

Peace and Conflict

Topics covered:

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|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Peace and justice | 4. Terrorism | 8. Holy War |
| 2. Forgiveness and reconciliation | 5. Reasons for war | 9. Pacifism |
| 3. Violence | 6. Nuclear weapons | 10. Victims of war |
| | 7. Just War | |

Remember: if a question is asking you for the **similarities** it means **two things the same**. If it says **contrasting** it is asking you to say **both for and against**.

7. Just War

Christianity:

- ✓ A war which is fought using certain criteria for fairness.
- ✓ A theory developed and introduced by St Augustine.
- ✓ Contains 8 criteria:
 1. Must be fought for the right cause.
 2. Must be started by the right authority (government etc.)
 3. Must have the right intention
 4. Must be a last resort
 5. Must be a reasonable chance of success.
 6. Must use a proportional amount of force
 7. Must be fought by the right means (no harming innocents)
 8. Must use appropriate force (weapons etc.)
- ✓ All criteria must be met in order for the war to be a 'just war'.

Islam:

- ✓ Lesser jihad obliges Muslims to fight under certain conditions
- ✓ There are strict rules to follow
- ✓ Although there is no specific theory in Islam codes of conduct have been developed.
- ✓ War is allowed if it follows the 6 circumstances:
 1. It is the last resort
 2. It is done in self-defence
 3. The decision is made by a state leader
 4. It is done for a just cause
 5. Other countries can assist another Muslim start which is under threat
 6. If another state has tyrannised Muslims it is permissible to fight in support of Muslims
- ✓ If the conditions are met, the war is just and those who fight in it will receive the reward of God.

6. Nuclear weapons

- ✓ Weapons that work by a nuclear reaction which devastate huge areas and kill large numbers of people.
- ✓ It is estimated that in 2015, nine nations had around 15,700 nuclear weapons between them.
- ✓ The usual justification for NW is that they prevent world wars from occurring due to the fear of the consequences.

Christianity:

- ✓ Christians believe that the problem with nuclear weapons is their use rather than the device themselves.
- ✓ It is a fundamental belief that as God is the creator only he is the one who is able to take away life.
- ✓ Some believe that nuclear weapons which kill masses of innocent can never be justified.
- ✓ Others believe that they can be used as a threat for self-defence.

'Thou shall not kill' Exodus 20

'If there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth'. Exodus 21:23-24

Islam:

- ✓ Believe life is sacred and using weapons which could kill millions of people and destroy the earth goes against the teachings of Islam.
- ✓ In warfare innocent civilians must be protected, with nuclear weapons this is not possible.

Do not contribute to your destruction with your own hands, but do good for God loves those who do good'. Qur'an 2:195

Other types of weapons of mass destruction:

Chemical – a weapon which contains lethal chemicals which when released causes death, mainly by choking.

Biological – a weapon which introduces harmful bacteria and viruses into the atmosphere. They can cause illness and death on a massive scale.

8. Holy War

- ✓ Fighting for a religious cause or God. Normally controlled by a religious leader.

Christianity:

- ✓ In the Old Testament there are many references to holy wars such as the Crusades.
- ✓ A holy war must be authorised by a religious leader with great authority.
- ✓ It should be to defend Christianity from attack.
- ✓ Those who take part will receive spiritual rewards and go straight to heaven.
- ✓ Christians will stand up for their faith but are much more likely to use the power of argument than violence.

Islam:

- ✓ Lesser jihad makes the concept of holy war important to Muslims, as it defends Islam and the rights of Muslims.
- ✓ Holy war cannot be used to force people to convert to Islam.
- ✓ The war must be fought for God and not for a leader to demonstrate their power.
- ✓ For a holy war to be justly declared the faith of Islam must be under attack.
- ✓ Holy war must be a last resort
- ✓ Muslims must remain in battle until it is won with a holy war.
- ✓ A Muslim who is killed fighting in a holy war in defence of Islam is promised a place in paradise.

9. Pacifism

- ✓ The belief of people who refuse to fight in war that all violence is wrong.
- ✓ They believe violence can never be justified.
- ✓ Pacifists strongly believe that it is best to work at preventing war from becoming a possibility.
- ✓ They believe it is even wrong to fight in self-defence.
- ✓ Humans lives are so valuable that nothing can justify putting them under threat.

Christianity:

- ✓ Not all Christians are pacifist.
- ✓ Christian pacifists believe that peace is needed. It is not just an absence of conflict but a sense of well-being and security.
- ✓ Peace can be achieved through religious faith, supported by prayer and meditation.
- ✓ Many pacifists take their inspiration from Jesus, who taught non-violence.
- ✓ They believe to follow non-violence is to follow the way of Jesus.

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God'. Matthew 5:9

Islam:

- ✓ Islam is a religion of peace.
- ✓ It is difficult for Muslims to call themselves pacifists because of the duty of Jihad.
- ✓ In most circumstances Muslims share principles of pacifism, and sympathise with the cause of pacifists.
- ✓ Muslims believe being at peace with yourself helps you to avoid conflict.
- ✓ They believe this inner peace comes from submitting your life to God and becoming part of the **Ummah**, which gives them solidarity and support.

10. Victims of war

- ✓ Casualties are unavoidable in war.
- ✓ Many religions believe that you should help the victims of war after it has ended.

Christianity:

- ✓ Support organisations that help victims of war because of the belief in **'love your neighbour as yourself.'** Mark 12:31

Caritas: Catholic organisation who help serve the poor. Inspired by the teaching of Jesus and the Church. Provide a practical response to those suffering through conflict by saving lives and relieving suffering. Provide food and shelter for refugees. Provide translators and legal aid.

Christian aid: Aim to bring an end to poverty. Work with the victims. Establish basic human rights and fairness in society. Support the local organisations to help deal with the issues. Raise awareness of conflict around the world. Fundraise through Christian Aid week. Distribute envelopes with a donation inside.

Islam:

- ✓ Also support organisations out of a duty to help others

Islamic relief: Independent charity which respond to the needs of victims by providing short term aid during disasters and emergencies/. Inspired by their faith and the teaching of Islam. Allocate resources regardless of race, politics, gender or belief. Expect nothing in return. Follow the teaching **'whoever saved a life, it would be as if they saved the life of all mankind'. Qur'an 5:32**

Muslim Aid: Governed by the principles of Islam. Give homes to orphans who have lost parents to war. Provide beds, and education. Make sure victims receive health care and give support to those who need it, especially spiritual support.

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Remember: if a question is asking you for the **similarities** it means **two things the same**. If it says **contrasting** it is asking you to say **both for and against**.

1. Peace and Justice

Peace:

- ✓ Peace is defined as the absence of war.
- ✓ It can also be thought of as a feeling of happiness.

Justice:

- ✓ Justice is bringing about what's right or fair, or making up for a wrong that has been committed.
- ✓ Justice is often linked with equality. If people don't have the same opportunities this is seen as unfair.

Christianity:

- ✓ In the Old Testament Prophet Isaiah looked forward to a time of peace.
- ✓ Peace is important to Christians. They should aim to make peace.

'Nation will not take sword upon nation'. Isaiah 2:4

- ✓ Christians look forward to a time when God, the ultimate judge, will establish justice between nations and settle disputes.

Islam:

- ✓ There is an emphasis on peace in the Qur'an. The word Islam in Arabic means peace.

'The servants of the Lord of Mercy are those who walk humbly on the earth, and who, when aggressive people address them, reply, with words of peace'. Qur'an 25:63

- ✓ In Islam, 'the Just' is one of the 99 names of Allah.
- ✓ Believe that God has provided the laws because they help bring about justice on earth.

4. Terrorism

- ✓ A serious form of violence.
- ✓ Where an individual or group who share certain beliefs use violence or threat to further their cause.
- ✓ The violence is usually committed against innocent people and takes place in public.
- ✓ Terrorists believe that killing innocent people will make the rest of the population more aware of their cause and the authorities will give in to their demands.
- ✓ **No religious tradition promotes terrorism, so you will never answer a question on why it is acceptable.**

Christianity:

- ✓ Most Christians believe terrorist acts are wrong
- ✓ Victims are usually innocent people and it is wrong to kill innocent people.
- ✓ They believe you should use peaceful ways to resolve issues.

'Thou shall not kill'. Exodus 20:13

'Love your neighbour as yourself'. Mark 12:31

Islam:

- ✓ Muslims believe terrorist attacks are wrong and they go against the wishes of God.
- ✓ Victims are usually innocent people and it is wrong to kill innocent people.
- ✓ There is no justification for terrorist attacks in the teachings of Islam.

'Do not take life, which God has made sacred'. Qur'an 17:33

3. Violence and Protest

- ✓ The right to protest is a fundamental democratic freedom.
- ✓ Protest is an expression of disapproval which is often in public.
- ✓ Protests have to be carefully planned out and requested before they go ahead.
- ✓ Police have to be informed in case they become violent.

Christianity:

- ✓ Christians do not promote violence.
- ✓ Christian teachings generally say that violence should be avoided if possible.
- ✓ Sometimes Christians understand that violence is needed in order to stand up for injustices.
- ✓ They believe certain rules should be followed when violence occurs.

'Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called sons of God'. Matthew 9:5

'If there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth'. Exodus 21:23-24

Islam:

- ✓ Muslims believe that fighting and violence is only allowed in self-defence.
- ✓ They say you should only fight those who actively fight against you.

'Do not kill each other, for God is merciful to you. If any of you does these things, out of hostility and injustice, We shall make him suffer Fire'. Qur'an 4:29-30

'If you have to respond to an attack, make your response proportionate, but it is best to stand fast'. Qur'an 16:126

2. Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Forgiveness:

- ✓ Defined as showing grace and mercy and pardoning someone for what they have done wrong.

Reconciliation:

- ✓ Restoring relationships after conflict or a disagreement.

Christianity:

- ✓ Believe that forgiveness is important for living peacefully.
- ✓ The wrong should be righted (justice) but once that's happened forgiveness should follow.
- ✓ God sets the example by forgiving those who ask through faith. We should do the same.
- ✓ Believe that reconciliation is important. It is more than apologising.
- ✓ Reconciliation involves a conscious effort to rebuild the relationship.

Islam:

- ✓ Forgiveness is an important element of living peacefully.
- ✓ Allah sets the example regarding forgiveness by forgiving those who are truly sorry and ask for forgiveness in faith.
- ✓ Also believe that reconciliation is important. It is more than apologising.
- ✓ Reconciliation involves a conscious effort to rebuild the relationship.

5. Reasons for war

Greed:

- ✓ War has been used to gain land or territory or regain land lost.
- ✓ It is used for countries to control resources and make countries richer and more powerful.

Christianity:

- ✓ Christianity warns against greed so a war for this reason is wrong.

'For the love of money is the root of all evil'. 1 Timothy 6:10

'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God'. Luke 18:25

Islam:

- ✓ Muslims also warn against greed.

'God does not like arrogant, boastful people, who are miserly and order other people to be the same, hiding the bounty God has given them'. Qur'an 4:36-37

Self-defence:

- ✓ When a country attacks another it expects to meet resistance from the invaded country.
- ✓ Fighting in self-defence is usually considered to be morally acceptable as you are protecting the lives of the innocents that live there.

Christianity:

- ✓ Whilst there is little in the New Testament to justify the idea of fighting in self-defence an argument can be made for it.
- ✓ Christians believe it is acceptable as long as all other ways of solving the problem have been attempted and failed.

'Do to others what you would have them do to you.' Matthew 7:12

Islam

- ✓ The Qur'an permits fighting in self-defence, as long as all other ways of solving the problem have been attempted

'Those who have been attacked are permitted to take up arms because they have been wronged – God has the power to help them'. Qur'an 22:39

Retaliation:

- ✓ Retaliation is deliberately harming someone as a response of them harming you.
- ✓ Wars are sometimes fought in retaliation against a country which has done something wrong.

Christianity:

- ✓ Christians are taught by Jesus not retaliate.
- ✓ Many Christians find it difficult to follow the teaching when it comes to war.

'Do not repay anyone evil for evil'. Romans 12:17

'But I tell you do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also'. Matthew 5:39

Islam:

- ✓ Islam teaches that retaliation should be measured.
- ✓ Torture is forbidden.
- ✓ Muslims believe that God offers innumerable rewards for those who choose reconciliation over retaliation.

'If you have to respond to an attack, make your response proportionate, but it is best to stand fast'. Qur'an 16:126

'There is cause to act against those who oppress people and transgress in the land against all justice...though if a person is patient and forgives, this is one of the greatest things'. Qur'an 42-43