



# Social & behavior change:

## Guidance for religious leaders

As a faith leader you are a trusted member of the community who can play a critical role in stopping the spread of COVID-19. As a religious leader, you have developed good communication skills and know how to connect with your audience. Your work as a religious leader often involves encouraging people to change or adopt certain behaviors and beliefs. Your voice is therefore extremely essential in encouraging social and behavior change amongst your congregation that will ensure they avoid getting infected or infecting others with the COVID-19 disease. The following are a few guidelines on how you can go about this:

- Ensure that you fully understand your MoH guidance on COVID-19 transmission and control.
- Convey this message to your faith community while keenly ensuring that you do not unknowingly distort it.
- Consult a medical professional whenever you are in doubt about the message that you want to share with your congregation.
- Where possible, invite a medical professional of your faith to come and talk to your audience about the disease and how to stay safe.
- Use your sermons, weekly messages, and one on one conversations to discuss COVID-19 prevention with the faithful.
- Find and share words from your holy book that support the various disease containment measures that the MoH in your country has put in place.
- At your place of worship or office, ensure that you publicly follow health guidelines. This includes ensuring there is no touching between you and your congregants, which may mean modifying certain religious practices. In this way, you will be setting an example for your congregation by modeling desired behavior.

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Source: WHO