



Īmān, Qurb & the Trials of Sūrat al-Kahf

A Level 6 Sunday School Workbook — Teacher & Student Edition



Program Level	Level 6 (ages ~11-13)
Sessions Covered	Two 45-minute class periods
Session 1	Īmān and Our Relationship with Allāh — Al-Qarīb, the Ever-Near (Sūrat al-Baqarah 2:186)
Session 2	Sūrat al-Kahf: The Four Trials — Faith, Wealth, Knowledge & Power (18:13, 46, 65, 84)
Arabic Typography	Uthmani script (Amiri Quran typeface)
Primary Sources	Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr; Ibn al-Qayyim, <i>Madārij al-Sālikīn</i>
Contemporary References	Dr. Yasir Qadhi; Nouman Ali Khan (Bayyinah Institute)

Prepared for classroom use • Includes fill-in-the-blank vocabulary, discussion guides & teacher's notes

Table of Contents

How to Use This Workbook

Notes for Teachers & Students	3
-------------------------------	---

Session 1 — Īmān and Our Relationship with Allāh

Learning Objectives & Session Timing	4
Core Verse: Sūrat al-Baqarah 2:186 (Al-Qarīb)	4
Tafsīr Notes — Ibn Kathīr & Ibn al-Qayyim's <i>Madārij al-Sālikīn</i>	5
Vocabulary: Fill-in-the-Blank Table	5
Discussion Questions	5
Activity: My Du'ā' Journal	6
Closing Reflection & Du'ā'	6

Session 2 — Sūrat al-Kahf: The Four Trials

Learning Objectives & Session Timing	7
Introduction: Why We Read Sūrat al-Kahf	7
Trial 1 — Faith: Verse 18:13 (The Youth of the Cave)	8
Trial 2 — Wealth: Verse 18:46 (The Man with Two Gardens)	8
Trial 3 — Knowledge: Verse 18:65 (Mūsā & Al-Khiḍr)	9
Trial 4 — Power: Verse 18:84 (Dhūl-Qarnayn)	9
Vocabulary: Fill-in-the-Blank Table	10
Activity: Match the Trial	10
Discussion Questions	10
Closing Reflection & Du'ā'	10

Appendix

Arabic-English Glossary (Both Sessions)	11
Teacher's Answer Key	12
Sources & Further Study	13

Notes for Teachers & Students

This workbook is designed to be used by **both the teacher and the students** during two 45-minute class periods. Every page students see is also the page the teacher is teaching from — there is no separate teacher's guide to juggle. Sections that are specifically for the teacher (timing cues, facilitation tips, background context) are marked with a dashed gold box like the one below.

TEACHER NOTE

Boxes like this one appear throughout the workbook. They contain pacing suggestions, discussion-facilitation tips, and background context drawn from classical and contemporary scholarship. Students are welcome to read them too — nothing here is confidential — but they are written with the teacher's preparation in mind.

What You Will Need

- This printed workbook (one per student, or one shared copy per pair)
- A pencil or pen for the fill-in-the-blank sections and reflection activities
- A comfortable, quiet space for the closing du'ā' at the end of each session

A Note on the Arabic Text

All Qur'anic verses in this workbook are printed in **Uthmani script** (rasm 'Uthmani), the standard orthography used in the vast majority of printed Mus'hafs worldwide, including the Mus'haf of Madinah. Each verse is accompanied by a transliteration and an English translation of its meaning, since no translation can fully capture the meaning of the divine speech. Students are strongly encouraged to also listen to a qualified reciter and, where possible, learn to read the verses directly from the Arabic.

A Note on the Scholarly Sources

The tafsīr notes in this workbook draw primarily on the classical commentary of **Ibn Kathīr** (d. 774 AH), one of the most widely used Sunni tafsīrs, and on **Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's** *Madārij al-Sālikīn* ("The Ranks of the Divine Seekers"), a spiritual commentary that maps the believer's journey toward closeness to Allāh. Contemporary explanations referenced for classroom-friendly framing are drawn from the recorded tafsīr lectures of **Dr. Yasir Qadhi** and **Nouman Ali Khan** of the Bayyinah Institute. Teachers are encouraged to consult these works directly for the fullest picture — see *Sources & Further Study* at the back of this workbook.

Session 1: Īmān and Our Relationship with Allāh

Al-Qarīb — "The Ever-Near" • Core Text: Sūrat al-Baqarah 2:186 • Duration: 45 minutes

By the end of this session, students will be able to:

- Recite Sūrat al-Baqarah 2:186 in Arabic and explain its meaning in English.
- Explain what it means that Allāh is *Al-Qarīb* (the Ever-Near) and why this verse answers directly rather than through the command "say."
- Describe at least three ways that believing in Allāh's nearness should shape how they make du'ā' (supplication).
- Connect the concept of Īmān to consistently turning to Allāh in worship and supplication.

TEACHER NOTE — SUGGESTED PACING (45 MIN)

Opening reflection (5 min) → Verse recitation & vocabulary (10 min) → Tafsīr discussion (15 min) → Du'ā' journal activity (10 min) → Closing & group du'ā' (5 min).

Opening Reflection (5 minutes)

Discuss with a partner, then share with the class: Have you ever needed to talk to someone important — a principal, a doctor, a company — and had to go through an assistant, wait on hold, or fill out a form before you could actually speak to them? Now imagine someone so important that you never need an appointment, a password, or someone to pass along your message. They hear you the instant you speak. Who might that be, and how does that make you feel?

Core Verse

Sūrat al-Baqarah (2:186)

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۖ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُوا
Wa idhā sa'alaka 'ibādī 'annī fa innī qarīb(un), ujību da'wata ad-dā'i idhā da'āni, falyastajībū lī wa liyu'minū bī la'allahum yarshudūn.

"And when My servants ask you, [O Prophet], concerning Me — indeed I am near. I respond to the call of the caller when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me and believe in Me, that they may be rightly guided." (Sūrat al-Baqarah 2:186)

Tafsīr Notes

From Ibn Kathīr's Tafsīr: Ibn Kathīr and other classical exegetes point out something unusual about this verse's structure. In many places where the Qur'ān addresses a question put to the Prophet ﷺ, Allāh instructs him: "Say..." (qul). Here, however, Allāh answers directly — "indeed I am near" — with no intermediary between the question and the response. Commentators explain that this nearness (qurb) is a nearness of knowledge, hearing, and response, not a physical nearness, and that it is emphasized especially in the context of du'ā', showing that supplication requires no intercessor and no special access — only sincerity.

From Ibn al-Qayyim's *Madārij al-Sālikin*: Ibn al-Qayyim structures his famous spiritual commentary around the "stations" (manāzil) that a sincere worshipper travels through on the way to Allāh. Qurb — closeness to Allāh — is treated as one of the highest of these stations, reached not by physical effort but through consistent worship, obedience, remembrance (dhikr), and repeatedly turning back to Allāh (ināba). Du'ā' itself, he explains, is both a proof of that closeness and one of the clearest means of drawing nearer to it.

Vocabulary — Fill in the Blank

Using the verse above and class discussion, write the meaning of each word or phrase in the blank column.

ARABIC	TRANSLITERATION	YOUR ANSWER (MEANING)
عِبَادِي	'ibādī	
قَرِيبٌ	qarīb	
أُجِيبُ	ujību	
دَعْوَةُ الدَّاعِ	da'wata ad-dā'i	
فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا	falyastajībū	
وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا	wa liyu'minū	
يُرْشِدُونِ	yarshudūn	

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think Allāh answers directly ("I am near") instead of saying "Tell them: I am near," the way He does in many other verses?
- What does the word *qarīb* (near) teach us about how we should feel and act when we make du'ā'?
- Ibn al-Qayyim describes closeness to Allāh as a "station" a believer travels toward through worship, dhikr, and turning back to Him. Name two specific actions you could take this week to grow closer to Allāh.
- How might truly believing that Allāh is Al-Qarīb change the way you handle a difficult day at school or at home?

Activity: My Du'ā' Journal (10 minutes)

Because Allāh is Al-Qarīb and responds to every sincere call, write one short du'ā' in each category below. You do not need to write in Arabic — write in your own words, in English.

1. A du'ā' asking Allāh for guidance in something you are unsure about

2. A du'ā' about something specific happening in your life right now

3. A du'ā' of gratitude, thanking Allāh for something specific

TEACHER NOTE — FACILITATION TIP

Some students may be shy about sharing personal du'ā's aloud. Consider only asking for volunteers rather than going around the room, and remind students that this journal is between them and Allāh — the point of the activity is the writing itself, not the sharing.

Closing Reflection & Du'ā'

Before we close, remember: no line, no appointment, no password stands between you and Allāh. Whenever you call on Him, He is already near. Let's close together with a short du'ā' for guidance.

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا

"Our Lord, grant us mercy from Yourself and prepare for us right guidance in our affair." (Sūrat al-Kahf 18:10)

Session 2: Sūrat al-Kahf — The Four Trials

Al-Fitan al-Arba'ah — "The Four Trials" • Core Texts: 18:13, 18:46, 18:65, 18:84 • Duration: 45 minutes

By the end of this session, students will be able to:

- Identify the four major trials (fitan) addressed in Sūrat al-Kahf: faith, wealth, knowledge, and power.
- Recite and translate one key verse connected to each of the four stories.
- Explain, using Ibn Kathīr's commentary and contemporary explanations, one practical lesson from each story.
- Explain why Sūrat al-Kahf is described as protection against the trial of the Dajjāl.

TEACHER NOTE — SUGGESTED PACING (45 MIN)

Introduction & framework (5 min) → Four verse blocks with discussion (25 min, ~6 min each) → Vocabulary & matching activity (10 min) → Closing & du'ā' (5 min).

Introduction: Why We Read Sūrat al-Kahf

Sūrat al-Kahf ("The Cave") is recommended reading every Friday, and it is well known for four stories placed at its center: the Youth of the Cave, the Man with Two Gardens, Mūsā's journey with a wise servant (identified in hadith as Al-Khiḍr), and the account of Dhūl-Qarnayn. Contemporary teachers such as Nouman Ali Khan have popularized a helpful framework for understanding these four stories together: each one addresses a different *fitnah* (trial) that every believer faces — the trial of **faith**, the trial of **wealth**, the trial of **knowledge**, and the trial of **power**. Scholars note that these same four elements — false belief, wealth, knowledge, and power — will all appear together in the greatest trial of the end of times, the Dajjāl, which is why regularly reflecting on this sūrah is described as a source of protection.

In this session, we will look at one verse from each of the four stories.

Trial 1 — Faith: The Youth of the Cave

Sūrat al-Kahf (18:13)

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ نَبَأَهُم بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّهُمْ فِتْيَةٌ آمَنُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَزِدْنَا هُدًى

Naḥnu naquṣṣu 'alayka naba'ahum bil-ḥaqq(i); innahum fityatun āmanū bi rabbihim wa zidnāhum hudā.

"It is We who relate to you their story in truth. Indeed, they were youths who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance." (Sūrat al-Kahf 18:13)

Tafsīr Note: Ibn Kathīr highlights that Allāh describes these believers with the word *fityah* — young people, not elders or scholars — showing that youth is never a barrier to strong *īmān*. Notice also the order in the verse: their guidance *increased* after they believed and stood firm. Classical and contemporary commentators alike draw the same lesson for young believers today: taking a firm, sincere stand for your faith is met by Allāh with more guidance, not less.

Trial 2 — Wealth: The Man with Two Gardens

Sūrat al-Kahf (18:46)

الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا

Al-mālu wal-banūna zīnatul-ḥayātīd-dunyā, wal-bāqiyātuṣ-ṣāliḥātu khayrun 'inda rabbika thawāban wa khayrun amalā.

"Wealth and children are [but] adornment of the worldly life. But the enduring good deeds are better to your Lord for reward and better for [one's] hope." (Sūrat al-Kahf 18:46)

Tafsīr Note: This verse comes right after the parable of a wealthy man who boasted to his companion about his gardens, his wealth, and the number of his family, and doubted the Hereafter. Ibn Kathīr explains this āyah as Allāh's direct comment on that story: possessions and children are temporary decorations of this life, while *al-bāqiyāt aṣ-ṣāliḥāt* — lasting righteous words and deeds — are what actually remain of value with Allāh.

Trial 3 — Knowledge: Mūsā and Al-Khiḍr

Sūrat al-Kahf (18:65)

فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِّنْ عِبَادِنَا آتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِندِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِمَّا لَدُنَّا عِلْمًا

Fawjadā 'abdan min 'ibādinā ātaynāhu raḥmatan min 'indinā wa 'allamnāhu min ladunnā 'ilmā.

"And they found a servant from among Our servants to whom We had given mercy from Us and had taught him from Us a [certain] knowledge." (Sūrat al-Kahf 18:65)

Tafsīr Note: Ibn Kathīr, relying on authentic hadith, identifies this unnamed servant as Al-Khiḍr. Even Mūsā (peace be upon him) — one of the mightiest of the prophets — humbly asked to follow and learn from someone given a different kind of knowledge, described as "'ilm min ladunnā" (knowledge granted directly from Us). The lesson drawn by scholars, both classical and contemporary, is that knowledge is a trust from Allāh, not a personal possession to boast about, and that real learning requires humility, even for the most accomplished among us.

Trial 4 — Power: Dhūl-Qarnayn

Sūrat al-Kahf (18:84)

إِنَّا مَكَّأَلُهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَآتَيْنَاهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَبًا

Innā makkannā lahū fil-arḍi wa ātaynāhu min kulli shay'in sababā.

"Indeed, We established him upon the earth, and We gave him to everything a way." (Sūrat al-Kahf 18:84)

Tafsīr Note: Ibn Kathīr explains that Dhūl-Qarnayn was given wide authority and the practical means ("asbāb") to travel and accomplish his goals across the earth. What follows in the sūrah is notable: rather than taking personal credit, Dhūl-Qarnayn repeatedly attributes his success to Allāh's mercy and uses his power to protect a vulnerable people by building a barrier against Gog and Magog, refusing payment for the work. Power, the story teaches, is a trust ("amānah") to be used for others — not a possession to be hoarded.

Vocabulary — Fill in the Blank

Using the four verses above and class discussion, write the meaning of each word in the blank column.

ARABIC	TRANSLITERATION	YOUR ANSWER (MEANING)
فِتْيَةٌ	fityah	
هُدًى	hudā	
زِينَةٌ	zīnah	
الْبَاقِيَّاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ	al-bāqiyāt aṣ-ṣāliḥāt	
رَحْمَةً	raḥmah	
عِلْمًا	'ilm	
مَكَّانًا	makkannā	
سَبَبًا	sababan	

Activity: Match the Trial

Draw a line (or write the matching letter) connecting each verse reference to its trial and story.

1. Sūrat al-Kahf 18:13

A. Trial of Power — Dhūl-Qarnayn

2. Sūrat al-Kahf 18:46

B. Trial of Faith — Youth of the Cave

3. Sūrat al-Kahf 18:65

C. Trial of Knowledge — Mūsā & Al-Khiḍr

4. Sūrat al-Kahf 18:84

D. Trial of Wealth — Man with Two Gardens

Discussion Questions

- Of the four trials — faith, wealth, knowledge, and power — which do you think is hardest for someone your age today, and why?
- How does the story of Dhūl-Qarnayn show that having power is different from using it well?
- Scholars connect all four trials in Sūrat al-Kahf to the Dajjāl. Why do you think reading and reflecting on this sūrah regularly is described as protection?

Closing Reflection & Du'ā'

Faith, wealth, knowledge, and power are all tests of what we do with what Allāh gives us. Let's close by asking Allāh for guidance in every one of them.

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا

"Our Lord, grant us mercy from Yourself and prepare for us right guidance in our affair." (Sūrat al-Kahf 18:10)

Arabic-English Glossary

Complete reference list — all terms from Sessions 1 & 2

Arabic	Transliteration	Meaning	Session
إِيمَانٌ	īmān	Faith; belief	1
قَرِيبٌ	qarīb	Near, close	1
دُعَاءٌ	du'ā'	Supplication; calling upon Allāh	1
أُجِيبُ	ujību	I respond / I answer	1
قُرْبٌ	qurb	Nearness, closeness (to Allāh)	1
إِنَابَةٌ	ināba	Turning back to Allāh in repentance	1
فِتْنَةٌ	fitnah	Trial, test, temptation	2
فِتْيَةٌ	fityah	Youths, young people	2
هُدًى	hudā	Guidance	2
زِينَةٌ	zīnah	Adornment, decoration	2
الْبَاقِيَّاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ	al-bāqiyāt aṣ-ṣāliḥāt	The enduring righteous deeds	2
عِلْمٌ	'ilm	Knowledge	2
رَحْمَةٌ	raḥmah	Mercy	2
سَبَبٌ (ج. أَسْبَابٌ)	sabab (pl. asbāb)	A means, a way	2
أَمَانَةٌ	amānah	A trust; something held in trust	2
الدَّجَالُ	ad-Dajjāl	The False Messiah of the end times	2

Teacher's Answer Key

Suggested answers for the fill-in-the-blank vocabulary tables

Session 1 Vocabulary (2:186)

Arabic	Suggested Meaning
عِبَادِي	My servants
قَرِيبٌ	Near / close
أَجِيبُ	I respond / I answer
دَعْوَةُ الدَّاعِ	The call of the one who calls (the supplicant)
فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا	So let them respond (obey) [to Me]
وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا	And let them believe [in Me]
يُرْشَدُونَ	They may be [rightly] guided

Session 2 Vocabulary (18:13, 46, 65, 84)

Arabic	Suggested Meaning
فَتِيَّةٌ	Youths / young people
هُدًى	Guidance
زِينَةٌ	Adornment / decoration
الْبَاقِيَّاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ	The enduring righteous deeds
رَحْمَةً	Mercy
عِلْمًا	Knowledge
مَكَّنَّا	We established / We gave authority
سَبِيلًا	A means / a way

Match the Trial — Answer Key

1 → B (Faith) 2 → D (Wealth) 3 → C (Knowledge) 4 → A (Power)

TEACHER NOTE

These are suggested answers to guide discussion, not the only acceptable wording. Accept any student answer that captures the core meaning, especially for the open-ended discussion questions on the previous pages.

Sources & Further Study

Qur'anic Text

Verses are presented in Uthmani script (rasm 'Uthmani), the standard orthography of the printed Mus'haf. English renderings of verse meanings throughout this workbook follow the commonly used Saheeh International style of rendering, adapted for classroom clarity.

Classical Scholarship

- **Ibn Kathīr, Ismā'il ibn 'Umar (d. 774 AH).** *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*. A widely used classical Sunni commentary, referenced throughout this workbook for verse-by-verse explanation and background on the stories of Sūrat al-Kahf.
- **Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 751 AH).** *Madārij al-Sālikīn bayna Manāzil Iyyāka Na'budu wa Iyyāka Nasta'in*. A major spiritual commentary structuring the believer's journey to Allāh around a series of "stations," including qurb (nearness), referenced in Session 1.

Contemporary References

- **Dr. Yasir Qadhi.** Recorded tafsīr lectures and classroom-oriented commentary, referenced for accessible explanations suitable for a Level 6 audience.
- **Nouman Ali Khan, Bayyinah Institute.** Recorded tafsīr series on Sūrat al-Kahf, including the popular "four fitan" framework (faith, wealth, knowledge, power) used to organize Session 2 of this workbook.

TEACHER NOTE

Teachers preparing to lead these sessions are strongly encouraged to listen to or read the full lectures and commentary referenced above rather than relying solely on the condensed notes in this workbook. The notes here are summaries intended to support — not replace — direct engagement with these sources.

Workbook prepared for classroom use in a Level 6 Sunday School program. All Qur'anic citations reference the sūrah and āyah number for easy verification against any standard Mus'haf or trusted digital Qur'an resource.