

The Ghazali Children's Project – Links, Films and Resources



“It will change the way we teach our children.” -Shaykh Hamza Yusuf

The Ghazali Children's Project seeks to educate children spiritually & transform their characters by showing how the outer aspects of Islam can, through their inner spiritually transformative meanings, change every situation into one that strengthens their innate human nobility of character. The Project aims to help support entire communities of Muslim parents, teachers, and children in realizing how to live by and embody the noble Prophetic character through self-observation and correction. Imam al-Ghazali's writings offer children of all ages the authentic and quality guidance they need at a time when their values are being formed, through his effective and systematic approach.

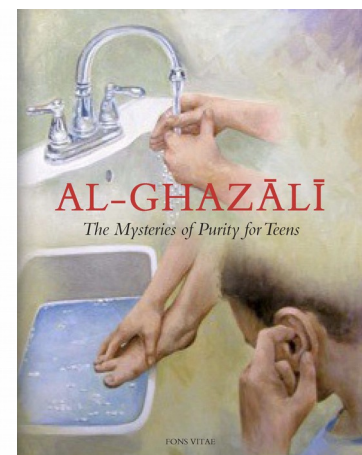
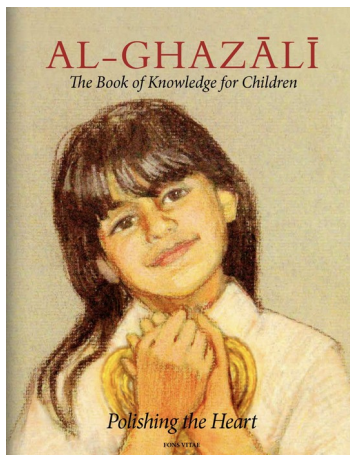
"The Ghazali Children's Project is nothing less than a revolution in developing humane, ethical, and committed Muslim youth, who are in dire need of guidance in these troubled times. Imam al-Ghazali is the 'Proof of Islam,' and these teachings, presented in a beautiful life-affirming way, will prove to be a major shift in the way Islam is taught to young people. As a community, we owe much to Fons Vitae for bringing them to fruition. Let the transformation begin!" -**Shaykh Hamza Yusuf – Co-Project Director**



“The Ghazali Children's Series is a gift to our children who deserve a pedagogy that allows them to develop the innate goodness which God has placed within each human being, so that they can become moral, kind and happy adults.” - **Dr. Ingrid Mattson**

Shaykh Hamza Yusuf explains “that Islamic Education is understood as both *tarbiyyah* and *ta'lim* - character building and teachings, moral and intellectual development which naturally lead on to spiritual development.” If knowledge is just information learned and does not become a state of being, it is just so many words. What we want most for our children and ourselves is good character. The Prophet Muhammad, Peace be upon him, said, “I was sent only to perfect good character.” But how is this achieved? Not by simply learning about the vices and virtues but through an enjoyable systematic curriculum which not only clarifies deeper meanings but provides effective activities and practices that help make the virtues become second nature. Imam al-Ghazali’s *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, now adapted for the young, meets this need.

Regarded in the Muslim world, over the centuries, as the greatest compendium of Islamic spirituality and ethical behavior for everyday life, the *Ihya* lays down practical teachings and explains how the outer aspects of Islam can, through their inner spiritually transformative meanings, change every situation into one that strengthens the innate human nobility of character.



1) **VIDEO: What is the Ghazali Children's project?** How can it help educate children spiritually & transform their character? [Short video -3 mins]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xv020hASS5U>

2) **VIDEO: What is the Ghazali Children's project?** [Long video – 15 mins] Offering an overview of the project and its mission as it was being launched.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdoPXgK6rNc>

3) **The Ghazali Children Official Website** – Many resources:

<http://www.Ghazalichildren.org>

No ordinary website but an interactive universe for entertaining and educating children at home as well as being a useful support in the classroom and resource for teachers and parents.

4) **Ghazali Children Youtube Channel**- with many video resources, incl. Core Teachings, Pilot School how-to's, interviews, animations and more...

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKoxSQZFq-g2s2E9CHrQHVw>

5) **All Ghazali Children's and Adult books** for purchase & ebook download at Fonsvitae.com:

<https://fonsvitae.com/product-category/ghazali-project/>

(see image of the complete Book Series attached below)

6) **VIDEO: 'The Critical Importance of Al-Ghazali in Our Times'** – An amazing talk by Shaykh Hamza Yusuf <https://vimeo.com/34401389>

7) **ISNA Horizons Magazine Article**: “Timeless Teachings for Young Readers-Imam al-Ghazali’s writing offers children of all ages the spiritual guidance they need at a time when their values are being formed.” (see attached image below)

8) **The Ghazali Pilot School Program**:

- **Ghazali Children Pilot School Program** – Videos, Answers to Questions, Resources...
http://ghazalichildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Ghazali-Children-Pilot-Schools-2_12_2019-PDF.pdf
- **VIDEO: Ghazali Project Pilot School video**. A brilliant resource with practical 'how-to' advice from teachers and parents on applying Ghazali's teachings to children. The film offers great ideas for learning activities, lessons, and fresh approaches. The Hub Club school (Solihull, England) is a Fons Vitae Ghazali Children's Pilot School (25 mins)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IeWEVRUYks>
- Also see the Ghazali site **Pilot School resources** page and sign up:
<https://ghazalichildren.org/parents/pilot-school-program/>

9) **Ghazali Children Social media**:

<https://www.facebook.com/GhazaliChildren/> (8000 followers)

<https://www.instagram.com/fonsvitaebooks/> (1000 followers)

<https://twitter.com/GhazaliKids>

10) **Sample flip-book** from Ghazali's Book of Purification:

<https://mobissue.com/uqoz/mlxh> Al-Ghazali’s Mysteries of Purification for Children sample pages flipbook.

11) **Sample flip-book** from Ghazali's Book of Prayer

<https://mobissue.com/uqoz/hmsd> al-Ghazali’s Mysteries of Prayer for Children sample pages flipbook.

12) **Ghazali Children Core teachings videos:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-F3Vvk5ctkc&list=PLeh49fuXIca3VJNJxsCFb0nHrcZalRKWP>

Core teachings adapted for children from the books of the Revival of the Religious Sciences. These are intended to inspire children to understand why and how they can perfect their Hearts and character. These videos are to be used in combination with the Ghazali Children's Education Project curricula, books and resources.

13) **Baraka Blue** on ego, True Self & the Ghazali Children's Project (short video 3 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DztiXvXrGNc>

Baraka Blue, a well-known American Muslim poet and rapper speaking about the spiritual teachings of al-Ghazali. To watch the fascinating full interview with him (20 mins) go here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOdigK8H8sU>

14) **Ghazali Website 'Things to do'**. See the delightful videos children produce themselves and post. This is the most visited and popular section of the website.

<https://ghazalichildren.org/things-to-do/>

15) **Ghazali Website 'Curriculum'** resources and downloadable documents

<https://ghazalichildren.org/curriculum/>

16) **How Ghazali Stories can be used as a Tool to Contribute to the Formation of Good Character** – This resource outlines how the Ghazali Stories provide an entertaining structure for character development.

<http://ghazalichildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Ghazali-stories-and-virtue-development-Addressing-the-Needs-and-Opportunities-of-Islamic-Weekend-Schools-letters-from-parents-and-teachers.pdf>



Imam al-Ghazali's teachings address the whole person. For example, in his book, on the *Mysteries of Purification*, regarding the purification of both the outward and the inward, he wrote that "one should know with certitude that the purification of the Heart comes through ridding the soul of its vices and reforming it with virtue, and that a person who stops at outward purification alone is like someone who wants to invite a king to his home, then busies himself with decorating its front door, while leaving the inside full of rubbish and debris."

The Project's aim is to establish from the start of the child's life, reflexive habits such as humility, patience, love, altruism, gentleness, forbearance, and respect for other faiths while providing children with real and effective tools to address such failings as selfishness, backbiting, arguing, laziness, envy, bragging, hypocrisy, greed, wasting time and pride.

17) Curriculum Objectives

The aim of the Ghazali Children's Project materials is to support children:

- in their ability to recognize and maintain their innate human dignity.
- in becoming aware of their True Selves and in identifying with this pure aspect of their being rather than with the lower, false, egoic and separative nature which is centered on itself [al-nafs al-ammara].
- in becoming self-observant and self-correcting.
- in realizing nobility of character through imitation of the Prophetic qualities realized by understanding, loving, and practicing the inner dimensions of all outward acts – to stop simply just "going through the motions".
- in living life with humility and in service.

* * *

When small children are presented with truth, they recognize it; they cannot bear injustice or lying. The Ghazali educational package presents essential teachings in a simple and enjoyable way, making otherwise deep concepts accessible and easy to live and grow by. It gives parents a language through which they can discuss profound concepts with their children.

Ghazali provides a map for all ages. The materials are for children who can read, but may easily be adapted by parents and teachers for a child as young as five years of age. Ghazali's core teachings, which are presented in the stories and then reinforced by the workbooks, curricula, videos and children's website, provide a systematic way to develop noble character in an enjoyable way.

Realization of the Objectives

The objectives of the curriculum of the Ghazali Children's Project are achieved through:

- a. Core teachings presented in stories and reinforced by workbooks, curricula, and the website (Ghazalichildren.org)
- b. A curriculum which encourages self-observation and correction with activities such as quiet time doing one's Heart drawings, the Virtue Box, and more.
- c. Social service built into the calendar
- d. Play-acting, through which both the unpleasantness of the bad action is better understood and the correct act practiced, is experienced as pleasurable. (e.g. not sharing then sharing, meanness then kindness). For example: Ghazali explains that a good thought must be followed through immediately before the 'whispering' suggests otherwise. Children can take turns expressing a good thought while another child whispers a counter suggestion. This fun game demonstrates clearly what goes on in peoples' minds and makes it easier to be aware of these thoughts and make the correct choice.
- e. A key project feature is based on role-modeling. The teachers, parents and students must all strive to embody what Ghazali is transmitting so that everyone is a good example for the other. In this way, not only do the students improve, but the community as a whole will be transformed. The best schools will involve the parents, teachers, students, alumni, and the community at large.

It is recommended that all parents and teachers first read straight through the children's books. In this way they can easily convey and continually reinforce the ideas to smaller children during daily life activities and simplified bedtime stories, while at the same time becoming clear as to the changes they need to make in *themselves*.

Please emphasize that this learning is a community effort. Teachers, parents and students all need to work together with the material in order to reinforce what is being taught. Children can learn from role models better than from stories. The ideal is for each parent and teacher to read through the children's books 1-6, and use every opportunity in daily life to draw attention to these teachings. A class by itself will not be enough to transform the character of a child. Collective involvement also provides a precious opportunity for the parents and teachers to observe and consciously correct themselves, thereby becoming the kind of role model/teacher which Imam al-Ghazali says we are to be. He concludes his Book of Knowledge-considered to be a summation of his entire *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, by emphasizing that we are *all* teachers.

THEMES

Imam al-Ghazali based everything he wrote on his profound understanding of Quran and Hadith. Certain themes from al-Ghazali's **Book One** are presented repeatedly in the children's stories in order to emphasize their importance and underscore their urgency. Among them are:

- Divisions of Knowledge, their importance and Sacred Sources.
- The brevity of human life, whose true purpose is to know and worship God and prepare to meet Him.
- The Two Worlds: The fleeting enjoyment of this world and the Eternal Peace in the Abode of Permanence.
- Human dependence on God, trust in His Will.
- The polishing of the Spiritual Heart: self-observation and correction, key virtues, and harmful vices.
- The provisions and focus for life's journey, the importance of not wasting time.
- The quality of the true teacher and responsibility of the student: we are all teachers.
- Putting knowledge into practice.

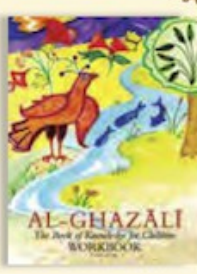
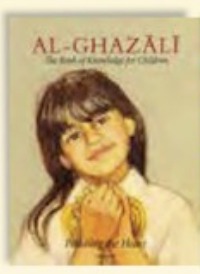
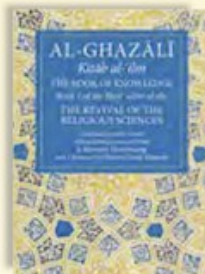
In **Book Two**, the Book of Belief/Creed, Imam al-Ghazali explains the nature of God – Who and What and Where He is. This has been adapted for children. This book then goes on to talk about accountability and what happens after we die.

Book Three, The Mysteries of Purity, and **Book Four**, The Mysteries of Prayer, help children to love and understand the deep and beautiful levels of ablutions and prayer with a special emphasis on humility.

Books Five and **Book Six**, Charity and Fasting address the profound meanings of generosity, patience and the deeper interior levels of the fast.

Book Seven on the Hajj, provides again the sacred structure and interior personal transformative aspects underpinning the pilgrimage. (Forthcoming)

FONS VITAE — THE GHAZALI CHILDREN'S BOOKS



BOOK SET ONE:

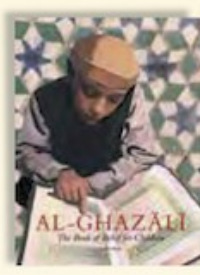
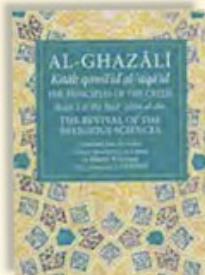
BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE

Adult Book • Children's Book • Workbook • DVD (3 books)

Adult Book of Knowledge 289 pages\$26.95

Book of Knowledge (children)
215 pages w/ color illustrations and DVD\$22.95

Workbook Book of Knowledge
194 pages w/ color illustrations and school curriculum\$19.95



BOOK SET TWO:

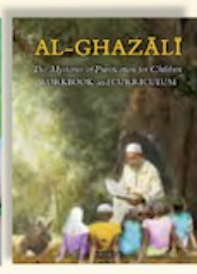
BOOK OF BELIEF

Adult Book • Children's Book • Workbook (3 books)

Adult The Principles of the Creed 136 pages\$25.95

Book of Belief (children)
54 pages w/ color illustrations\$19.95

Workbook Book of Belief
100 pages w/ black/white illustrations and school curriculum\$18.95



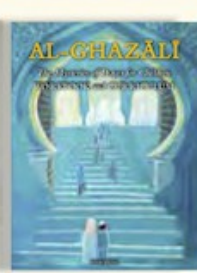
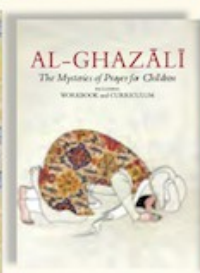
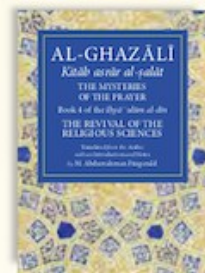
BOOK SET THREE:

THE MYSTERIES OF PURIFICATION

Adult Book • Children's Book & Workbook volume (2 books)

Adult Book of Purity 112 pages\$23.95

Book and Workbook of Purity (children)
224 pages w/ color illustrations and school curriculum\$29.95



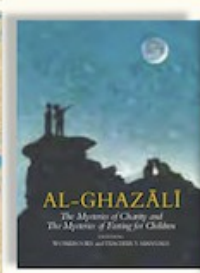
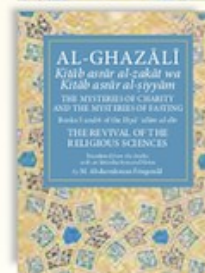
BOOK SET FOUR:

THE MYSTERIES OF PRAYER

Adult Book • Children's Book & Workbook volume (2 books)

Adult Book of Prayer 236 pages\$26.95

Book and Workbook of Prayer (children)
320 pages w/ color illustrations and school curriculum\$32.95



BOOK SET FIVE & SIX:

THE MYSTERIES OF CHARITY & THE MYSTERIES OF FASTING

Adult Book • Children's Book & Workbook volume

Adult Book of Charity & Fasting 196 pages\$25.95

Book & Workbook of Charity & Fasting (children)
294 pages w/ color illustrations and school curriculum\$34.95

www.GhazaliChildren.org

No ordinary website, but an interactive universe for entertaining and educating kids at home and as a support for school teachers. For book orders, contest announcements, Ghazali Kid's Introductions, News, Things to Do and Resources. For PILOT SCHOOL participation, questions and sharing please e mail us at: FonsVitae.Ghazali@gmail.com | For full selection of Ghazali Books visit FonsVitae.com
Any questions contact: Project Director – Gray Henry at 502-939-7373 or email: Grayh101@aol.com

FOR ORDERS: fonsvitaeky@aol.com

www.fonsvitae.com

(502) 897-3641 phone/fax

Timeless Teachings for Young Readers

Imam al-Ghazali's writing offers children of all ages the spiritual guidance they need at a time when their values are being formed

BY GRAY HENRY

SHAYKH ABDAL HAKIM MURAD (T.J. Winter), Shaykh Zayed Lecturer of Islamic Studies in the Faculty of Divinity at University of Cambridge, and dean and founder of the Cambridge Muslim College, notes, "If the Qur'an tells us that the heart is the essence of man, so that the Prophet (*salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) on his Ascension saw the highest perfection with his heart [Quran 53:11], and if revelation itself descended 'on his heart', then the heart is the unique interface of the eternal and the finite realms..."

The Louisville, Ky. based Fons Vitae, working in collaboration with Shaykh Hamza Yusuf Hanson, has undertaken the monumental task of publishing Imam al-Ghazali's 11th century 40-volume magnum opus, *The Revival of the Religious Sciences (Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din)* as an educational package re-crafted for families and schools. Regarded in the Muslim world over the centuries as the greatest compendium of Islamic spirituality and ethical behavior for everyday life, it lays down practical teachings and explains how the outer aspects of Islam can, through their inner spiritually transformative meanings, change every situation into one that strengthens the innate human nobility of character. Prophet Muhammad said, "I was sent only to perfect good character."

Hamza Yusuf explains, "The Ghazali Children's Project is nothing less than a revolution in developing humane, ethical and committed Muslim youth, who are in dire need of guidance in these troubled times. Imam al-Ghazali is the Proof of Islam, and these teachings, presented in a beautiful life-affirming way, will prove to be a major shift in the way Islam is taught to young people. As a community, we owe much to Fons Vitae for bringing them to fruition. Let the transformation begin!"

Ingrid Mattson, the London and

Windsor Community Chair in Islamic Studies at Huron University College at Western University in Canada, and a former ISNA president, says, "The Imam Ghazali Children's series is a gift to our children who deserve a pedagogy of Islam that allows them to develop the innate goodness which God has placed within each human being so they

can become moral, kind and happy adults."

Ghazali Children's Series provides authentic quality guidance for children of all ages at a time when their values are being formed. Imam al-Ghazali's systematic approach for developing virtuous character is provided in an educational package that includes beautifully produced children's books, source texts for parents and teachers, workbooks with activities, and a school curriculum, all supported by an interactive parent-children's website and Pilot School Program. These materials offer a creative, enjoyable, and spiritual supplement or alternative to standard Islamic Studies curricula with a strong focus on the purification of the heart.

Regarding the purification of both the outward and the inward, Abū Hāmid Muhammad ibn Muhammad Al-Ghazali (1058-1111) wrote that one should know with certitude that the purification of the



Heart comes through ridding the soul of its vices and reforming it with virtue, and that a person who stops at outward purification alone is like someone who wants to invite a king to his home, then busies himself with decorating its front door, while leaving the inside full of rubbish and debris.

The project aims to establish, from the start of a child's life, reflexive habits such as humility, patience, love, altruism, gentleness, forbearance, and respect for other faiths while providing children with real and effective tools to address such failings as selfishness, backbiting, arguing, laziness, envy, bragging, hypocrisy, greed, wasting time, and pride.

Children need to be raised as spiritual beings who are self observant and self correcting. The project has seen how 4 and 5 year olds are drawn to spiritual truths.

Teachings need to engage the imagination and the spirit of children and attract

CHILDREN NEED TO BE RAISED AS SPIRITUAL BEINGS WHO ARE SELF OBSERVANT AND SELF CORRECTING.

their enjoyment and love. A child needs to be handed back his or her dignity and religion in a way that he or she can understand what it is *really* for and therefore truly *desire* consciously to keep his or her innate goodness of character intact.

The project envisages that children, for generations to come, will be able to understand that their faith is about the interior process of perfecting the Spiritual Heart and eliminating base character traits, which accumulate when the true nature of the Heart is neglected.

Fons Vitae is experiencing the global Muslim community coming together enthusiastically endorsing and supporting this series. A major grant from the John Templeton Foundation has contributed to the publication. The Ghazali Project has been officially launched in Morocco, Indonesia, Great Britain, Canada, and the U.S. It is becoming part of imam training programs and is now used in prison outreach. Currently, translations are underway in Arabic, Urdu, German, Swedish, and Malay.

THE PLAN

The first two book sets, *The Book of Knowledge* and *the Book of Belief*, are now available with the *Book of Purity* and *The Book of Prayer* nearing completion.

Each set contains a complete translation, in readable English, of Ghazali's original text for parents and teachers accompanied by a beautifully illustrated version adapted as stories for children ages 7–11. It is also appropriate for other ages and for parents. The accompanying workbook includes activities and even comics, which reinforce Ghazali's teachings, as well as a full school curriculum.

This educational package is supported by:

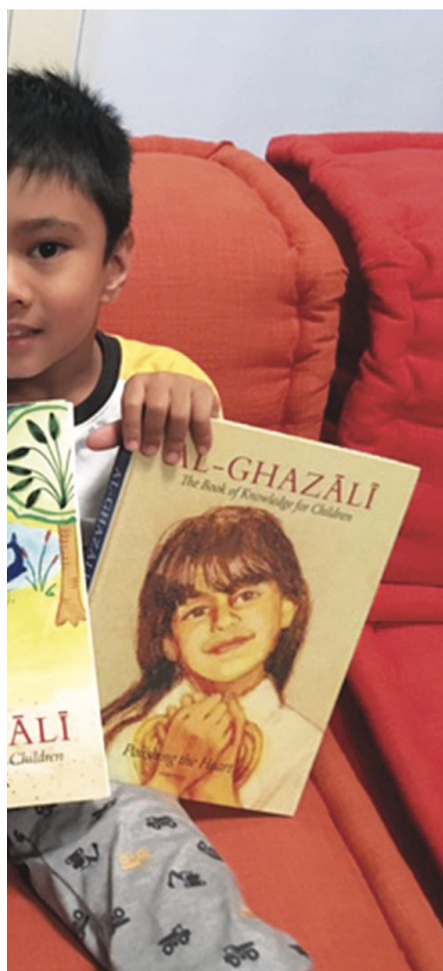
- A team of recognized Islamic scholars and educators;
 - An instructional DVD included in the Children's Book of Knowledge (which also includes showing how the stories may be adapted for small children);
 - A Pilot School Program;
 - An interactive website <http://ghazalichildren.org> (currently active and is expected to be completed in late Fall, 2016);
- The website offers:

The educational package book sets and other relevant children's books, also available in e-book formats;

A meeting place for children with a variety of activities, including story time, contests, videos by children, and other ways to interact using the ideas they are being taught about Ghazali's teachings;

A venue for parents and teachers, providing a variety of resources, and a place for discussion, curriculum updates, and feedback. ■

Gray Henry, Director, FonsVitae, authored this article with the help of Zaytuna Institute in Hayward, Calif.



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#ghazali #fonsvitae #tarbiyah #truelearning #knowledge #ghazalikids

