Islam in Albania cheat sheet

## Beliefs

* The Shahada - most basic Muslim creed

*There is no god but God. Muhammad is the messenger of God*

* Reject “Polytheism”   
  - this includes the trinity
* Jesus was a prophet - NOT God.  Nor did he ever claim to be God.
* Works-based salvation – no assurance  
  (5 pillars, divine scales of justice)

## Islam = Culture = Identity

Being a Muslim is everything.  It’s their family, their culture, the way they interact with their world. It’s who they are.

## Stories are important

* Honor/Shame culture
* Oral tradition
* Huge respect for authority

They don’t primarily reason via facts and arguments. They reason via stories & experiences.

## Family & Authority

* Defer to authority figures – “My imam could answer that question”
* Haram (forbidden) to go against the will of the father of the family

## Functional Atheists

Individual Albanians may only show some of these characteristics, rarely will you run into a full-fledged Muslim believer.

Most Albanians live without thinking about faith hardly at all. They are more influenced by pop-culture ideas and MTV than they are by Islam.

## How you respond

* Don’t disrespect Muhammad
* Avoid saying “Jesus is the Son of God” – likely to lead you into the wrong argument
* Know some verses where Jesus talks about Himself as God and be able to find them in your Bible.

Mark 14:62, Luke 22:67-70, Matt. 26: 63-65, John 8:56-58

* Don’t go on offense against Islam!  
  Don’t threaten the core of who they are.
* Tell your story!
* Tell parables or stories about Christ
  + Prodigal Son  
    Luke 15
  + The Great Dinner  
    Luke 14:15-24
  + Wicked Tenants  
    Mark 12:1-11
* Ask them about their family – this may lead you past an impasse when discussing reasons they don’t believe
* Ask about other teachers/influencers on their life
* The Koran teaches that the Bible is a holy book with authority – use it!
* Ask lots of questions  
  “Do you read the Koran?” “What do you think about Allah?” “What do you believe about Jesus?”
* Tell them what America is really like – i.e. that it’s not like MTV
* Talk about your hope not being found in the world/materialism