

Aid to the Church in Need

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

Core RE: Teachers' Guide



Aid to the
Church in Need

ACN UNITED KINGDOM



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ACN Overview



Aid to the
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ACN UNITED KINGDOM

Our Mission

- to advance the Christian religion by supporting and promoting the Church, especially in countries where Christians are suffering persecution or discrimination;
- to further the other charitable work of the Church by providing practical assistance and pastoral care for persons in need, especially those who are living in, or are refugees from, such countries.

Raising Awareness

Reports about the persecution of Christians rarely make the headlines. Yet the individual voices of the suffering Church are compelling, courageous and often inspirational.

As well as raising awareness of the plight of suffering Christians through our Community Outreach Team, we also carry out a range of advocacy work.

Who We Help

Each year we fund over 5,000 projects in more than 140 countries around world, helping to support the Church in its mission, and bringing hope and solidarity to millions of people. From priests and seminarians to catechists and Sisters, you enable us to help persecuted and suffering Christians live out their faith.

By helping these key Church leaders, you are actually reaching out to many more of our brothers and sisters – millions in fact, as the projects that we support have the specific aim of providing pastoral and spiritual support to Christians in parishes and communities all over the world.

Often they witness to Christ in the face of persecution, oppression or poverty. In their hour of need it is the hope of Christ that sustains them – as well as your prayers and solidarity.

SCHEME OF WORK



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Overview:

This is a series of six lessons which can be used as part of a Core RE course.

Time: 1hr

Each lesson is designed to last 1 hour. However, the tasks contained within them can be extended through group discussion and writing activities from the Students' Workbook, or shortened by selecting certain aspects to focus on.

Aim:

For pupils to recognise the challenges of religious persecution that thousands of people continue to face around the globe, and to be motivated to attend a Mass of prayer service on their behalf.

Section 48 Criteria:

- Teaching and resourcing promotes purposeful learning, enjoyment, progress and attainment of pupils
- Ongoing assessment strategies, such as questioning and plenaries, are used to set an appropriate level of challenge
- Pupils show signs of progress as individuals
- Pupils show their attainment in consolidation activities at the end of the lesson
- Examples of differentiated work are evident
- Pupils are given opportunities to become religiously literate
- Pupils reflect spiritually and think ethically and theologically
- High quality resources are used effectively to optimise learning for pupils
- Teachers' resources ensure that pupils are given extensive opportunities to present their learning using a wide variety of forms of expression

Religious Education Directory Links:

Every lesson includes all three 'ways of knowing' (understanding, discerning and responding) by virtue of the way the course is planned. As outlined above, the main emphasis of the scheme of work is to motivate pupils, through gaining knowledge and discerning various interpretations, into action and a practical response. The speech-writing task in lesson six is based on the four plenary tasks in lessons two – five. It consolidates the information gained and gives pupils an opportunity to explore further their own reasoned judgement, utilising content from the lessons and drawing on pre-existing theological understanding.

Each lesson has a main theme and a secondary theme. The secondary theme gives students the opportunity to reflect on the 'Big Questions' and to use the information from the lesson for the 'discern' and 'response' connections. Rather than focusing on one of the six specific branches outlined in the RED, this scheme of work threads its way through several branches:



Creation to Covenant

Reflecting on the calling of their own conscience.

Exploration of ethical issues facing religious people around the world.

What does the creation story (Genesis 1-2) have to say about human dignity?

How does stewardship relate to the way we treat others?

Prophecy and Promise

'What is truth?' asked Pilate (Jn18:38). Is there 'truth' and if so, how can it be known with certainty?

What are the implications if it does not exist?

What did Jesus say would happen about being persecuted for his sake?

Leah and Maira willing to risk all for the promise of eternal life - what does this say to me?

Desert to Garden

The reality of suffering and religious persecution around the world today. How do faith groups respond? What is the role of justice? How is this implemented in law?

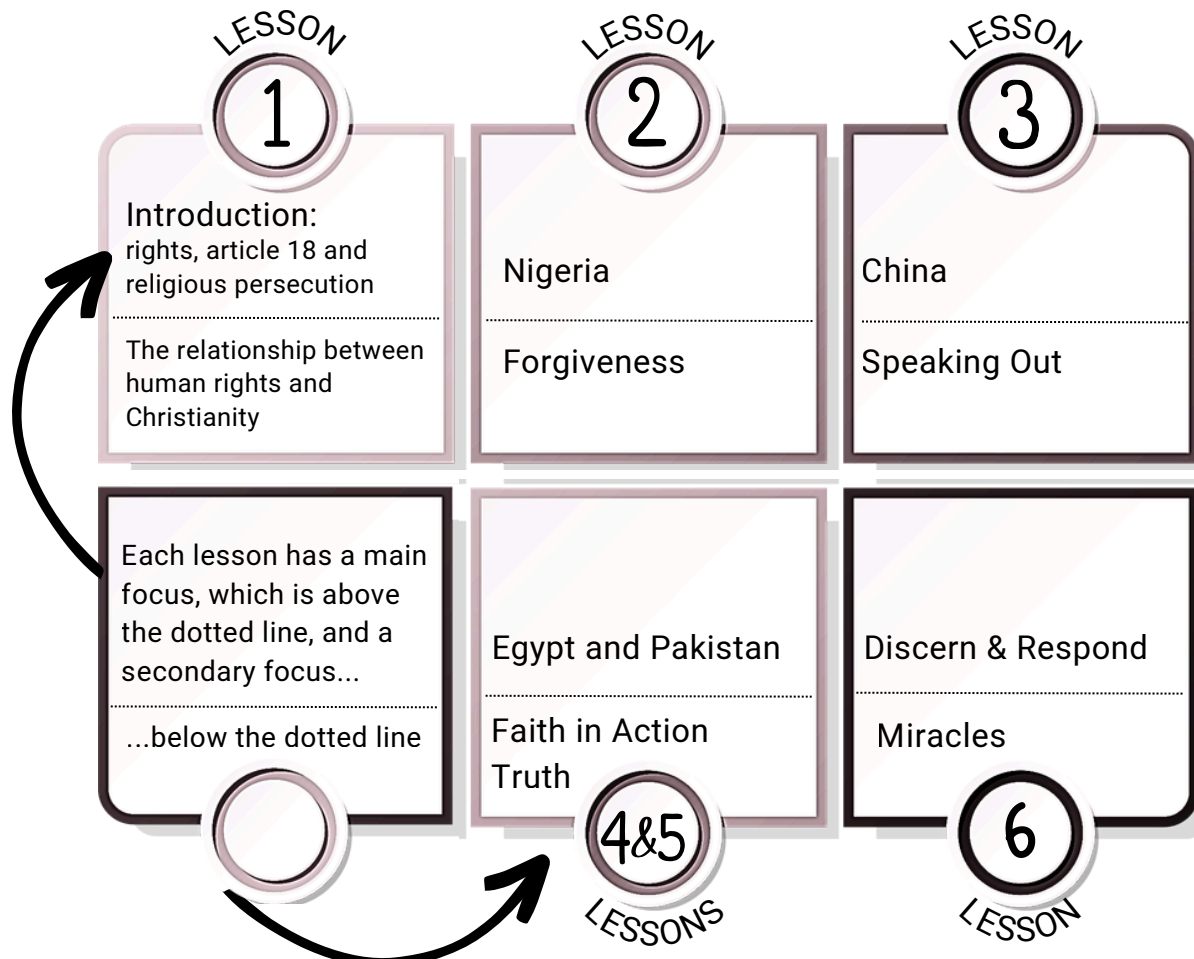
Why should Christians 'forgive those who trespass against us'?

Why does persecution often make people's faith stronger? (The Church is growing in China and Nigeria despite the risks).

To the Ends of the Earth

What role does religion play in a variety of countries? How is it accepted or rejected by governing states? How do charities work for change?

Jesus promised to be with us until the end of time. How do we live this in the Eucharist?



THIS IS OUR FAITH LINKS

TIOF Link: Statement:

S1 Other World Religions: I have explored one world religion other than Christianity

S1 Reign of God: I can express how I can respond to Christ's challenge to transform the world by learning about and contributing to local and international charities

S2 Reign of God: I can describe how I can contribute to the common good within my local community and beyond

I have deepened my understanding of issues of social justice focusing on the issue of poverty

I can describe how others have responded to Church teaching

I have responded to the opportunity to participate in a prayer reflection relating to justice for the oppressed

I have experienced opportunities to engage with issues of social injustice.

S2 Signs of God: I have reflected upon the significance of the sacraments in the life of the community of faith. I can describe how these provide important encounters with Jesus throughout life.

S3 Signs of God: I have developed an awareness of how, through Christian action, prayer and reflection, I can contribute to the mission of the Church

S3 Reign of God: I have explored personal and wider societal situations which require reconciliation in society today, such as injustice and conflict

I have continued to deepen my understanding of social justice by focusing on Church teaching on issues of peace

S4 Signs of God: I have participated in opportunities to pray, reflect and celebrate Sacraments as a faith community

S4 Hours of God: I understand that prayer is the human response of faith and love to the God who calls

I have participated in prayer and reflection, focused on my relationship with God

I am deepening my understanding of the Eucharist as the 'source and summit' of the Christian life

S4 In the Image of God: I have explored ways in which the Catholic vision of the dignity of the human person has implications for how we respond to moral and human rights issues

S5 Hours of God: I can articulate how Christ, in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, draws us into union with him and communion with others

S5 Reign of God: I have had the opportunity to reflect upon the example of Christ and to respond to the needs of others

I have explored how an informed conscience affects my response to international issues

S6 In the Image of God: I have developed my understanding of what it means to damage the dignity of another person

S6 Reign of God: I have identified and participated in opportunities to become involved in Christian witness, focusing on service to others, which puts into action my learning on Church Teaching

PLEASE READ BEFORE TEACHING THIS UNIT

In Britain today we are engaged in a process of learning how to construct and live in a society made up of people of many different faiths. This is a process from which no-one is excused. Our common good depends on it. *Foreword, Meeting God in Friend and Stranger*

Given that this unit covers religious persecution occurring now, some of the subject matter may be challenging for students. It is our aim to show the reality of persecution in a sensitive way that brings unity to students of all faiths and none.

FAQ on Extremist Islamism

a. How should I approach talking about Islamic extremists?

To emphasise the difference between radical groups and mainstream Islam, speak about “Islamist” extremists or “jihadist” extremists rather than “Islamic” extremists.

“Islamism” and “jihadism” are neologisms, and their precise meanings are still debated, but using them will help students to understand that we are not talking about mainstream Islam.

- “The term ‘Islamism’ at the very least represents a form of social and political activism, grounded in an idea that public and political life should be guided by a set of Islamic principles.” (The Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Politics, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)
- “‘Jihadism’ is a term that has been constructed in Western languages to describe militant Islamic movements that are perceived as existentially threatening to the West. Western media have tended to refer to Jihadism as a military movement which is rooted in political Islam.” (The Cambridge Companion to New Religious Movements, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)

Also, try to be specific, rather than generalising. Most attacks and atrocities performed by extremists are carried out by specific groups. It can be useful to name the group responsible where it is possible to do so, e.g. in Iraq the group variously known as Daesh or ISIS carried out the 2014 seizure of the Nineveh Plains which saw Christians, Yazidis and other minority groups forced out of their homes or subjected to violence or oppression.

b. Can you explain to my classes the difference between Islamism and mainstream/traditional Islam as a religion of peace?

Islam has often been called “the religion of peace” because of the verses in the Qur’an which speak about peace, for example (25:63):

The servants of the All-Merciful are those who walk upon the earth in humility and who, when the ignorant address them, say in reply: “Peace”.

And (8:61):

But if the enemy inclines towards peace, make peace with them.



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Indeed, Pope Francis has made it very clear that Islam sees itself as a religion of peace, so it would be wrong to associate it with extremist violence. In 2014 the Pope told journalists:

“You can’t say that [all Muslims] are terrorists... The [Muslims themselves] say ‘No we are not this: The Qur’an is a book of peace.’” There is obviously a wide gulf between the religion of peace and jihadist extremism.

Modern Islamist extremism has a specific origin, which needs to be understood.

Following the USSR’s invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, Islamic scholar Abdullah Yusuf Azzam issued a fatwah (an Islamic judgement) calling for a jihad in Afghanistan to protect the Muslim-majority population. This fatwah conceived of the military campaign as a defensive one to drive out the Communists.

Abdullah Yusuf Azzam belonged to the Salafist school of Sunni Islam. Salafism is an ultra-conservative reform movement that ostensibly emphasises a return to the earliest beliefs and practices of Islam, stressing the Qur’an, Sunnah and Ijma. Among Salafists there is a school of thought that believes this will only be achieved through a jihad in the sense of a war, but this is only one view among several. As well as militant followers of the Salafist school, adherents of the Wahhabist movement joined the war in Afghanistan. Wahhabism, again, claims to look back to the earliest beliefs and practices of Islam, and it has been described as a sub group within Salafism. However, Wahhabism is more puritanical and hard-line in its approach. They oppose a number of traditional Islamic practices including the veneration of wali (Muslim saints), and they prohibit pilgrimages to their tombs. Some Wahhabists even believe the black stone of the Kaaba is idolatrous. At various points, its proponents have condemned as ‘un-Islamic’ certain activities we would consider as normal, including watching non-religious TV programmes, playing football and celebrating birthdays. Many Wahhabists hold that those who do not share their vision of Islam are not true Muslims. A number of mainstream Muslim groups categorically reject Wahhabism; the Indonesian Islamic organisation Nahdlatul Ulama, for example, has issued a fatwa declaring Wahhabism to be heretical.

The Muslim fighters in Afghanistan received support from the USA and Saudi Arabia, and the USSR was driven out in 1989. After the defeat of the USSR some of the fighters bonded together to continue their struggle against what they saw as anti-Muslim powers – including the USA – and this was the first group to be described as “jihadist”. In 1989 Al Qaeda was founded to advance these aims, which was the first of the Islamist extremist groups.

Other groups, such as Daesh (ISIS), were inspired by Al Qaeda, although many of them have become more hard-line and more puritanical than Al Qaeda itself. One example would be the split between Daesh and the local Al Qaeda affiliate Al-Nusra Front during the Syrian Civil War. Both were fighting to see a strict Salafist-style Islamic society imposed on Syria. Alan Henning, a 47-year-old taxi driver from Manchester, who had been ferrying medical supplies to help the local Syrians, was beheaded by Daesh in 2014. Al Qaeda affiliate Al-Nusra Front objected to the killing believing the action to be un-Islamic, since Henning’s charitable work had primarily helped local Muslims, including women and children. This incident marked the split between the two groups. But Al Nusra should not be seen as somehow more moral or closer to mainstream Islam than Daesh; a 2016 report by Amnesty International showed it had been involved in torture, child abduction and summary execution

(<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2016/07/syria-abductions-torture-and-summary-killings-at-the-hands-of-armed-groups/>).



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The online Muslim apologetics site Islam Question and Answer also provides a response to this question from an Islamic perspective, which might be useful in examining this issue

(<https://islamqa.info/en/answers/209600/islam-is-a-peaceful-religion-with-those-who-are-peaceful>). It should be noted that there are a number of generalisations about Christianity on this webpage, e.g. Western countries are referred to as “Christian states”.

The Appendix below, containing extracts from a 2023 UK government report, makes a similar point about the difference between the Islamic faith and Islamist extremism, with specific reference to the situation in Great Britain.

c. Does ACN promote religious tolerance between faiths?

Through its local Church partners, ACN has supported a number of initiatives designed to promote harmony and tolerance between different faith groups. To give just one example, in the Central African Republic, ACN backed a project which saw Christian leaders, the (Catholic) Archbishop Dieudonné Nzapalainga and the (Protestant) Rev'd Nicolas Guerekoyame, join together with Muslim Imam Kobine Layama, the Chairman of the Islamic community in the Central Africa Republic, to carry out peace initiatives, mediating in areas where there were clashes between Christian and Muslim communities. The initiative was set up when rebels from the Muslim-majority militant group Séléka were seizing territory for political and financial gain, and often targeting Christian areas. This caused Christian, Animists and other non-Muslims to band together as Anti-Balaka groups, which were originally defence groups, but which took on a life of their own, targeting innocent Muslims. Fault lines were developing between Muslims and Christians as the conflict took on a sectarian dimension. The clerics aimed to stop a full-scale religious war from developing. Séléka has threatened Imam Layama for saying that its activities are not compatible with the Qur'an.

ACN plays a role in breaking down religious hatred by promoting inter-faith work in a number of different countries, for example by supporting inter-religious dialogue programmes run by the Jerusalem Centre for Jewish Christian Relations and the Al-Liqa Centre in the Holy Land.

d. Are other faiths being persecuted?

Yes. To give just a few examples, Muslims have been persecuted in both India and Sri Lanka, Hindus have been persecuted in Pakistan, Bahais probably suffer more than other religious groups that face severe restrictions in Iran, and Buddhists have faced persecution in Vietnam.

e. Why is Christianity the most persecuted religion?

According to evidence gathered by the Pew research Centre, in 2020 Christians suffered harassment – ranging in severity from verbal abuse to killings – in 155 countries, which is more than any other religious group. Muslims also suffered high levels of harassment, reporting problems in 145 countries.

(See https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2022/11/PF_2022.11.29_restrictions_REPORT.pdf)

Christianity is present in most countries across the globe, so, when religious minorities are persecuted, Christians are invariably among those facing repression or attacks by state authorities or extremist groups.



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When jihadist groups over-run areas they often target Christians – despite the Qur’an calling on Muslims to respect all People of the Book – which can result in Christians being disproportionately targeted by Islamist extremist groups.

Attacks on Christianity can be associated with the religion’s teachings, as some groups find the concept of God becoming Man and being killed to be anathema.

In some countries, for example China or North Korea, Christianity is associated with the West and therefore it can be seen as a subversive element within society. In such a context local Christians become a proxy target.

f. Can you give me an outline of what to say at the beginning of my lesson to ensure that all students understand that terrorists are a very small minority and that they persecute Muslims too?

Stress that extremist groups such as Daesh (ISIS), Al Qaeda, Boko Haram and other militant groups do not represent the views of most Muslims. They may claim to be acting in the name of Islam, but the majority of Muslims would disagree. The Muslim Council of Britain has repeatedly condemned the actions of such extremist groups.

In a statement about the 2017 Manchester Arena Bombing, which was carried out by Islamist terrorists, the Muslim Council of Britain's Secretary General said:

“This is horrific, this is criminal. May the perpetrators face the full weight of justice both in this life and the next.”

So do explain to students that we must be very careful not to identify Islam indiscriminately with militant extremism.

Islamist extremists do target Muslims too. Sometimes these are members of Islamic groups whose beliefs are different from theirs (e.g. Sufis). In other cases it seems to be an act of retribution after Muslims speak out against the extremists. To give an illustration of the latter category, in 2014 more than 120 worshipers were killed, and over 260 injured, when Boko Haram attacked the Central Mosque in Kano during Friday Prayers. A man tried to drive a car into the mosque, but detonated explosive when he was unable to do so. Armed gunmen then started shooting into the congregation. The mosque is located next to the residence of Nigeria’s second most senior Muslim cleric Muhammad Sanusi II, the Emir of Kano. He had spoken out against Boko Haram. The extremist group’s leader Abubakar Shekau said the Emir should be killed for deviating from Islam.

g. Does ACN defend the rights of other religious groups?

ACN is a Catholic charity and all its practical aid is channelled via local Catholic Churches (or, in a very few cases, local Eastern Orthodox Churches). Its advocacy work similarly focuses on highlighting the suffering experienced by Christians.

However, in many cases, a number of different religious minorities are persecuted alongside Christians, e.g. in parts of Pakistan where Christian girls are abducted and forced to convert, there is data to suggest that girls from the Hindu community also suffer a similarly high number of incidents. In such cases we have campaigned for all groups suffering these problems.

¹ People of the Book – followers of a monotheistic religion guided by a set of scriptures. The Qur’an unequivocally recognises Jews, Christians and “Sabians” as People of the Book. There has been debate within Islam as to whether other groups might be included under this heading, particularly members of the Zoroastrian religion.

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For example, in 2021, ACN's Hear Her Cries report looked at the kidnapping, forced conversion and sexual victimisation of Christian women and girls, as this is the area which ACN has expertise in and had access to first-hand information about it.

However, the petition to government that ran alongside the report more broadly called for action to stop the forced conversion and marriage of women and girls from all minority faith groups.

Every other year ACN also produces the Religious Freedom in the World report, an examination of religious liberty violations in every country in the world. This allows ACN to examine the main trends affecting, not just Christians, but all religious groups.

Appendix

Useful extracts from Does Government 'Do God?': An independent review into how government engages with faith:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1152684/The_Bloom_Review.pdf

p.13
Chapter 6: Faith-based extremism
This review recognises that the freedom to campaign for particular beliefs is a fundamental human right and an essential part of a liberal democracy. However, it is unacceptable and undemocratic for activists to coerce, threaten or intimidate people who disagree with their beliefs or tactics. Identifying when an ideology breaches democratic bounds is a complex issue. While the majority of people of faith are, as defined earlier, 'true believers' – decent, honourable and generous people – government must address the small but dangerous minority of 'make-believers' who intentionally harm, or intend to harm, the individual and collective freedoms this country holds dear. The four fundamental British values as taught in our schools are democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs. These values are what makes this country such an attractive place to live. Government should be bold and courageous in not just upholding these values, but rigorously protecting them too.

For a generation, policy makers and the media have almost singularly focused on the threat of Islamist extremism, and proportionally it remains the largest threat. Of course, the overwhelming majority of British Muslims do not condone the values and behaviour of Islamist extremists. Government should redouble its efforts to ensure mainstream and peaceful Muslims do not feel unfairly associated with Islamist extremists. The important distinction between Islam and Islamism must form part of the faith literacy training for all staff on the public payroll as recommended in chapter 2. [Emphasis added]

p. 21
Recommendation 14 (chapter 6)
Government should redouble its efforts to reinforce the distinctions between extremist Islamism and Islam and between Islamist extremists and Muslims. The vast majority of British Muslims do not condone the behaviour or values of Islamist criminals who perpetrate acts of violence, terror and extremism. Government should continue to seek ways of ensuring that British Muslims do not feel unfairly associated with violent Islamism or Islamists who operate with violent or subversive tactics, and ensure that these distinctions are heavily supported in the faith literacy training...

Dr John Newton
Senior Press Officer ACN



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OUTCOMES



UNDERSTAND

By the end of this unit:, students will be able to

- Show an understanding of the reasons why, in 1949, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was regarded as necessary (Lesson 1).
- Explain why human rights are predicated on biblical values (Lesson 1)
- Describe some of the ways Christians and Muslims are being persecuted for their faith (Lessons 2-5)
- Identify some of the causes of religious persecution particular to the specific countries. (Lessons 2-5).
- Retell individual stories of individuals who have experienced persecution (Lessons 2-5)
- Explain what Aid to the Church in Need does worldwide to help victims of persecution and bring an end to it. (Lessons 2-6)
- They should develop their knowledge and understanding of doctrine, belief, forms of worship and theological concepts, questions of meaning and purpose, philosophy and ethics and the significance of the answers for personal choices and commitments. (See secondary themes in each lesson).

DISCERN

By the end of this unit:, students will be able to think critically and creatively about what they have studied, for example, by being able to:

- perceptively discuss different views, leading to developing arguments that are coherent, relevant, and logically structured. (Throughout unit, and through Assessment in Lesson 6)
- Express a point of view or a preference.
- Listen to contrary viewpoints.
- Construct arguments.
- Weigh strengths and weaknesses.
- Arrive at justified conclusions.
- Recognise complexity with reference to different interpretations and historical context.

RESPOND

- Respond personally to questions that are difficult to answer.
- Show understanding of how beliefs and values inform personal decisions and ways of life.
- Explain differences of belief and ways of life with reference to religious commitments.
- Critically reflect on their own beliefs and ways of life in response to dialogue with others. Respond with integrity to personal conclusions about questions of value and meaning.

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION



AIM:

To consider why human rights are important and where they come from.

To understand the why the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was established and to examine Article 18 with reference to religious persecution past and present.

To introduce the work of ACN.

PRESENTATION:

Slide 1

Title slide

Slide 2

Discussion starter questions

Slides 3-4

Note from Sarah (see additional material below) on social media guarding the right to what you want and around that. This is meant to be a relatively light-hearted introduction to the topic about a recent issue.

Slide 5-6

Thinking quietly or discussing in pairs. What do we do when one person's rights conflict with another's?

Slide 7

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Slide 8

Visual representation of why it was needed.

Slide 9

Click on the scroll to access the UDRH if required. Look at Article 18 and refer pupils to their workbook as some of the articles are printed.

Slides 10-12

Introduction to this unit. Outline the aims, explaining the focus on religious persecution. The video shows a current example of religious persecution.

Slide 13

Task: Overview of religious persecution in the world

Slide 14

ACN logo

Slides 15-30

ACTIVITY:

- Look at the images on the top row and try to work out what they may be referring to.
- Each image shows an area of need which is addressed in the work of ACN.
- Now look at the second row of five; these are examples of a particular project of ACN's to help those in need in practice.
- Which images on the top row might relate to the bottom row? Identify the need on the top row and a corresponding work of ACN on the bottom row (you may want to do this together as a class and/or let them guess for a short time).
- From slides 16 onwards, each of the slides comes in a set of three: i) The need - top line of images; ii) a way that ACN tries to alleviate the need - an ACN response; iii) a video of a real-life example.

Slides 16-18

- i) The need - victims of injustice and violence
- ii) ACN response - providing spiritual assistance, psychological support, counseling, trauma healing and initiatives for children who have been traumatised
- iii) Video - Nigeria

Slides 19-21

- i) The need - religious persecution
- ii) ACN response - being a voice for those who have none
- iii) Video - Set Your Captives Free

Slides 22-24

- i) The need - war
- ii) ACN response - long and short-term aid
- iii) Video - Ukraine

Slides 25-27

- i) The need - Crisis situations such as earthquakes and other natural disasters
- ii) ACN response - emergency campaigns, fundraising
- iii) Video - Syria

Slides 28-30

- i) The need - refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS)
- ii) ACN response - funds to local partners to help them provide shelter, safety and basics like hot meals, heating and transport
- iii) Video - Syria

Slide 31

Final slide

Slide 32-33

Extension Task



RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN OUR WORLD

CHRISTIANITY

Christians are the world's "most widely targeted" faith group. (Pew Research Centre)

1 IN 7

At least 360 million Christians around the world experience high levels of persecution and discrimination – 1 in 7 of the Christian population. (Open Doors: World Watch List 2022)



FORCED CONVERSION

1,000 Christian and Hindu girls are kidnapped, raped, forced to convert and marry their abductors every year. (The Movement for Solidary and Peace)

VIOLATIONS

In 62 countries there are violations of religious freedom. This equates to 23 of 54 African countries (Religious Freedom in the World Report 2021)



LACK OF FREEDOM

Changing or renouncing your religion can have grave legal and/or social consequences in 21% of countries. (Religious Freedom in the World Report 2021)

ARRANGED MARRIAGE

In Pakistan, research suggests Christians could comprise up to 70% of women and girls forcibly converted and married. (Hear Her Cries)



WOMEN & GIRLS

Research indicates that Christians make up 95% of women and girls held by terrorists in Nigeria. (Hear Her Cries)

MURDER



5,898 Christians were murdered for their faith in 2021. (Open Doors: World Watch List 2022)



CHURCHES

5,100 churches were attacked in 2021. (Open Doors: World Watch List 2022)



LESSON 1: ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

A resident in Perth, Australia, received a handwritten letter from one of their nearby neighbours.

The note was titled 'Important message' and read: "Hello, neighbour.

"Could you please shut your side window when cooking, please? My family are vegan (we eat only plant-based food), and the smell of the meat you cook makes us feel sick and upset."

It went on to say: "We would appreciate your understanding," and was signed Sarah, Wayne, and 'kids'.

The letter went viral after pictures were uploaded to social media by the recipient, Kylie.

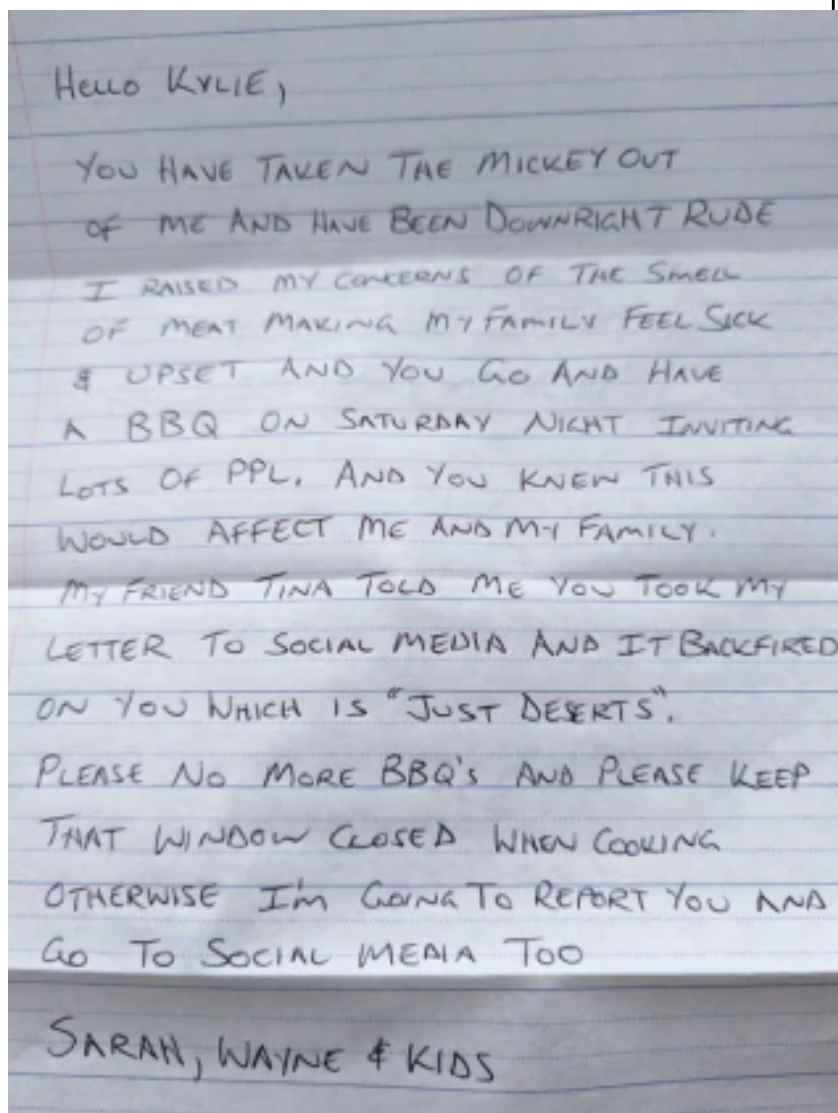
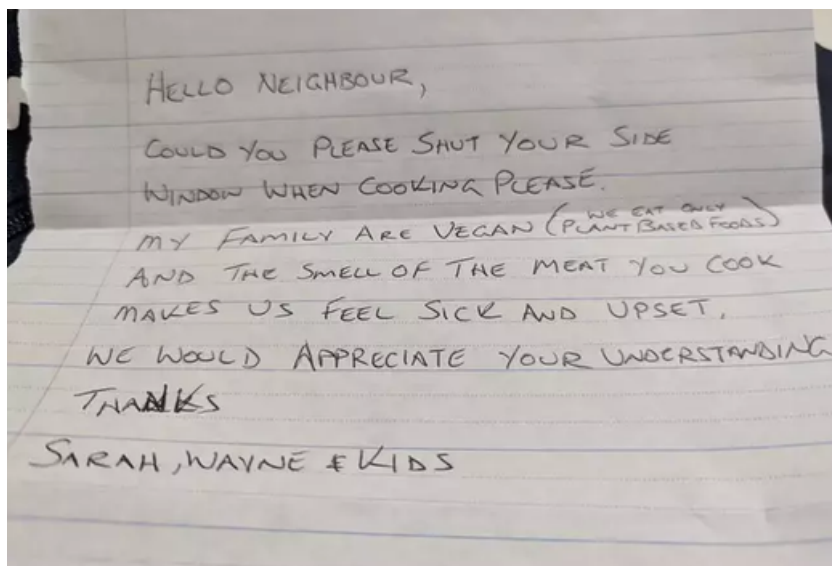
The follow-up note was posted to Facebook on 09/05/23 and accused Kylie of taking 'the mickey' as well as being 'downright rude' for not keeping the meaty aromas under wraps.

It read: "Hello Kylie, you have taken the mickey out of me and have been downright rude.

"I raised my concerns of the smell of meat making my family sick & upset and you go and have a BBQ on Saturday night, inviting lots of people and you knew this would affect me and my family."

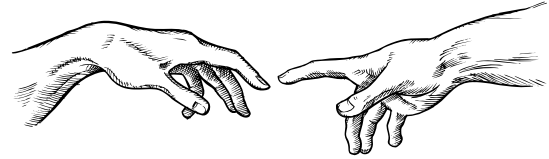
The handwritten letter continued: "My friend Tina told me you took my letter to social media and it backfired on you which is 'just deserts'."

The neighbour, known as just 'Sarah, Wayne and kids', concluded with the reiterated request: "Please no more BBQs and please keep that window closed when cooking otherwise I'm going to report you and go to social media too."



HOW THE CONCEPT OF THE IMAGO DEI ('IMAGE OF GOD') IN GENESIS SHAPED THE WEST'S UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

In our post-modern country, few realise that the rights upon which our culture is built came from the bible. The revelation that every person is created by God meant that each person has innate dignity.



We regard it as obvious that we should care for the less fortunate because of their dignity as human beings, but this was in no way obvious to the ancients. Jesus' call to see in him the hungry, the naked, the stranger, the sick and the imprisoned was new. For this reason, from its very foundation, the Church has cared for the bodily and spiritual wellbeing of all people.

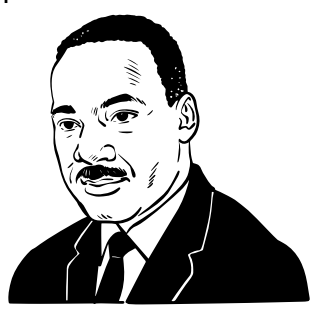
Jesus' treatment of women, children, and society's down-and-outs was remarkable in an ancient context.

The way Jesus spoke to women, healed them, taught them, praised them and involved them in his ministry made it clear that he saw women as equals. And he broke many social conventions to do so.

Since Apostolic times, the Church has cared for the poor by the command and example of Christ himself. The early Christian communities organised collections for impoverished members of their own communities, other Christian communities and eventually for non-Christians (1 Cor 16; Gal 2:10). This distinguished the Christians more than anything else.

Inspired by these words, a despised Christian minority ended the barbaric practice of infanticide in the Roman Empire, and stood against the ancient slave trade and, from the beginning, the Church has cared for children and orphans. A clear example comes from St Ignatius of Antioch's letter to the Smyrnaeans (ca. 110), in which he criticizes the pagans, who "have no regard for love; no care for the widow, or the orphan, or the oppressed."

The ancient document of the Apostolic Constitutions also states the obligation to care for orphans and gives direction as to how to do so.



Inspired by these words, William Wilberforce finally abolished slavery in the British empire, and Martin Luther King Jr fought bravely for civil rights in the United States.

The first hospitals were established soon after Constantine made Christianity legal in the early 4th century. Hospitals not only cared for the ill, but also for the poor, the stranger, the orphan and the elderly. A great example is the work by St Basil at Cappadocia in 369, who founded a type of "medical city" with streets and different buildings for different classes of patients. His work was admired by many for its extent and efficiency in treating the sick. St Basil's example quickly spread, and Benedictine monasteries were the first to open hospitals in Western Europe.



Inspired by these words, Mother Teresa served the poor in India's slums for fifty years, and Nelson Mandela dismantled apartheid in South Africa.

Adapted from: Justice by Nicholas Wolterstorff - Theos Think Tank - Understanding faith. Enriching society. & Ten Reasons Our Human Rights Come From Jesus - Daily Declaration (canberradeclaration.org.au) with thanks.