

Year 3&4 Key Stage 2



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Resource File

Year 4 units of work - War and suffering - Why are there wars?





Lesson 1 Why are there wars?

The big picture

This lesson introduces a unit of work on war and suffering by looking at whether war can ever be justified. Most children this age assume that religion opposes wars in every situation.

The lesson starts with some typical playground scenarios, and then goes on to examine the idea of violence, or war, sometimes being 'justified'. It then looks at some of the circumstances that would lead a believer into feeling a war can be justified.

Learning objective

- To consider why believers of religions can sometimes believe war is justified.

Success criteria

Learning about

- Pupils will have begun to understand some religious perspectives on war.

Learning from

- Pupils will have considered why circumstances can lead believers to take part in or support war.

Religious Education Council Requirements

B3, C1, C3

Resources

- **CD Image gallery, page 18:** Images of war
- A4 paper or RE books
- Drawing and writing materials
- **Resource sheet 1:** 'Is it OK to hit someone?'
- **Resource sheet 2:** 'Is it OK to fight a war?'

Vocabulary

Conflict, justified, last resort, negotiation, peace, revenge, right, suffering, torture, victim, violence, war, wrong

Introduction

Tell the class that, over the next few weeks, you are going to be thinking about and discussing a very serious topic with them. Put the words: 'war' and 'suffering' on the board. Explain that these words describe some parts of life that can bring incredible sadness to individuals and whole groups of people. Show the class the images of war from the Image gallery (page 18).

Explain that they will be looking at why believers of all faiths hate suffering and try to make things better, but also how many believers sometimes believe war is the only way to sort things out.

Share the learning objective: 'In this lesson we are going to think about the serious issue of war, and hear what some religions think about it.'

Key questions ?

Is it OK to hit someone?

Is it OK to fight a war?

What do religions say about war?

Activities

Stimulus and response

This topic will inevitably raise many questions, issues, viewpoints and snippets of family history. The best way to address this is to give people time and space to consider their personal response.

Give everyone a piece of paper and ask them to put the word 'war' in the middle of it. Tell them that they are going to have about 15 minutes to fill that paper with all the thoughts, questions, and things they know about war. They might like to write down the names of any wars they know of or any famous individuals linked to wars. They can use writing, drawings and a mixture of both. After an appropriate amount of time, allow them to get into pairs or small groups to share their thoughts and ideas with each other.

Put on the board the following question:

Key questions ?

Is it OK to hit someone?

Ask for hands up for 'yes' and 'no'. Discuss the pattern that emerges, but what you may find is that there is a large number of people in the class who do not vote. Explain that a problem with this question is that although everyone would agree that hitting is wrong, everyone has been in a situation where it seems the right thing to do.

Hand out copies of **Resource sheet 1**: 'Is it OK to hit someone?' and allow some time to talk it over in pairs or small groups. Don't feel the need to go through each one. Instead, you may like to pick a few of the statements to illustrate how there is no simple answer.

Under the question, 'Is it OK to hit someone?', put the question, 'Is it OK to fight a war?' Explain that this is just a grown-up version of the first question. In each situation, there will be believers who say 'yes', some who say 'no', and others who say 'sometimes'.

Explain to the class that you are going to show them one example of when believers found themselves asking this question. Read together **Resource sheet 2**: 'Is it OK to fight a war?' and

allow people time to think and talk about it. When you feel they have had enough time, ask them to write on their 'war' sheets their response to the question: 'Is it OK to fight a war?' They can record it in words, pictures, or even through questions.

Plenary

Tell the class you are going to put to a vote the question, 'Is it OK to fight a war?' and they can either answer: 'yes', 'no' or 'sometimes'. Discuss the results of the vote. Make it clear that one of the issues with war is that it is always the cause of suffering for everyone involved. Tell people that next week they will be looking at what believers think about suffering and some of the things they try to do about it.

To end the lesson, people could copy and complete the following sentence:

- 'Looking at the world today has made me think about...'

Differentiation

(By grouping) all members of the class, except those with very specific needs, should be able to participate in this lesson. Grouping of those people who find discussion and social interaction harder should be planned and not left to independent choice.

Extension

The open-ended nature of the task should lead to more sophisticated outcomes from more able people.



Name:

Date:

Is it OK to hit someone?

Is it OK to hit someone if they have something I want?	Is it OK to hit someone because they hit me first?
Is it OK to hit someone if they are bigger than me?	Is it OK to hit someone if they are saying bad things about my family?
Is it OK to hit someone if they disagree with me?	Is it OK to hit someone if they are bullying me?
Is it OK to hit someone because someone else has told me to?	Is it OK to hit someone if an adult is hitting them too?
Is it OK to hit someone if they won't leave me alone and adults aren't helping?	Is it OK to hit someone because I know I can hit harder than them?



Name:

Date:

Is it OK to fight a war?

There are no religions which say that war is a good thing. People who believe in the major world religions do not ever want to have a war or to be the cause of one.

However, there have been times in history when religious believers have taken part in war because they believed it was the only way for 'right' to beat 'wrong'. Here is one example of this. There are many other examples that would show the same dilemma faced by believers from all faiths over thousands of years.

Guru Gobind Singh's rules of war

When Guru Tegh Bahadur was the Sikh Guru, the Emperor of the land believed there was only one religion. If Hindus and Sikhs wanted to follow their own religion, he took all their money and destroyed their schools, houses and temples. Guru Tegh Bahadur continued to teach

that everyone should be free to follow their own religion and no one should be forced to worship a god they did not believe in. Because of this, the Emperor put him in prison, with four other Sikhs. They were tortured to try to make them change their beliefs, but still they would not give up the Sikh beliefs, so the Emperor had them killed.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's son became the next Sikh Guru and is known to believers as Guru Gobind Singh. As he grew up and saw the Emperor was still doing bad things he made an important decision. He decided that all Sikhs should be armed and willing to fight for what is right. But he laid down some rules, which all Sikhs were expected to follow. The rules were:

- War should always be a last resort. Sikhs should only fight when everything possible had been done to settle arguments peacefully.



Name:

Date:

- War should never be fought out of hate. Instead it should be fought out of a desire for 'right' to defeat 'wrong'.
- War should never be fought to gain revenge.
- During the war, no land or property should be taken or anything taken from people's houses.
- Soldiers should be living good lives and should never harm anyone not fighting.
- The war should have clear objectives. Once these have been achieved, the war should stop.