IN THE KNOW: NIGERIA

WEIGH IN

1

Having a large family is highly desired in Nigeria. Often, couples will have as many children as they are able, resulting in some families having about a dozen members.

What are some benefits of having a large family in Canada compared to that of a similar size in a Nigerian household? What would some of the challenges be? Does living rurally versus in a city become an important factor when determining the various benefits/challenges?

2

Nigeria's population is 46 percent Christian. However, due to the presence of Islamic militants in the north, Christian persecution in Nigeria was ranked sixth on the 2023 *World Watch List*. Additionally, according to Statista, Nigeria has the third highest number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Africa.

Islamic militants in Northern Nigeria often raid Christian communities, resulting in families being homeless and/or forced to live in IDP camps. With so many in the country displaced (including non-Christians), what role could followers of Jesus have in these camps? Find a Bible verse that would comfort *and* encourage you to seize opportunities for ministry if you happened to be in this situation.

WAY OUT

Let's begin phase two of the dinner party! First, create a custom name tag for each of your guests and include a "weigh-in question" on the reverse side. These weigh-in questions will be excellent conversation starters and discussion points while your guests are enjoying the meal. Next, prepare and follow the recipe for the Nigerian "Jollof Rice." During the evening, present the allegory comparing the similarities between Islam and Christianity, which are listed in this month's "One Way" section. At the end of the dinner party, offer up a prayer for more opportunities to share the Gospel with your Muslim neighbours. The recipe and name tags with the weigh-in questions are available at:

vomcanada.com/TableTalkNigeria

RECOMMENDED READS

Around the World with Matt and Lizzy – Nigeria by Julie C. Beemer (Children)

Let's Eat! Mealtime Around the World by Lynne Marie (Children)

Byang Kato by Simonetta Carr (Children)

ONE WAY

Finding common ground is key when sharing your faith with others. With that in mind, let's learn some of the similarities between Islam and Christianity through the allegories below relating to the featured recipe.

Creation: Vegetables are tangible elements in a recipe, adding unique tastes and textures to the whole meal. Like the vegetables within the dish, the belief in God as Creator is a tangible element that flavours the entire belief system of those following either Christianity or Islam. Both religions believe that God created the heavens and the earth, giving purpose and meaning to all created things.

The Patriarchs: The spices in this recipe complement the other ingredients, enhancing the flavour of the entire dish. The purpose of each spice is not to overpower the taste of the other ingredients but to allow the other flavours to shine. In the same way, the common recognition of the Old Testament patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – complement the other beliefs held by both Muslims and Christians. In both religions, this shared belief is not meant to 'overpower' the other core elements but to highlight God's purposes for humanity.

One God: Much like how the rice is foundational to our featured recipe, the belief in one God is foundational to both Islam and Christianity. One of the core principles of Islam is the belief in one God, so much so that it is written on the outside of most mosques. Likewise, the belief in one God is foundational to the Christian faith. Although the identity, name and character of that one God differs significantly, this can be a common place to begin an interesting discussion between Christians and Muslims.

Final Judgement: The sauce completes the recipe, making the dish more than that of simply rice and veggies, but a rich and tasty meal known as "Jollof Rice." In a similar way, the belief that God is coming back at the end of human history provides a focal point and specific flavour to the rest of a person's faith beliefs. Both Muslims and Christians believe that God will come back to judge the world. What that looks like varies dramatically, but what a beautiful discussion could respectfully take place over those details.

Sources:
https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/persecution/countries/nigeria/
https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/nigeria/
https://www.statista.com/statistics/1237374/number-of-internally-displaced-persons-in-nigeria/

Background: Shutterstock/artshock

Finding Common Ground Solutions:

1/3 & 1/6 = 6 Tomato
2/3 & 3/7 = 21 Stock
2/15 & 1/5 = 15 Hot Pepper
1/10 & 2/3 = 30 Onion
1/2 & 7/9 = 18 Butter
5/6 & 4/5 = 30 Peppers
1/6 & 1/2 = 6 Rice
3/11 & 1/3 = 33 Oil
5/12 & 1/4 = 12 Spices
4/8 & 3/7 = 56 Salt & Pepper
3/9 & 1/3 = 3 Bay Leaves