

5.17 Ramadan and Islamophobia with Felicity LeFevre

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SPEAKERS

Jasmine Bradshaw, Felicity LeFevre

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00
You're listening to the First Name Basis podcast, Season Five, Episode 17: "Teaching Children About Ramadan and Islamophobia" with Felicity LeFevre.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:18
Teaching our children to be inclusive and anti-racist starts with us within the sacred walls of our home. First Name Basis is designed to empower you with the confidence you need to be a leader in your family and a change maker in your community. Together, we will wrestle with hard questions and use the answers to create the world we want: a world that reflects our values of inclusion, compassion, and courage. I'm your host, Jasmine Bradshaw, and I am so excited to be on this journey with you.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:53
Hello, First Name Basis fam. I am so glad you are here. Happy Ramadan! Happy Ramadan to all of our Muslim friends, all of our Muslim members of the First Name Basis family. We are so excited to support you as you celebrate this really sacred time in your life. And to anyone who is not Muslim, or is wondering how they can learn more about Ramadan, you have come to the right place. Today we are learning all about what Ramadan is and why it is so sacred. And then we're also going to talk about Islamophobia.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 01:29
Our guest today is Felicity LeFevre. She has done and been so many amazing things throughout her life in her career. She is a mother. She's a teacher. She's an illustrator—she recently illustrated a children's book. She's an artist, she's an activist. There are so many ways

that Felicity uses her influence in this world to bless the people around her. And I am so grateful that we have connected. Felicity and I have actually been Insta friends for years. At the very beginning of First Name Basis, before it was even a podcast, I would just share stuff on my Instagram account. And one of the things that I did with Violet when she was a little toddler was participate in something called World Hijab Day. World Hijab Day is on February 1, and the hijab is the religious headcovering that Muslim women wear to show their devotion to God. And I know that a lot of you out there understand what it means to wear something on your body that is a symbol of your devotion and your love for God. So it was something that was really sacred that I was able to take part in. On World Hijab Day, they invite women to wear the hijab to show their solidarity with Muslim women who wear the hijab every day. So I was able to do a really amazing activity with Violet, and the person who created the activity was Felicity LeFevre. So I did the activity, I tagged her in it, and then of course, we started messaging back and forth and realizing that our values and what we want for our children and for this world, are just so incredibly aligned. So I knew that she would be a fantastic person to have on the show. And you'll hear her say that this interview was a long time coming. We actually had one scheduled for a year ago. But so much has been happening between the pandemic and of course, so many acts of violence in our country and around the world, that we felt like it would be better to really press pause and pick it up at this time. So I'm really excited to share this interview with you. Felicity is a gem her warm spirit really comes through. And I'm just so grateful that she would take the time to talk to us when she was preparing for something so sacred and special in her life and in her religion.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 03:44

So if you're not sure, Ramadan is the month of the year, when Muslim people fast and pray, they recommit themselves to their faith, and they give up their service, their time and their resources. They connect with one another. It is very special, and so incredibly sacred. And Felicity will share with us why it's so sacred and some of her favorite family traditions. And she also shares with us a lot of resources. So one of the resources I wanted to point you to in the show notes is a collection of letters that she created along with the Muslim Educators Collective. And in these letters they can be both from parents or from teachers, so that they can communicate about Ramadan. So teachers can send these letters home in order to communicate with the parents and caregivers of their Muslim students about Ramadan. But she also has one where parents can send it to their child's teachers so that they can let them know what's going on with their kiddo during the month of Ramadan. So that's linked in the show notes for you.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 04:42

And the other thing I want to point you to in the show notes is our Bookshop account. So one of the things that Felicity mentions is the importance of reading books that have Muslim characters doing things that are important to their faith, but also doing things that are totally everyday normal life—going to the grocery store, or playing at the pool or going to the library, all those different types of things. So we over at First Name Basis have taken the time to put together a collection of books that feature Muslim characters. So that is in the show notes, or you can find it by going to firstnamebasis.org/books.



J Jasmine Bradshaw 05:15

All right, I really, really want to introduce you to Felicity, but first, I have to tell you that enrollment for Ally Elementary and Ally Elementary Jr. closes this Friday on April 8, and today is your very last day to use your ally elementary coupon code. If you don't have the coupon code yet, that means you're not on our email list yet. So go to firstnamebasis.org/allyinfo. We'll send you information about Ally Elementary and we will send you the coupon code to go along with it.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 05:45

Ally Elementary was created for third through eighth graders. And it is your key to helping your children become the anti-racist allies that our communities so desperately need. It's a collection of video lessons where you learn everything from melanin: what is it? Where did it come from? How does it affect our skin tone? All the way through anti-racism? What is racism? What is anti racism? And how do I be part of the solution? And of course, we have also created for you Ally Elementary Jr. Last time when we shared about Ally Elementary, I heard from so many parents and caregivers that they have little ones who they wanted to teach how to be allies to. So Ally Elementary Jr. is for preschool through second graders. And we really dig into allyship. What is an ally? What does it look like? How do you recognize bias? And what should you do about it? What are the tools that you have in your tool belt to help when you see that someone is being treated unfairly or not being treated with the respect or the dignity that they deserve? So check out Ally Elementary and Ally Elementary Jr. Just go to firstnamebasis.org/allyelementary, or click the link in our show notes. And remember, enrollment closes on April 8. So I want to see you inside Ally Elementary or Ally Elementary Jr. It's going to be such an amazing journey that we get to go on together.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 07:06

Okay, my friends, let's jump in. Let's meet Felicity, I know you're going to love her. She gives really good concrete ideas for how we can support our Muslim friends and family during Ramadan, and how we can talk to our children about Islamophobia so that they can be part of the solution with us.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 07:26

All right. Hello Felicity, my friend! Welcome to First Name Basis.

F Felicity LeFevre 07:30

Hello, this is so exciting. This has been a long time coming. Nobody knows that, but we have been trying to get together for a while now.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 07:38

I know! Almost a year. Well, thank you for taking the time because it's just a heavy time for

everybody.

F Felicity LeFevre 07:44

Yeah, yeah. I appreciate you reaching out.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 07:47

Well, I have shared with my community that you have done so many different things. And recently, you really went through a big career transition. I mean, I'm sure that was, like, so many different emotions, both like exciting, but also really painful. Just tell us a little bit about yourself and what you do now.

F Felicity LeFevre 08:06

So yeah, when the world stopped, basically, that next Fall of 2020, I decided it was best for me and my family that I take a step back from the classroom. And I was teaching my two youngest ones. They were doing online school through, you know, the public school system, but it was like the online learning like you see those commercials. So I really had to be like with them. You know, it wasn't just like, "Okay, go log into your class now." So it was kind of like homeschooling, but not to the extreme, like creating curriculum from scratch. So I was doing that for almost a year. And then yeah, we just hit like this mental health wall, and I was done with it, they were done with it. So got them enrolled back into school. And I was home and I just decided, "Okay, another U-turn. What am I doing now?" And so I just continued to make educational resources for the classroom, which I've been doing and mostly sell on Teachers Pay Teachers. And then I also got busy that last spring, because MoNique Waters from It's MoNique's World, she reached out to me and asked me if I was interested in illustrating a book with her. So we just recently published that. So that was really exciting. That was in January, so that kept me busy for a while for sure. Yeah, there's a lot more work than I realized going into publishing and illustrating and yeah, it's a process. I mean, really, it made me value picture books even more, and also I'm trying to kind of improve all sides of myself. So I've been taking Arabic classes and Islamic Studies classes online. So that's that's been, you know, a long time coming. But yeah, it's been interesting to, to do that and kind of, you know, use a different part of my brain that hasn't been used in a while.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 10:09

Yeah. Oh my gosh, learning a new language. I mean, I like just thinking about that I tried to learn piano when my first daughter was born. And I know that's not the same as learning a language, but it was so stinking hard. I was like, "Why did I think that having a newborn meant I would have all this time to learn piano?"

F Felicity LeFevre 10:30

Yeah, I don't get that!

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 10:33

I didn't know what I was doing. Well, I'm so excited to hear more about your Arabic classes. And it is the perfect segue into our topic today. And I've been thinking a lot about how to share this with our community. Because, like, just coming off of the heels of Black History Month, we obviously try to emphasize, we understand that there is struggle, and there's so much joy. So in talking about Ramadan, I also wanted to talk a little bit about Islamophobia, because it's the reality of marginalized communities. So let's start with the joy. And I'm just wondering if you can share with us the purpose of Ramadan? And why is it so sacred to the Muslim community?

F

Felicity LeFevre 11:17

Yeah, I appreciate you asking that question, because so often, I guess, the question really is, "Wait, what are y'all doing? Ramadan? You don't eat and stuff?" you know, and it just completely kind of misses the point of the month. And there's actually a saying in the tradition that you don't want to...something to the effect of you don't want to come out of Ramadan with just being hungry and thirsty. Like, that's not the point of it. It's not just a an exercise in physical discipline. It really is a spiritual and communal effort to kind of improve yourself. And in that month of Ramadan—so the Islamic calendar is based on lunar month, so that's why it changes every year. It's not like every year it's in May, or every year it's in August. And so it was within this month that the Qur'an was revealed. And that was sent from God to Angel Gabriel, or we say, "Jabril." But same thing, the same angel that came to Mary in the Christian tradition, same angel revealed the book of the Qur'an. And so this is kind of known as the month of the Qur'an, where you hear, many people will be reciting, and they just they try to get through a whole reading of the Qur'an throughout the month. And it's about, I think, 500 or so pages, or maybe more, of Arabic. So that's a huge focus, for sure. And it's also just time where people, hopefully, I think this year is going to be kind of back to normal, but a time of communal prayers every night. And acts of charity are definitely encouraged, especially at the end of the month, you have to give your mandatory Zakat, which is 2.5%...I think that's right, 2.5% of your wealth, to whoever needs, to the community, and that's a need. So it's definitely more than just fasting for sure.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 13:20

Yeah, it's almost like you were saying at the beginning, like just a really well-rounded opportunity to reflect.

F

Felicity LeFevre 13:27

Yeah, it's definitely the month of reflection. It's like a reboot, it's a spiritual, emotional, and mental, just trying to reboot yourself and kind of give you that that break.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 13:41

When you were talking I was wondering, do you go to the mosque usually every day? I mean,

outside of COVID times, like during Ramadan?

F Felicity LeFevre 13:51

I think I'm not the average person to ask this question, only because I kind of withdrew from it only because I did teach within the Islamic school. And so whenever I would go to the masjid, which is the Arabic word for mosque, whenever I would go, it would turn into like a parent-teacher conference. And I just kind of wanted to hide...

J Jasmine Bradshaw 14:20

My gosh, like the opposite of what you're trying to do.

F Felicity LeFevre 14:24

Yeah, it's like, you know, those memes where, like, a teacher's in a grocery store and they see their student and they're trying to duck and hide. Like, that's kind of what it became for me. So I kind of got in the habit of not going, which isn't necessarily good. So hopefully this Ramadan, I want to try to push myself to get out of my introverted shell, and go pray in community with other people.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 14:47

Oh, and I'm sure it's such a personal thing, too. And I want to thank you first for that gentle correction on masjid versus mosque. And I remember you sharing that "mosque" is like a European-ized version of the word. So thank you for that correction.

F Felicity LeFevre 15:02

Oh, no, thank you for remembering that. Thank you.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 15:05

So I'm wondering if you have any favorite family traditions that you guys do during Ramadan? Like, what are you most excited to celebrate together?

F Felicity LeFevre 15:16

Um, so the entire month is kind of, the whole month is like a tradition, I guess you could say. Because your your schedule is completely flipped on its head. Because you're waking up at like, you know, 3:30, 4 o'clock to eat, which is not something that people normally would do ever. And then, you know, some might try to go back to sleep for a little bit, you pray, and then you

try to go back to sleep a little bit before having to go off to work or school, whatever. And then when you come home in the afternoon, there's either cooking going on and you try to, people try to squeeze in a nap. So your whole sleep schedule is just kind of all off. Plus, you're fasting, so you're tired and then most people will let the kids stay up a little bit later at night. So they just kind of have this pushed, this bedtime that gets deeper and deeper into the night. But then they end up taking naps when they come home from school. So it's definitely, like it's a special time, but at the same time it is, it can be challenging. But towards the end of the month, ironically, you just kind of get used to it. And it just seems like almost like normal life for you by the end of the month. As far as like tradition, I'd say that's probably been challenging for me because there's this, you know, I have this confused nostalgia from just growing up Christian and like, having those memories of like, you know, the holidays of celebrating Christmas and everything. So it's not something that necessarily carries over into Ramadan. It's a completely different thing. So for Eid, usually, if I could say we had a tradition, is that most people, you'll go to pray where the whole community will gather for a prayer in the morning. And then everybody just seems to go out to like, to a diner, to a restaurant somewhere and eat breakfast, because you haven't really had like a yummy brunch or breakfast for a whole month. So you go, like, IHOP is crowded. Packed. Every IHOP in America, on like May 2, I think is Eid, stay away, guys. Stay away. Trust me.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 17:31

That is awesome. I never would have thought of that. But that totally makes sense. And for anyone listening, who's not sure, Eid is the celebration at the end of Ramadan. And you have different Eid celebrations throughout the year, right?

F

Felicity LeFevre 17:44

There's one other one, yeah, that kind of marks the end of the Hajj journey, which is a couple months after. I think it comes in the summer this year.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 17:54

When you were talking about the schedule being flipped on its head, it made me think, I was wondering if you have any tips for teachers or caregivers who aren't Muslim, but have like Muslim friends or students? How can they support them, especially the kids like during this time? Because I'm sure that's tough. I mean, I remember being a teacher, I had a student who was Muslim, and like just having him in with me while the other kids were eating lunch, or giving him extra things that he could do so that he didn't have to think about, you know, how hungry he was, during times. What would you suggest?

F

Felicity LeFevre 18:29

Oh, well, that's, that's awesome that you did that. I'm sure he greatly appreciated it. A couple of friends and I, we actually drafted some letter templates, and maybe I can give you the link for that. I have to review them and remember exactly what we wrote, but we drafted a few letter templates last year. And one was like that Muslim parents can kind of write for the

teacher and the school, just letting them know what their child's schedule is going to kind of look like, at home, for that month. And then I believe we also drafted up some templates, from teachers to parents, just saying, "I understand that Ramadan is coming..." and if this template doesn't work for you, I would suggest that any teacher that who knows that they have Muslim students should just reach out to the family and say, "Happy Ramadan," and you can say that. Totally nothing wrong with saying that. "I realized that Ramadan is approaching, could you please let me know if your child is fasting and if they do feel weak, or if they decide they want to break their fast is that okay?" Because that tends to be a big issue. Some parents want to kind of, I don't want to use the word force, but they want to try to encourage their children to fast the whole day, whereas other parents are like, "Oh, fine, they're hungry. They want to break it, it's fine." And it also depends on the age of the child as well. So that's something that a teacher should ask for sure, you know. And just let them know, like, "If you think that they're not going to be able to hold their fast for the whole day, maybe you can send some snacks, I can just keep on my desk for your child," something like that. And also knowing that the kids are going to be sleepy. Like, even if they aren't fasting, their families and the household is basically on night shift. So they're going to be sleepy no matter what. So that's definitely something to look out for. And please, I wouldn't want anyone to view it as like, "Oh, the these families aren't taking care of their kids. This isn't this isn't a good bedtime routine, etc." It's just, it's for, I know, it sounds like a long time, but it's just one month out of the year. And really to be just respectful and mindful that the family is trying to balance their spiritual motivations and their child's educational goals the best way they can.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 21:03

Yeah. Oh, those are such good tips. Thank you for sharing that. Um, are there any respectful ways for families who aren't Muslim to engage with Ramadan without appropriating? Cuz we, you know, we all know how we feel about appropriation. It's like this super no go. Is there a way for people to engage or celebrate and make sure that they are appreciating instead of appropriating?

F

Felicity LeFevre 21:27

Yeah, I think this is this is a great question. Because, um, you know, it can be just one of these strange things that people just don't know what to do or say, you know. Even just saying "Happy Ramadan," they might feel awkward about saying that, but that's absolutely something. That's step one, right? It's just acknowledging that you know that your Muslim coworker, friend, classmate, or neighbor is observing the month of Ramadan. A great gift that I think any Muslim family would appreciate is fruit. Actually, if you just want to give them like, a little, you know, even just some cut up watermelon. Watermelon is just one of the best, like, most refreshing things to eat after you fasted all day. And it's actually in their tradition to eat watermelon and specifically dates, you know, those beautiful Medjool dates that are so yeah, so rich and sweet. So most, most Muslim families will, we call it "breaking their fast," will break their fast with water and dates. So if you just want to give them like a few dates, you know, just tie it in a little bow and say, "Happy Ramadan, I'm here for you, if you need anything," that's a great step to just kind of say, "Hey, I'm here for you," you know.

F

Felicity LeFevre 22:42

And then there's also I actually I saw right before we got on this call, our local Masjid posted about, if anyone is interested, in coming to the communal dinner, which is called Iftar. And so every night theâ€”I guess, I'm assuming that most places will have the communal dinners now, because I think everybody's kind of opening back up to how things were pre-COVID. But quite often, they'll have designated days or they'll just be open for any day. Like so if you're interested in coming to join the communal dinner for that evening, you can reach out and say, "Hey, you know, I'm not Muslim, but I'm your neighbor down the street. And I would love to come participate in your Iftar," which is an English spelled "I-F-T-A-R" for anyone who's just trying to catch the words that are coming out of my mouth. And this is, it's a communal dinner, you don't pay for it. Everybody just comes and eats and fills up and prays and then goes home. So I'm pretty sure that most Muslim communities would be open to other people coming and joining them.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 24:01

Oh, I love that. I'm wondering, okay, I'm thinking of myself going to an Iftar celebration. And I'm wondering, two questions: number one, is it like potluck style? Like do you bring something, or you just come?

F Felicity LeFevre 24:14

That will probably depend on the size of the community. Like, I know a here what happens is that someone will pay, they'll sponsor a night, and it's just served by the mosque, by the Masjid. So it's not potluck. It's just they cater, they get it catered, or they have a kitchen, like in the building where they just cook everything and have it have it ready.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 24:39

Okay, that's awesome. And then I actually have another question. I said "two," but I mean, yeah, my second would be what would be most respectful to wear?

F Felicity LeFevre 24:51

Oh, um, you know, I'd say any, like, "modest,"â€”I guess, I mean that word means something different to everybody, right? Yeah. modest clothing. You know, I wouldn't say that you have to wear a hijab. No, no, no, no, not all Muslim women wear hijab, and they should be accepted with open arms and any Masjid that they go to. But yeah, if you just dress like, you know, what would you wear to church? Right? Like, you're not going to wear something that's, you know, you would consider immodest or, you know, not appropriate for a church. Right? So, same thing, I would just say something that, you know, you'd pull out on a Sunday morning and wear and you'd feel comfortable wearing. You can wear that to the masjid.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 25:35

I love that. And my third question is, so if someone is attending an Iftar, and they would like to

redistribute their resources to the masjid, is there a way to do that? Or would it be better to go through like an organization?

F Felicity LeFevre 25:47

You mean, if they wanted to make like a donation?

J Jasmine Bradshaw 25:49

Yes,

F Felicity LeFevre 25:51

I think they do have...probably just contact masjid, because what a lot of people will do is, they'll have what they call "sponsorship," and people will call in and say, "I want to pay, I want to sponsor a dinner for the community on Wednesday night. I'm sending you \$1,500." Or, "I want to donate \$10 towards the dinner." So you would just probably contact your local Masjid I would say.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 26:16

Okay, that's awesome. Okay, so I hope if anyone's listening and they decide to go to an Iftar dinner, they make sure that they are sharing what they have with the people that they're celebrating with.

F Felicity LeFevre 26:28

Yeah, that would be awesome.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 26:30

Okay, so now kind of changing gears from the exciting celebration portion to the harder piece of it. We know that it's really important to talk to our children about Islamophobia. So can you share, like a simple definition that parents can use to teach their kids? Because I think when we start with these really big, hard concepts, that's the number one question I get is, "How do I say it to my children?"

F Felicity LeFevre 26:55

Yeah, yeah, that's a that's a good question. You know, I, I guess if I had to put my my teaching cap on, and if I was to explain it to, let's say, a five-year-old or a four-year-old, I would say, "Someone who is Islamophobic, it means that they are scared." "Who are they scared of," the kid might ask, right? "They're scared of people that look like they might be Muslim. People who

practice the religion of Islam, they're scared of them." And then the child might say, "Well, scared of what?" And, in my opinion, I think people who are Islamophobic are scared that Muslim people are a threat or dangerous in some way. They're really not. But they've just put a pretend story in their head that people that who are Muslim, or look Muslim, are like these scary, dangerous people, when they're actually not. They're just people who love God, and want to show that they love God, by practicing their religion of Islam.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 28:03

Thank you for pointing out that it's not just people who are Muslim, it's people who they think look Muslim. Because we have had, I mean, so many situations, and one that comes to mind, especially in Arizona, where someone thought that someone was Muslim, and they weren't. And I mean, you know, even so violence is just horrible. But the the idea that Islamophobia includes thinking, you know, what someone is without knowing them, talking to them or asking them, that's a really huge piece of it.

F Felicity LeFevre 28:33

Yeah, yeah, for sure. I mean, I'm just thinking back to after 9/11 There were so many attacks on Sikh men, you know, because they they were the turban, and people who just absolutely have no idea what Islam was, attacking them for something absolutely invalid. Just so far off. So far off.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 28:56

And that was that was exactly what I was thinking of, because that first attack was here in Arizona, and I remember being so young, but being absolutely like, horrified.

F Felicity LeFevre 29:07

Yeah, it's kind of ironic because the, the the word Islam, its root word is "Salam," which means peace. And so Muslim is "Mu", that, and I'm probably saying that wrong, me trying to show off my non-existent Arabic, but the word "Mu" means a person. So a Muslim is a person who practices Islam. Islam is the Path of Peace. Wow. So it's just quite ironic that, you know, people think that people who are Muslim are these dangerous, treacherous terrorists, when really we're, the whole pathway is supposed to be guided on the path of peace.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 29:53

I have chills. Thank you for sharing that. Wow.

F Felicity LeFevre 29:56

Yeah, sure.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 29:58
That yeah, that is a good thing to share with our kiddos too.

F Felicity LeFevre 30:01
Yeah, I think so.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 30:03
So what are some concrete actions that families can take to combat Islamophobia? I mean, I think I run into this a lot, too, with anti-racism, a lot of people will focus on it when something really bad has happened. But we know that microaggressions, which are just basically racism, or just basically Islamophobia, are happening every day. So what are some, like everyday concrete things that people can do?

F Felicity LeFevre 30:27
Yeah, that's a great question. Like, you know, it's kind of like putting on a BandAid on a gushing wound, right? That's not, that's not the goal. We want to create a healthy environment and a healthy knowledge of, for, for children to have about their whole world, not just about their little microcosm of the world. So I was thinking, definitely, I think picture books are a great way for parents to start in a really easy way. Because you know, it, it doesn't put everything on them, they might not have the words, they might not know what pictures to look up. But they can look up books on Ramadan, or look up books with Muslim characters, or even just a character that might have a hijab, and is just doing normal everyday things. But that exposure, you know, that a child will see, will make it such that when they're out in the world, and they see a woman who wears a hijab, or a man who is dressed in traditional cultural wear from various Muslim countries, they won't point and be like, "What's that?" You know? And that always shows a lot like when a child is just pointing and saying, "What's that," that means that they've never been exposed to it. So I think picture books are a great starting point. And if you're not sure where to go, always start with your local library, right? I mean, go to the librarian, and they should be able to help you search up some some good ones.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 31:56
Yeah. Oh, that's such a good conversation starter, like just having that grounding of a book. And then you can figure out what your kids questions are from there. Because sometimes you don't even know what questions they have until you expose them.

F Felicity LeFevre 32:09
That's true. That's very true. You know, I was also thinking, when you ask this question, you know, so quite often, I'll be in a store or walking around, and a kid will point and they'll say:

know, so quite often, I'll be in a store or walking around, and a kid will point and they'll say, "Mommy, what's what's she wearing?" Or just staring and just kind of you can tell that they're trying to figure me out. Even if they don't ask the parent and quite a lot, I'll hear parents or moms say "Shh!" like hushing them. Like, as if it's something bad, you know? And I don't think any child should be hushed, you know, in that situation at all. Like, whether it's seeing someone in a wheelchair or someone who is, you know, maybe they're blind using a walking stick, like, we shouldn't hush them. They're curious. They want to know, and it's nothing bad, right? Like being in a wheelchair, that's the life that that person has. Being Muslim, this is the life that I have. It's nothing to be ashamed of. And so by hushing the child, it's like, you're telling them, "That's a shameful quality that person has, we shouldn't discuss it."

J Jasmine Bradshaw 33:19

Oh, my gosh, I love that you share that. Because we know that, like our kiddos, the questions don't stop. They just stop asking them, because you're making them feel ashamed. Right? So you say "Shh". And they think, "Oh, this is not something that we talk about." And then that's how they start to form biases and incorrect assumptions in their head because they have questions, but they're not saying them out loud for you to be able to correct them if they're going down the wrong path.

F Felicity LeFevre 33:46

Yes. Yes, Mic drop. Thank you.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 33:50

Well, it just reminds me so much, I feel like when parents are approaching things like Islamophobia, or talking to their kids about disabled people, or even anti-racism, they just get so overwhelmed. And I feel like, I want them to know that when you are going down one path, you're really going down multiple paths. If you've started anti-racism, you already have so many tools that you need to talk about Islamophobia. They're so transferable, you know.

F Felicity LeFevre 34:16

Absolutely, yeah, you're totally right. And if you stand up for one community, you should be able to stand up for all communities.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 34:24

Oh my gosh, amen to that. So on that same vein, what's one thing that you wish non-Muslim parents would teach their children. Like as a Muslim mom, what is something that you want me to help my children really understand?

F Felicity LeFevre 34:41

I guess back to when we were talking about this, that the religion of Islam as a peaceful religion. You know we're not, we're not out to get anyone on a very basic elementary-level of speaking. And then also, I guess, you know, now that I'm living in the, I guess would be referred to as the "Bible Belt," it's a very different environment for me coming from New York City. But living in the Deep South, I feel like there's so many Christian communities that don't know—and I can say, growing up, I don't think I ever thought about it either—but that don't know that Islam is one of the Abrahamic faiths. You know: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. We all believe in the same God, actually. So when I say "Allah," I'm saying God, right? That Muslims believe, we believe in Moses, we believe that he was a prophet. We believe in Jesus, we love Him. We believe that he was a prophet as well. So there's really so much that we have in common, but we're always trying to point out our so-called differences. And I just wish that especially Christian communities would understand that we also love Jesus, you know. Like, we don't have anything against him. Like we love him.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 36:09

Yeah. Oh, I love that. And like the creation, the story of Mary and Jesus is in the Qur'an, right?

F Felicity LeFevre 36:16

Oh, yeah. Yeah. 100%. I mean, we have you know, I mentioned Angel Gabriel earlier. We have—it's the same story. He came to her. She was not married. She was a virgin. Yes, we believe all of that.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 36:34

That's amazing. Thank you for showing those parallels.

F Felicity LeFevre 36:37

Yeah.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 36:38

And of course, I'm sure that after people listen to this, they are going to want to connect with you. So how can people connect with you? Where can they find you and definitely share about the book that you illustrated?

F Felicity LeFevre 36:50

Oh, okay. Yeah, I don't think I named dropped, title dropped, the book name. So I'll have to do that. Okay, it's "I Can Achieve Anything" by MoNique Waters, illustrated by me, Felicity LeFevre, and you can find it on Amazon or on Barnes and Noble. Online. Um, well, I guess I don't have an

up and running website. That's one of my goals, hopefully, in the future. But for now, Instagram, and if I don't message back, I apologize. You know, I tend to put my Instagram on mute most days. But on Instagram I'm at palettebyfelicity. So that's Palette by Felicity. And you can also just email me, same, palettebyfelicity@gmail.com. I prefer to do, kind of, business talks through email, not necessarily through Instagram chats.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 37:42

So the other thing I want to share is that you have an amazing pack of Women's History Month posters, and opportunities for people to learn about amazing women throughout history with that, that you have illustrated yourself.

F Felicity LeFevre 37:54

Oh, yeah. Thank you for sharing. I almost forgot about that. Yeah, that's up. And I hope it's a valuable resource and that people can learn about so many amazing women, women from all over the world, not just in America.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 38:10

I love that. Well, thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Felicity so much for being here.

F Felicity LeFevre 38:14

Yes. Thank you for having me, Jasmine. This has been too much fun.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 38:17

Felicity was totally worth the wait, don't you think? She is absolutely fantastic. She is a wealth of knowledge, and I'm so grateful that she shares her talents with the world. Go follow her over at palettebyfelicity. I've linked her Instagram in the show notes. Grab the book that she illustrated, and use the tips that she gave us to talk to your kiddos about Ramadan and Islamophobia.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 38:44

Just a reminder, Ally Elementary and Ally Elementary Jr. enrollment is closing on Friday, so I want to see you there inside those programs. I'm super duper excited to teach our kiddos how to be allies together.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 39:00

My friends, thank you for being here. I hope you can feel how much I believe in you, and how

deeply I know that when we work together, we can make real change in our communities. Any of the books, podcasts, or articles that I reference will be linked in the show notes. If you are looking for more detailed notes, be sure to head over to our Patreon community. On our Patreon site. I provide all of the outlines that I use to make the episodes and everything is linked there. So you don't have to take furious notes while you are listening. And don't forget to join us over on Instagram at [firstname.basis](#). If you're interested in partnering with First Name Basis or doing some kind of collaboration, please email us at hello@firstnamebasis.org. All right, have a great week my friends, and I will talk to you again soon.