

Racism: what is it, and why is it unfair? What can we learn from 6 examples?

Anti-racist religious education

www.anti-racist-re.org.uk

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RE TODAY AND NATRE WORKING WITH THE FREE CHURCHES GROUP AND METHODIST SCHOOLS



RE Today
Services



4 religious texts and 6 examples of racism to think about.

In RE pupils learn about diversity all the time.

In anti-racist RE, negative or racist attitudes or behaviour are confronted and challenged so that prejudice can be reduced and equality and justice issues can be highlighted.

In this lesson your pupils aged 8-11 will have a chance to explore the meaning of 4 religious texts. They will think about 6 examples of racism, and decide what makes them bad.

See the notes to this slide for further details.

Start your pupils work on the next slide.

Or show them this interesting musical clip to get them identifying issues and thinking (it's a cover of Cynthia Erivo's song 'Stand Up' from the amazing 2019 movie 'Harriet':

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0CpVSvhFeo>





We asked pupils to make a logo for fairness for all humanity.

Here are two examples:

- Sadia, 8, says: 'My box model shows hearts coming out to meet you. All you need is love. I am not religious, but I do believe in love.'
- Ailsa, 9, says: "My rainbow shows how I imagine a perfect world, where people who are different can all get along. To make this happen, we have to stop hatred."
- Which one do you like best and why?
- If you made a fairness logo, what would yours be like?



Religion and racism: Discussing some questions with your talking partner

- Do you know the names of any religions and any holy books? Can you match them up?
- Here are 4 religions: **Buddhist / Christian / Hindu / Muslim**
- Here are four holy scriptures: **Qur'an and Hadith / Metta Sutra / Bible / Gita.**
- Do you know which religion goes with which book?
- Can you guess what different holy books have to say about racism?
- Racism is a kind of unfairness. It is about people's lives being made worse just because of their race, the colour of their skin or their ethnic group.
- Religious holy books speak about treating others with goodness and fairness. We will find out about some of their teachings.





What does Buddhist scripture say?

- A Buddhist scripture called the Mettasutta says this:
- **“May all beings live in safety with hearts full of joy. Whether weak or strong, great or small, seen or unseen, far or near, born or yet to be born, may all beings be full of joy”**
- If a Buddhist person uses these words for meditation, then could it stop them from being racist? Give a reason for your answer.





What does Christian scripture say?

- In the Christian Bible, Jesus teaches his followers:
- **“Blessed are those who are hungry for justice. They will be filled. Blessed are the peacemakers. They will be called the Children of God”**
(Matthew’s Gospel, chapter 5)
- If A Christian person follows these teachings, could it stop them from being racist? Give a reason for your answer.





What does Hindu scripture say?

- In the Hindu scripture called the Bhagavad Gita, the Hindu god Krishna says this:
- **"I look upon all creatures equally; none are less dear to me and none more dear."**
- If a Hindu person followed the example of the god Krishna, and looked on everyone as a friend, what difference would it make? Give a reason for your answer.





What does Muslim holy text say?

- The Muslim Prophet Muhammad [PBUH] said this:
- **"For the white to lord it over the black, the Arab over the non-Arab, the rich over the poor, the strong over the weak or men over women is out of place and wrong."**

This is a Muslim Hadith of Ibn Majah

- If a Muslim follows this teaching, how would they treat people of different races? Give a reason for your answer.



What do the different religious teachings about living together have in common?

A Buddhist scripture called the Mettasutta says this:

“May all beings live in safety with hearts full of joy
Whether weak or strong, great or small, seen or unseen,
far or near, born or yet to be born, may all beings be full of joy” If a Buddhist person uses these words for meditation, then they could not be racist.

In the Christian Bible, Jesus teaches his followers:

“Blessed are those who are hungry for justice. They will be filled. Blessed are the peacemakers. They will be called the Children of God” (Matthew’s Gospel, chapter 5)

If A Christian person follows these teachings, they would be against racism.

In the Hindu scripture called the Bhagavad Gita, the Hindu god Krishna says: “I look upon all creatures equally; none are less dear to me and none more dear.”

If a Hindu person followed this teaching, they could not be racist.

The Muslim Prophet Muhammad said: "For the white to lord it over the black, the Arab over the non-Arab, the rich over the poor, the strong over the weak or men over women is out of place and wrong." This Hadith of Ibn Majah teaches Muslims to be in favour of equality and against all kinds of prejudice.



From bad to worse?

Racism is always bad, but some examples are maybe worse than others.

Or maybe they are all equally bad. With your partner, think about these 6 examples, cut up the cards your teacher gives you and rank them.

A. Which do you think is the worst? Why?

B. When you have put them in rank order, discuss carefully:

C. Why do some white people so often treat black people so badly? What can be done to end racism in examples like these?



A slave trader from Bristol:

Read the example and discuss what is unfair.

Edward Colston (1636-1721) was a slave trader. He used his ships, based in Bristol, to enslave people from Africa, taking them across the Atlantic Ocean to work without pay on plantations. Many died on the journeys on his ships. Colston became very rich from his slave trading activities, and even paid for a church and a school to be built in Bristol with his money, but he never apologised for his slave trading and the harm it did to an estimated 80 000+ people.



Racism in the playground:

Read the example and discuss what is unfair.

At a school in a small town in Britain, there are mostly white children, and just 6 black pupils. Most of the time, people treat each other kindly and everyone gets along, but one day one of the black children, an 8 year old boy, goes to his teacher in tears. He explains that during football on the playground two of his classmates (they are both white) shouted racist words about him to put him off scoring a goal. He missed his shot.



Getting a rich person's job in a bank: Read the example and discuss what is unfair.

At a big banking firm in London, there are thirty new jobs with high salaries. The jobs are for people who have just graduated from university. 300 people apply for the jobs, including 15 black people. After the interviews have been held, the bank appoints all white people to the new jobs. All the directors of the bank are white people. When they are challenged, they say 'we just gave the jobs to the best candidates.'



The killing of George Floyd in the USA:

Read the example and discuss what is unfair.

George Floyd was a black man from Minneapolis, USA. He liked basketball, and rap music. He had five children - his youngest daughter was 6. After trouble with the law as a young man, he found faith in God and worked for his church, always keen to help others. People called him a 'gentle giant'. On 25th May 2020 a police officer was called to a grocery store where George Floyd was accused of using a fake \$20 bill (he wasn't). But the (white) police officer knelt on George Floyd's neck for 8 minutes. George died. His killing led to huge global 'Black Lives Matter' protests.



‘We don’t think a black minister is a good idea in our church’:

Read the example and discuss what is unfair.

A church in the countryside needs a new minister. The congregation is all made up of white people. Three ministers, all of them with gifts and experience to do the job well, apply to lead the church. One is black, and she does not get the job. She is told by one person in the church: ‘we didn’t think you would like it in our church because you come from a different kind of community.’ She is disappointed – and upset.



Rosa Parks and the seats on the bus, USA, 1955:

Read the example and discuss what is unfair.

Rosa Parks lived in Montgomery, Alabama in the USA in the 1950s. There was a racist law that said only white people could sit on the front seats of the busses, and black people had to give up their seats for white people. One day in 1955 Rosa refused to give up her seat. She was arrested. The black people of Montgomery organised a bus boycott, but it took a year to get the racist law changed.



Which of these was the worst example of racism and why?

- **Was it hurtful?**
- **Was it unfair?**
- **Did somebody die?**
- **Is it specially bad if racism happens in a church or school?**
- **Is it always fair when you don't get a job?**

**Edward Colston the
slave trader**

**(Not) Getting a rich
person's job in a bank**

**Racism in the
playground**

**"We don't think a black
minister is right for our
church."**

**The killing of George
Floyd**

**Rosa Parks and the
Bus Boycott, 1955**



Religions teach kindness, fairness and justice. Should people follow these teachings better?

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**Write a Charter
to Reduce
Racism.**

**Can you use
some ideas from
the scriptures
you have been
learning?**

Our Charter to Reduce Racism



Continue working with your partner, and write into the boxes: what made this a bad example of racism? What do you think can be done to change the world so that this cannot continue, or will not happen again? Can you use ideas from the religious teachings in your answers?

Edward Colston the slave trader	Racism in the school playground	A bank that gives no jobs to black people
The killing of George Floyd	A church that won't choose a black minister	Rosa Parks and the Montgomery bus boycott



Writing tasks

Choose two out of four

- Which were your two favourite scriptures from this work? Explain what you liked about each one.
- Which were the two worst examples of racism, did you think? Explain what was so unfair about these.
- 'There is no such thing as racism that is not so bad. All racism is unfair and should stop.' What do you think?
- Religions say 'no to racism' – but it still does not stop. Can you explain why?



The impact of the learning

Can you say 'yes' to some of these? Well done!

I can...

- Identify and talk about what makes 6 examples of racism unfair
- Consider how 4 scripture texts could make people less racist
- Make links between the teaching of sacred texts and what fairness means
- Suggest ideas of my own to reduce racism



Partners

This project is a partnership between the Free Churches Group, Methodist Schools, RE Today, NATRE and many teachers of RE and educators from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic communities who have become voluntarily involved.

Lat Blaylock, RE Today Adviser and Anti-Racist RE project co-ordinator, would like to thank all these partners for their contributions, work and inspiration.

