

# SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

## D. V

### RELIGIOUS ASPECTS

50 minutes

Resource for Religious Studies, Citizenship

This section looks at the current situation, its history, and the events leading up to it, from the perspective of religious considerations and beliefs. There are questions and discussion points on the slides, and more suggestions for group work and written assignments are included below.

#### Aims

Students will be able to identify the different issues which influence leaders on both sides, and to understand the influence of religion in this conflict.

#### Content

##### Slide

1	Title
2	Maps of Muslim world
3	Possible causes
4	Church and State
5 –12	Religious aspects of history of region
13	Peace Talks
14 – 15	Religious Aspects of Core Issues
16 – 21	Peoples and Religions in Israel
23 - 28	Jerusalem
29	Conflicting religious claims
30	Religion on the West Bank
31, 32	Government on the West Bank
33, 34	People and Religion in Gaza
35, 36	Government in Gaza
37	Zionism
38	Aims of Iran
39 – 41	Attitudes of 3 major faiths to war
42 – 46	Causes of the conflict. Religious? Nationalistic?
47 - 48	Notes
49	Suggested Reading

#### Slide 2

- There are:
- 22 Arab Muslim countries in the Middle East;
- A total of 56 Muslim countries in the world, with a combined total population of 10,000,000,000;
- 82 Christian countries;
- 1 Jewish country

#### Slide 3

Ask the students to consider the questions, but to delay reaching a decision until all slides have been looked at.

## Slides 5 - 12

Slides 5 – 12 highlight the religious aspects of the conflict. For a more detailed history of events, see D. I.

Invite comments.

## Slide 15

**Class discussion:**

In view of the number of Muslim and Christian states in the world, and the fact that Israel is such a multi-cultural society, is it reasonable for Israel to expect this recognition?

## Slides 23 - 28

**Muslims** face Mecca when they pray.

**Jews** face the site of their ancient Temple in Jerusalem, which they call the Temple Mount.

**Christians** face Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is mentioned 142 times in the New Testament

667 times in the Old Testament

Never in the Koran

## Slide 29

Conflicting religious claims. **Role play.**

Divide the students into pairs, each pair consisting of a member of Hamas, the other an orthodox Israeli Jew. Ask them to make the religious case for their right to control the whole of the area west of the Jordan River – the area known as Palestine.

## Slides 42 - 46

Discussion: How do the students explain the fact that

- a) The Palestinians on the West Bank say they want a Palestinian state living peacefully alongside Israel, but that they continue to quote their Charter?
- b) The Israelis say they want to live in peace alongside a Palestinian state, but refuse to withdraw their citizens from the area claimed by the Palestinians for their state?

## Show slides 29 – 32

Discuss the question on slide 32.

## Show slide 35 - 36

Many Arabs left what became Israel, as refugees.

Some people say

- I. The Jews 'stole' Arab land;
- II. That they expelled Arabs in 1948-9 and 1967;
- III. That they replaced them with Jewish refugees from Europe and the Arab world.

Others claim that:

- a. Jews have lived there for thousands of years;
- b. Those who came later settled on malaria-ridden, arid land, which they made habitable;
- c. This attracted Arabs from around the Arab world;
- d. Arabs left Israel during the 1948-49 war, but that most were not expelled.

What actually happened is a subject for lengthy research. However, it is possible to discuss how such totally differing versions of events came about, and how we can ensure that we look at both sides of the story before reaching our own conclusions.

**Show slide 42**

Discuss the questions on this slide.

**Show slide 46**

- i) The question asked on slide 36 could apply to conflicts all over the world. Suggest conflicts to the students, and ask them to give their answer also in relation to these other conflicts.
- ii) Ask the students to read these possible causes of the conflict, and then to put the 13 suggestions on slide 39 in the order of importance.

Some people believe that:

- 1-3 Religious considerations are obviously the concern of some on each side.
- 4 Water: there is much co-operation between Israelis and the Palestinians.
- 5 Iran is feared by Israel, many in the West and also by many in the Arab world.
- 6 As suggested by Fatah leader, Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas).
- 7 - 9 These are probably a very large factor.
- 10 Everyone is working towards this aim.
- 11 Some wonder whether this is the real objective.
- 12 The Palestinians are afraid that Israel secretly wants to expand, to control large areas of the Middle East, and to destroy the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.  
Israel is afraid of being forced into undefendable borders and of then being destroyed.
- 13 See reading list, slide 44.

**Assignments**

1.

Given the religious importance of Jerusalem to the three Abrahamic faiths, what do you see as the solution to the problem of both Israel and the Palestinians' claims to control the Old City and particularly the holy sites?

Do the experiences of the peoples of the three religions throughout history affect their claims? Will they affect the decisions of the International community?

2.

Using the material in the Power Point presentation, show how solving the Arab-Israeli conflict is made more difficult by relationship of religious and political considerations.

**Outcome**

The students will now have a deeper understanding of the conflict and of how religious beliefs are affecting the political decisions.