

Religious Studies Knowledge Organiser: Year 8 Community Cohesion

Key Word	Meaning
Community cohesion	a common vision and shared sense of belonging for all groups in society
discrimination	treating people less favourably because of their ethnicity/gender/colour/class
ethnic minority	a member of an ethnic group (race) which is much smaller than the majority group
interfaith marriage	marriage where the husband and wife are from different religions
multi-ethnic society	many different races and cultures living together in one society
multi-faith society	many different religions living together in one society
prejudice	believing some people are inferior or superior without even knowing them
racial harmony	different ethnic groups living together peacefully
racism	the belief that some races are superior to others
religious freedom	the right to practise your religion and change your religion
religious pluralism	accepting all religions as having an equal right to coexist
sexism	discriminating against people because of their gender (being male or female)

Changing attitudes to the role of men and women in the United Kingdom

How attitudes have changed:

During the second half of the 19th century it became the accepted view that married women should stay at home and look after the children. However, between 1882 and 1975 women have gained rights to:

- Keep their property separate from that of their husband's
- Vote in elections and become councillors and MPs
- Receive the same pay as men for the same work

In 1975, the Sex discrimination Act aimed to reduce sexism in society by:

- Making it illegal to discriminate in employment on the grounds of gender or whether someone is married

Attitudes to the roles of men and women have been slower to change and women are still more likely to:

- Do all the housework
- Have fewer promotion prospects
- Lower salaries than men

Why attitudes have changed:

- The work of the suffragette movement showed that women were no longer prepared to be treated as second class citizens.
- During the First and Second World Wars, women had to take on many of the jobs previously done by men and did these jobs just as well as men.
- Social and industrial developments in the 1950's and 1960's led to the need for more women workers.
- The UN Declaration of Human Rights and the development of the feminist movement meant equal rights had to be accepted.
- The Labour governments of 1964-70 and 1974-9 were dedicated to equal rights for women.

Christian attitudes to equal rights for women in religion

There are different attitudes to equal rights for women in Christianity.

The traditional attitude of Protestant Christianity:

Many Evangelical Protestants teach that men and women have separate and different roles and so cannot have equal rights in religion. Women should not speak in church and only men can be Church leaders and teachers. They have this attitude because:

- St Paul taught that women should not teach or speak in church
- St Paul used the story of Adam and Eve to show that men have been given more rights by God because Adam was created first
- Although Jesus had women followers, he chose only men as his twelve apostles
- It has always been the tradition of the Church that only men should be leaders

The modern attitude of Protestant Christianity:

Many Protestant Churches (e.g Church of England, Methodist) give men and women equal rights, and have women ministers and priests, because:

- The creation story in Genesis says that God created male and female at the same time in his image and therefore of equal status
- In some of his letters, Paul teaches that men and women are equal in Christ
- There is evidence from the Gospels that Jesus treated women as his equals

Catholic attitudes to the roles of men and women:

The Catholic Church teaches that men and women should have equal rights in society and in religion except that they cannot be apart of the ordained ministry. Catholics have this attitude because:

- The creation story in Genesis 1 says that God created male and female at the same time in his image and therefore of equal status
- It is the teaching of the Catholic Catechism that men and women are equal, and should have equal rights in life and society
- Only men can be priests because the apostles were all men, and priests and bishops are successors of the apostles.
- Only men can be priests because Jesus was a man and the priest represents Jesus in the Mass

The United Kingdom as a multi-ethnic society

The UK has always been a mixed society: Celts, Romans, Angles, Saxons etc. are all ancestors of the British.

The UK has always believed in human freedom and offered asylum to those suffering persecution, for example to European Jews in the 1930's.

In the 2001 Census only 7.9% of the UK's population came from ethnic minorities and over half of these were born and educated in the UK.

The problems and benefits of living in a multi-ethnic society:

Problems	Benefits
Racially prejudiced employers will not give jobs to certain ethnic groups religiously prejudiced employers will not give jobs to certain religious groups	More progress will be made in a multi-ethnic society because new people will bring in new ideas and new ways of doing things
Prejudiced landlords are likely to refuse accommodation to certain ethnic groups or religions	People of different ethnic groups and nationalities will get to know and like each other
If teachers are prejudiced against certain ethnic minorities or religious groups, they will discriminate against them in their teaching	A multi-ethnic society helps people to live and work in a world of multi-national companies and economic interdependence between all nations
Prejudiced police officers will discriminate against certain ethnic or religious groups	Life is more interesting with a much greater variety of food, music, fashion and entertainment

Some of the problems can develop and have a poor effect on society:

- If certain groups feel that they are being treated unfairly by society then they will begin to work against that society
- Some politicians believe that young black people turn to crime because they feel they will not be able to get good well-paid jobs because of discrimination
- Some politicians believe that young Muslims have been turning to extremist Islamic groups because they feel they have no chance of success in a prejudiced British society
- Racism and discrimination can lead to groups like the BNP stirring up hatred and violence

Government action to promote community cohesion in the UK

The UK government is promoting community cohesion by:

- Passing laws against racism and discrimination (Race Relations Act; Racial and Religious Hatred Act)
- Making community cohesion part of the national curriculum

Community Cohesion is important because without it a multi-ethnic society will become violent and divided for example causing terror attacks and race wars.

Why Christians should help to promote racial harmony

Christians should try to promote racial harmony because:

- In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus showed that races who hated each other (like the Jews and Samaritans) should love each other as neighbours
- Jesus treated people of different races equally.
- St Peter had a vision from God, telling him not to discriminate because God had no favourites among the races.
- St Paul taught that all races are equal in Christ since God created all races in his image.
- The Christian Church has members from every race. Over 33% of the world is Christian and 70% of Christians are non-white.
- All the Christian Churches have made statements recently condemning any form of racism or racial discrimination.

Issues raised for religion by a multi-faith society

A multi-faith society needs to have laws giving equal rights to all religions and to those who have no religion (religious pluralism). However, a multi-faith society can raise problems for religious people in areas such as:

Conversion - conversion attempts by other religions can cause problems because it is like discrimination

Bringing up children - bringing up children may cause problems because children might leave their parents faith and choose a different path

Inter-faith marriages - inter-faith marriages may cause problems because parents will have to decide which faith the children should be brought up in.

The UK as a multi-faith society

Many societies were mono-faith (having only one religion) until the 20th Century, but Britain has had believers in different faiths for many years and by the end of the 20th Century Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and other religions were settled in the UK, so that it is a truly multi-faith society.

The benefits of living in a multi-faith society:

- People can learn about other religions and this can help them to see what religions have in common.
- People from different religions may practise their religion more seriously and this may make people think about how they practise their own religion.
- People may come to understand why different religions believe what they do and this may make people think more seriously about their own beliefs.
- People are likely to become a lot more understanding about and respectful of each other's religions.
- Religious freedom and understanding will exist in a multi-faith society and this may help to stop religious conflicts.
- A multi-faith society may even make some people think more about religion as they come across religious ideas they have never thought about before.

Ways in which religions work together to promote community cohesion in the UK

Religions are working for community cohesion in the UK by:

- Working to discover what is the same about religions
- Helping with inter-faith marriages
- Making sure that all children learn about different faiths
- Joining local and national groups to promote community cohesion