



PEACE AND CONFLICT

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AQA GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES (8062)

PAPER 2: THEMES
PEACE AND CONFLICT

ABOUT THE TOPIC

This topic explores how Christians, Muslims and non-religious people think about peace and conflict and how these beliefs influence actions to promote peace and resolve conflict.

It includes:

- Causes of conflict
- Just War theory and Jihad
- Pacifism and Holy War
- Nuclear weapons
- Peacemaking and forgiveness
- The role of organisations



KEY BELIEFS THAT INFLUENCE ATTITUDES



CHRISTIANS

- God is loving and calls people to love their neighbour.
- Jesus taught peace, forgiveness and reconciliation.
- War is a result of human sin but sometimes it may be necessary to resist evil.



MUSLIMS

- Allah is All-Peace (As-Salam) and wants peace and justice.
- Islam encourages peace but allows defending the innocent.
- Jihad means striving in the way of Allah – this can be inner struggle or defensive action.



NON-RELIGIOUS

- Values such as human rights, equality and freedom promote peace.
- Conflict arises from greed, power and prejudice.
- Peace is achieved through dialogue, education and laws.

KEY QUOTATIONS



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

This shows Christians believe in actively working for peace.



"If anyone killed a person – unless it be for murder or spreading corruption in the land – it would be as if he killed all mankind." Qur'an 5:32

This teaches Muslims the value of human life and peace.



"Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding." Albert Einstein

This reflects the non-religious belief that dialogue and understanding lead to lasting peace.

CAUSES OF CONFLICT



CHRISTIANS

- Sin, selfishness and greed cause conflict.
- Broken relationships with God and others lead to violence.



MUSLIMS

- Injustice, oppression and breaking Allah's laws cause conflict.
- Shaytan (Satan) can influence humans to do evil.



NON-RELIGIOUS

- Competition for power and resources.
- Prejudice, racism and ignorance.
- Poverty and inequality.



JUST WAR THEORY (CHRISTIANITY)



CHRISTIANS

War can be justified if:

- There is a just cause (e.g. self-defence).
- It is the last resort.
- The right intention is to restore peace.
- Proportionality is used (no excessive force).



MUSLIMS

Similar ideas are found in Islam: war is only permitted in self-defence and must follow strict rules to limit harm.



NON-RELIGIOUS

Some support just war ideas if it protects human rights and prevents greater evil.



JIHAD (ISLAM)



MUSLIMS

- Jihad means "striving in the way of Allah".
- Greater Jihad – inner struggle to be a good person.
- Lesser Jihad – defending the faith and protecting the innocent.



CHRISTIANS

Some compare Jihad with the Christian duty to stand up for justice and protect others.



NON-RELIGIOUS

Some see armed Jihad as violence. Others understand it as self-defence.



PACIFISM VS HOLY WAR



CHRISTIANS

- Pacifists believe Jesus taught 'turn the other cheek' and oppose all violence.
- Holy War: Some believe God may call people to fight against evil.



MUSLIMS

- Some Muslims believe war is wrong except in defence.
- Holy War (Jihad) is allowed in self-defence and to protect the oppressed.



NON-RELIGIOUS

Pacifists oppose all war; others believe force may be used to stop tyranny or evil.



NUCLEAR WEAPONS



CHRISTIANS

Many believe nuclear weapons are wrong as they cause mass destruction and are immoral.



MUSLIMS

Most Muslims believe nuclear weapons are haram (forbidden) because they cause indiscriminate harm.



NON-RELIGIOUS

Many oppose nuclear weapons as a threat to humanity; others say they are needed for deterrence.



PEACEMAKING AND FORGIVENESS



CHRISTIANS

Jesus taught forgiveness ("forgive 70 x 7"). Christians are called to be peacemakers.



MUSLIMS

Forgiveness is highly valued in Islam. Allah is Most Forgiving and encourages Muslims to forgive others.



NON-RELIGIOUS

Forgiveness helps heal and move on. Peacemaking involves dialogue, compromise and understanding.



THE ROLE OF ORGANISATIONS



- The United Nations (UN) works to maintain peace and resolve conflicts through diplomacy and peacekeeping.
- Christian organisations (e.g. CAFOD, Christian Aid) work for peace, justice and reconciliation.
- Muslim organisations (e.g. Islamic Relief) promote peace, humanitarian aid and interfaith dialogue.
- Non-religious organisations (e.g. Amnesty International) protect human rights and campaign for peace.

PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING PEACE



- Justice – treat everyone fairly.
- Respect – value every person's dignity.
- Reconciliation – forgive and restore relationships.
- Dialogue – listen and try to understand others.
- Cooperation – work together for the common good.

SUMMARY: HOW VIEWS MAY DIFFER

ISSUE	CHRISTIANS	MUSLIMS	NON-RELIGIOUS
Causes of Conflict	Sin, greed, broken relationships with God.	Injustice, oppression, breaking Allah's laws.	Greed, prejudice, inequality, ignorance.
Just War / Jihad	War can be justified under strict rules.	War allowed in self-defence; Jihad has greater and lesser meanings.	Some support just war ideas; others oppose all war.
Pacifism / Holy War	Some are pacifists; others believe in holy war.	Most oppose war except in defence; Jihad can be holy war.	Pacifists oppose all war; others support force to stop evil.
Nuclear Weapons	Generally opposed as immoral and destructive.	Mostly opposed: seen as haram.	Many oppose as threat to humanity; some support for deterrence.
Peacemaking	Forgiveness and love are key.	Forgiveness and justice are important.	Dialogue, understanding and compromise.
Role of Organisations	Work for peace, justice and reconciliation.	Provide aid, promote peace and interfaith dialogue.	Promote human rights, peace and global cooperation.

KEY VOCABULARY

Conflict – A serious disagreement or fight.

Peace – Freedom from war; living in harmony.

Just War – War that is morally right under strict conditions.

Jihad – Striving in the way of Allah (greater or lesser).

Pacifism – Belief that all violence and war are wrong.

Forgiveness – Stopping feelings of anger and seeking peace.

Reconciliation – Restoring friendly relationships after conflict.

Deterrence – Preventing war by the threat of punishment.

Proportionality – Using only the force necessary.

STUDY TIPS



Learn key beliefs and teachings for each view.



Compare Christian, Muslim and non-religious views.



Make links between beliefs and behaviour.



Use key vocabulary in your answers.



Practise 4, 6 and 12-mark exam questions.



Think about similarities and differences.