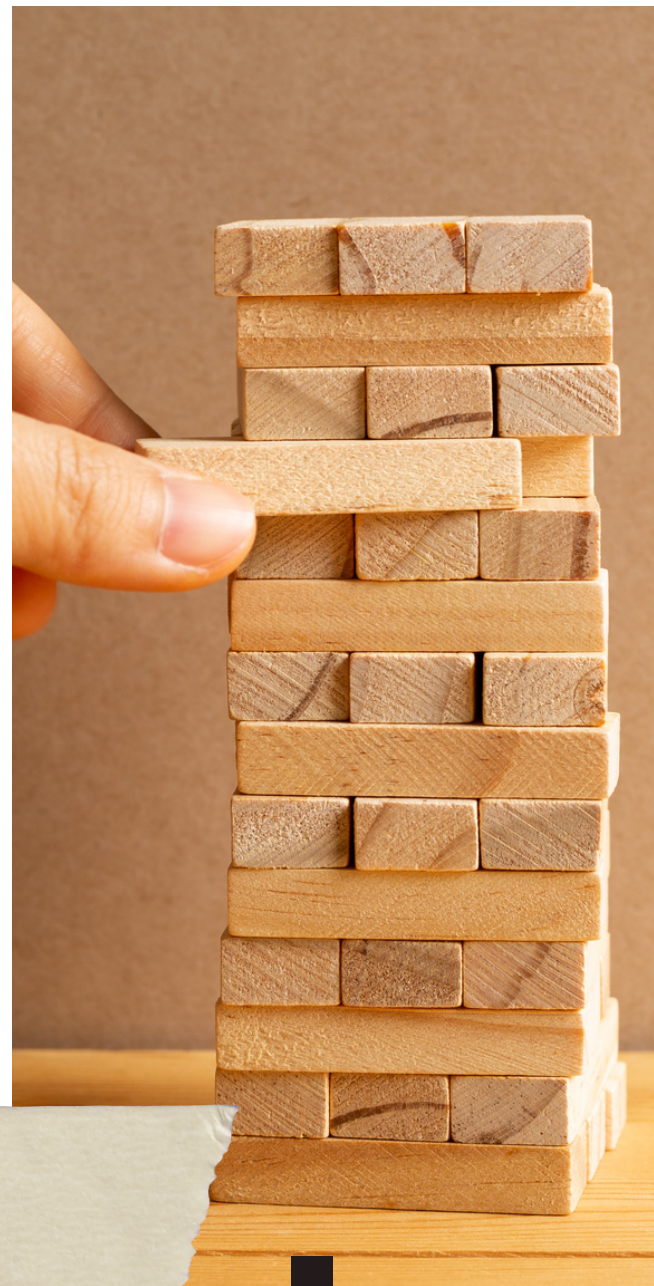


## Interactive activities demonstrating lessons from Warith Deen Mohammad's legacy

### Building Blocks to Achieve Excellence

1

- **OBJECTIVE:** To demonstrate the importance of foundational concepts Warith Deen Mohammad understood were important to reach human excellence and achieve success in this life and the Hereafter. It provides a forum for participants to brainstorm these foundations and visualize how one's life and the broader society may crumble if not built upon these needs and values.
- **MATERIALS NEEDED:**
  - Jenga blocks, cardboard building blocks, or plastic cups (enough for each small group to build a tower)
  - Tape or stickers to write on
  - Markers that can write on the tape or stickers without coming off





## INSTRUCTIONS:

- Instruct each group to reflect on the values, actions, and services that Warith Deen Mohammad identified as essential to achieving human excellence and success in this life and the Hereafter.
- For younger groups, have a share-out of these values, actions, and services and give a talk about the Qur'anic connections and Hadiths that relate to each of them. For older groups, instruct them to find these connections themselves.
- Instruct each group to write the values, actions, and services foundational to a healthy individual, community, and society on pieces of tape and stick them on the blocks or cups.
- Then, instruct the group to build the foundation for their pyramid or tower with those blocks or cups.
- Have each group add what comes out of these foundational concepts on pieces of tape and stick them on blocks or cups to build a large tower or pyramid vertically (e.g., confidence, emotional intelligence, financial freedom, thriving communities, healthy families, lower rates of depression, etc.)
- Once each group has built their pyramid or tower, instruct them to remove a foundational block or cup individually.
- Ask each group how many blocks or cups were removed from the foundation until their whole tower or pyramid fell.
- Open the discussion for reflections and tie it together with a message about building our lives, communities, and societies from the major lessons and principles we learn from Allah's (swt) guidance.

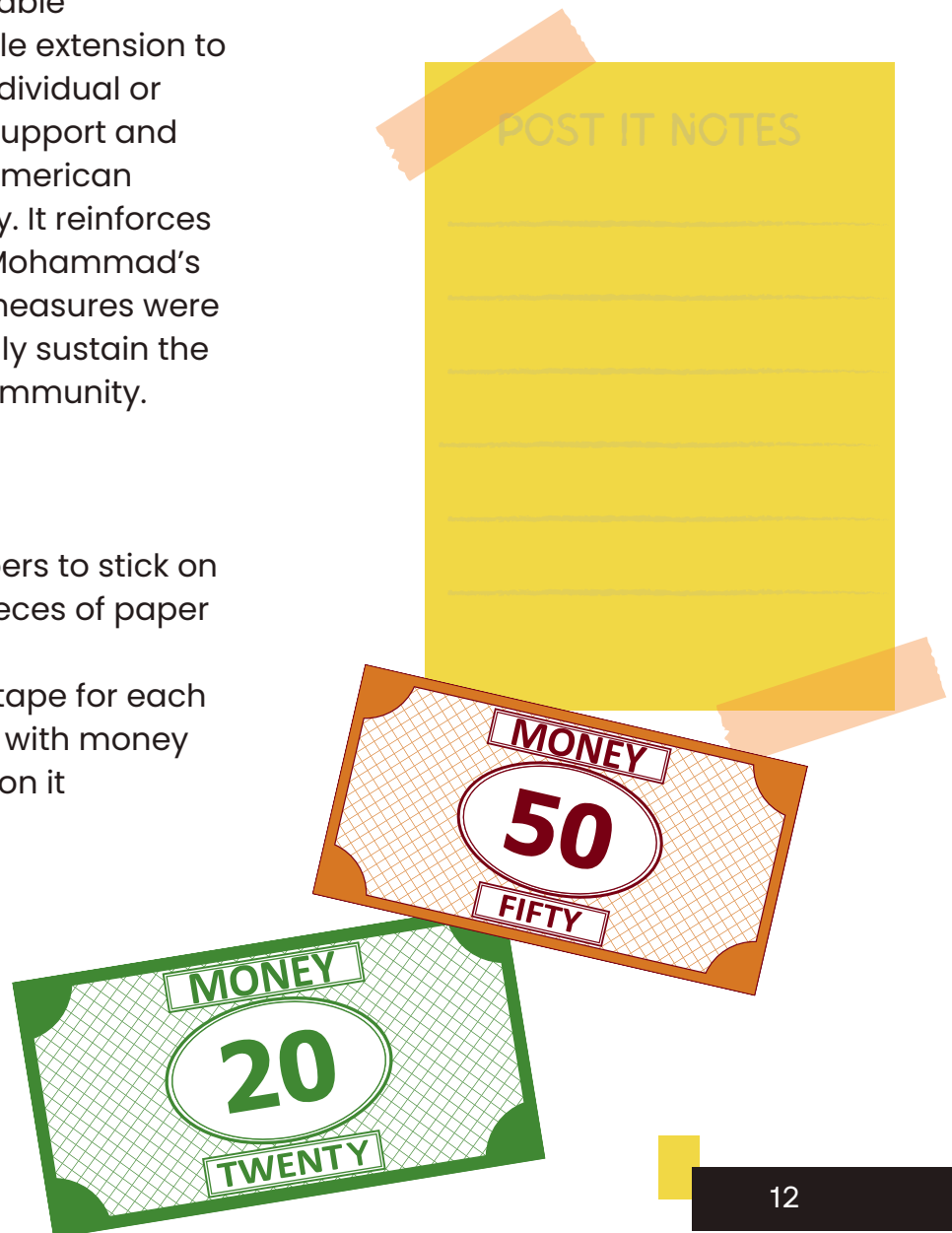




## Where Does Our Collective Financial Power Go? Where Does Our Money Go?

2

- **OBJECTIVE:** Raise awareness about where we spend our money as a community. Initiating discussion and reflection on sustainable communities. Possible extension to take steps toward individual or collective action to support and sustain the Muslim American community internally. It reinforces Imam Warith Deen Mohammad's legacy of ensuring measures were taken to economically sustain the Muslim American community.
- **MATERIALS NEEDED:**
  - Large Post-It papers to stick on walls (or large pieces of paper taped on walls)
  - Play money and tape for each group or post-its with money amounts written on it





## 2

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Hang large Post-It papers around the room. You can pre-label these papers as a facilitator, or you can open them up to the group to brainstorm and label these papers with the names of brands, companies, and stores the group spends money at daily, weekly, and/or monthly.
- Pass out the fake money and tape or small post-it notes.
- Ask each individual to take the time to reflect or review how much money they or their family spends at each brand, company, or store and to place the fake money or post-it notes on the corresponding large papers around the room.
- Add up the money spent in each place and reflect as a group as to whether more money is being spent to support brands, companies, and stores outside of the Muslim community vs. inside both the local and Muslim community.
- Facilitator's notes: This activity can be extended into a conversation or lesson on the importance of supporting and sustaining our local and broader Muslim community economically, including the Waqf system, highlighting local Muslim businesses and services, brainstorming ways to create more avenues of collective economic freedom in different ways and the power of boycotting brands and companies that do not align with specific values or ideals. This topic also brings up the themes of intentional collective work and courage for the sake of a higher mission vs. convenience.
- Supplemental Resource:  
<https://www.quranreading.com/blog/verses-of-quran-that-define-structure-of-an-islamic-society/>





## Courageous Stance Activity

### 3

- **OBJECTIVE:** Gives real-life examples of daily scenarios that participants may face in their lives and provides a forum for participants to support one another in navigating situations that require a courageous stance. It relates to Warith Deen Mohammad's legacy of being fearless in his greater mission, guided by the Qur'an and Sunnah despite the hardships he endured.



- **INSTRUCTIONS:**
  - Open up the topic of Courage with reflection questions (examples below).
  - Either prepare scenarios ahead of time, printed on sheets of paper, or have each participant write out a real-life scenario they brainstormed or have witnessed/experienced that required courage and place the pieces of paper with the scenarios into a container.
  - Break the participants into small groups and have each group draw three to five scenarios randomly from the container.
  - Give each group time to read, discuss, and come up with solutions to each scenario.
  - Have each small group choose one scenario they discussed and create a skit with it to present to the whole group after the small group discussion time.
  - After each group presents, open it up for broader reflection and guidance.



## 3

### Example Reflection Questions:

- Who is the most courageous person you know personally? Why do you think they're brave, and what challenges you about them?
- I'll ask some questions, and you rate the level of courage it takes for you by holding up 1-10 fingers. 1 for "Totally comfortable" and 10 for "No way, not me!"
- How much courage to ... (Stop and talk briefly after each one.)
- talk to someone your age you don't know?
- talk to a teacher about something you don't understand?
- talk to a friend about Islam?
- What's the most courage-over-comfort thing you've done in the last month? How did you grow through that experience?







## Collage of Courage

4

- **OBJECTIVE:** To encourage participants to envision what courage means through artistic expression. Initiates reflection and group discussion on what it means to be courageous and to stand up for Truth, as Warith Deen Mohammad's legacy exemplifies.
- **MATERIALS NEEDED:** To encourage participants to envision what courage means through artistic expression. Initiates reflection and group discussion on what it means to be courageous and to stand up for Truth, as Warith Deen Mohammad's legacy exemplifies.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:**
  - Depending on the size of the group you can do this as an individual or small group activity. Pass out the magazines/newspapers and small poster boards to each individual or group with scissors (or they can tear with their hands for artistic effect) and glue as needed.
  - Have the group cut or tear out words, phrases, and images to create a collage of what courage means to them. This can be a creative time where they create their own words, phrases, and images by doing a collage style utilizing the materials given.
  - Ask each individual or group to share as desired and open the floor for reflection and conversation.
  - Conclude the conversation with a talk on being courageous and give examples from the Qur'an and Sunnah relating it to your participant's age group and their lived experiences.





## 4

### APPLICATION EXTENSIONS:

- Organize phone bank/voter registration for the upcoming election - related to Imam Warith Deen Mohammad's belief to be civically engaged. Contact MAS PACE to conduct a Get Out the Muslim Vote campaign!
- Waqf Program Introduction: introduce the MAS Waqf program to your participants, teaching them about the waqf system and tradition leading into a mini "think tank" round to brainstorm routes to Muslim American financial sustainability (individual, local, and societal) - related to Imam Warith Deen Mohammad's life-long pursuit of establishing individual and communal financial literacy and freedom.
- Organized efforts - Organize teach-ins, panels, and/or demonstrations internally or externally to take a courageous stance for justice in your mosque, chapter, or community - related to Warith Deen Mohammad's pursuit of justice and Truth and his belief in the power of civic engagement and community organizing efforts.





## Achieving Excellence in this life and the next

- Ihsan = excellence
- "Allah loves that when one of you accomplishes a work, that he accomplish it with excellence" [Narrated by Al Bayhaqi]
- "Allah has prescribed Ihsan (excellence) in every matter." [Muslim]
- When Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) was asked about the definition of ihsan by Angel Gabriel, he responded "to worship Allah as if you see Him, for even if you do not see Him, He sees you."
- "Verily, Allah has enjoined Ihsan (excellence) with regard to everything. So, when you kill, kill in a good way; when you slaughter, slaughter in a good way; so everyone of you should sharpen his knife, and let the slaughtered animal die comfortably." [Muslim]

## Justice and Equality

- "O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both." [Quran, 4:135]
- "And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance. That you not transgress the balance. And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance." [Quran, 55:7-9]
- We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other)). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. [Quran, 49:13]
- In his final sermon our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor for a non-Arab over an Arab. Neither is the white superior over the black, nor is the black superior over the white -- except by piety."





## Community Care

- “The believers are but brethren, therefore make peace between your brethren and be careful of (your duty to) Allah that mercy may be had on you” [Quran, 49:10]
- “And hold fast by the covenant of Allah all together and be not disunited, and remember the favor of Allah on you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts so by His favor you became brethren; and you were on the brink of a pit of fire...” [Quran, 3:103]
- Narrated Abu Musa: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "A believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts enforce each other." The Prophet (ﷺ) then clasped his hands with the fingers interlaced (while saying that). [Sahih al-Bukhari 2446]





## Understanding the Context within in Which Imam Warith Deen Mohammad Emerged as a Leader: Historical Background on the Nation of Islam (NOI)

The Nation of Islam (NOI) originated in 1930 in Detroit, Michigan, with the founding of the Allah Temple of Islam by Wallace D. Fard, otherwise known as Farad Muhammad among variations of his name as aliases. Although the organization was originally considered insignificant, with some labeling it a “voodoo sect” throughout much of the 1930s, the movement would become one of the wealthiest organizations and best-known Islamic Black nationalist movements in not only America but the world.

Fard’s successor, Elijah Muhammad (formerly Elijah Poole), was considered Fard’s “messenger,” becoming the “Chief Minister,” taking over leadership of the organization in 1934, after which Fard disappeared from both the organization’s leadership and the public eye. Under Elijah Muhammad’s leadership, the organization changed its name from the Allah Temple of Islam to the Nation of Islam (NOI); the first of many times the organization and movement would undergo a rebranding in the effort to attract, maintain, and sustain members and the organization in its various iterations.

During this first era, from 1934-1975, the NOI focused on foundational establishment while growing its membership base and scaling its reach. With a strong focus on self-sufficiency and intentional community efforts, the NOI established the newspaper *The Final Call to Islam*, the first of many publications that would provide employment opportunities and revenue streams for their members and organization.





Having initiated the organization's educational arm through homeschooling, Clara Muhammad, the wife of Elijah Muhammad, founded the first independent private schools for Black Muslim children with the founding of the University of Islam in the early 1930s. In just 30 years, this school system would grow to serve 2,000 students across eight schools in Los Angeles, Atlanta, Philadelphia, and Boston, adding 40 more schools by 1975, providing both centers of training and sources of revenue, strengthening the organization ideologically and financially. The impact, however, was broader as Clara Muhammad's establishment of privatized Islamic educational institutions served as the foundation for the Islamic school system we have today in America, wherein the schools are not only legal, but 150 of an estimated 250 Islamic schools are currently accredited.

What is lesser known about Clara Muhammad is that she carried the vision for the organization forward from 1935-1946 while Elijah Muhammad was hiding from opposition and authorities and during his incarceration as he was subsequently arrested on account of evading the draft of World War II (WWII). Under her leadership, external educational systems were established, and internal support and training systems were founded and expanded upon, such as the Muslim Girls in Training (MGT) program. The MGT was an educational program for women with training based on the ideologies and methodologies of the NOI.





With his release from prison, Elijah Muhammad hurried to establish more avenues of self-sufficiency for the Black community and the NOI specifically, generating more revenue streams, and start setting the foundations for long-term organizational and community sustainability. In the 1940s, Elijah Muhammad was constructing what would be considered the NOI's "empire," founding a system of NOI-run businesses and initiating the acquisition of property with the purchase of farmland in Michigan in 1945. A decade later, the network of educational institutions started by his wife, in addition to the NOI's business ventures and property, would be valued in the millions, which is why the first era under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad and Clara Muhammad, is known as the era of foundational establishment despite the organization's suppression during WWII.

With the rise of charismatic new members in the organization's ranks and the advent of the civil rights movement, the NOI experienced a boom in their 'second era' during the 1950s and '60s. Malcolm X emerged as one of the NOI's most powerful speakers and recruiters. He was released from prison in 1952 and was a dedicated and passionate member of the NOI until his split from the NOI's ideology in 1964. Having influential representatives, such as Malcolm X, when civil rights were at the forefront of national discourse enabled the NOI to gain traction stateside through their sharp critique and primary focus and ideology centered on race relations and systemic injustice.





From the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s, the organization experienced a second membership surge with a new and more militant generation of leadership emerging. The message of Black elevation through radical separatist ideas and criticism of the structures of white oppression resonated widely, ushering the organization into a period of national growth and international reach. However, major splits internally started to occur. By the mid-sixties, the NOI was in more than 60 cities and settlements abroad, including Ghana, Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean. However, this was also the time when individuals and groups started to split off, such as those who began the Five-Percent Nation and, of course, Malcolm X's public denouncement of the NOI's ideologies and conversion to Sunni orthodox Islam in 1964.

Although Malcolm X split from the NOI's ideology, the legacy of his contributions as a representative for the NOI would eventually sustain and revive the movement, the most notable example of which was in the rapidly advancing member Louis Farrakhan, a former cabaret singer who joined the NOI in 1955 as a result of meeting Malcolm X, who in the ranks of national leadership during the organization's 'third era.' With Malcolm X's transition out of the organization and the subsequent internal and external strife as a result of his assassination in 1965, the second era of the NOI came to a close.







The ‘third era’ of the organization was a period of transition, revision, and revival, deepening internal organizational strife. With a robust base in the NOI, Farrakhan became a national spokesman in 1967, further securing a position of authority in the organization and setting the stage for what would come in its future. Despite mounting pressure, the NOI continued expansion and sustainability efforts, such as the opening of a \$2 million mosque and school in Chicago in 1972, still under the ‘supreme’ leadership of Elijah Muhammad. Just as the NOI was bouncing back from the controversies of 1965, there was an increase in violence between members and former members. In 1973, NOI members invaded the Hanafi Muslim Center in Washington, D.C., founded by a former nation leader, and attacked his family, killing his children and leaving his wife paralyzed. Incidents such as these, compounded by Malcolm X’s assassination, caused heightened tensions between the NOI and external Muslim and non-Muslim communities.

Elijah Muhammad died in 1975, and Warith Deen Mohammad emerged as the NOI elected leader, subsequently reforming the movement and its ideology. The account of what happened, as a result of Imam Warith Deen’s efforts and legacy, is above in the section entitled Warith Deen Mohammad’s NOI Leadership and Trajectory.



## RESOURCES:

[Video of Imam Warith Deen Mohammad](#)



# BLACK HISTORY IS AMERICAN HISTORY



GUEST SPEAKER  
IMAM MIKA'IL  
STEWART SAADIQ

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