



War and Peace

You can use these answers and examples to get help if you are stuck and to check your answers when you have finished them, and to improve your work if you can.

For many of the questions, there could be more than one way of writing a good answer – in these cases, we've given some examples of what a good answer might say, but there are also other things that you could correctly use in your answer.

The questions are in bold, and the answers and examples are in italics.

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Working in pairs or small groups, discuss how a war might affect

A country

A family

An individual

A country might be affected very directly through the destruction of its infrastructure (buildings, roads, transport etc). Sometimes the government will introduce laws which require people to serve in the armed forces (conscription) or limit what they can do. The economy will be affected as factories focus on producing weapons rather than consumer goods.

In a family, family members might have to join the armed forces, and be far from home and possibly in danger for long periods of time. The family might have to move away from their home to a safer place to live.

An individual may experience fear or loneliness, especially if they were directly involved in the war or otherwise separated from the rest of the family. Their education might be interrupted. They might need to live for a prolonged time with limited food or without other amenities. They might die in the war, or return with lasting physical or mental injuries

Which of them would affect people during the war, and which would still have effects after the war was over?

Things which might have more lasting effects could include and injuries which they had sustained, and perhaps any damage to personal relationships coming from being apart for so long. Other things which might remain after the war might be a deep hatred of the other side and long-term poverty.

Which has the worst consequences of all? Remember to think about the effects of wars on those who fight in them, as well as on the innocent victims of war.

What you choose here is up to you and will depend on your own view.

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Under what circumstances do you think it is justifiable to fight a war? Choose from the list below and write the letters into the boxes on the diamond in order of importance from most (top box) to least (bottom box).

How you do this task will depend on your own view, and there is no single right or wrong way to do it.

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What does the Old Testament say about war and peace?

In this passage, highlight where warlike or violent language is used.

If you're using the version of the resource which uses the CEV translation of the Bible (you can tell because it has (CEV) after the Bible reference), you could highlight 'The LORD is his name, and he is a warrior!', 'He threw the chariots and army of Egypt's king into the Red Sea', '... he drowned the best of the kings officers. They sank to the bottom just like stones.' And 'you crushed your enemies'.

If you're using the version of the resource which uses the NRSV translation of the Bible, then you'll find that the text is a little different. Your highlighting will be 'The LORD is a warrior', 'Pharaoh's chariots and his army he cast into the sea; His picked officers were sunk in the Red Sea.', '... they went down to the depths like a stone.' and '... your right hand, O LORD, shattered the enemy'.

What type of writing is this Bible passage?

This type of writing is a song which praises God.

What is the context (background) to this song?

The Israelites had escaped after having been in captivity in Egypt as slaves. The Bible story says that God sent Moses to ask Pharaoh (the Egyptian king) to let them go and sent a plague each time he refused. Finally, Pharaoh let the Israelites go, but he then changed his mind and went after them with his army. The Israelites were trapped with the sea before them and Pharaoh's army behind them.

Choose three adjectives to describe the different emotions it contains.

There is a range of different adjectives which you could use here. Some examples might be 'relieved', 'happy' and 'grateful'.

What would it have meant for the Israelites if God hadn't been 'a warrior', fighting on their behalf?

They would have been caught by Pharaoh's army, and either killed or forced back into slavery.

What do you think was the purpose of including this song in the book of Exodus?

The song was probably included because the writer of Exodus wanted to make sure that the Israelites did not forget that, as they believed, God had saved their ancestors. The song reinforced the point that the Israelites could rely on God.

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What would this look like today? Re-write the highlighted part of the passage using modern-day language and items.

There are lots of different ways you could have done this. Here is an example:

They will use their technology to build water supplies and medicines instead of bombs, and guns; they will never again make war or attack one another. Everyone will find rest in their own quiet and happy places, and they will live in peace.

Write a tweet of no more than 280 characters to summarise the different Old Testament ideas about war and peace.

Again, this is something which you can do in many ways. Your tweet might emphasise the differences between these two passages, but it is also possible to write one which relates them to each other, for example:

If the Israelites need protection, God will fight for them against their enemies and win, but where possible there will be peace.

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What does the New Testament say about war and peace?

Do you think that Jesus meant for people to literally let people to slap them on both cheeks? If not, what do you think he did intend his followers to do?

Jesus was using this as an illustration of the point he was trying to make, that people shouldn't try to retaliate, to get their own back or to get even with people, even if those people had committed an offence against them.

How might these teachings influence a Christian when thinking about war and peace?

These teachings of Jesus are usually understood to show that Christians should work to make peace. If God blesses those who make peace, then that indicates to Christians that their aim should be to do that. One of the more common causes of conflicts is the desire to get revenge on those who you think have done wrong to you, but Jesus taught that you shouldn't do that. These teachings might make Christians feel they should be pacifists, but certainly they teach that peace is an important goal, and that war should be avoided.

Compare and contrast these sayings of Jesus with what the Old Testament says about war and peace.

In the Old Testament, sometimes God fought for the Israelite nation and made sure that they were victorious over their enemies. Sometimes the Bible says that this was because, in the eyes of the Israelites, their enemies were wrong and that punishment for them was just. However, as we see in Micah, God still sought peace. In the New Testament, the teachings of Jesus focused on the personal and relational peace between individuals rather than the idea of peace between nations.

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What is pacifism?

What are the key characteristics of pacifism?

Pacifism is characterised by the view that violence and fighting are always wrong, and that making peace and reconciliation between enemies are the only acceptable solutions to conflict.

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Can a war ever be just?

Look back to the diamond 9 you did at the start of this topic. Do the same task again, but this time use the Just War theory as your criteria.

How does your new diamond compare to your original?

As with the first diamond, there are different ways in which you might have done this activity and there are no completely right or wrong answers. The just war theory suggests that things such as A. To defend your own nation from attack, G. To defend human rights and H. To defend those who are too weak to defend themselves are justifiable reasons to go to war, and that things such as B. To acquire wealth/resources from other countries and F. To extend your control over others are not.

Can weapons of mass destruction and drones be used in a war that is just? Look at the terms of the Just War and explain whether they match or contradict the use of weapons of mass destruction and drones.

Just War theory says that some wars, tactics and weapons are morally permissible but others are not. It was developed in a time when weapons such as these were unimaginable. This is an example of how Christian teaching needs to consider new situations and adapt to them, while still drawing on the Bible and earlier Christian thinking.

When applying the criteria of the Just War Theory, much depends on the circumstances in which conflict is taking place. The case that weapons of mass destruction can't ever be just relates to their destructive and indiscriminate nature, which some suggest means that they cannot ever be seen as the minimum amount of force necessary. Others might point out that a long, conventional war over many years could do just as much damage. If drones can target very accurately, then they might be seen as being unlikely to avoid unnecessary harm and to only use the minimum of force necessary. However, they are a weapon which strikes out at a target far away rather than being only for defensive purposes. If the drone is being used to destroy something which would itself cause great harm to innocent people, then it might be said to be justifiable, but if it is an unprovoked attack on some innocent people, then not.

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Reach a balanced judgement about this quotation:

'Christians should never fight in wars.'

What do you think? Give reasons for your opinion. Make sure that you refer to parts of the Just War theory and various different Christian views of war, including pacifism and the teachings of the Bible.

How you answer this question is up to you, and there are lots of different ways you could approach it. The best answers will show that you understand a range of different ideas about Christianity and war, and that you have reached a conclusion about the question.

Here are some things which you might have included in a good answer:

Overall, Christian responses to war need to be considered and measured against the Bible, and especially the teachings of Jesus.

Wars are violent, destructive, cause great misery and can have long-lasting effects.

In the Old Testament, there are examples of God fighting on behalf of the Israelites and ensuring that they are victorious against their enemies. Sometimes that it presented as being justice for wrongs the enemies have committed against the Israelites, such as making them slaves.

Elsewhere in the Old Testament, such as in the book of Micah, there is a longing for peace and being able to turn weapons into everyday, useful things.

In the New Testament, the teachings of Jesus emphasise the importance of attitudes and behaviour which makes peace rather than stoking conflict, to the extent that 'When someone slaps your right cheek, turn and let that person slap your other cheek.'

Some Christians are pacifists who believe that any form of warfare against humans is wrong.

The Just War theory accepts that sometimes fighting a war might not be the worst thing that you can do, and it gives a set of principles in which a war might be considered to be acceptable. These principles are quite demanding to meet, and they try to rule out things like disproportionate or excessive force and unprovoked aggression.

Christians are also concerned with bringing about reconciliation and healing after conflicts, as can be seen in the work of Christian charities like Pax Christi International, The Community of the Cross of Nails and The Corrymeela Community.