COMMUNITY COHESION

Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies
Unit 4
Community Cohesion
Key Words

**Community Cohesion:** A shared sense of belonging for all groups in society.

**Prejudice:** Believing some people are inferior or superior without even knowing them.

**Discrimination:** Treating people unfairly because of their race, colour, gender, class, age, etc.

**Ethnic Minority:** An ethnic group smaller than the majority group.

**Sexism:** Discriminating against people because of their gender (sex).

**Racism:** Discriminating against people because of their race or colour.

**Multi-Ethnic Society:** Where different races and cultures live together in one society.

**Racial Harmony:** A society where different ethnic groups live together happily.

**Multi-Faith Society:** Where people of different faiths live together in one society.

**Religious Freedom:** The right to practice your religion and change your religion if you want to.

**Religious Pluralism:** Accepting all religions as equally valid and correct and can all coexist.

**Interfaith Marriage:** Marriage where each partner is from a different religion.
Prejudice: ‘Believing some people are inferior or superior without even knowing them.’

Discrimination: ‘Treating people unfairly because of their race, colour, gender, class, age, etc.’

I’m not sure I like the look of this fella!

Hey guys, I didn’t ask to be yellow!
Sexism: ‘Discriminating against people because of their gender (sex).’

Equality: ‘The state of everyone having equal rights.’

- Traditionally certain roles have seemed more suited to certain genders.
- Remember, men can be the victims of sexism too.

Women make up 84% of workers in the service industries (care assistants, child minders, hairdressers, checkout staff etc.).

Men make up 66% of all senior officials (managers and business professionals). (2001 Census)
Advances in Equal Rights for Women

'The Qualification of Women Act 1918' gave women over 31 the right to vote in elections. In 1928 the age was lowered to 21 to be the same as men. Today all people over the age of 18 can vote.

'The Equal Pay Act 1970' ensures men and women are paid equally for doing the same jobs.

'The Sex Discrimination Act 1975' made it illegal to discriminate against any person because of their gender (sex).
For Christians the bible sometimes seems to say different things. Most Christians believe men and women are equal whilst Catholic Christians believe they are equal but were given different roles by God.

Why Attitudes Have Changed Towards Women

1. During the First and Second World Wars women had to take on the jobs previously done by men and proved they could do them just as well.

2. Countries such as New Zealand gave women equal rights opening the way for other countries to do the same.

3. Successful women in business and politics around the world show that women are every bit equal to men.

4. UN Declaration of Human Rights includes equality for all people no matter of race or gender.
'God created humanity in his own image, male and female he created them both.' *Genesis* 1:27

'There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ.' *Galatians* 3:28

‘Wives submit to your husband... for the husband is head of the wife.’ *Ephesians* 5:22

‘Women must remain silent in church, they are not allowed to speak.’ *1 Corinthians* 14:34

**Top Tip:** Quotes from the Bible are often seen as the best kind of evidence to show Christian belief but must be used with a relevant explanation.
Women and the Church

The Catholic Church do not accept women as priests:

‘The Lord chose men to form his 12 disciples and the apostles did the same when they chose their successors. For this reason the ordination of women is not possible.’

The Church of England have officially accepted the ordination of women; but some churches still refuse to employ a woman as their vicar.

‘Ordination’ is when the Church officially recognises a person as a priest/vicar etc.

The Methodist Church has allowed women to hold any level of leadership within the church for many years.
Multi-Ethnic Society

- ‘Where different races and cultures live together in one society.’

Racial Harmony

- ‘A society where different ethnic groups live together happily.’

Multi-Faith Society

- ‘Where people of different faiths live together in one society.’

Benefits

- People gain an understanding and acceptance of other cultures - this can lessen the chance of conflicts and wars.

- People experience different cultures and foods from around the world.

- Society can make better progress sharing innovation and new perspectives on issues.
Racism: ‘Discriminating against people because of their race or colour.’

Racism happens when people believe that some races are better than others. In the past this has led to many injustices happening:

**The Slave Trade:** Over 4 million black people were taken from their homelands to other countries to work as slaves for white people.

**Segregation:** This was where black people were not permitted to mix with white people on buses, in restaurants and in schools. This mostly happened in South Africa and the USA.
THE BIBLE ON RACE


St Peter originally thought Christians from a Jewish background were better, but after God spoke to him in a dream he said ‘God does NOT show favouritism, but accepts people from every nation.’ Acts 10:34-35

St Paul said there is no difference between people from different nations in the eyes of God. ‘There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all equal to Christ.’ Galatians 3:28

Exam tip: Use clear P.E.E. with Bible verses to secure HIGHER grades.
Racism vs Racial Harmony

Racism is strongly rejected in the Christian Church.

‘We state that racism is a direct contradiction to the teaching of Christ.’ Methodist Church

‘We state that Christian belief is incompatible with any philosophy that is based on hatred or treats people as inferior because of their race, religion or for any other reason.’ Baptist Church

‘Every form of social & cultural discrimination must be stopped and eradicated as incompatible with God’s design.’ Catholic Church
The Effects of Discrimination & Racism

• If certain groups feel that they are being treated unfairly by society, they may become **insular**, cut themselves off from society, and even **work against** that society.

• **Racism and discrimination** in society can lead to the rise in groups such as the **BNP** who encourage **division** between different **ethnic** groups in society.

• In 2001, white and Asian youths from communities **isolated** themselves off from each other, **rioted** and **attacked** and **killed** each other on the streets of Oldham, Burnley and Bradford.
• The July 7th (2005) bombers were British citizens who had lost their sense of allegiance to Britain and were prepared to kill because they felt society worked against them.

• Police believe that when people feel discriminated against they are more likely to join extremist groups and take part in acts of terrorism.

• It is thought that some young people from minority backgrounds turn to crime because they cannot see a future for themselves in a discriminating society.
Government Action to Promote Community Cohesion

Community Cohesion: when a common vision and shared sense of belonging exists for all groups in society.

Education
Community Cohesion was made part of the national curriculum in 2006. Ofsted judge all schools on how they include community cohesion into their lessons and overall school life.

Laws
Passing laws such as the Race Relations Act and the Crime and Disorder Act and the Race and Religious Hatred Act which make it illegal to discriminate against people or encourage hatred due to race or religion.

Funding
Giving financial support to groups and community projects which promote equality and unity or provide research into the best ways of achieving Community Cohesion.

People
Establishing groups such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission to ensure government laws are acted upon. Making sure all groups in society are represented fairly in education, social services, police and government.

What can be done to promote community cohesion?
The Law & Racism

The Race Relations Act 1976
- It is unlawful to discriminate against anyone because of race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin in regard to jobs, training, housing, education, and services.
- It is unlawful to use threatening, abusive or insulting words in public that could stir up in racial hatred.
- It is unlawful to publish anything that is likely to cause racial hatred.

The Commission for Racial Equality
- An organisation set up by the Government in 1976 to enforce the Race Relations Act.
- To advice the Government on how the law was working and any necessary alterations.
- To promote the concept of equal opportunities.
The Church, Asylum Seekers & Immigrant Workers

The Church of England (also called the Anglican Church) has worked with many minority groups in society including asylum seekers and immigrant workers.

What They Do

- They give a religious view on the issues to politicians and government groups.
- They set up legal advice clinics with lawyers and interpreters to help people through the asylum and immigration process.
- They help provide home starter kits with essential items such as kettles etc.
- Some churches set up language classes to help people integrate in society.
- They support the ‘Still Human, Still Here’ campaign to support the human rights of asylum seekers and immigrants.

Why They Do It

- The Bible shows God as demanding justice for all people - this means fair treatment for everyone.
- Christians follow the Golden Rule taught by Jesus - ‘Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.’.
- The Bible tells Christians to ‘Love God and thy neighbour’.
- The parables of the ‘Good Samaritan’ and the ‘Sheep and Goats’ tell Christians to treat all people in society well as this demonstrates your faith.
The Good Samaritan

Jesus told a story about minority groups and helping others

A Jewish man was once attacked by robbers. A little later a religious leader came by but hurried off scared that he might be attacked also. After a little more time a teacher of the Jewish faith came along but also refused to touch the man as this would make him ‘unclean’.

Eventually a Samaritan man came along, they were enemies of the Jews. However, he saw the man needed help no matter what religion he was. So, he helped the man on to his donkey, took him to an inn and paid the inn keeper to look after the injured Jewish man.

Jesus said this foreign man, part of a minority group in his day and distrusted and hated by those listening to Jesus’ story, was a hero. Jesus said the Samaritan was a true neighbour, and people who act like him will be the ones who are doing what God really wants from people.
Multi-Faith Britain

Most people believe that individuals have the right to believe in the god of their choice and follow the religion they choose.

Religious Freedom:
‘The right to practice your religion and change your religion if you want to.’

Every 10 years the British Government holds a census (national questionnaire) of the population. The purpose is to build an accurate picture of Britain today. One question is about people’s religious belief.

Outline of Religious belief in Britain - 2001

- Christian: 42,558,000
- No Religion: 8,197,221
- No Answer: 4,823,000
- Muslim: 1,591,207
- Hindu: 558,746
- Sikh: 336,040
- Jewish: 267,711
- Buddhist: 149,237
- Other Religion: 157,000

HM Office of National Statistics 2001 Census
Exclusive Christians

'I (Jesus) am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father (God) except through me.' John 14:6

Exclusive: Most Christians are exclusive, this means they believe; only those people who follow Jesus, and live by his teachings, will go to heaven.

Problems:

- This is often seen as intolerant and discriminatory.
- Would God not be cruel to say the majority of the population will not go to heaven?
- How could a loving God allow anyone to go to hell because they’ve been born into a non-Christian culture?
Inclusive Christians

**Inclusive**: Some Christians believe you should only go to heaven by accepting Jesus, and his teachings, but, some members of other religions and some non-Christians may also be able to go to heaven.

- God saved people **before** Christianity existed. God will save people who lived **right** lives as if the God they followed had been the **right** one.

- When religious people **die** they will realise Jesus’ teaching was the right way and **convert** after death.

**Problem:**

- This goes **against** what Jesus said in the **Bible** (John 3:16).
Pluralist Christians

Religious Pluralism: ‘Accepting all religions as equally valid and correct and can all coexist.’

John Hick: Modern day theologian, philosopher and religious pluralist.

Faithful followers of all religions will be saved and go to heaven. All religious experience comes from God, different cultures follow it in different ways. E.g. Hinduism in India.

Problems:

• Pluralist belief goes against the teaching of Jesus so is not always considered as truly Christian.

• Most other world religions reject pluralism and are either inclusive or, more commonly, exclusive.
Hick’s Mountain Paths:

Hick pictures religion like mountain paths. People try and get to the top but take different routes.

Each route is “mapped out” through the cultural, family and religious experiences of their life.

Eventually all followers will reach the same summit.

Hick concluded; all religions are looking for the same God.
Interfaith Marriages

As a multi-faith society expands there will be people from different religions who fall in love and want to marry. But, does it matter?

YES

- Religious wedding services are difficult as each religion has its own unique style.
- The religion of any children may cause conflict.
- Funeral services will be a problem for family members from other religious traditions.
- Some family members may feel a person has betrayed their faith by marrying a person with an opposing view.

NO

- Most religions encourage equality - why not in interfaith marriages also?
- Interfaith marriages might encourage religious tolerance between families.
- Children will have a wider understanding from which to choose their own faith.
- Some Liberal Christians believe all religions are valid methods of trying to reach the same God anyway.
The Media & Community Cohesion

An issue from Religion and Community Cohesion presented by the media is the role of women in the church as shown in the TV series ‘The Vicar of Dibley’.

OUTLINE

Dawn French plays a woman who has been given the job of vicar in a traditional English village community. At first the villagers, particularly the town’s leading figure, David Horton, struggle to adjust to the idea and try to get her to leave. However, as she shows that she is more than capable of doing the job well she is accepted and loved by the village, including Mr Horton.

The role of women in the church is an important one for many Christians for the reasons laid out earlier in this guide.

Some fundamentalist and conservative Christians believe that the responsibility of leading a Church should be a man’s role as Jesus was a man, God is described in male terms in the Bible and Jesus disciples were all male.

However, many liberal and conservative Christians believe that this was mostly down to the culture of the day and today society is more accepting of women in roles of authority, such as a vicar.
The programme actually tackles many issues not just that of women in church leadership. E.g. How we should treat the poor, third world debt, how Christians respond to world disasters, love and faithfulness. However, all of these are done through the concept a woman’s perspective as the vicar.

David Horton is the leader of the Parish Council (members of the church who make decisions affecting the community). Initially he is against a woman vicar and tries to get her to resign and even sacked. His character has a sexist attitude towards the role of women in church leadership based on traditional religious views. One reason this comedy programme was so popular was that it often gave an exaggerated but true insight of people’s thoughts.

Some Christians feel the programme handled the issue well and showed a modern Christian view of acceptance, particularly as all the community eventually accepted her.

However, Some Christians feel the programme did not handle the issue well as it represented those who were against women in leadership as being intolerant sexists whilst they may feel they have a good religious reason for their opinions.

Other Christians feel that whilst the issue is important, the vicar was shown as a liberal Christian who didn’t always live up to Christian standards. E.g. Having pre-marital sex.