

How and why does religion bring peace and conflict?

(Intention) What we intend to cover in our learning: (Topic web of concepts here)

Engage

Session 1: (May take two lessons) Explore what children already know about Christian, Muslim and Hindu beliefs in regard to peace. Explore Leviticus 19:18, Proverbs 20:3 and 1 Thessalonians 5:15 for Christianity, identify that they don't believe in retaliation and want to be at peace with everyone. Explore idea of Islam submission to Allah and Qur'an 49:10 and 2:208, but Muslims believe in Holy War (Harb al-Muqadis) and the reasons for this. Explore the concept of ahimsa in Hinduism, but that sometimes it might be honourable to fight for protection. • Discuss and explore the difference between outer- and inner-peace shown through different religions, particularly Hinduism, and how this affects how the believers live.

Enquire and Explore

Session 2: Explore violence in the Bible through 'David and Goliath' and question the commandment 'thou shalt not kill' with reference to the military. Consider common faith as rallying war cries through 'Onward Christian Soldiers' song - Christianity and 'Allah Akbar' ('God is great:' Muslim); also discuss the phrases 'for God's sake' and 'violence for peace.' 'Among the people there is he whose discourse on the life of the world pleases you, and he calls on God as witness to what is in his heart, yet he is an unyielding and antagonistic adversary. When he turns and leaves, he walks about corrupting the earth, destroying crops and livestock – God loves not corruption:' discuss how religions provides a useful cover and powerful motivator for the evil-hearted, and that it has a different effect on the power-hungry than it does on the altruistic/ virtuous, which arguably says more about human psychology than it does about religion. E.g. the jihad (a struggle to fight against enemies of Islam) is also used to further territorial ambitions of ruthless leaders, just as today it is sometimes distorted to justify terrorist bombings (there also exists extremism in Christianity). Like law and politics, religion can be used to defend the oppressed and oppress the defenceless. Religion can be a source of extreme nationalism (e.g. in Christianity, Islam and Judaism God is described as a 'mighty warrior,' 'just king' and 'righteous judge.')

Session 3: Teenage activist Malala Yousafzai was shot by the Taliban, who said her work (educating girls) was 'a new obscenity.' Outline there are events in history (e.g. 9.11??) where people have killed in the name of their religion. When Christianity was becoming powerful, Popes ordered Christian Crusaders (11-13th Century) to kill lots of Muslims in attempts to win control of Jerusalem (the 'Holy Land'). These are called 'holy' wars: wars religions justify (e.g. a Muslim interpretation of the Qu'ran to kill the 'unfaithful' ie, people of other religions). • It is easy to blame e.g. the Muslim faith for 'honour killings' etc (leads to Islamophobia) but important to recognise not all Muslims interpret holy texts this way: 'there is no 'I' in ISIS.' • Wishing for religions not to exist reflects a savagery that will arguably inflame rather than reduce tension. • Religion is used to justify heinous crimes e.g. recent terrorism but there is also evidence people don't need God as an excuse to commit crimes, eg: Stalin's Soviet Union's genocide against the state's own people; Russian Christians killed for their beliefs by atheists intent on purging religion from the Soviet Union. • When Northern Ireland's Protestant government and police force fought the Catholic minority who wanted to leave the UK and join a united Ireland, there were other causes than religious belief: for example, Catholics had less opportunity for obtaining jobs and lived in sub-standard housing. Many Middle Eastern wars are due to competition over land/ oil/ resources. • Religion's identity not only survives but is heightened when national and political alliances break apart and therefore can be blamed for conflict

Session 4: Martin Luther King confronted racism by calling churches to become not more secular but more Christian: to evoke a deeper and truer Christianity. This is an example of religious-inspired social action. Display Understanding Christianity picture 17. • How do wars start? Pursuit of profits/ power/ territorial or tribal supremacy. Religion can be caught up in these... or moderate these forces, e.g. refusing to kill/ seeking peace. Religion is not always deeply rooted in every conflict and is at risk of sometimes coming to obscure more deeply rooted causes and motivations.

Session 5: Most Christians believe war should be avoided if possible and only undertaken if all other efforts to resolve an issue by peaceful means have failed. Many see war to be the result of a failure to live by God's standards. • Pacifists such as Quakers believe war is never the answer. Groups of Muslims, Christians etc interpret sacred texts differently and behave in order to encourage and promote peace. • Religion is often a stronger force than material incentives: it is better at directing behaviour towards social betterment than laws or physical force. Both Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King Jr conducted non-violent protests based upon religious beliefs. • Religion teaches tolerance for people of other races and religions. The 10 Commandments in the Bible are the basis of Western ethical and legal systems. Similarly, the 5 Pillars of Islam are the basis for most Muslims' lifestyles. • Where religion develops freely and people have free access to places of worship, churches, mosques, temples and synagogues have always been shelters for the poor.

Evaluate

Session 6: Evaluate how members of each religion express their desire for peace, e.g. through charity work, prayer, meditation, treating people/animals in a certain way, being missionaries. Do these activities promote peace or conflict? • Explore symbols of peace for different religions and within the world, e.g. peace sign, dove, crescent and star, swastika. Evaluate - What do they make you think of and why? Do they promote peace?

Express

Session 7: Explore and discuss how religions are represented in the news, whether this is more from the perspective of peace or conflict. Look at different news articles and what these mean about the religion, e.g. Malala Yousafzai returning home to where she was shot, Muslim women wearing kippahs to support Jewish women, Hindu priest carrying 'untouchable' into a temple. Can the children write about how the news reports on religion and whether they promote peace or encourage conflict?

(Implementation) Key words I will use and need to know:

Ahimsa	Christianity	Conflict	Harb al-Muqadis
Hinduism	Islam	Pacifism	Peace
Self-defence	Just War Theory	Violence	Justice
Bible	Qu'ran	Jihad	Islamophobia
'Holy' war			

(Implementation) Key information we will learn:

- ✓ The story of David and Goliath
- ✓ Religion is a useful cover (to justify heinous crimes) and a powerful motivator (interpretations of texts) for conflict
- ✓ Interpretations lead to beliefs about how to behave
- ✓ It's important not to group all people of one religious background under one bracket and judge a whole group of people by the actions of a few
- ✓ 'Holy' wars are justified by religions
- ✓ Lots of wars are started because of non-religious causes
- ✓ Many people see war to be a last resort and seek peace

(Implementation) Things to do and find out at home:

- Find out about some of the greatest peace figures in history – Mahatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King and Mother Teresa.
- Research some of the conflicts caused by religion, including the Middle Eastern Conflict, the Iraqi War and also historical problems such as the partition in India.
- Research stereotypes and the danger of judging everyone the same way.

(Implementation) Some key information you can find more out about:

- ✓ The story of David and Goliath, a good video for this is: <https://youtu.be/mQa-GseMSI4>
- ✓ Interpretations lead to beliefs about how to behave, a good video to introduce this is: <https://youtu.be/om3INBWfoxY>
- ✓ It's important not to group all people of one religious background under one bracket and judge a whole group of people by the actions of a few - a good introductory video about stereotypes can be accessed here: <https://youtu.be/I1N81MB3EWs>
- ✓ Many people see war to be a last resort and seek peace, more information can be accessed here: www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zbygixs/revision/5

(Impact) What we will aim to do at the end of our learning:

By the end of our learning we will

- ✓ Recognise the controversial nature of this topic, explaining divergent views relating to it.
- ✓ Explain what at least two religions believe about peace and conflict.
- ✓ Analyse the relationship between peace and pacifism.
- ✓ Begin to analyse and evaluate the role of religion in peace and conflict in real life situations, i.e., Northern Ireland, South Africa, India, Syria, Jerusalem, Palestine.

(Impact) The RE Age Related Expectations we will cover and be assessed against:

Social Human Sciences

	Year 5	Year 6
A. The diverse nature of religion	<p>Explain the different ways in which the terms 'religion' and 'belief' are used by followers from within a religion or worldview and those from outside it.</p> <p>Show awareness that talking about religion and belief can be complex.</p>	<p>Begin to analyse and evaluate the varying use of the terms 'religion' and 'belief' by followers from within a religion or worldview and those from outside it.</p> <p>Recognise some areas of controversy when interpreting and explaining the nature of religion and belief.</p>
C. The ways in which beliefs shape individual identity, and impact on communities and society and vice versa	<p>Explain how beliefs impact on and influence individual lives, communities and society, and how individuals, communities and society can also shape beliefs.</p>	<p>Begin to analyse and evaluate how beliefs impact on, influence and change individual lives, communities and society, and how individuals, communities and society can also shape beliefs.</p>

Supplementary Guidance and Resources:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jul/02/religion-wars-conflict>

<https://debatewise.org/debates/3042-religion-source-of-conflict-or-of-peace/>

https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Role-of-religion-in-conflict-peacebuilding_0.pdf

Glossary <http://www.swracademy.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Religion-War-Peace-Conflict-Copy.pdf>

<https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/guides/zbygixs/revision/5>

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/tackling-violence-building-peace>

<https://quran.com/2/204-205>