



## Religion, Peace and Conflict: Just War Teaching Ideas

**Learning Objective:** To explain what a just war is.

**Success Criteria:**

- To describe the main features of the Just War theory.
- To apply the Just War theory to several case studies.
- To evaluate the idea of war.

**Context:** This is the third lesson of the topic. Students have previously studied the causes of war.

### Starter

‘Can war ever be acceptable?’

Students answer this question on the [Just War Survey](#) sheet. They then ask other members of the class the same question and record their answers. The teacher can then ask some of the students to share the best answers they have heard.

Drawing on these answers, introduce St. Thomas Aquinas’ ‘Just War’ theory and the reasons underpinning it.

### Main Activities

‘Just War Theory’

Having heard a description of the Just War theory, students complete the [Just War Cloze Procedure](#). Students who need help can be given a key word bank.

‘Applying the Just War Theory’

Students use the cloze procedure to help them complete the [Applying Just War Activity Sheet](#). They look at the case studies and decide whether each of them can fulfil the criteria of a just war.

### Plenary

‘For religious people, war can never be justified.’

Students have to think about this statement and form their own views. They should then put their names on sticky notes and place these on the continuum on the board. The teacher can then ask some students to explain their positions to the class. Answers should be personal but could include:

Agree – it goes against rules such as ‘do not kill’; violence violates religious teachings on love and peace; negotiation is always a better option.

Disagree – elements of Aquinas’ theory can be used to answer this question.