

Key vocabulary

Social Justice: ensuring that society treats people fairly whether they are poor or wealthy and protect peoples human rights

Human Rights: the basic rights and freedoms to which all human beings should be entitled

Responsibility: a duty to care for, or having control over, something or someone

Prejudice: unfairly judging someone before the facts are known; holding biased opinions about an individual or group

Discrimination: actions or behaviour that result from Prejudice

Equality: the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities

Disability: any condition of the body or mind that makes it more difficult for that person to do certain activities and interact with the world around them

Positive discrimination: treating people more fairly because they have been discriminated against in the past or have disabilities.

Freedom of religion: the right to believe or practice whatever religion one chooses

Freedom of religious expression: the right to worship, preach and practise one's faith in whatever way one chooses

Tithe: one tenth of annual produce or earnings

- In Britain today, the official state religion is Christianity, and the Anglican Church is the established (official) Church in England.
- No one can be forced to join the Church. The government protects **freedom of religious expression**, that is the right of individuals to worship in whatever way they choose, or not at all, and laws forbid the persecution of members of other faiths or non-believers.
- Believers are free to **evangelise** providing that they do not preach hatred and intolerance.

Theme F: Religion, Human rights & social justice



Human rights

In 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which sets out the basic human rights that everyone should be entitled to, regardless of their nationality, language, religion, gender or status.

In 30 articles the Declaration sets out what should be the minimum rights for human beings to enjoy freedom, justice and peace.

The UK passed the Human Rights Act (HRA) in 1998. It includes the rights contained in the European Convention of Human Rights, for example the right to life, liberty, security, privacy, marriage, family life, free elections, education, and a fair trial.

- Christians oppose discrimination against disabled people because it does not show Christian love (agape).
- Jesus healed the sick and disabled and taught his followers to 'love your neighbour as yourself' (Mark 12: 31).
- Therefore, Christians support the provision of access ramps, lifts, disabled toilets and other facilities designed to make life easier for those with disabilities.
- Many support the use of **positive discrimination**.



- In the Bible, heterosexual relations are portrayed as natural and what God intended. Much more controversial are homosexual relations. Genesis 19 described God as destroying Sodom and Gomorrah because of the wickedness and homosexual activity of its inhabitants.
- Within Christianity there is a diversity of opinion, from condemning homosexual acts as sinful to seeing homosexuality as morally acceptable. Traditionally, the Church has opposed homosexuality, with some arguing that God made Adam and Eve male and female and that the prime purpose of sex is procreation.
- Other Christians believe that it is not loving to condemn people for their sexual orientation. A central teaching of the Bible is to 'love your neighbour as yourself'. Romans 13:1 says that Christians should submit themselves to the governing authorities. Recently, the law has changed in this country to give equality to everyone, and homosexual couples can now legally get married.

Gender prejudice

- In some Christian denominations women are not allowed to have important positions. For example, the Roman Catholic Church does not support women becoming priests.
- They argue:
 - Jesus chose male disciples, therefore God wants men to take up roles within the Church today
 - Jesus chose Peter to lead the Church when He had gone
 - Men and women are equal ("Image of God") but have **different** roles to play
- It wasn't until 1993 that the Church of England allowed women to be ordained as priests
- In 2014, Libby Lane became the first female bishop in the Church of England.
- Some people left the Church of England because of this decision.

"For the love of money is the root of all evil"
1 Timothy 6:10

"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Galatians 3:28

"Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it"

Genesis 1:28

"Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak [...] for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church."

1 Corinthians 14:34-35

"That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they will become one flesh."

Genesis 2:24

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." **Matthew 22:39**

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

Romans 12:18

"Husbands should take good care of their wives."

Qur'an 4:3

"It is easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God"

Mark 10:25

"The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat"

2 Thessalonians 3:10

"Do no exploit the poor because they are poor"

Proverbs 22:22