

# What can be done to reduce racism? Can religion help? Unit of Work for 8-11s

Anti-racist religious education

[www.anti-racist-re.org.uk](http://www.anti-racist-re.org.uk)

[www.natre.org.uk/anti-racist-re](http://www.natre.org.uk/anti-racist-re)



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



















# 1. Key Question for these lessons: Racism: what is it, and why is it unfair? What can we learn from 6 examples?

Intent: pupils will be enabled to:

- Learn about some texts from different religions that ask people of faith to treat all humanity well.
- Learn about 6 scenarios that give examples of racism, discussing what is bad about each one and how they could change.
- Learn to use accurately key words including racism, unfairness and fairness, religious wisdom
- Consider questions about what makes some cases of prejudice worse than others
- Express thoughtful ideas of their own about how racism and prejudice can be reduced.

Attitudes and values:

Pupils will be challenged to think about sacred texts, their own community and their personal attitudes. Do they take a stand against racism?

SMSCD and cultural capital:

This lesson gives opportunities to encounter a range of cultural and religious sources to prompt pupils own spiritual and moral development.

Implementation: teaching and learning activities

- These activities are facilitated by the PowerPoint and worksheet / resources available on the website.
- Introduce the theme and the lessons to pupils by telling them that they will have a chance to think about racism and religion, and maybe to change their minds for themselves. Reinforce how important their own thinking is, and how good RE uses methods like dialogue, reasoning and research into the experiences of others to learn. Can pupils give examples of racism ‘close to home’ in the UK? Show pupils examples of religious teaching from different faiths and ask: what might believers infer from this about racism, fairness and justice? You could introduce these questions with this impressive YouTube clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0CpVSvhFeo> a cover of ‘Stand Up’ by Cynthia Erivo.
- Examples of Respect. You might begin with our discussion activity, which uses 6 examples of behaviour which raise discussion points about prejudice, discrimination and racism and four scriptural texts from different religions. This asks pupils to make judgements and distances and grounds their discussion in concrete but fictional examples. There are no correct answers to this, but it can promote excellence in discussion. In this first task, pupils look at some examples of prejudice generally, including for example gender prejudice or religious prejudice, and will home in on issues about racism later.
- Introduce in simple terms the key words ‘stereotyping’ (looking at everyone in a large group and saying ‘they are all the same’) and prejudice (judging people without knowing them individually, in a bad way).
- Study carefully the scripture teachings given in the handout which express views from different faiths about prejudice and discrimination. Talk about why it is that religions speak words of peace + equality, but are still sometimes racist in practice. Can pupils give examples? Why does it happen? What should be done?
- Ask pupils to record their learning by describing the discussion and explaining what they learned from it. Ask pupils to make up and write down another scenario in which racism occurs and people have to decide what respect requires. Suggest that they do one that is ‘close to home’ – that could happen in our community.
- Think about how, in your context, you will give pupils an opportunity to consider whether they wish to change their attitudes and behaviour, and what they have learned about racism, religion and worldviews. Encourage them to be honest and reinforce that their opinions may change because they discover new facts, and consider why it is good to be reasonable, open minded and evidence based in developing their own views.
- You might use a film clip to introduce the specific topic of racism through an examples. A carefully chosen clip from a film like ‘Harriet’ / ‘Selma’ / ‘The Help’ / ‘Malcolm X’ or similar, set in the USA at the time of the Civil Rights movement can enable pupils to identify examples of racism in ways that are distanced and grounded from their immediate situation. It’s important then as well to confront the facts of racism much closer to home. Show a clip, consider what it tells us about racism and religion, then invite pupils to consider what they know of racism in their own community. Give some UK examples. Refer back to the example-scenarios the pupils wrote above.
- Homework and / or written work: can pupils review the clip of the film they saw, explaining: what happened? What role did religion play in the clip? What examples of racism did the clip show? Is it true that sometimes religion makes racism worse, but sometimes makes it better? Did the pupils see examples of stereotyping and prejudice in the clip? Can they identify and use these key terms?

Impact: Outcomes  
Can most younger pupils:

- Identify and talk about what makes 6 examples of racism unfair.
- Suggest what believers might infer about racism from sacred texts that urge fairness and goodness, considering how 4 scripture texts could lead people to be less racist
- Make links between the teaching of sacred texts and what fairness means
- Suggest ideas of their own to reduce racism

Can most older pupils:

- Describe how sacred texts carry messages about racial justice
- Consider questions about why racism happens and how it can be reduced, giving reasons for their ideas
- Explain links between different cases of racism using key words including ‘stereotype’ and ‘prejudice.’
- Express thoughtful views about how racism can be reduced, including within religions.

Notes

Probably best taught over two lessons.

It’s characteristic of anti-racist RE to focus on factual learning, and to struggle against prejudice through dialogue, using correct information and challenging people to live up to ideals of equality.

Teachers should take care to ensure that the class understand that hate speech has no place in school, so there are ways of saying things about other people that get them into trouble.

Further resources for this lesson are available via the websites of the Free Churches Group and NATRE

Pupil-outcomes can be shared via the website.













