

GCSE Religious Studies

Religion, Peace and Conflict

Workbook



Name:

Religious beliefs, teachings and attitudes about reasons for war

At any point in time there is always a war happening somewhere in the world. We have fought wars throughout history and there is little sign of them stopping. Wars between nations, civil wars, threats of futuristic wars including nuclear and cyber wars all threaten our existence on a daily basis. We have progressed in terms of weapons and types of war to a point where weapons already exist that could destroy us all.

All religions promote peace and the majority of the world's people would claim to have a religious beliefs... so why do we continue to have conflicts? We will look at three specific



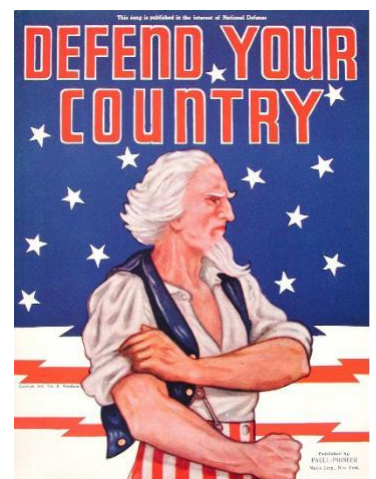
reasons: Greed, Self-defence and Retaliation.

Greed

This is war to gain, for example, more land, more power or more resources. Most religions would disagree with this as a reason. Greed comes from selfishness, which are both characteristics not approved of by religions. Considering the numbers of soldiers and casualties in war, greed could never be seen as a justifiable reason for it.

Self-defence

Religious holy books and texts describe wars. The Old Testament, the Qur'an, the Bhagavad Gita and the Guru Granth Sahib all suggest that war may be necessary in self-defence. If a country or religion is under attack, then conflicts can happen. It would be seen as entirely right and proper to defend your country against attack. The problem comes when the response is disproportionately large, and self-defence turns into aggression



for its own gain.

Retaliation

At times, a country will be attacked in a way which provokes retaliation. For example, the First World War began as a retaliation against a political assassination. The problem with retaliation is that it is often a spontaneous reaction which leads to the escalation of a situation, and hence war. Religion would all say that peaceful negotiation and discussions to resolve issues are better than simple retaliation because they diffuse rather than exacerbate issues.



Tasks:

1. What threatens our existence on a daily basis?

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2. What do all religions promote?

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3. What do most religions believe about 'greed' as a reason for war?

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4. What do most holy books suggest war might be necessary for?

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5. What might be the problem of war for self-defence?

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6. What is 'retaliation'?

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7. What is the problem with retaliation?

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