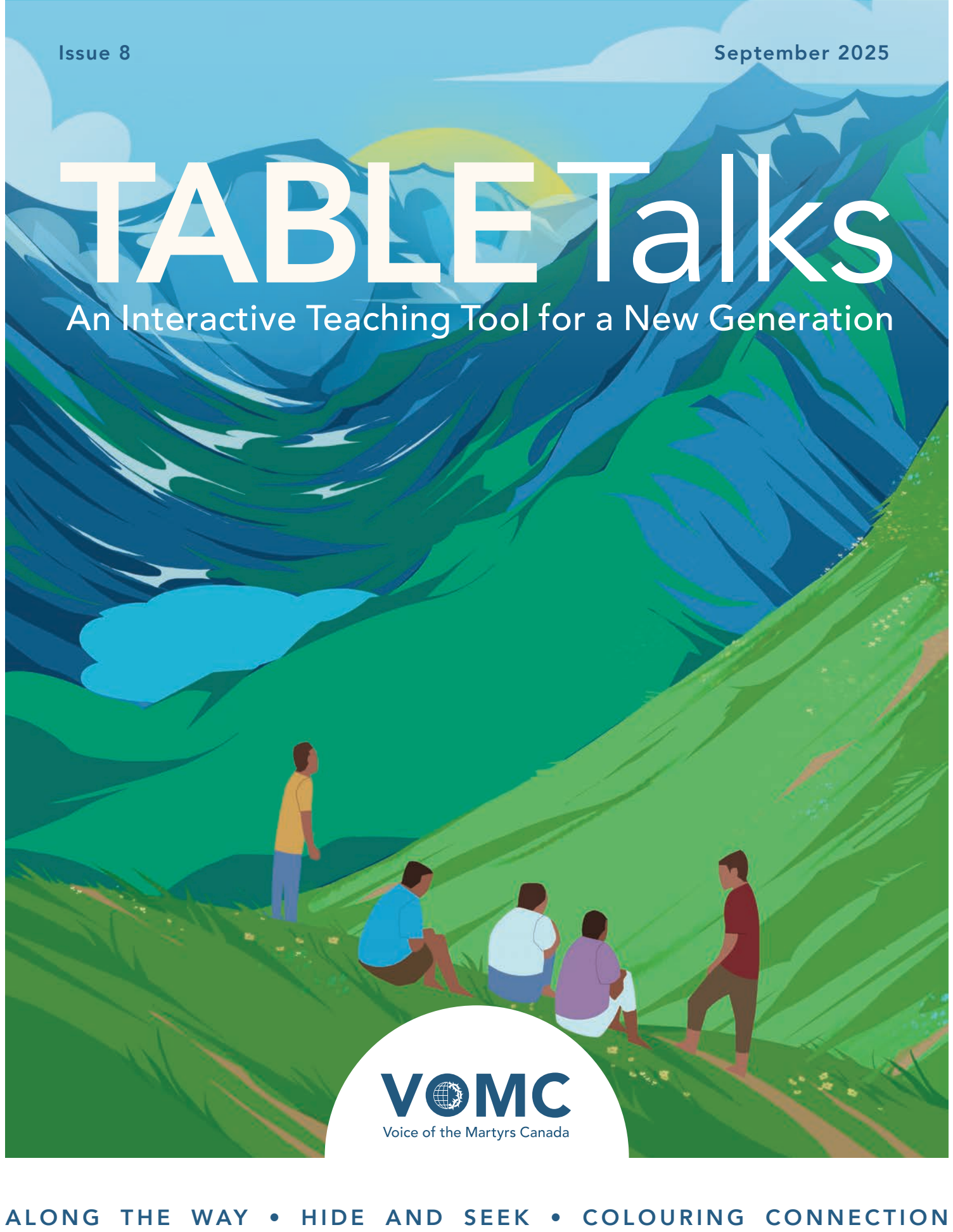


Issue 8

September 2025

TABLETalks

An Interactive Teaching Tool for a New Generation

An illustration of five children on a grassy hill. One child stands on the left, looking towards the mountains. Four other children are sitting on the grass, looking in the same direction. The background features stylized mountains in shades of blue and green, with a yellow sun or moon partially visible behind them. The sky is light blue with soft white clouds.

VOMC
Voice of the Martyrs Canada

ALONG THE WAY • HIDE AND SEEK • COLOURING CONNECTION

Along *the Way*

Estimated Reading Level: Ages 12-15

***Editor's Note: This true story describes the inspiring faith of young Christians who were faced with persecution as a result of following Jesus and deals with themes of violence. We encourage parents and guardians to take the time to read and discuss the subject matter with younger audiences.**

Haroon, Atish, and six of their friends chatted excitedly in the back of their van. They were headed to western Pakistan on their first ministry trip. As they drove through a local market, their van got a flat tire.

Knowing the people in the area were Muslims, they took the opportunity to share about Jesus while they waited for the repair. Haroon was telling a group of villagers about Christ's love for them, when Atish noticed men pushing their way toward them.

"Come with us now!" these members of the secret police demanded. The authorities put the five Christian men into a car and drove them to a police station. The rest of the group, three young women, followed in another vehicle. Scared, the students began to pray. This was the first time they had experienced such opposition for their faith.

"You came here to spread Christianity!" the interrogators insisted. The soldiers put burlap bags over their heads and loaded them into a truck, leaving the women at the police station.

Each day was the same – interrogations and beatings. "If you accept Islam, I will forgive you," the interrogator told Haroon. "But if you don't, we will kill you."

Haroon countered, "I will not leave Jesus Christ."

The male students were kept in dark cells and slept on a hot concrete floor. Atish says, "They told us we would spend six or seven years in prison, and our families wouldn't know where we were."

After 52 days, the authorities placed bags over their heads and loaded them into trucks. They drove up a mountain, were dropped off, and told to count to 500. Hearing the truck drive off, Atish lifted the bag from his head and saw the captors were gone!

"I will not leave Jesus Christ."

"We started praising God," Haroon says. The five young men thankfully returned home and learned that the female students had been kept at the police station for a week, suffering only verbal abuse.

Haroon and Atish, although still coping with trauma, persist in spreading the Gospel. "At times I am courageous, other times it haunts me," Atish reveals. Although Haroon's family tried to dissuade him from returning to mission work, he too is steadfast in his commitment to serving the Lord: "I am ready to die for Jesus Christ."

Reading Between the Lines

Words that have the same sound, but different spellings and meanings, are called *homonyms*. For example, **weak** and **week**.

1. What does the word "tire" mean in the story?

- a) To become weary
- b) A rubber covering on a wheel
- c) To lead

2. Choose the definition that matches the version of "time" or "thyme" used in the story.

- a) An instance of something happening
- b) A moment as measured in hours and minutes on a clock
- c) A culinary herb

3. What does the word "pray" mean in the story?

- a) An animal hunted for food
- b) To speak to God
- c) To look

Words with opposite meanings are called *antonyms*. For example, **little** is the antonym of **big**.

1. What is the antonym of "scared" in the story?

- a) Happy
- b) Courageous
- c) Sad

2. What is the antonym of "dark"?

- a) Light
- b) Heavy
- c) Bright

3. What is the antonym of "opposition"?

- a) Support
- b) Agreement
- c) Acceptance

4. What is the antonym of "captured" or "imprisoned"?

- a) Freed / Released
- b) Confined
- c) Detained



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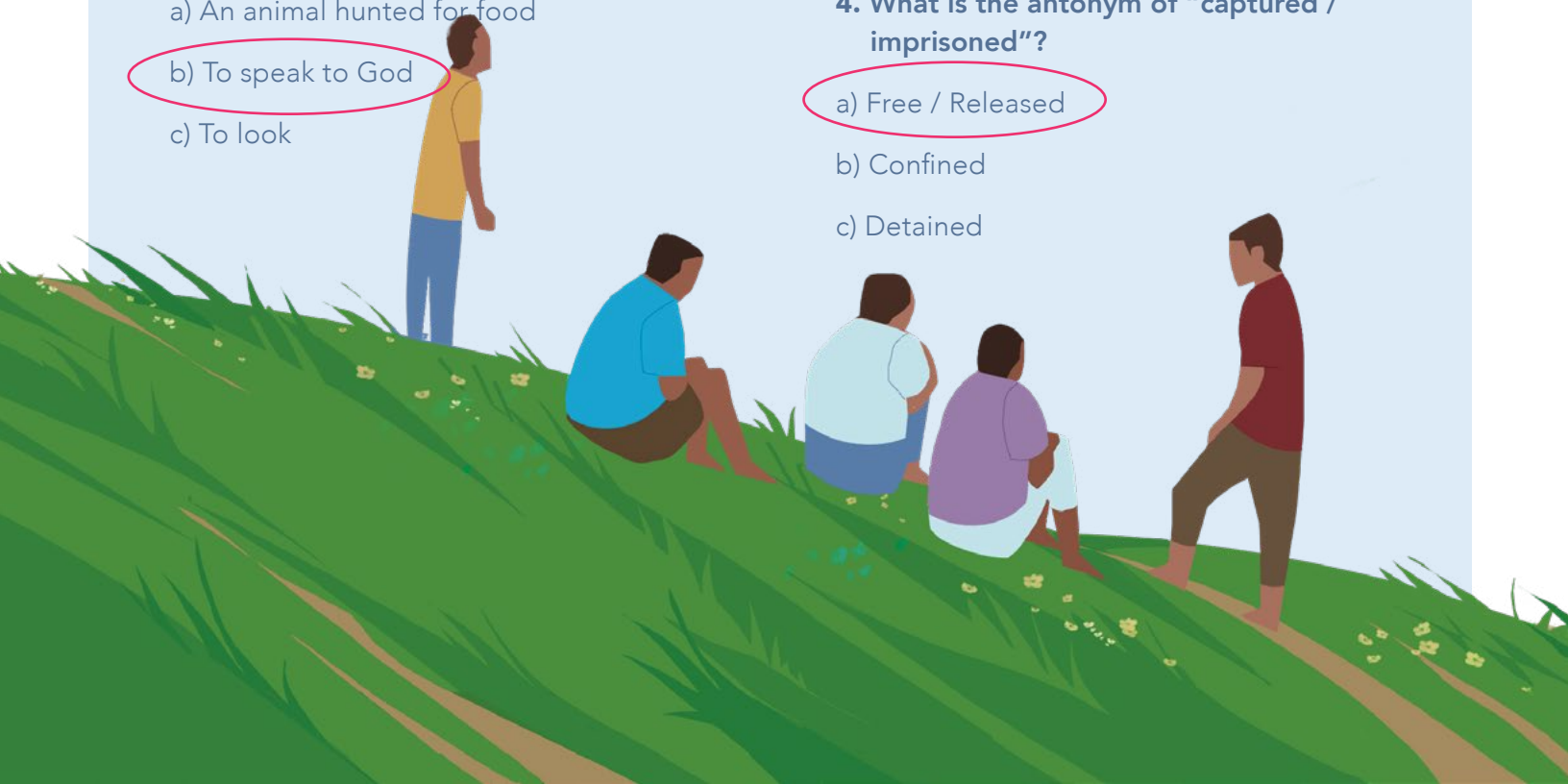
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Hide and Seek



I spy...

Find and circle
the hidden
items!

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--|
| 1. A bowl of rice | 5. A rooster | 9. A mosque |
| 2. The flag of Pakistan | 6. A camel | 10. A rickshaw taxi |
| 3. An old-fashioned radio | 7. Three mountains | 11. Fireworks |
| 4. A goat | 8. Two mangoes | 12. A woman in an orange
shalwar kameez |

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Weigh In

Weighing the facts about Pakistan

1.

The Tharparkar Desert in Pakistan is the only fertile desert in the world, and there are over 1.5 million people living in it.

2.

Most Pakistanis, especially girls, drop out of school by grade eight due to poverty and the need for extra income.

3.

As Pakistan is an honour-shame culture, maintaining family honour is foundational to the community. Any dishonourable actions can bring shame to the family.

4.

Blasphemy laws in Pakistan make it illegal for anyone to speak negatively about Islam. The penalty is imprisonment or death.

Corresponding Question Points:

(1) Deserts are biomes that receive little to no rainfall each year, making them hard to live in. Theorize why the Tharparkar Desert is fertile and supports millions of people. Afterwards, research why the desert allows life to thrive.

(2) What are the positive, negative, short-term, and long-term effects of dropping out of school to work? For example, a teenager who leaves school might be able to earn money for their family in the short term, but this decision could also limit their future job opportunities.

(3) Read Luke 9:23. Christians in Pakistan choose daily to go against their culture and sacrifice relationships with their family members. What sacrifices have you made in your friend groups and family to be a Christian?

(4) How do Pakistan's blasphemy laws align or conflict with international human rights standards, such as freedom of speech and religion?

One Way

Religious Comparison: Compare & Contrast What the Bible Says

The Five Pillars of Islam are required practices that form the foundation for Muslim life and are essential for going to heaven. However, not until Judgement Day does a Muslim discover if their efforts were enough to earn them a spot in heaven. In the diagram below are the Five Pillars of Islam and how Christianity differs.

Purpose: All these pillars are necessary for Muslims to have a chance at salvation.

Shahada (Declaration of Faith): Muslims must daily confess: "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger." It reminds them of their faith and commitment to Islam.

A person enters the Kingdom of God by confessing with their mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 10:8-13).

Salah (Prayer): Muslims must pray facing Mecca five times a day: at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and after dark. Prayer includes the recitation of a passage of the Quran and sometimes any personal requests.

Christians are instructed to pray to God, not out of religious duty, but because God wants a relationship with His people.

Zakat (Alms): Muslims are required to give 2.5 percent of their income to the poor. By faithfully giving, Muslims can secure divine blessing and community approval.

Giving is a core part of the Christian life. Jesus instructs His people to give to those in need. Whatever is given, Christians are to give and serve as if doing it for the Lord (Colossians 3:23-24), not for what can be earned.

Sawm (Fasting): During the last month of the Islamic calendar, there is a communal fast called Ramadan where no one eats during the daylight hours. The purpose is for spiritual enlightenment, and to identify with the poor.

Christians often fast in their walk with Christ. Fasting is not a requirement but has spiritual benefits as it draws a person closer to God. When a Christian fasts, it is done privately (Matthew 6:16-18).

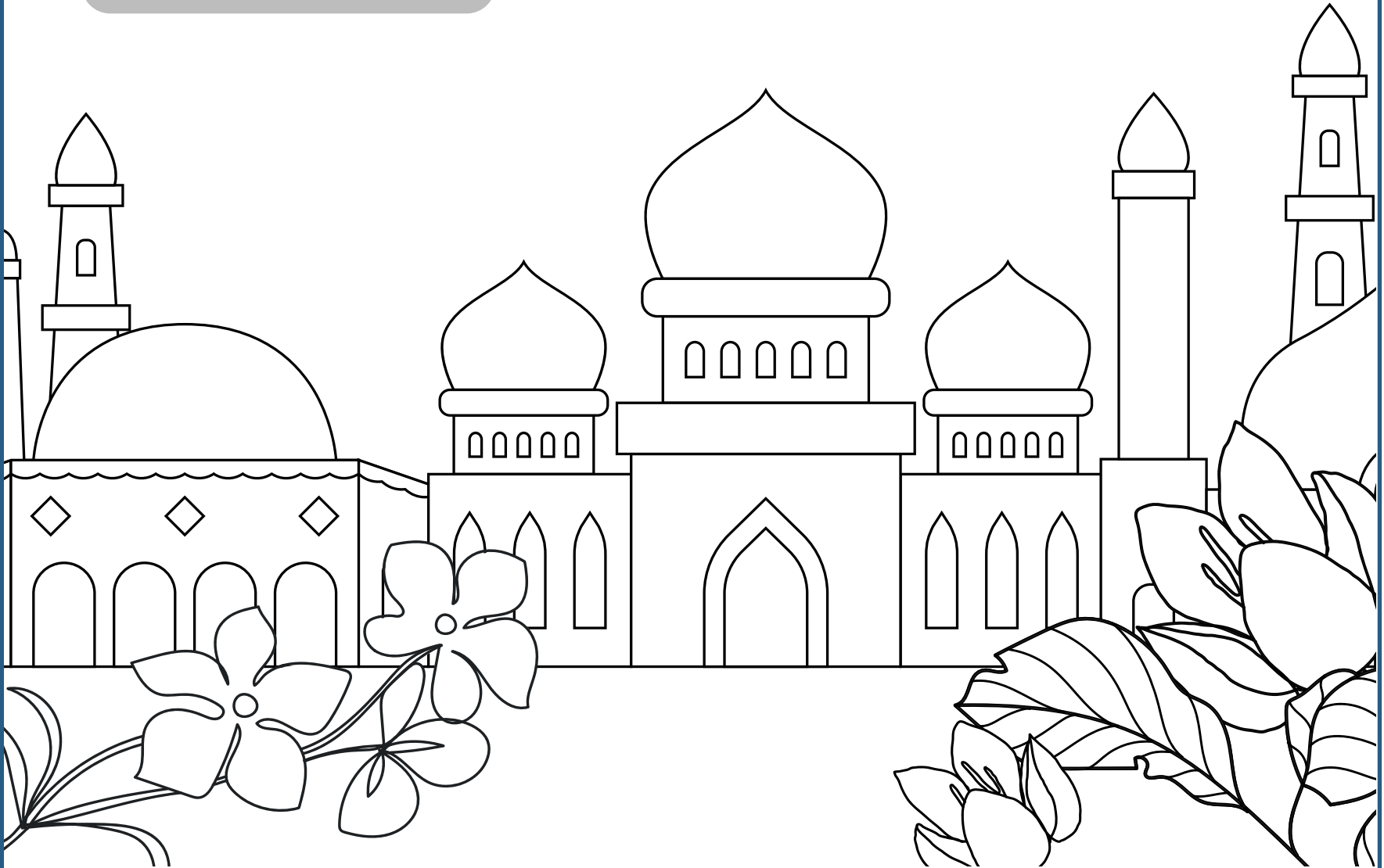
Hajj (Pilgrimage): All Muslims who are able are required to make the pilgrimage to Mecca and the surrounding holy sites at least once in their lives.

Christians often visit important historical sites for a deeper understanding of the Bible and God. While visiting holy sites are inspirational to a believer, it is not a requirement.

Purpose: Salvation is assured. All these practices help Christians have a deeper relationship with God.

Colouring Connection!

"I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." ~ Psalm 121:1-2 ESV





Even though these new believers lost everything in the rubble, they never lost hope. Their faith in Jesus gave them strength, peace, and a reason to live unoffended.

Thank you for helping me spread that same hope. By hiring me to pick up your leaves, your kindness will reach a life touched by God's love that lasts forever through the Voice of the Martyrs' *Relief and Development Fund*.

**Donate. Encourage.
Make a difference.**



Fall Leaf Fundraiser

vomcanada.com/TableTalksPakistan25

or [store.vomcanada.org/category/donations/
relief-and-development-fund](http://store.vomcanada.org/category/donations/relief-and-development-fund)

Fall Leaf Fundraiser Instructor's Guide

1. Instructions

- Print out as many fundraiser cards as you need.
- Determine whether you will charge a certain amount or allow the client to give as they feel led.
- Coach your children on what to say, and practise with them beforehand.
- Pray with your children before they go out.
- Provide each household with a fundraiser card, making sure that your contact information is clearly printed so they know how to reach you.

2. Tips for Success

- Determine ahead of time which houses to approach.
- Make note of any households that may struggle with yard work due to mobility needs.
- Be polite and friendly. Introduce yourself and explain why you're there.
- Invite a few friends or family members to help out; this will make the job faster and more enjoyable.
- Offer to pray with each potential client.

3. Get Your Leaf Pile Published!

- By October 31st, 2025, please email tabletalks@vomcanada.org with the following information:
 - Total amount collected.
 - Number of yards completed.
 - A photo of the largest leaf pile you created.
 - Age and name.
- The participant who collects the most donations will have a photo of their leaf pile published in a future issue of *Table Talks*, along with the total amount of funds collected, their name, and the number of yards they completed.



A Way Out

How can I get out of my comfort zone and get involved? Let's help – one leaf at a time!

In Pakistan, some Christians are wrongfully blamed for damaging the Quran. These false claims can lead to serious harm. Homes may be burned, people could be arrested, and lives can be lost. Yet even in hard times, our Christian family keeps going and stays strong in their faith.

Let's help them by raising money – one leaf at a time!

Join us by collecting fall leaves to support those in need.

For full details and a printable card to share with your clients, visit: vomcanada.com/TableTalksPakistan25



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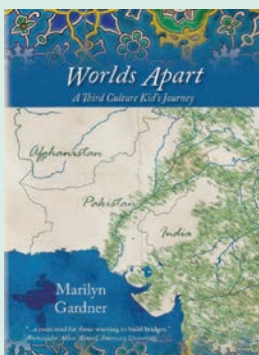
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or store vomcanada.org/category/donations/relief-and-development-fund

RECOMMENDED TEEN BOOK



Worlds Apart: A Third Culture Kid's Journey*

by Marilyn R. Gardner
(ages 11-17)

Worlds Apart tells the captivating story of Marilyn Gardner's

childhood as a 'third-culture kid' who was raised by her American missionary parents in the heart of Pakistan.

*Not available at VOMC's online store, but available elsewhere.



ARTIST OF THE MONTH



Shanna (age 9) from Fenwick, Ontario, is the winner of *Colouring Connection* from the May issue of *Table Talks*. Congratulations and wonderful job! We received many fantastic submissions. Thanks to everyone who submitted their artwork.

For more resources, including those that are free, visit our online store!

vomcanada.com/store

