

Lesson 3 – Religion, Peace & Conflict

What is the just war theory? - [Just War Theory \(Christianity\) \(thenational.academy\)](https://www.thenational.academy/just-war-theory-christianity) Please use this link when completing your worksheet.

Starter:

Write down a list of conditions, that you think, makes fighting a war the right thing to do.

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

Task: Match the key word to the correct definition.

1. Pacifist	Believing it is right to fight in a war in the interests of justice and the greater good
2. Holy war	Believing it is right to fight a war in the name of God
3. Just war	Believing all war and killing is wrong

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGmLJgojD1E> – Watch the video to understand views on the Just War theory.

A **just war** is a war which is declared for right and noble reasons and fought in a certain way. A just war is not a war that is 'good' as such – it is a war that Christians feel to be necessary or 'just' in the circumstances, when all other solutions have been tried and have failed. It is a necessary evil and a last resort.

Christianity is not a **pacifist** religion although there are pacifists in most Christian **denominations**. Some Christian groups, e.g., the **Religious Society of Friends** (Quakers), oppose war in all circumstances.

Most Christians would support a war if it were justified by just war standards.

What is the Just War theory?

The **Just War theory** was first developed by **St Thomas Aquinas**. Aquinas was one of the most influential **theologians** of the last 1,000 years. The theory set out conditions against which to judge whether a war should be waged and if it could be justified, and how it should be waged.

The just war theory conditions:

1. Be fought for a **just cause** (e.g., self-defence or to defend others)
2. Be declared by a **proper legal authority**
3. Have a **just intention** (fought to promote good or defeat wrongdoing; justice and peace must be restored afterwards)
4. Be a **last resort** (other ways of solving the problem tried first)
5. Have a **reasonable chance of success** (the good gained by winning should outweigh the evil which led to the war)
6. Be **proportional** (excessive force should not be used and innocent civilians must not be killed)

Which condition is the most important and why?

Can war ever be justified? Explain your answer.

World War 2
War was declared British Government
Hitler had already invaded or taken over two neighbouring countries before the war started.
The war was declared to stop Hitler from invading other countries.
For four years before the war there had been lots of negotiations to try to settle the problem without a war.
There was lots of bombing of German cities by British bombers. Hundreds of thousands of German civilians were killed
Germany was totally defeated and peace was made between Britain and Germany.

Look at this checklist on the Second World War.

Did it meet the conditions of a just war?

Answer:

I think the Second World War was/was not a just war because...

This means...