

GCSE Religious Studies
Religion, Peace and Conflict
Workbook



Name:

Religions allowing war – holy war and just war

All religious traditions believe in peace, not war. However, most also accept that there are times when it is necessary to go to war to avoid a greater evil. Within religious teachings there are contrasting views on war and so religious believers must use their conscience in deciding if they believe a war is morally justified.



There are three possible stances a religious believer might take:

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

Within some religious traditions, there is clear guidance on the rules and legitimacy of wars.

Christianity

Declare a holy war, call the troops to arms (Old Testament)

Holy War

Within Christian history there was once a strong concept of holy war. In the Old Testament there are many examples of wars fought in the name of God. The soldiers believed God was on their side and indeed had influence over the outcomes of battles. For example, Joshua's army followed God's commands to blow trumpets and

bring down the walls of Jericho. The Crusades (1095 – 1291) were fought to capture control of the Holy Land. The Christian soldiers believed they were fighting for a sacred and noble cause. They believed God was with them and the Muslim Turks that they were fighting were the pagan enemies of God.



Just War

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4. What are the Christian just war rules?

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