

War and Peace.

What you need to know:

- Reasons used by religious believers for **pacifism**.
 - Reasons used by religious believers to take part in war.
 - The work of a religious believer who has worked for peace or led non-violent protest.
 - Criteria for a **just war** and a **holy war** and application of each term to a relevant example.
 - Application of sacred texts, religious principles and statements by religious authorities to war and peace.
 - Concepts of peace, justice and sanctity of life.
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Pacifism is the belief that all violence is wrong no matter what the circumstances (absolute morality). Pacifists refuse to fight in wars. They are 'conscientious objectors' - they say that going to war is against their conscience.

Reasons for Pacifism:	Reasons for believers to fight:
Violence leads to more violence.	These mainly centre on the idea of justice and the criteria for a just war.
War solves nothing in the long run; people still have to settle disputes.	It is wrong to allow weaker countries to be attacked and do nothing about it.
War wastes precious human and natural resources.	Self-defence is justifiable.
War causes terrible suffering, even among innocent people.	War is the lesser of two evils.

War increases hatred, prejudice and greed.	It depends on the circumstances of the war.

Martin Luther King:

Led civil rights demonstrations including a march to Washington D.C where he made his infamous 'I have dream speech'. In this speech he showed how he saw the future for his children. He organised non - violent protests including sit - in's in white only restaurants, refusing to move until they had been served. Along with this he organised a bus boycott until blacks were allowed to sit in any seat they wished¹.

As part of his role as a preacher he often gave sermons on this issue and many speeches all over the country about the plight of his fellow blacks in the Deep South. He won the noble peace prize for his work in the civil rights movement.

Although Martin Luther King was a pacifist does not mean to say that he sat back and did nothing. Along with the other things mentioned above, he worked effortlessly to gain blacks the right to vote², to use public facilities and to be educated with white people³. He went to prison for his beliefs and spoke out even when he had his house bombed. He was finally assassinated for opposing the segregation laws in the Southern USA.

Mohandas K Gandhi (aka 'Mahatma' or 'great soul'):

He began his non - violent passive resistance or 'satyagraha' (steadfastness in truth) during his 20 years of living in South Africa at the time of apartheid⁴. He would disregard unjust laws without hating whites or retaliating against them. He had to face the consequences of his resistance by returning to his

¹ Don't forget that it was the refusal of Rosa Parks that set this action into place. If she had not refused to give up her seat then this may not have happened.

² Remember the usual question a black person had to answer was 'How many bubbles can be blown from a bar of ivory soap'. White's were given the vote automatically.

³ Think of the 'Little Rock 9' who went to an all white school and had to have military protection to ensure they were safe. This lasted until they graduated.

⁴ This is a similar system to what was happening at the time of MLK. It was designed to make the whites more powerful than the blacks. The blacks suffered the same types of treatment than those in the Deep South of the USA.

native India. On his return he found that there were the same prejudices and discrimination there between the British and the Indian people⁵.

As the leader of the Indian National Congress, he called for the Indian people to resist British rule and gain independence by non - violent means. He did this by leading marches and boycotting British goods. He was repeatedly imprisoned by the British and when the Indians started fighting amongst themselves he began to fast. He was prepared to die for his beliefs. He continued to fight for the status of the 'untouchables' to be raised⁶. He, like Martin Luther King was assassinated for his beliefs.

REMEMBER THAT JESUS WAS NOT A PACIFIST! THE INTENTION OF THIS MODULE IS TO LOOK AT MODERN DAY MEN WHO FOLLOWED THIS TEACHING.

Just war:

A just war is a war fought for a just cause. St. Thomas Aquinas gave us the following guidelines to help us:

A just war must be:

- Started and controlled by a proper legal authority.
- Fought for a just cause (those attacked must deserve it).
- It is fought to promote good or avoid evil; justice and peace must be restored afterwards,
- The last resort (other ways of solving the problem must be tried first).
- Fought only using enough force to achieve victory and innocent civilians must not be killed.
- Fought with reasonable chance of success; the good gained by winning should outweigh the evil which led to the war.

Sometimes 'Jihad' or collective defence of the Muslim community must be fought to defend the rights of Muslims to follow their religion or to protect them from a tyrant. Those killed in jihad enter paradise on Judgement Day. A war is just if:

⁵ This was because India was part of the British Empire at the time. This meant that Britain had conquered India and claimed the land for herself.

⁶ This is because India has a history of the caste system. This means that certain people are only entitled to perform certain task in life. The untouchables were the lowest of the low and not really a caste in the eyes of the other castes.

- It has been declared by the proper authority.
- It is a last resort.
- Innocent life, plants and animals have been protected.

The Qur'an forbids going to war to attack others, to win land or power, or to make converts to Islam.

Holy War:

A Holy War is fought for religious reasons 'with God on your side'.

The Crusades (Christian wars to recover Jerusalem and the holy places of Palestine from the Muslims in the Middle Ages) were considered at the time to be a Holy war or a war on behalf of God.

In the Bible there are example of God ordering a war or approving war:

'...The Lord has given you the city! The city and everything in it must be totally destroyed as an offering to the Lord' (Joshua 6: 16 to 17)⁷.

Some conditions for a holy war (in the ancient Israelite thinking) include the following:

- It was what God wanted.
- God was in the midst of their armies as an unseen supreme commander.
- The losers were to be completely exterminated, including men, women and children.
- Victims of war and spoils were consecrated to God as though God's property.
- Anyone who kept some of the spoils would be stoned to death.

⁷ For a full account of the story, read the book of Joshua. It is not that long and will show how and why God ordered that this city should be attacked.

Religious teachings about war and peace:

Christianity:

- Killing is wrong: Do not commit murder (Exodus 20:13).
- Love your neighbour as yourself (Matt: 22:39).
- The Just war theory given by Aquinas.
- In support of war: turning over tables of the moneylenders in the Temple. Jesus did this in his last week on earth.

Islam:

- 'Salaam', a Muslim greeting which means peace.
- The Qur'an teaches that you should aim to make peace and avoid war, but if that is impossible, once the war finishes you should make peace.
- 'Hate your enemy mildly; he may become your friend one day' (Hadith)

Practice questions:

1. What does a pacifist believe about war?
2. Explain the term 'justice' and 'sanctity of life'.
3. Explain how a believer might use the idea of the sanctity of life to argue what is wrong.
4. State what is meant by just war and holy war.