

NAME: _____

RE TEACHER _____

AQA RELIGIOUS STUDIES

RELIGION, PEACE AND CONFLICT

KEY PRINCIPLE RUNNING THROUGHOUT THIS TOPIC

God's wish is for peace, not war. The Church opposes violence and actively works to secure peace. Forgiveness and reconciliation lie at the heart of this message.

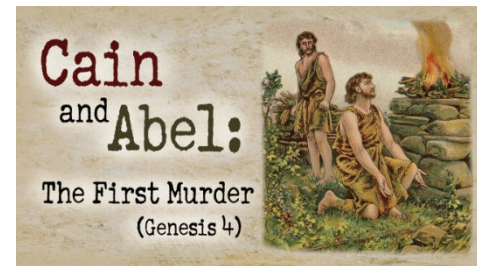
"Thou shalt not kill" (10 Commandments)

"As we forgive those who trespass against us" (Our Father)

"Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5: 9)

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON VIOLENCE AND BULLYING

1. Violence is a rejection of what God wants and can threaten and harm others.
2. Jesus taught seeds of bitterness, angry and jealousy need to be controlled as they may lead to violence and murder. ***"If you are angry with a brother or sister you will be liable to judgement."* Matthew 5:22**
3. Wrong thoughts turning into action is illustrated in the story of Cain and Abel. Cain is jealous of his brother Abel and kills him.
4. Bullying is another destructive form of violence, even if it is not physical. Individual lives can be ruined by comments made on social media.
5. The Bible also speaks about bullying and the harm words can cause damaging a person's self-esteem and causing fear. ***"But no one can tame the tongue – a restless evil, full of deadly poison. . . My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so."* (James 3:8-10)**



FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

1. **Forgiveness** is central to the teaching of Jesus. The Bible has lots of examples of forgiveness: Jesus forgave his killers: ***"Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing"* Luke 23:34** Jesus tells Peter to forgive ***"Not 7 times but 77 times"* Matthew 18:22** The Our Father: ***"As we forgive those who trespass against us"***
2. **Reconciliation (Restoring peace or harmony to a situation).** Jesus taught that people have to be reconciled to one another before they can be reconciled with God. ***"First be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift" (at the altar) Matthew 5:24.***

3. Reconciliation brings:

- A) Stronger relationships
- B) An appreciation of each other
- C) An opportunity to live without fear
- D) Peaceful future



4. Understanding and empathy are important for both forgiveness and reconciliation.

FAITH IN ACTION

Gee Walker is an excellent example of a mother who followed Christ's teaching on forgiveness. Her 18 year old son Anthony was murdered in a racist attack in Liverpool, in 2005. Rather than harbour thoughts of anger and hatred towards her son's killers, she forgave them. She said that Christ forgave his killers on the cross and that as a Christian she too must do the same. She also said that forgiveness helps with the healing process and that anger and bitterness cause more harm to the person grieving; forgiveness is a relief and helps to bring healing.



JUSTICE

1. The Church teaches that it is God's desire that everyone be treated fairly. ***"In the image of God he created them, male and female he created them."* (Genesis 1: 27)**
2. Justice is a kingdom value and one way in which Christians can help to spread God's Kingdom on earth.
3. When a person is treated unjustly, they can lose their sense of self-worth and self-respect.
4. There are many examples of injustice in the world. Apartheid in South Africa is just one example, where laws were passed which created segregation and discrimination towards black people.
5. Prophet Amos says that justice is more important than ensuring worship is done correctly: ***"I will not listen to the melody of your harps. Let justice roll down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream"* Amos 5:23-24.**
6. One response to injustice is **'Righteous Anger'**. This is anger against an injustice which is controlled into a positive action and can improve a situation. Jesus showed righteous anger in the temple. ***"Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves."* Matthew 21:12.** Christians therefore believe that they too should show righteous anger in situations that God would not approve of e.g. human trafficking or a government abusing their power.
7. However, most Christians are against violent protest, as it can result in the loss of life.

THE JUST WAR THEORY

1. The New Testament contains teachings where the limited use of violence may be acceptable. Jesus said: ***"The one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one"* Luke 22:36.** (After, the apostles present 2 swords to Jesus; he tells them that is enough!) Jesus knew that people were coming to get them and realised his followers would need to defend themselves.
2. St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas devised a list of conditions that made fighting a war justifiable. These conditions have become known as the **just war theory**. ***"We do not seek peace in order to be at war, but we go to war that we may have peace"* St Thomas Aquinas.**

3. There are conditions attached to the just war theory. These are:

- Declared by a lawful authority i.e. government
- Serious and just reason e.g. self-defence, **not** to gain land or resources
- Last resort – all peaceful means have been exhausted
- Reasonable chance of success
- Innocents should not be harmed
- Force used should be proportional and limited. No Weapons of Mass Destruction.

4. Many people believe that war is never right and that working through the United Nations is much better.

FURTHER READING

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022 has led to war between these two nations. Many people believe that the Ukrainian defence of their country conforms to the just war theory. What do you think? See link below to read an article about this very issue.

<https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2022/03/81091/>



NUCLEAR WAR AND WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

1. There are three main categories of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD's): Nuclear, Biological and Chemical.
2. The basic Catholic attitude to warfare was laid out in 1963 by Pope John XXIII in his encyclical (letter) *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on earth).

The full encyclical can be read by clicking on the link below:

https://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html

3. There are 5 main reasons why the Catholic Church opposes the use of WMD's. These are:

- 1) **Indiscriminate.** Innocent people and neighbouring countries not fighting can be caught up in the effects of WMD.
- 2) **Disproportionate.** Effects are totally disproportionate to any possible success that may follow. This includes initial effects from the weapon and escalation e.g. counter attacks of WMD by other countries.
- 3) **Small success.** The possibility of success is small. The effects can be so devastating that survivors end up living in a world of chaos. As Pope Benedict XVI said about nuclear war: *"There would be no victors, only victims"* (Message for World Day of Peace 2006)
- 4) **Cost.** The cost of researching and building WMD's is huge! This means that money is not being spent on things which can improve people's lives.
- 5) **Increased tension.** Possession of WMD increases tension and fear making the world a less stable and safe place

POPE FRANCIS IN JAPAN

Pope Francis visited the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during his tour of Japan in November 2019. Both cities hold a unique and unenviable record – the only two cities in the world ever to have experienced a nuclear attack. Pope Francis, said the following whilst in Hiroshima: *'The use of nuclear weapons, as well as their mere possession is immoral.'*

A new message came from the Pontiff. **Even having nuclear weapons (The UK, France and USA all have nuclear weapons) is immoral.**

Further reading can be found from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament website. Click the link below.

<https://cnduk.org/>



4. In contrast to the message of Pope Francis, some people, including Catholics, think that the possession of nuclear weapons is necessary. One particular reason given is that possession of nuclear weapons helps to deter aggressive attacks from other countries and are important for self-defence.

THE UKRAINIAN EXAMPLE

In February 2022, Russia a 'nuclear weapons state' invaded neighbouring Ukraine. Ukraine is one of just four countries in the world which voluntarily disarmed, giving up their stockpile of nuclear weapons. Would Russia have invaded Ukraine if Ukraine was still a country possessing nuclear weapons?



THE CONSEQUENCES OF MODERN WARFARE

1. War is destructive and its impact is devastating. War creates:
2. **Civilian casualties.** This refers to people who do not fight in war but are killed or injured by the fighting. The use of modern weapons has meant that civilian deaths often greatly outnumber military deaths. The Church believes

that any person not directly involved in fighting should not be attacked. In WW2, many Jews were given shelter from the Nazis in the Vatican and other church buildings.

3. **Refugees.** Civilians are forced to leave their homes either because their lives have been destroyed or because they risk death. Many end up living in refugee camps with poor conditions. The Catholic Church believes that all refugees should be welcomed and protected by all countries. It urges ALL – governments and individuals to help. At the height of the Syrian refugee crisis in Europe in 2015, Pope Francis made this plea to the Catholics of Europe. ***“May every parish, every religious community, every monastery, every sanctuary in Europe host a family, starting with my diocese of Rome.” Pope Francis.***



“May every parish, every religious community, every monastery, every sanctuary in Europe host a family, starting with my diocese of Rome.” Pope Francis.

4. **Environmental damage.** Modern warfare has the potential to do great damage to the environment.

As stewards of the earth, Catholics believe they have a responsibility to limit the damage done to the environment

RELIGION AS A REASON FOR VIOLENCE AND WAR

1. Religion is often cited as a reason for war. Events such as the Crusades, the Troubles in Northern Ireland or unrest in the Middle East, on the surface may appear to give truth to this claim. However, the reasons for conflict are often more complex than this.

2. **War and violence in the Old Testament (OT).** People often claim that the OT is full of violence and war waged on behalf of God. However, many of these battles should be viewed in their historical context: It was necessary for a group of persecuted people to establish themselves at a time when many disputes were settled through violence.

3. ***“An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” Exodus 21:24*** is often cited as Biblical justification for violence. However, when this was written over 3000 years ago, individual wrongs were punished by collective punishment – tribes or families. The ‘eye for an eye’ was used to limit the violence suggested and that an individual should be punished, NOT a larger group of people, most of whom were innocent. Its meaning therefore is the exact opposite to what is claimed.



4. **Holy War.** A Holy war must be approved by a supreme religious leader (e.g. Pope). The purpose, to defend the Christian faith from attack. Those who take part believe that they will gain spiritual rewards.

5. The **Crusades** are the best-known examples of a Holy War. Popes called upon Christians to defend the holy places in the Middle-East, especially Jerusalem, from attack from Muslim Turks. St Bernard in the 12th century argued that the Crusaders were fighting injustice done to Christians and as they were authorised by the Pope, who was God’s representative on earth, it was God’s will. **For more information on the Crusades, click the link below.**

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crusades>

PACIFISM

1. Pacifism is the belief that violence and war can NEVER be justified.

2. Jesus taught that it is much better to bring peace than violence. There are numerous passages from scripture to support this viewpoint:

“If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also” (Matthew 5:39)

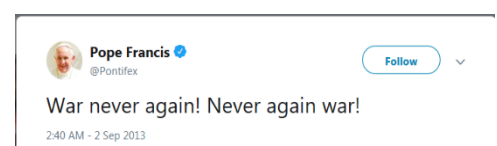
“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9)

“all who take the sword will perish by the sword.” (Matthew 26:52)

3. The early Christians were pacifists. St Martin of Tours (336-397) resigned from the army when he became a Christian saying: ***“it is not right for me to fight”***. When he was accused of cowardice, he offered to go to the front of the army unarmed – but the enemy asked for peace before this happened.

4. The Catholic Church acknowledges that very person and nation has the right to defend themselves. However, it emphasizes the need for non-violence. In 2013 Pope Francis tweeted: ***“War, never again! Never again war!”***. Official Church teaching, contained in the Catechism, says the following: ***‘The Church strives for peace but does not preach radical pacifism.’ Youcat 398.*** This allows the possibility of war in extreme circumstances. However, war should always be a last resort.

5. There are some Christian groups like the Quakers and other influential Christians like Martin Luther King who have rejected and continue to reject any form of violence.



THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN CONFLICTS OF THE 21ST CENTURY

1. The Catholic Church believes that it is important to try to both prevent war and help victims of war.
2. Using their role as a world leader with global influence, recent Popes have worked hard to end conflict and achieve peace.

3. Efforts of the Pope.

Each week the Pope prays for peace in St Peter's square. In 2003, Pope John Paul II was one of the strongest voices to war in Iraq – **"No to war!"** the Pope said to diplomats gathered. Like Pope John Paul II, Pope Francis has continued this theme. He continually speaks of the need for peace. In 2014, he organised a prayer meeting between the presidents of Israel and Palestine. By using Jewish, Christian and Islamic prayers, he hoped to bring the leaders to a position where change could occur. The Pope is also able to use the Church's extensive diplomatic services behind the scenes to urge for peace. It can apply its diplomatic 'muscle' on countries who can help to achieve this. It can act as a mediator between two opposed countries. In 2014, Cuba and the USA sought to normalise relations between them. The Vatican and Pope Francis played a substantial role in helping to achieve this. For more information, on this issue, click on the link below.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-32679290>

More recently, the Pope has pleaded for peace in Ukraine. He has spoken by telephone to both President Zelensky of Ukraine and Russian Patriarch Kirill, who is a strong supporter of President Putin and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



4. Catholic agencies such as CAFOD, Aid to the Church in Need and Caritas help to support victims of war. They do not take sides. Examples of their work include:



5. **Aid to the Church in Need** works to help persecuted Christians today, especially in the Middle East.

In 2014, the charity spent almost a million pounds providing blankets, medicine and food to those still in Syria and to the thousands of refugees who had left the country. It has also rebuilt churches, convents and schools for the local Christian community that was nearly obliterated by so called 'Islamic State' terrorist group in Iraq and Syria.

6. **CAFOD**. After 11 years of civil war in Sierra Leone between 1991 and 2002, many children had been kidnapped by terrorists and forced to become child

soldiers. CAFOD established orphanages to rescue these children. They started education and rehabilitation programmes.

7. **Caritas**. In 2015, Caritas went to the aid of victims in Niger. Some of the victims were lying out in the open under trees, trying to escape the violence. They had no food or water and were badly affected by the cold nights. Caritas provided food, water and tents in conditions where the aid workers could have been attacked and killed themselves.

TERRORISM

1. Terrorism is **"A planned action intended to cause death or serious harm to civilians with the purpose of achieving political change."** It usually refers to acts which are: Violent, intended to create fear through a psychological impact, carried out to undermine governments and force authorities to give certain demands, deliberately targeting civilians.

2. The Bible makes it clear that terrorism goes against God's wish for peace. St Paul teaches that we should obey the civil authorities as they have been put in charge by God. Terrorism goes against governments and is therefore wrong. **"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore, whoever resist authority resists what God has appointed and those who resist will incur judgement."** (Romans 13:1-2).

3. Paul also goes on and commands us not to take vengeance and to leave that to God – this suggests that violence and terrorism is always wrong.



“Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, ‘vengeance is mine, I will repay says the Lord.” (Romans 12:19)

4. However, it is possible to see the methods used by the Jewish Maccabees (1st century BCE) as a form of terrorism using violent terrorist attacks against the non-Jewish power that was trying to get them to give up Jewish beliefs and practices. **Many believe that without this action, Judaism may not have survived and so the Maccabees actions can be justified.**

5. The Catholic Church opposes all forms of terrorism in any situation. ***“Terrorism threatens, wounds and kills indiscriminately; it is gravely against justice and charity.” Catholic Catechism 2297.***

6. Britain has experienced terrorist attacks since World War 2. For example, the IRA carried out bomb attacks in Warrington (1993), London (1993) and Manchester (1996). Islamic extremists have carried out attacks in London (2005), the beheading of Lee Rigby (2013) and Manchester (2017).

TORTURE, RADICALISATION AND MARTYDOM

1. **Torture** is the use of severe physical or mental pain and can take many different forms.

2. The Catholic Church rejects all forms of torture. Why?

A) Torture is barbaric (savage, cruel)

B) Denies the victim their human rights

C) Illegal – international law does not allow it, even in war

D) Ineffective way to obtain information – is the information valid?

“Torture which uses physical or moral violence to extract confessions, punish the guilty, frighten opponents, or satisfy hatred is contrary to respect for the person and for human dignity.”

Catholic Catechism 2297

3. **Radicalisation** is adopting extreme views on religious, social or political issues. It tends to take place among younger people who feel rejected by their society or religion.

4. The vast majority of people do not support radicalisation of any kind (White extremist, Islamic fundamentalism, animal rights etc.) It is a **threat to the unity and stability of society**. In recent years, radicalisation has been seen as a bigger concern to the UK, as it can **potentially lead to terrorism**.

5. In 2015, there was a change to the law which stated that schools have a legal duty to prevent people being drawn into terrorism. This is called the **‘Prevent Programme.’** For more information on **‘Prevent locally’**, click on the link **here**. <https://www.leics.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/t/prevent/prevent/>

6. **Martydom** is the suffering or death of a person because of their beliefs. Radicals who act as suicide bombers to kill innocent civilians claim that they are martyrs. The Catholic Church does not accept this - they are terrorists.

7. The Church has always valued martyrs (our school is named after them!) Martyrs follow the teachings and example of Jesus. The Church believes that Christians should reject standards that are wrong – for some this has led to suffering or death. ***“If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” Matthew 16:24***

8. In May 1996, Islamic terrorists slit the throat of seven French Trappist monks whom they had kidnapped from the monastery of Tibherine in Algeria and held as hostages for two months. On December 8th 2018, the monks were beatified at a ceremony in Oran, Algeria. They have been declared martyrs and are on the second step to sainthood. For more information about the Monks of Tibherine, click the link below.

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/people/last-monk-tibhirine-god-drove-history>

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACEMAKING

1. The Bible teaches that it is the duty of Christians to be at peace with one another and help to bring about reconciliation.

2. Writing to the community at Philippi, St Paul speaks to them about the argument between two of its members. He asks for peace and for the whole community to help them to be reconciled. ***‘I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women.’ Philippians 4:2-3***

3. This appeal shows that all Christians should work towards reconciliation. Living in harmony with others is a sure sign to all people that God is present in their life. ***“Peace, however, is not merely a gift to be received: it is also a task to be undertaken.” Pope Benedict XVI, Message for World Day of Peace 2012.***

To see the full text, click the link below.

https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20111208_xlv-world-day-peace.html

4. As well as working towards peace individually within their own families and the local community, the Church works for peace on a global scale. Two Catholic organisations that work towards peace are:

1) Pax Christi

2) Justice and Peace Commission

5. **Pax Christi** is an organisation set up after WW2 by a group of Catholics to try and reconcile the countries of worn torn Europe. It works in more than 50 countries to establish peace based on mutual respect, justice and reconciliation. It tries to become involved in disputes at an early stage to avoid violence. It campaigns against military spending and the arms trade and calls for the abolition of nuclear weapons. **For more information click the link here:** <https://paxchristi.org.uk/>

6. **The Justice and Peace Commission** was founded in 1978 and works in every diocese in England and Wales. It aims to remove war by removing the causes of war. For e.g. it campaigns against the use of WMD and the need to reduce the arms trade. For more information on the work of the Justice and Peace Commission in the Diocese of Nottingham, see the following link: <https://www.dioceseofnottingham.uk/departments/caritas-and-justice-peace>

7. **Non-violent resistance** wants to make a stand against injustice without resorting to violence.

8. **Gandhi** successfully used non-violence to end British rule in India and **Martin Luther King** used non-violence to get equal rights for black people in the USA.

9. The Catholic Church supports the use of non-violence to achieve justice. Many Christians claim that Jesus would have supported non-violent protest when he said, ***“Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you and pray for those who abuse you.” Luke 6:27-28***



Key words

Conflict Resolution	Creating peace between two parties that have been at war or in dispute with each other
Holy War	Fighting for a religious cause or God, probably controlled by a religious leader
Justice	Bringing about what is right and fair, according to the law, or making up for a wrong that has been committed
Just War	A set of criteria that a war needs to meet before it can be justified
Martyrdom	The suffering or death of a martyr (a person who suffers or dies because of their beliefs)
Non-violent resistance	Resisting a government without using violence, for example, through peaceful protest or non-cooperation
Pacifism	The belief of people who refuse to take part in war and any other form of violence
Peacemaking	The action of trying to establish peace
Radicalisation	Adopting extreme views on social, political or religious issues
Reconciliation	The restoring of harmony after relationships have broken down
Righteous anger	Anger against an injustice; some Christians describe this as anger they believe is acceptable.
Terrorism	Unlawful use of violence, usually against civilians, to achieve a political goal
Torture	The use of severe physical or psychological pain to punish someone or force them to do or say something
Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD's)	Weapons that can kill large numbers of people and cause great damage. Nuclear, biological and chemical weapons all fall into this category.