

Theme F: Religion, Human Rights & Social Justice

Human Rights Act 1998

In your own words explain what **Human Rights** are.

Human rights protect you in many ways such as your right to a private and family life, as well as expressing your opinions and your right not to be mistreated or wrongly punished by the state. After the 2nd World War more than **50 Member States** contributed to the final draft of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. Some of the articles are: **Right to Life, Right to a fair trial, Right to Liberty and Security**.

Prejudice & Discrimination

Prejudice: Opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience.

Discrimination: To act on prejudice.

Racism: Belief in the superiority of one race over another; discrimination against an individual or group of people, based on racial background, usually colour. The Bible says: **“For God does not show favouritism.”**

Below note down the **main causes of racism**:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The Race Relations Act 1976 stated it is illegal to: Stir up racial hatred by using offensive language or threats, refuse someone a job because of their race or ethnicity.

Racism

Most Christians today oppose racism in all its forms. The **Bible** says: **“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female], for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”**

‘Show Racism the Red Card’ is a campaign that uses top footballers to educate people against racism.

Disability

Christians oppose discrimination against disabled people because it does not show Christian love (**agape**). Jesus healed the sick and disabled and taught his followers to **‘Love thy neighbour as yourself’**.

Gender

Paul’s letter to the Corinthians appears to show **gender prejudice** and **discrimination** against women. He says just as Christ is the head of man, so a man is the head of a woman.

“Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak [...] for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.”

Sexuality

Adam & Eve were told in **Genesis 1:28** to: **“Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.”** traditionally, the Church has opposed homosexuality as God made **Adam & Eve** male and female and that the prime purpose of sex is for procreation.

Wealth

Responsibilities of wealth

Christians believe that they have a responsibility to try to make the world a better, more equal place for everyone. Wealth should be used to allow people freedom, dignity and a safe and more equal life.

The Parable of the Sheep & Goats shows that good people (including those who are generous with their wealth) will be rewarded in heaven while greedy people will be punished in hell.

Jesus told the **Parable of the Rich man & Lazarus** in which the rich man ended up in hell because he had not helped the beggar at the gate.

Christians believe that by sharing they are helping Jesus and showing Christian love (**agape**).

Bible quotes

“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.”

“But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.”

“Wealth and honour come from you; you are the ruler of all things.”

“No one can serve 2 masters [...] You cannot serve both God and money.”

Poverty

Poverty is the state of being extremely poor. **Poverty** can be defined differently:
- **Relative poverty** relates to what a particular society considers to be poor. **For e.g.** someone in UK might be considered to be relatively poor if they live on less than the average UK income.
- **Absolute poverty** is when someone does not have access to basic human needs such as water, clothing, education & shelter. **UNICEF states 22,000 children die each day due to poverty.**

Reasons for poverty are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Duty to tackle poverty & its causes

Christians believe when God made **Adam & Eve** at the start of time he gave them the job of looking after the world and everything in it. This is called **stewardship**. **They will:**

- Campaign to raise awareness of poverty to give people a voice by sharing the stories of real-life.
- Work in communities, e.g. give people in poor communities the skills and knowledge to help themselves.
- Donate goods and volunteer time to food banks:

- **The Trussell Trust** is a Christian charity that fights against poverty.

“The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.”

Exploitation of the poor

Exploitation: misuse of power or money to get others to do things for little or unfair reward.

Excessive interest

Desperate people are sometimes lured into borrowing money at exorbitant interest rates and find themselves unable to pay off the debt.

These lenders often target low-income families.

Such practices are **ILLEGAL** and are often linked to organised crime. Serious violence may result if repayments are not made.

People trafficking

Criminal gangs may force some migrants to work in poor conditions for little pay, or to work as prostitutes. Some are kidnapped and forced to work like slaves, or to work in the sex industry in another country.

This is a multi-billion pound industry in which criminals profit from control and **exploitation** of others.

Fair pay

Around 200,000 people work in tea plantations in West Bengal, India and are paid £1 a day. Workers are forced to endure poor working conditions, long hours, low wages and other violations of labour rights.

The UK Government introduced the **National Minimum Wage Act 1998**. Many Christians supported this introduction as they believe in a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

Provide definitions below:

Emergency aid –

Long term aid –

Many Christians are involved in supporting soup kitchens, food banks, and charities that provide help for those in poverty.

Salvation Army

Provides emergency assistance, budgeting and debt advice, ideas on how to save money, local support for job seekers. Salvation Army churches or centres also provide: clothes, lunch clubs, food parcels, showers, baby supplies and meal vouchers.

Christian aid

Christian Aid is a Christian organisation that insists the world can and must be swiftly changed to one where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty. It tries to provide help where the need is the greatest. It works alongside nearly 600 local partner organisations.

Charities

Freedom of religious expression

Article 9 of the **Human Rights Act 1998** protects your right to freedom of thought, belief and religion and it includes the right to change your religion or beliefs at any time.

This gives people the right to wear religious clothing, talk about their beliefs and take part in religious worship.

Christian teachings encourage **tolerance** and **harmony**. **“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.”**

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”

“I urge you brother and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and out obstacles in your way.”

NO religion teaches religious intolerance. **Islam** teaches that religious freedom is part of God's design, and freedom of belief is taught in the **Qur'an**.

Social Justice

Social justice: Ensuring that society treats people fairly whether they are poor or wealthy and protects people's **human rights**.

It is about seeking to protect people's civil liberties, rights and opportunities, and taking care of the least advantaged members of society.

The **Bible** teaches that's God is a God of justice: **“all his ways are just.”** The **Prophet Amos** told the people of Israel that God was not pleased with the way they were oppressing the poor.

There are many stories in the **Bible** that illustrate the need to help others, such as the **Parable of the Good Samaritan** and the **Sheep & Goats** in which Jesus says those who help the hungry, thirsty, sick, a stranger, those without clothing or those in prison, help him.

James, in his letter, says that Christians have a responsibility and duty to promote social justice, as **“faith without deeds is useless.”**

Exam Practice

Give TWO causes of poverty. [2 marks]

Give TWO main causes of racism. [2 marks]

Explain TWO similar religious beliefs about the responsibilities of having wealth. [4 marks]

Explain TWO religious beliefs that show why racial discrimination is wrong. [5 marks]

Explain TWO religious beliefs about the status of women in religion. [5 marks]

'It is always right to give charity to the poor.' [12 marks]

'Those who live in poverty should help themselves to overcome their difficulties.' [12 marks]

'Racism is the worst form of prejudice.' [12 marks]