

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

Northern Ireland: *Roots of Conflict, Routes to Peace* a learning resource from the National Peace Council, pp 46-7
From *Conflict & Tolerance: A Headstart Module* by Jean Sargent. Tower Hamlets Learning Design, 1994

Aims:

To help participants realise that we all have personal perspectives and prejudices. To discuss people's different viewpoints and how they should all be respected.

What You Need:

Enough copies of the character descriptions on the next page for everyone.

Method:

Ask the group to read the character descriptions and viewpoints in turn, out loud (5 minutes). Then split into small groups to discuss the questions below (20 minutes). Come back together as a whole group and ask each small group to share one important point from their discussion (15 minutes).

Time:

40 minutes

Discussion:

1. What do Michael and David have in common?
2. What divides them?
3. How do you explain both republican and unionist attitudes?
4. What do the mothers have in common?
5. What do the children have in common?
6. Look at Jim's mother's reaction to his death.
How do you think the other families would have reacted to his death?
7. What do you think of the citizen's attitudes?
8. What do these characters tell us about the conflict?
9. Who has your sympathy?
Why?



Michael

Michael is 19 years old. He lives with his parents, three sisters and one younger brother. Michael is an IRA man.

Republican view: He is a brave young man who is doing his duty and fighting to free this community from the terrorism of the British presence.

Girlfriend's view: He is my boyfriend. We met at school. He fancied me first. He's a great bloke. I really like him.

Brother's view: He's my brother. He shoves me to the far side of the bed. He's stays totally cool when the police rough him up on the street.

Mother's view: He is my son, my second child. I'll never forget the day he was born - a Caesarean section. It was New Year's Day. The Belfast Telegraph took his photo in my arms. I still have the photo of my wee Mickey.

Unionist view: He is a member of the IRA. This is a state of emergency and he should be stopped by whatever means are necessary.

Citizen's view: He is an IRA man. They're fanatics. What's his name again?



Jim

Jim is 42 years old. He is married to Vera. They have five children. One day he is walking on the dividing line between two areas when a car bomb explodes. He is killed.

Unionist/Republican view: He must have been mixed up in something. There's no smoke without fire.

Wife's view: He was my husband. He always looked after me. I'll never get over it. I still think of him every day.

Child's view: He was my Daddy. He fixed my toys when they broke. He always let me win when we played pool. I miss him.

Mother's view: He was my son, my fourth child. I'll never forgive the people who did this. He was such a lovely boy.

Unionist/Republican view: It's an awful shame, but maybe it will make them sit up and take note.

Citizen's view: He was in the wrong place at the wrong time. His poor family. What was his name again?



David

David is 28 years old. He is married to Joyce. They have two children, Karen aged 7 and John aged 4. David is a policeman.

Unionist view: He is a brave young man who is doing his duty and protecting the community from the terrorism of the IRA.

Wife's view: He is my husband. We met at school. He fancied me first. He's got a great sense of humour. I love him.

Child's view: He is my Daddy. He lets me climb on the shopping trolley. He's buying me a new bike and we'll go out together on Saturday.

Mother's view: He is my son, my third child. I'll never forget the night he was born. It was snowing. The midwife came just in time. I had him in the back room of our old house. He looks like his Grandad. That was my wee Davy. He's a big lump of a man now.

Republican view: He is a member of the Security Forces. This is a war and he is a legitimate target.

Citizen's view: He's a policeman. They have an awful job. What's his name again?

DO RELIGIONS CAUSE WAR?

Northern Ireland: Roots of Conflict, Routes to Peace a learning resource from the National Peace Council, pp 48-9, 66-7
From *Biting the Moral Bullet: Issues of Peace and Justice*, edited by Kevin O'Donnell. Published by Hodder & Stoughton Educational, London, 1997

Aims:

To explore ways in which religion can lead to conflict as well as ways in which it can promote peace.

What You Need:

Copies of the page opposite, A3 paper, marker pens.

Method:

1. Give out copies of the page opposite. Divide the class into four or five groups. They work on the first question in their groups for a few minutes, then feedback to the rest of the class.
2. Work on question two in their groups and then feedback.
3. Debate 'Do religions cause war?' Explain that the wars they might have mentioned may have other causes than religion (eg. politics, who holds the power and who owns the land). Perhaps people will use any excuse to fight? (Have a look at the Seville Statement on Violence in the Original Sources section, pg 66.)
4. Work on the three speech balloons in groups. Feedback, and select the best ones. Have these groups draw them up neatly on A3 paper for display later.
5. Read through the section opposite on the Golden Rule. Point out that this teaching is at the heart of the religions. Is it always lived out? In their groups get them to rewrite the Golden Rule in contemporary, streetwise terms. Choose the best one as a class, and write this out on A3 paper to make a banner.

Discussion:

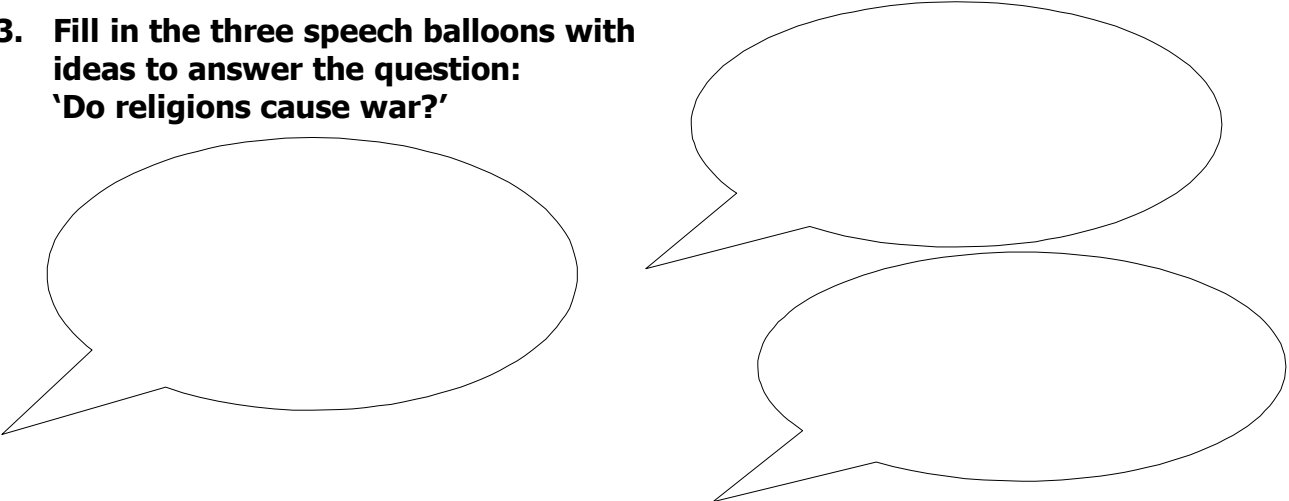
1. In what ways do you think religion helps improve or makes worse the situation in Northern Ireland?
2. What other factors besides religion can be a cause of conflict?
3. Think about ways people might be able to overcome their religious differences. Do you think everyone will ever join the same religion?

DO RELIGIONS CAUSE WAR?

1. List any wars that are being fought at the moment in the world.

2. Are any of these linked with religion? Do you know which religion?

3. Fill in the three speech balloons with ideas to answer the question: 'Do religions cause war?'



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| <p>4. What do religions teach?</p> <p>'Love your neighbour as yourself' <i>(Christianity)</i></p> <p>'One should seek for others the happiness one desires for oneself' <i>(Buddhism)</i></p> <p>'Let none of you treat your brother in a way he himself would dislike to be treated' <i>(Islam)</i></p> <p>'Do not take revenge on anyone or continue to hate him' <i>(Judaism)</i></p> | <p>Although religious differences can sometimes cause wars, the same basic moral teaching is at the heart of all religions: 'What you do to someone else is what you should expect to be done to you.' This is known as the golden rule. The founders of the faiths said things like 'Love your neighbour' and yet their words have been used to justify wars.</p> <p>Perhaps religion can be used in a bad way or a good way, just as politicians can cause wars or try to make peace?</p> |
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SEVILLE STATEMENT ON VIOLENCE IN PLAIN TEXT

The Seville Statement on Violence was written in 1986 by an international team of specialists. One of the main elements of the Statement says that war is a social invention, and that peace can be invented to replace it. In 1989 the Statement was adopted by UNESCO for use in programmes of education for peace and international understanding.

Introduction

This Statement is a message of hope. It says that peace is possible and that wars can be ended. It says that the suffering of war can be ended, the suffering of people who are injured and die, and the suffering of children who are left without home or family. It says that instead of preparing for war, we can use the money for things like teachers, books, and schools, and for doctors, medicines and hospitals.

We who wrote this Statement are scientists from many countries, North and South, East and West. The Statement has been endorsed and published by many organisations of scientists around the world, including anthropologists, ethologists (human behaviour), physiologists, physical scientists, psychiatrists, psychologists, and sociologists.

We have studied the problem of war and violence with today's scientific methods. Of course, knowledge is never final, and someday people will know better than we know today. But we have a responsibility to speak out on the basis of the latest information.

Some people say that violence and war cannot be ended because they are part of our natural biology. We say that is not true. People used to say that slavery and domination by race and sex were part of our biology. Some people even claimed they could prove these things scientifically. We now know they were wrong. Slavery has ended and now the world is working to end domination by race and sex.

Five Propositions

1. It is scientifically incorrect when people say that war cannot be ended because animals make war and because people are like animals. First, it is not true because animals do not make war. Second, it is not true because we are not just like animals. Unlike animals, we have human culture that we can change. A culture that has war in one century may change and live at peace with their neighbours in another century.

2. It is scientifically incorrect when people say that war cannot be ended because it is part of human nature. Arguments about human nature cannot prove anything because our human culture gives us the ability to shape and change our nature from one generation to another. It is true that the genes that are transmitted in egg and sperm from parents to children influence the way we act. But it is also true that we are influenced by the culture in which we grow up and that we can take responsibility for our own actions.

3. It is scientifically incorrect when people say that violence cannot be ended because people and animals who are violent are able to live better and have more children than others. Actually, the evidence shows that people and animals do best when they learn how to work well with each other.

4. It is scientifically incorrect when people say that we have to be violent because of our brain. The brain is part of our body like our legs and hands. They can all be used for cooperation just as well as they can be used for violence. Since the brain is the physical basis of our intelligence, it enables us to think of what we want to do and what we ought to do. And since the brain has a great capacity for learning, it is possible for us to invent new ways of doing things.

5. It is scientifically incorrect when people say that war is caused by 'instinct'. Most scientists do not use the term 'instinct' anymore because none of our behaviour is so determined that it cannot be changed by learning. Of course, we have emotions and motivations like fear, anger, sex, and hunger, but we are each responsible for the way we express them. In modern war, the decisions and actions of generals and soldiers are not usually emotional. Instead, they are doing their jobs in the way they have been trained. When soldiers are trained for war and when people are trained to support a war, they are taught to hate and fear an enemy. The most important question is why they are trained and prepared that way in the first place by political leaders and mass media.

*'We are not
condemned to war
and violence
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Instead, it is
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Conclusion

We conclude that we are not condemned to war and violence because of our biology. Instead, it is possible for us to end war and the suffering it causes. We cannot do it by working alone, but only by working together. However, it makes a big difference whether or not each one of us believes that we can do it. Otherwise, we may not even try. War was invented in ancient times, and in the same way we can invent peace in our time. It is up to each of us to do our part.

THE MAJORITY SHALL PREVAIL

Northern Ireland: Roots of Conflict, Routes to Peace a learning resource from the National Peace Council, pp 51-2
From *Community Conflict Skills: A Handbook for Groupwork in Northern Ireland*, by Maria Duff, Belfast, 1988

Aims:

To look at how sometimes we are happy to accept majority rule and sometimes we are not.

What You Need:

Enough copies of the issues list for everyone. Pens, Hip-chart, and adhesive-putty.

Method:

Give each person the issues list on the next page. Or come up with your own list. Get everyone to fill them in individually first (5 minutes). Divide the group into small groups of 3 or 4 to discuss what they've come up with, in particular look for where there are differences (20 minutes). Ask everyone to re-mark their issues list if they have changed their minds on any issue, and come back together as a large group. Put the results from each group on the board or a flip chart (15 minutes).

Time:

40 minutes

Discussion:

1. Were there many differences within the groups?
2. Did anyone change their minds on their marking after talking to someone else? Why?
3. Were there more agreements than differences, or less?
4. Were there any surprises?
5. What have you learnt from this exercise?

Issues list

Please mark the following with a tick if you agree or an X if you disagree:

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| 1. If the majority of people in a room are smokers, they should be allowed to smoke in it. | |
| 2. If the majority of people decide they don't want to wear seat belts, they should not have to. | |
| 3. If the majority of local residents decide they want the leisure centre closed on a Sunday, it should be closed. | |
| 4. If the majority of people in a country decide that abortion should be illegal, it should be made illegal. | |
| 5. If the majority want to bring pen-knives to school, they should be able to. | |
| 6. If the majority of people in a street want to change its name, they should be entitled to do it. | |
| 7. If the majority of children at a school don't want to have homework, they shouldn't have any. | |
| 8. The majority should decide about the future of Northern Ireland. That is: | |
| a. The majority of people in the UK | |
| b. The majority of people in the whole of Ireland | |
| c. The majority of people in Northern Ireland | |
| 9. In every situation, majority rule is always the best and fairest way of making a decision. | |



The rights of minority groups can easily be ignored when decisions are taken purely on the basis of majority rule.