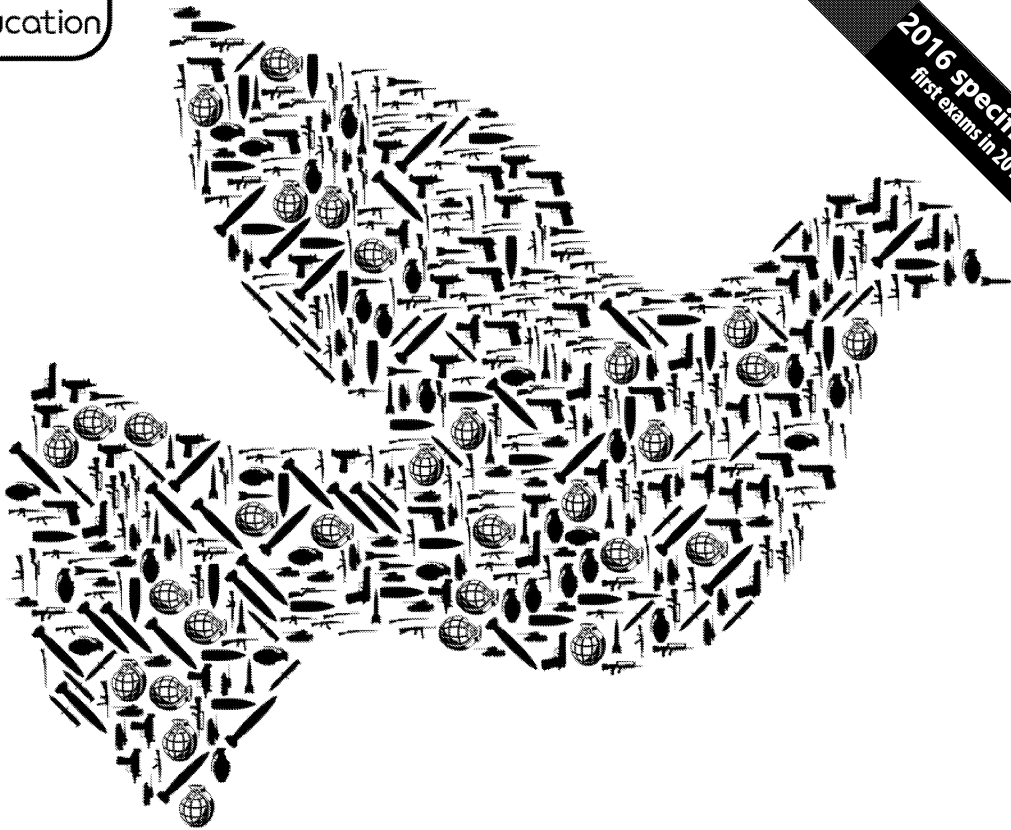




Revision Summaries for GCSE AQA Religious Studies A

Component 2: Theme D Religion, Peace and Conflict

Update v1.1, October 2025

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Teacher's Introduction

The revision summaries in this series are designed to support your students as they study the GCSE AQA Religious Studies A specification, and have been designed to cover the major themes and concepts of each topic point accordingly.

All students, whether they are academically strong, average or weak, can benefit from a concise and clearly explained set of notes to revise from, both as they work through the AQA course and when preparing for their end-of-course exams. It is recommended, therefore, that students be given each relevant summary after learning a topic so that they can clearly understand the summaries and refer back to them when needed. However, the summaries can also function well as a pack given to students in the run-up to their exams.

Remember!

Always check the exam board website for new information, including changes to the specification and sample assessment material.

Each topic follows a set structure detailed below:

- ✓ **Keywords:** A clear list of important terminology students need to know when studying the topic.
- ✓ **Overview:** A look at the major themes of the topic, with a brief introduction to the major points of discussion and disagreement.
- ✓ **Key Points:** The main body of the summaries for each topic, they are a clear and concise set of notes that help students support their own knowledge and understanding of the topic.
- ✓ **Student Checklist:** A helpful guide to what students need to know by the end of the revision summary and a way to check their understanding and progress through a particular topic.
- ✓ **Practice Questions:** A full set of practice questions (with extra multiple-choice questions), complete with mark schemes. These are useful for students wishing to improve their knowledge on a particular topic and to practice skills as they approach their end-of-year exams.

This clearly ensures students not only have a grasp on the key themes of each topic, but also a way to understand their place within the specification as a whole. Students who may have missed lessons or not made detailed notes may benefit greatly from these revision summaries in helping their recollection of key topics closer to their end-of-course exams, especially when looking over topics covered earlier in their studies.

March 2019

Update v1.1, October 2025

As per the exam board assessment updates, changes have been made to the practice questions:

- “contrasting” replaced with “different” in the 4 mark question
- 5-mark question replaced with a 6-mark question
- 2-mark question reduced to a 1-mark question

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* resulting from minor specification changes, suggestions from teachers and peer reviews, or occasional errors reported by customers

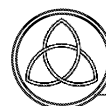
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Peace, Justice, Forgiveness Reconciliation



Keywords

- **Conflict** a clash or struggle between individuals or groups, e.g. war
- **Forgiveness** letting go of past harm and moving forwards to work together
- **Justice** the achievement of fairness within a society or a situation
- **Peace** a state of harmony within society and between societies
- **Peacemakers** people who are actively involved in achieving the aim of peace
- **Reconciliation** the bringing together of two or more conflicting sides with a view to harmony
- **Sermon on the Mount** a section of teaching within the Bible where Jesus promotes peace



Overview

- The topic of violence and conflict is an important one to address in the modern world. Many non-religious people have views regarding the issues of peace and conflict, let alone the position of the pursuance of peace and the avoidance of violence.
- Nevertheless, violence remains a reality with which our society must grapple, and terrorism being just a few examples of modern issues of violence.
- Some of the most important themes when discussing ideas of violence include peace, forgiveness and reconciliation. There are many biblical teachings on these ideas which are used as a guide to help you see where these views come from.
- Peace is generally considered to be the ideal; it is the absence of conflict and war within a society. Forgiveness is the letting go of hurt and negative emotions as a result of conflict, and is believed to be necessary in order to move forward.
- Reconciliation is the resolution of the conflict between conflicting parties and moving forward.



Key Points

Peace

- Peace is the status of society living in harmony, with the absence of conflict or war.
- Many Christians lay great emphasis on the importance of peace. Indeed, there are many biblical teachings in the New Testament which put a high importance on the achievement and maintenance of peace within society.
- Many Christians believe that Jesus taught emphatically that peace is something which he brings them. In the Sermon on the Mount, an important teaching within Matthew, Jesus taught specifically that the peacemakers will be called sons of God.
- However, some Christians feel that violence is justifiable in some instances.
- Some Christians take teachings such as Matthew 10:9 to lead to the idea that violence in some instances, might be considered to be okay.

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Reconciliation

- Forgiveness commonly leads to reconciliation, or vice versa.
- Reconciliation is the process by which two groups who have been in opposition come to move past their differences and work together to create a better, more positive relationship following a conflict in order to facilitate the end of the conflict and establish peace. It is an important part of the ending of conflict as it attempts to establish a way for the conflicting parties to move past their differences, hopefully avoiding continued or future conflicts between the groups.
- The Gospels and the New Testament teach of the reconciliation of human beings to God through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Reconciliation, therefore, is an important part of Christian life, and it should be considered that the Bible does state that those who have been reconciled to God should make an effort to reconcile themselves with the people with whom they have conflict on earth.
- By forgiving or working towards forgiveness, reconciliation can be achieved.
- Christians believe that God wants them to foster good relationships with each other.

'For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, will we be more reconciled to him.'

'So when you stand before the altar, if you have a brother or sister who is against you, leave your gift there; first be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift.'



Student Checklist

What do I know?	No Idea 	Nearly
I understand the concept of peace		
I understand Christian attitudes towards peace		
I understand the concept of justice		
I understand Christian attitudes towards justice		
I understand the concept of forgiveness		
I understand Christian attitudes towards forgiveness		
I understand the concept of reconciliation		
I understand Christian attitudes towards reconciliation		

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Practice Questions

Peace, Justice, Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Multiple-choice Questions (Note: in the exam there will only be one of the following correct answers)

1. Which of the following is a Bible verse instructing believers to pursue justice?
 - A Deuteronomy 1:1
 - B John 3:16
 - C Deuteronomy 16:20
 - D Genesis 1:27
2. Which of the following verses is used to justify Christian positions that peace is the only way?
 - A Mark 10:9
 - B Luke 10:9
 - C John 10:9
 - D Matthew 10:9
3. How many times does the Bible teach Christians they should forgive?
 - A seven times
 - B seven times seventy-seven
 - C seventy-seven
 - D seven hundred
4. Which of the following is a definition of forgiveness?
 - A Moving forward but harbouring resentment
 - B Continuing conflict
 - C Letting go of negative emotions and moving forwards
 - D Refusing to reconcile

5. Give **one** biblical teaching regarding peace.
6. Explain **two** different religious attitudes towards justice.
 - Your response must refer to at least one religion.
7. Explain **two** different Christian approaches to forgiveness and justice.
 - In your response you must refer to sacred writings or another source of religious teaching.
8. 'The achievement of justice is the ultimate aim according to religious beliefs.' Evaluate this statement, and in your answer:
 - give reasoned arguments in support of this idea
 - give reasoned arguments against this idea
 - refer to religious viewpoints
 - refer to non-religious viewpoints
 - reach a justified conclusion

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Violence



Keywords

- **Conflict** a struggle or discord between groups of people
- **Death** the cessation of life
- **Evil** something which is morally wrong and causes suffering
- **Jihad** the lesser form of this means Holy War within Islam
- **Protest** to verbally oppose an idea or action, such as a war
- **Sin** breaking the law of God within a religious belief
- **Suffering** the experience of pain
- **Terrorism** acts of violence committed in order to provoke terror
- **Violence** the use of physical force to inflict suffering
- **War** a large-scale conflict between two groups such as countries



Overview

- Violence is a physical struggle or action in which physical force is used to cause harm.
- Violence can manifest in different ways – for example, someone throwing a punch is violence, but large-scale wars are also violence. There are scales of violence.
- Causes of violence vary hugely depending on the situation, but largely it is because of differences between those involved within the violence.
- Human beings have, throughout history, used violence as a way of fighting off threats.
- Within the modern day there are many different forms of violence, from the most basic to human physical violence, to more modern types of violence through weapons, to nuclear weapons, which will be touched upon later in the course.



Key Points

Christian Views

- Many Christians are opposed to the practice of violence.
- Within the Bible, Jesus taught an emphasis on peace. Christians believe that God wants peace among those who live on earth and, therefore, practising violence would go against the desires of God.
- Jesus specifically taught Christians not to harm their enemies, but instead to love them. Therefore, some Christians argue that this teaching extends to teach against violence against enemies, advocating instead love and mercy as the way to solve disputes.
- Jesus never taught that violence would ever be justified and for this reason many Christians believe violence cannot be justified. Jesus offered no staggering of violence allowing wrong. Violence against men is no less sinful than violence against women.
- Some Christians practise pacifism, which is the belief that violence can never be justified. Quakers are an example of a branch of the Church that believes this.
- Many Christians believe in the sanctity of life. Because violence often results in the loss of life, many Christians might oppose it for that reason. Murder is considered to be one of the Ten Commandments, so the taking of a human life within the context of violence is seen as a serious sin.
- Some Christians might argue that violence could be seen as justified in order to protect the innocent from committing what they consider to be evil acts and sins against God. For example, some Christians have taken violent action against those who work within abortion clinics as they believe this is a sin against God.

'Love your enemies'

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- They might see this as standing up for those who cannot stand up for themselves, they would view as being murdered via abortion. Therefore, in this view, this is as justified.
- Some Christians might also see some forms of violence, such as war in response, as justified as they are trying to stop violence from taking place. In this way, the violence could be argued to be an end which justified the means of violence within Christian thought. There are many instances within the Old Testament which are on the side of those at war, which some Christians might use to argue that God is calling for violence as it is justified.
- Some Christians argue that violence can be permissible when it is used as retribution for violence that has been committed. For example, some Christians might support the death penalty for capital crimes as there is justification for this in the Bible.

Muslim Viewpoint

- There is a variety of teachings within Islam which apply to violence.
- Islam has a tradition of peace and the word 'Islam' has linguistic ties to the word 'salam' which means peace.
- There is allowance within Islam for the practice of violence in certain situations.
- For example, the teachings surrounding the ideas of 'jihad'. Jihad means struggle or effort – the first, the greater form of jihad, is considered to be the belief in and the struggle to follow the path of God. The second, and lower, form of jihad involves the physical struggle as this is the struggle to defend the faith, or the physical struggle.
- Sometimes the lower form of jihad can be interpreted as **Holy War**.
- There are set criteria under which violence can be permitted within jihad. For example, how and why violence can be committed, e.g. no harm must come to civilians and crops can be burned.
- In modern times, the idea of jihad has been taken on by some extreme Muslims, such as terrorism. Largely, this interpretation of jihad does not take into account the lesser jihad and the criteria laid out for the allowance of this.
- Many Muslims are unhappy with the way in which this is happening and are involved in an attempt to counteract these acts of violence.
- Ideas of violence within Islam are not just limited to discussions of terrorism.
- Within the Qur'an, violence is permitted in the instance of self-defence.
- One criterion for jihad states that violence may be permissible if the faith of Muslims is being threatened.
- Some Muslims might argue that violent punishments (such as the death penalty) are permissible for certain crimes, as ideas regulating corporal punishment are laid out in the Qur'an. These are known as the Hudud punishments.

Non-religious Viewpoints

- There is a wide variety of beliefs regarding the morality of violence within the world.
- Humanists believe that every individual should be treated fairly and ethically. They argue that, for this reason, violence can never be justified. They believe that the goal should be to achieve peace, therefore, the ending of war is a human issue and task. Therefore, many humanists are involved in achieving peace within situations.



Student Checklist

What do I know?	No Idea 	Yes
I understand what violence is		
I understand at least two Christian approaches to violence		
I understand the Muslim approach to violence		
I understand a non-religious approach to violence		

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Practice Questions

Violence

Multiple-choice Questions (Note: in the exam papers there will only be one correct answer)

1. Which of the following is not a reason Christians might oppose violence?
A Life should have a high quality
B Life is sacred
C Jesus emphasised peace
D Murder is a sin
2. What is the term for the context in which violence might be permitted within Islam?
A Zina
B Jihad
C Hudud
D A
3. Which of the following is a Bible verse used to oppose the use of violence?
A Mark 5:44
B Matthew 5:44
C Luke 4:45
D John 3:54
4. What is the term for the secular group which might oppose the use of violence?
A Humanism
B Darwinism
C Secularism
D Atheism

5. Give **one** biblical teaching on violence.
6. Explain **two** different religious beliefs about violence.
 - Your response must refer to at least one religion.
7. Explain **two** religious beliefs about the justification of violence.
 - In your response you must refer to sacred writings or another source of religious teaching.
8. 'Violence is always wrong within religious belief.'
Evaluate this statement, and in your answer:
 - give reasoned arguments in support of this idea
 - give reasoned arguments against this idea
 - refer to religious viewpoints
 - refer to non-religious viewpoints
 - reach a justified conclusion

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The Reasons for War, Just and Holy War



Keywords

- **Civil war** a war between the civilians within a country due to differences in opinion or power
- **Gain** aquisition of resources; this can sometimes be a motivation for war
- **Greed** the drive for personal gain above all else
- **Holy war** a war which is believed to be fought in God's name
- **Human rights** the inherent rights of each individual by virtue of being human
- **Just war** a war which is fought for just causes
- **Pacifism** the opposition to any form of war for any cause
- **Religion as a cause** a war which is fought due to religious beliefs or differences
- **Retaliation** the act of war in revenge for an attack or breach of agreement, not necessarily in defence of oneself
- **Self-defence** the act of waging war in reaction to an attack, in order to protect oneself
- **Territory** a war which is waged over debate regarding ownership or rights to land



Overview

- There are various reasons why an individual or a country might choose to fight. In general secular societies these reasons might include greed, self-defence, perception of violation of human rights, a violation of a treaty, etc.
- The reason for which people wage war can be as morally important as how the war is fought. In general, people will view a war which is fought for the cause of defending a country (self-defence) as being morally justifiable, whereas a war which is fought in order to gain territory (greed) will be viewed as being morally unjustifiable.
- **Pacifism** is the belief that no war can ever be justified within religious belief. For example, the Christian denomination Quakers (otherwise known as the Society of Friends) believe that violence can ever be justified in any instance ever.
- Some people believe that religion can cause war, and certainly religion can be a factor in conflicts; however, these conflicts do tend to also involve other factors in which religion is not the primary cause. This will be addressed further in the Religion as a Cause of War section of the course.
- There is a variety of religious beliefs which discuss within their teachings and doctrines whether war might, or might not, be justifiable. For the sake of this course, the main three reasons for war to be focused on are greed, retaliation and self-defence, as well as factors such as religion.



Key Points

Greed

- The war of greed is a war based on greed is usually surrounding the possession of land or resources. For example, a country might want to obtain land from another power or to obtain resources such as oil.
- For example, many Christians opposed the Iraq War as it was thought to have been fought for the sake of oil rather than being a war which was intended to help people or liberate them from oppression.
- In general, greed comes from selfish desire for more wealth or money, which is often the motivation for war.
- Many religions have teachings regarding the need for a just cause of war because of the lives lost in those fighting, and as many religions see life as being sacred, there must be a sufficient reason for taking lives. Selfish reasons, such as greed, for waging war are not considered just.
- Therefore, within the majority religious thought, this reason for waging war is often considered morally wrong.

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Self-defence

- Some wars are fought on the basis of self-defence. This means that another country – has launched an attack and, therefore, the collective might feel the need to counterattack.
- These types of wars might be seen to be more morally justifiable – it is reasonable to attack in order to preserve the life of one's civilians and one's way of life. Sometimes it is necessary in order to preserve their freedom of religion, for example.
- Within religions such as Islam, self-defence is listed within the teachings (the Quran) in which it is permissible to wage war.
- Emphatically, self-defence must be proportionate in order to be moral. If one country attacks another country by continuous bombing of an area, this might be seen as a disproportionate response, therefore, not moral.

Retaliation

- The acceptance of retaliation as a reason for war will vary hugely depending on the culture and the governing laws of a country.
- Retaliation is different from self-defence as it indicates that there is not an immediate threat to oneself. It is an act of revenge rather than a necessity in order to protect oneself.
- Much like self-defence, it is generally thought that retaliation should be proportionate.
- Regarding large-scale retaliation, such as what led to the First World War, most people would agree that it is important to attempt to come to a peaceful agreement before any kind of war.

Holy War

- A holy war is a war waged by those who are fighting believing that they are fighting for the causes of, God.
- Within the history of Christianity there are examples of wars which were considered to be holy wars. Examples within the Bible where God is described as being on the side of those fighting.
- For example, the Crusades were considered to be a holy war which was fought by Christians to recapture the Holy Land for God. They believed that they were fighting for God's glory, is why this can be viewed as being a holy war.
- Furthermore, within the book of Joshua (specifically, 6:1–27) the account of the battle of Jericho is an example of a conflict which could be considered to be a holy war, or at least an example where God showed favour to one side. In this account, it is stated in the Bible that God was with the Israelites.
- Within Islam, this is referred to as lesser jihad, meaning struggle. While greater jihad is an inner faith struggle, lesser jihad is the outward struggle to defend the faith or spread it. It is permitted as long as they fit certain criteria – for example, the war must be started by a legitimate authority, fought for God's glory (not that of man), it must not attack or harm civilians, and it must be extremely important within the launching of a lesser jihad, as without meeting these criteria, it is not considered to be just. The guidance regarding what makes a war just is found in the Quran.

Just War

- A just war is a conflict which is provoked by a group of people to be morally justified. It is the collective and the individual that has an important part in deciding what a just war is.
- Within Islam, a holy war is considered to be a just war.
- Within Christianity, there are criteria regarding what makes a war just. While Jesus discouraged violence, in some cases that fighting is the better option – for example, if greater evil will occur if one does not fight, then in this instance fighting is justified. An example of a Christian turning to violence for a justified reason is the Confessing Church founding member Dietrich Bonhoeffer's involvement in the assassination plot against Adolf Hitler.
- Pope John Paul XXIII stated that 'It is impossible to conceive of a just war in the case of the use of nuclear weapons, the Catholic Church's position is that nuclear war is never just'.

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- St Thomas Aquinas posited a variety of rules regarding what makes a war just as follows:
- 1) It should be started by and led by a governmental authority.
 - 2) It should have a just or moral reason or cause, and must not be waged just
 - 3) It should have the end goal of defeating evil and establishing goodness.
 - 4) It should be the final straw in each case – all efforts to negotiate peace w
 - 5) There should be a good chance of winning the conflict as it is immoral to
 - 6) It should be undertaken within fair conduct. Where possible civilian cas
 - 7) It should have the eventual outcome of the achievement of peace.



Student Check

What do I know?	No Idea ☹	Near
I understand the role of greed in causing war and religious views regarding it		
I understand the role of self-defence in causing war and religious views regarding it		
I understand the role of retaliation in causing war and religious views regarding it		
I understand the concept of a just war		
I understand the concept of a holy war		

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Practice Questions

The Reasons for War, Just War and Holy War

Multiple-choice Questions (Note: in the exam papers there will only be one correct answer)

1. Which of the following reasons for war do most religions disapprove of due to religious beliefs?
A Greed
B Retaliation
C Self-defence
D Holy war
2. What is the term for a war in the name of God?
A Holy war
B Just war
C Unjustified war
D Theodicy
3. What is the Islamic term for a just war?
A Greater jihad
B Adhan
C Lesser jihad
D Jihadi
4. Which Christian figure put forward the idea of a just war?
A St Anselm of Canterbury
B Jesus
C St Thomas Aquinas
D Pope John XIII

5. Give **one** reasons for war.
6. Explain **two** different religious criteria for war.
 - Your response must refer to at least one religion.
7. Explain **two** different religions' approaches to just war.
 - In your response you must refer to sacred writings or another source of religious authority.
8. 'There is no just reason to wage a war within religious belief.'
Evaluate this statement, and in your answer:
 - give reasoned arguments in support of this idea
 - give reasoned arguments against this idea
 - refer to religious viewpoints
 - refer to non-religious viewpoints
 - reach a justified conclusion

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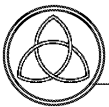


Pacifism



Keywords

- **Pacifism** the opposition to any form of war for any cause
- **Peace** the absence of conflict, and a state of harmony with
- **Just war** the idea that war can have moral justifications
- **Suffering** the experience of pain, which war can cause
- **Quakers** a branch of Christianity which heavily emphasises peace
- **Harmony** the absence of discord within a society
- **Conscientious objectors** those within the armed forces who refuse to carry weapons or more
- **Beatitudes** a set of teachings from Jesus in the New Testament which present peacemakers as being blessed
- **Conditional pacifism** the idea that violence is unjustified in the vast majority of cases, but that there are some extreme exceptions where it is the lesser of two evils



Overview

- Pacifism is the firm belief that violence can never be justified and peace should always be the goal.
- Peace within a pacifist definition should be emphasised to mean not just the absence of war but also the achievement of harmony within society.
- Some branches of Christianity, such as the Quakers, adhere to a strict moral code of pacifism. They believe that violence in any form can never be justified based on the teachings of Jesus. Their religious teaching includes a 'Peace Testimony', which is an account of their commitment to take no violent action.
- Within this belief, there is no instance in which they would consider violence to be acceptable.
- They are likely to, within the context of a war, adopt or pursue roles within the war which support their views. For this reason, they might opt to adopt roles such as those of medical staff or humanitarian aid workers rather than fighting in conflict to avoid actively fighting within the conflict but instead try to solve the conflict and reduce suffering and loss of life.

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God. For peace, for they shall be called the sons of God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God. For peace, for they shall be called the sons of God.'



Key Points

Christian Pacifism

- Many of the teachings of the New Testament given by Jesus emphasise the importance of peace. In the Beatitudes, Jesus emphasises that those who are peacemakers will be called the sons of God. Some Christians have adopted a totally pacifist stance in their approach to war.
- There are a few branches of the Church which adopt a pacifist stance. They believe that violence is wrong as he preached peace and discouraged his followers from using violence.
- Many Quakers, among other Christians from other denominations, take the teachings of Jesus seriously. This means that within the context of a war they consciously choose not to participate in war or use weapons.
- An important biblical teaching used to support the idea of Christian pacifism is the teaching that Jesus taught his disciples from defending him with violence. Therefore, many Christians take the teaching that violence, even in defence of religion or in God's name, is not justified.

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- A famous example of a Christian contentious objector is Desmond T Doss. He was a World War who refused to bear arms due to his religious beliefs. He saved many men on the battlefield without a gun. He is remembered as an example of a conscientious objector who did not carry a weapon into battle, and yet saved many lives of soldiers during the Second World War.
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German Christian living within Nazi Germany who opposed the Nazi regime. He believed in pacifism largely and preached to those within the Confessing Church to oppose the regime without resorting to violence. He helped Jews to escape from Germany.
- However, he did take part in a plan to assassinate Adolf Hitler, which indicates that violence could, in extreme cases, be necessary in some way in order to protect Jewish and other minorities who suffered under the Third Reich).
- Some Christians would argue that pacifism is not a viable way to live within a world where violence and war can sometimes be justified, but not always. They would argue that sometimes justifying the use of violence, as sometimes you would wish to be defended, they would argue that the most loving and caring thing to do is to defend someone in a way that might be justified.

The Golden Rule:

'In everything do to others as you would have them do to you'

Islamic Pacifism

- The majority of Muslims do not practise pacifism.
- This is because the Qur'an lays out criteria under which violence can be permitted. If violence is to be permissible within criteria laid out in their scriptures, then it would follow that the idea that violence is never justified would not follow as fitting within the Islamic faith.
- Muhammad himself is remembered as being a great military leader – himself practised violence within a war context, and was very good at it. As many Muslims view him as an example given by the Prophet, they would then argue that violence can occur in a justified way. The Prophet himself practised justified violence.
- However, it is important to stress that many Muslims believe that God (Allah) does not want a state of violence. Some Muslims practise conditional pacifism (e.g. the Ahmadiyya and Sufis). This is the belief that violence should be avoided at almost all costs but in some instances, only as a final resort if there is no other option and the alternative is worse.



Student Checklist

What do I know?	No Idea 	Nearly
I understand the idea of pacifism		
I understand the concept of pacifism		
I understand Christian arguments for pacifism		
I understand Christian arguments against pacifism		
I understand Islamic arguments about pacifism		
I can give an example of a religious group which believes in pacifism		

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Practice Questions

Pacifism

Multiple-choice Questions (Note: in the exam papers there will only be one correct answer)

1. Which of the following is the term for people who believe that violence can never be justified?
 - A Peacemakers
 - B Just war theorists
 - C Quakers
 - D Pacifists
2. Which of the following branches of Christianity practices pacifism?
 - A Church of England
 - B Baptism
 - C Quaker
 - D Christianity
3. Which of the following Bible verses contains an important teaching on pacifism?
 - A John 3:16
 - B Matthew 5:9
 - C Genesis 1:27
 - D Mark 25
4. What is the term for the belief that violence should be avoided at all costs but in some circumstances?
 - A Pacifism
 - B Occasional pacifism
 - C Conditional pacifism
 - D Unconditional pacifism

5. Give **one** biblical passage to support pacifism.
6. Explain **two** different religious views on pacifism.
 - Your response must refer to at least one religion.
7. Explain **two** ways a pacifist might navigate a war.
 - In your response you must refer to sacred writings or another source of religious teaching.
8. 'Pacifism is the best interpretation of religious teaching'. Evaluate this statement, and in your answer:
 - give reasoned arguments in support of this idea
 - give reasoned arguments against this idea
 - refer to religious viewpoints
 - refer to non-religious viewpoints
 - reach a justified conclusion

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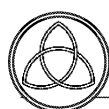


Religion and Belief as a Cause of Violence in the Contemporary World



Keywords

- **Terrorism** this refers to acts of extreme violence committed to instil fear
- **Jihad** meaning struggle, the lesser term of this is used to justify violence within Islam
- **9/11** a terrorist attack committed on 11th September 2001 in which two planes crashed into the World Trade Center in New York
- **Islamic State** a group of individuals who commit acts of terror in the name of Islam
- **Israeli-Palestinian conflict** a conflict in the Middle East
- **Politics** the issues regarding the running of a country and the interests of its citizens



Overview

- Violence is a reality in the natural world – however, among humans there is a complex set of multifaceted reasons which contribute.
- Religion has historically been a reason for which people waged wars, and those who commit acts within the twenty-first century themselves claim to commit these acts in the name of religion, people can argue that religion causes conflict and violence. Examples of this (known as **terrorism**) which are claimed by the committers to be religiously motivated. Groups such as Islamic State and other Islamist groups such as al-Qaeda have committed events such as the bombing at the Manchester Arena in May 2017.
- Religion has also become a source of contention in conflicts which have other causes. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become one in which the religious identity of the parties (Jews with Israel, and Islam with the Palestinians) has become closely tied to ideas of nationalism.



Key Points

Reasons Religion Might be Viewed as a Cause of Violence

- Many argue that religious motivations for violence have led to large-scale wars in history (such as the Crusades) as well as within the modern day, with the phenomenon of religiously motivated terrorism gaining more and more attention and importance within the twenty-first century.
- Some religious groups aim to create a theocratic society in which their religious beliefs are the basis of the law. In such cases, religiously motivated violence can occasionally result in such groups committing acts of violence. If the motivation behind their acts of violence is their religious faith and conviction, it could be argued that religion is the cause of the violence.
- For many, religion and politics are closely linked. Therefore, for some, political violence is also religious.

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- Within Islam, there are the criteria for jihad, which is considered to be a holy war committed in the name of Allah. Muhammad himself was a military leader, and this gives his followers the basis to commit violent acts. Many of those who are linked to terrorism linked to groups such as al-Qaeda and ISIS have claimed to be doing a form of jihad.
- One of the arguments used surrounding the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is that the land which bears great significance for all three major Abrahamic religions. The importance of the location is stipulated as an argument for why the peace negotiators would perhaps like as neither side is willing to compromise due to the land to each side.
- Specifically concerning the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, one of the escalating factors is the religious importance of the land. It is considered to be the Holy Land by both religions, this factor would not exist to exacerbate the conflict, and, therefore, arguably be making the conflict worse.
- Those within this conflict could argue that they are fighting the cause of God, and would not be a motivating factor, and, therefore, would not be a contributing factor. However, these crimes are so great that they believe their actions are justified for the great cause of God against a world they perceive as evil.

Examples of Religion within Violence

- The **Israeli–Palestinian** conflict is commonly used as an example of a conflict. When Israel was established in 1948, claiming the land of Israel as being a land for the Jewish people, from that point there has been a huge conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The conflict has a religious tone as it has been pitted as Jews vs Muslims. There have been huge bombings, beatings and murders, committed by both sides.
- In India, there are many examples of violence between religious groups. This includes Christians by Hindus, for example a mob attack on a church in 2023, or Muslims by the Hindu population in Indian-administered Kashmir.
- Many people point towards religious groups who commit **terrorist acts** against the UK, the US and France in the name of Islam as being religiously motivated. Those who commit such acts are **ISIS** (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant – also known as Daesh) and al-Qaeda. Extremist group ISIS took responsibility for the bombing of a concert at the Manchester Arena in 2017 which killed 22. Much like the terror attack of 9/11, they claimed this act in the name of God. These acts were committed by individual agents but were claimed to be motivated by the collective group.
- Acts of terrorism such as these are argued to be caused by the beliefs within Islam, and those who commit them may justify them by stating the motivation of pursuing lesser jihad.

Reasons Religion Might Not be Viewed as a Cause of Violence

- Some argue that those who are attempting to use violence to establish an Islamic state are not acting in their use of violence, as they violate the criteria in the Qur'an for lesser jihad.
- The example of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is infinitely more complicated than 'religion'. At the root of the issue are issues of territory and treatment. Many argue that the land was wrongfully taken from them at the point of the establishment of the state, and that they have been subjugated since then.
- Many individuals denounce the actions of groups claiming to act in the name of God, and argue that their actions, such as the bombing of the World Trade Center and the 9/11 attacks, violated the criteria of lesser jihad of causing no harm to women, children or the innocent. They argue that these individuals have motivations other than their religious beliefs, such as political or financial motivations.
- Furthermore, they would emphasise that the jihad considered to be greater jihad is the struggle of a good Muslim and follow the instructions of God to become a better person.
- While religion might be a reason to battle over territory – for example, with the Israeli–Palestinian conflict – some might argue that the battle is for political power this brings rather than it being a war solely motivated by religion.

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- Extremist groups such as ISIS and al-Qaeda are an extremely small segment of the world's population. Some would argue it is unfair to tar the entirety of religious believers worldwide with violence due to the actions of a few who claim to be motivated by such things. There are many motivators for these actions, such as political retribution, the desire for power, etc.
- Many religious people point to religious teachings of non-violence as being a cause of violence. They might argue that religious teachings might have stopped violence due to these peaceful teachings, although this is impossible to measure and a difficult claim to prove.
- Some might argue that religious teachings about the afterlife and consequences of violence, i.e. they would not want to be punished for committing acts of violence, might be a motivator.
- The Middle East conflict, for example, is infinitely more complicated than simply Muslims vs. Jews. Muslims, not least because there are groups in the Middle East – the Arab Jewish conflict. Christians are a living contradiction to those who cite the conflict as being purely religious. The Israeli Jews and the Arab Muslims.
- Specifically regarding acts of terrorism, it is important to consider that terrorism is not exclusive to religion. Anders Breivik, a Norwegian terrorist, killed many people in 2011 due to his strong opposition to the faith of Islam. He was motivated by a political attack, rather than one done out of religious motivation. Therefore, not all attacks can be said to be religiously motivated.
- Often crimes which were argued to be religious can be revealed to have political motivations. 9/11 is often cited as being religiously motivated; however, Osama Bin Laden's motivations for committing the act were not violating the jihad criterion to not kill innocents but rather his complicity in their government's interference in the Middle East. The act appears to be a political reason to commit a politically motivated crime.
- More people died during the Second World War (a conflict not caused by religious differences) than have been killed within religious conflicts.



Student Checklist

What do I know?	No Idea ☹	Nearly ☺
I understand how religion might be a cause of violence		
I understand how religion might not be a cause of violence		
I can give two examples of groups who have committed violence in the name of religion		
I understand religious responses to violence		

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Practice Questions

Multiple-choice Questions (Note: in the exam papers there will only be one correct answer)

- Which of the following is the meaning of terrorism?
 - Holy war
 - Violence in the name of religion
 - Violence in order to ignite terror
 - Violence with no meaning or drive
- What is commonly given as an example of a conflict which is said to be caused by religion?
 - The Second World War
 - The First World War
 - The Israeli–Palestinian conflict
 - The American Civil War
- What advantage is there within Islam for violence in the name of God?
 - Greater jihad
 - Lesser jihad
 - Adhan
 - Iblis
- Which of the following events caused the most deaths?
 - The Crusades
 - First World War
 - Second World War
 - 11th September 2001

- Give **one** example of an act of violence which could be argued to have religious justification.
- Explain **two** different views on the role of religion in violence.
 - Your response must refer to at least one religion.
- Explain **two** ways in which it might be argued that religion causes violence.
 - In your response you must refer to sacred writings or another source of religious authority.
- 'Religion causes violence and war.'
Evaluate this statement, and in your answer:
 - give reasoned arguments in support of this idea
 - give reasoned arguments against this idea
 - refer to religious viewpoints
 - refer to non-religious viewpoints
 - reach a justified conclusion

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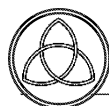


Weapons of Mass Destruction



Keywords

- **Weapons of mass destruction** modern developments in warfare which are designed to cause devastation beyond the realm of normal warfare
- **WMD** weapons of mass destruction
- **Nuclear weapons** weapons which use nuclear power causing huge devastation within their scope
- **Atomic bomb** a form of nuclear weapon
- **Biological warfare** the use of biological viruses or diseases as a form of warfare
- **Chemical warfare** the use of chemical substances as a weapon
- **Radioactive warfare** the use of radioactive material as a weapon
- **Nuclear deterrence** the idea that the possession of nuclear weapons deters an enemy from attacking a nation
- **MAD** mutually assured destruction



Overview

- Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) are developments within modern warfare which are controversial due to their ability to cause large-scale irreparable damage.
- Forms of weapons of mass destruction include **nuclear weapons** (such as the atomic bomb), **biological warfare** (e.g. releasing viruses, or diseases such as anthrax), **chemical warfare** (e.g. Agent Orange used by the US in the Vietnam War) and **radioactive warfare** (e.g. radioactive material contained within matter is used to cause long-lasting harm).
- The events at Hiroshima is an example of the use of nuclear warfare. On 6th August 1945, during World War II, America dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima which killed approximately 140,000 people. The radioactive material it let off has affected hundreds of thousands in the years since. The deaths and massive levels of destruction, and the nature of the atomic bomb have continued to be affected by the bomb today (e.g. birth defects caused by radiation).
- In general, weapons of mass destruction might be used to cause damage on a large scale in a conflict (as in the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima). Those who use them justify their choice by citing that it is the only way to end a conflict, or that it is necessary to prevent a nation from ongoing attack; for example, in the hope of stopping terrorism.



Key Points

Religious Attitudes

- No religious group supports or encourages the use of nuclear weapons.
- This is for a variety of reasons, not least because the use of such weapons causes massive suffering and death.
- One of the reasons that religious groups do not support the use of nuclear weapons is that it is within the bounds of what they consider as a just war.
- For example, within Christianity, nuclear warfare does not fit within several of the requirements of just war theory, not least the impact it has on innocent civilians. It also harms nature.
- One of the principles of just war for Christians is that the amount of harm which is caused is reasonable. The level of harm caused by nuclear weapons is obviously considered to be too great.

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- It would also violate the idea of proportionality within the just theory. This would unduly harm the population of a country. Teachings such as the Golden Rule view.
- Weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear weapons would also cause mass casualties if they were dropped – this would be damaging to God's creation, which Christians must preserve. Therefore, they would consider this to be another argument against the use of nuclear weapons.
- The use of weapons of mass destruction causes so much loss of life that many Christians would not agree with this as they believe that life is sacred. Ending, or dramatically deteriorating, a country with a weapon could never be considered to be moral.
- Within Islam, this would violate the stipulation within jihad that a conflict must be necessary and does not unduly harm civilians. It is incredibly difficult to pinpoint the destruction caused by weapons, meaning their use results in a great loss of life for civilians. The commandment that no harm can come to women, children, the elderly/vulnerable. This is impossible to achieve with weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, most Muslims would strongly oppose the use of weapons of mass destruction.
- Due to the damage inflicted by weapons of mass destruction, such as damage to the environment, the use of nuclear weapons would also violate the requirements of the just theory. The stipulation that crops should not be burned.

Nuclear Deterrence

- Some groups have argued for the development of nuclear weapons as a form of war. This is known as nuclear deterrence.
- The logic follows that should a country possess nuclear weapons, then other attempt to attack them for fear of the use of the weapon against them. Some developed nuclear weapons for this reason – they claim that they do not intend to develop them in order to deter potential attacks. This is known as MAD (mutual assured destruction) meaning that both groups will maintain but not launch their weapons as doing so would result in retaliation, thus destroying both nations.
- Some religious people might support this idea as they would reason that the war will potentially help keep peace. Therefore, there will be less war and fewer deaths.
- Many Christians and religious people disagree with this, however, as there is no intention that nuclear weapons will not be used. The leaders who develop them with no intent of using them, meaning that democracy changes, meaning that newly elected leaders might have access to them and might be more inclined than their predecessors to use.
- Such weapons require a huge amount of funding to build, develop and maintain. Religious views, would be better spent on helping the poor or healing the sick.
- The Roman Catholic Church made a stark statement against the use of nuclear weapons, stating in the Second Vatican Council that: *‘Though the monstrous evil of nuclear weapons as a deterrent, it is feared that the mere continuance of nuclear tests, undertaken for the sake of security, has consequences for life on earth ... nuclear weapons should be banned’*
- Some religious people agree with the idea of nuclear deterrence in terms of self-defence. For example, Islamic republic Pakistan itself has nuclear weapons. Pakistan justifies its possession of nuclear weapons as being a form of self-defence against Israeli and Indian threat. In the eyes of the protection of the nation and the Islamic faith justifies the possession of weapons. Some religious people consider to be within the Islamic faith.



Student Checklist

What do I know?	No Idea 	Nearly 
I understand the different forms of weapons of mass destruction		
I understand the Christian arguments against weapons of mass destruction		
I understand the Islamic arguments against weapons of mass destruction		
I understand the concept of nuclear deterrence		
I understand the religious responses to nuclear deterrence		



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Practice Questions

Religion and Belief as a Cause of Violence in the Contemporary World

Multiple-choice Questions (Note: in the exam papers there will only be one correct answer)

- Which of the following is not an example of a weapon of mass destruction?
 - Nuclear bomb
 - Chemical attack
 - Biological warfare
 - Artillery bombs
- Which of the following is not a religious objection to nuclear bombs?
 - They cause unnecessary suffering
 - They violate just war theory
 - They are more than necessary
 - They may lead to the end of the world's creation beyond repair
- Which of the following religious groups described nuclear weapons as a 'monstrous evil'?
 - The Catholic Church
 - The Church of England
 - The Church of Scotland
 - Baptists
- What does 'MAD' stand for?
 - Mutually assured detonation
 - Mutual assignation and devastation
 - Mutually assured destruction
 - Mutually assured devastation

- Give **one** example of a weapon of mass destruction.
- Explain **two** religious viewpoints against weapons of mass destruction.
 - Your response must refer to at least one religion.
- Explain **two** different religious responses to nuclear deterrence.
 - In your response you must refer to sacred writings or another source of religious authority.
- 'It is impossible to justify nuclear weapons from the perspective of religion.' Evaluate this statement, and in your answer:
 - give reasoned arguments in support of this idea
 - give reasoned arguments against this idea
 - refer to religious viewpoints
 - refer to non-religious viewpoints
 - reach a justified conclusion

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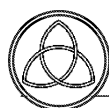


Religion in Peacemaking and War



Keywords

- **Peacemakers** those who attempt to aid peace negotiations, believed to be blessed by Jesus' teaching
- **Reconciliation** the establishing of a peace agreement between opposing sides
- **War victims** those who suffer as a result of a conflict
- **Making peace** the act of attempting to bring about peace within a situation
- **Pope Francis** the current Pope, who has made an effort to contribute to the peace process
- **Protest** to actively display opposition to an ongoing conflict



Overview

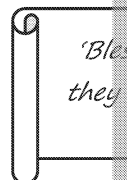
- Religion can be a motivating factor for some in attempting to bring about peace. It is known for Christians to protest against wars in an effort to bring about their end.
- For the reasons discussed within the reconciliation section of the course, many points towards the idea of reconciling rather than continuing a conflict in order to relieve the suffering of those who are being persecuted by the effects of war.
- Many religious people work for reconciliation between different countries, different faiths (through interfaith action) and other groups in conflict with others.
- Many Christians might also help victims of war or those heavily impacted by war. They might do this by fundraising, charity work, volunteering with aid organizations (e.g. Christian Aid), or praying for those affected.



Key Points

Religious Roles in Peacemaking

- While religion can be argued to have a role in motivating conflict, it is important to note that religious belief is for many a motivation to pursue peace. In order to make peace, religious groups have made efforts to aid and foster reconciliation between groups who have experienced conflict.
- Within Christianity, there is Scripture within the New Testament which teaches that peace should be pursued. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus states that peace should be considered to be blessed. In a series of statements regarding peace, Jesus includes those who make peace as a goal and attempt to achieve it. Therefore, many Christians consider this to be a central teaching that God desires for people to actively pursue peace between warring nations. This has led many Christians to involve themselves in helping during war reconciliation processes. They may also protest against wars in an attempt to get their own governments to involve themselves and use their power to help the peace process develop.
- Within Islam, there is the idea that Allah looks favourably upon those who choose mercy and peace.



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- attempted to a

'The King will reply, "I have done for one of the little sisters of mine."

- Many lay people also work for peace; for example, Christians within the Israel/Palestine situation. They have also been involved in discussions between those on opposite sides in order to aid reconciliation.
- Many Christians donate money to charities which help protect and support vulnerable lives. Lives have been impacted greatly by the effects of war, such as losing their homes and family members to a conflict. These people are vulnerable, and as Jesus taught Christians to love the lowest and most vulnerable in society, so Christians aim to help and aid these people through volunteering, donations and prayer. It is important to remember that this is based on biblical teaching such as Matthew 25:40 – Christians believe that by serving the vulnerable, such as victims of war, they are serving God.
- Examples of specific Christian charities which aim to improve and serve vulnerable people are Tearfund and Christian Aid. One of their aims is to help those affected by the conflict in the Middle East. For example, in 2018, Tearfund raised funds for the victims of the conflict in the Middle East.

Student Checklist

 What do I know?		No Idea
I understand how religious people might want to achieve peace		
I understand how religious people might work towards peace		
I can give one example of a religious individual who tries to achieve peace		
I understand why Christians might attempt to help victims of war		
I understand the ways in which Christians might attempt to help victims of war		



Practice Questions

Religion in Peacemaking and War Victims

Multiple-choice Questions (Note: in the exam papers there will only be one correct answer)

- Which of the following is not a religious figure who has campaigned for peace?
 - Pope Francis
 - Revd Desmond Tutu
 - Tenzin Gyatso
 - Bertrand Russell
- Which of the following Bible verses suggests that Christians should attempt to bring about peace?
 - Mark 5:9
 - Luke 5:9
 - John 5:9
 - Matthew 5:9
- Which of the following Bible verses suggests Christians should care for victims of war?
 - Matthew 25:40
 - John 25:40
 - Luke 25:40
 - Mark 25:40
- Which of the following is not an example of how Christians might aim to help victims of war?
 - Prayer
 - Donations
 - Collecting vouchers
 - Volunteering

- Give **one** reason why a Christian might be motivated to look after victims of war.
- Explain **two** different ways religious people respond to victims of war.
 - Your response must refer to at least one religion.
- Explain **two** religious beliefs regarding the pursuit of peace.
 - In your response you must refer to sacred writings or another source of religious teaching.
- 'Working for peace is a requirement of religion.'
Evaluate this statement, and in your answer:
 - give reasoned arguments in support of this idea
 - give reasoned arguments against this idea
 - refer to religious viewpoints
 - refer to non-religious viewpoints
 - reach a justified conclusion

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Peace, Justice, Forgiveness and Reconciliation

1–4. Multiple choice: Correct answers in order: (c) (d) (c) (c) (1 mark each for a total of 4 marks)

- 5.** 1 mark for any correct point. Students might include the passages below, but any relevant passage is acceptable.
- Matthew 5:9
 - Matthew 10:9

6. 2 marks per point for a total of **4 marks:**

Simple explanation = 1 mark

Detailed explanation = 2 marks

Students may include the following:

- Islam: there is a strong sense of justice and the establishment of justice within Islam. Crimes committed should be punished in accordance with the scope of the law and harmony will be restored to society.
- Justice within Islam will also be delivered on the Day of Judgement and in the meantime they will be rewarded for their good deeds within life.
- Christianity: some Christians believe in the idea of ‘an eye for an eye’ as being a way of establishing justice. They believe that this will establish justice for the victim.
- However, other Christians emphasise mercy towards all and, therefore, would not pursue justice.

7. Marked as the four-mark question, plus 1 mark for naming a relevant reference to scripture and a further mark for applying this to the question, for an overall total of **6 marks:**

Students might include the points below, but any relevant points can be included:

- Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the two Christian attitudes to justice. They should be able to demonstrate that some Christians feel they are required to specifically pursue justice. The Bible instructs them in the Old Testament to specifically pursue justice.
- Other Christians emphasise the teachings of the New Testament in emphasising mercy. In addition to justice, dissuading Christians from pursuing human understanding and instead to forgive and show mercy.
- Bible verses to support these answers could be any relevant content, but examples include:
 - ‘Justice and only justice, you shall pursue, so that you may live and occupy the land that I am giving you.’ Deuteronomy 16:20
 - ‘Go and learn what this means, “I desire mercy, no sacrifice”. For I have come to call for mercy.’ Matthew 9:13

8.

One argument with justification
Different arguments for and against, with justification
OR Several linked, justified arguments for one position
This is the highest level of argument that can be reached if only one point of view is considered
Good, justified arguments for and against, linked together
Definite reference to religion
Very well argued
Well-justified arguments for and against, linked together and leading to a reasonable conclusion
Appropriate reference to religion used to answer question

Answers could include the following details. They should show the importance of justice and demonstrate how important the ideas of peace, reconciliation and forgiveness are. Students should also show which is reasoned and argued well with support from relevant Bible passages.

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Preview of Answers Ends Here

This is a limited inspection copy. Sample of answers ends here to stop students looking up answers to their assessments. See contents page for details of the rest of the resource.