

What difference does it make to believe in ahimsa (harmlessness), grace and Ummah?

This unit explores religious commitment. **Religious commitment** refers to how much an individual is involved in his or her **religion** (Koenig et al., 2001). More precisely, a religiously **committed** person is supposed to "adhere to his or her **religious** values, beliefs, and practices and use them in daily living". This unit is looking at the value of Ahimsa in Hinduism and how it leads to practice, and the belief of grace in Christianity and how that leads to practice and the belief of Ummah in Islam and how that leads to practice. Children will have the opportunity to reflect on these three concepts and link them with their own ideas.

Key facts

- The grace of God in Christianity is the belief that God loves people unconditionally and is willing to offer forgiveness to anyone for anything.
- The worldwide Muslim community is called the Ummah
- Muslims complete at least on Hajj in their lifetime and give zakat to the needy.
- Ahimsa is an ancient Indian principle of non-violence which applies to all living beings. It's a religious value.
- Gandhi saw non-violence as a tool based on strong religious thinking.
- Gandhi did not preclude the use of violence.

Mahatma Gandhi



Gandhi was a political and social leader in the 20th century. His use of non-violent protest eventually led to his country's independence. Gandhi supported the rights of both Hindus and Muslims in India. He brought around change involving better treatment for groups which were treated unfairly.

Key Vocabulary

Ahimsa	Ahimsa -(in the Hindu, Buddhist, and Jainist tradition) respect for all living things and avoidance of violence towards others.
Civil resister	A person who takes political action that relies on the use of nonviolent resistance to challenge a power, force, policy or regime.
Community	A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.
Gospels	The teaching or revelation of Christ
Grace of God	"The love and mercy given to us by God because God desires us to have it, not necessarily because of anything we have done to earn it".
Hajj	Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca
Karma	(In Hinduism and Buddhism) The sum of a person's actions in this and previous states of existence, viewed as deciding their fate in future existences.
Parable	A simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson, as told by Jesus in the Gospels
Religious behaviours	Behaviours motivated by religious beliefs. Religious actions are also called 'ritual' and religious avoidances are called taboos or ritual prohibitions.
Religious beliefs	Attitudes towards mythological, supernatural, or spiritual aspects of a religion. Religious belief is distinct from religious practice and from religious behaviours – with some believers not practising religion and some practitioners not believing religion
Religious commitment	How much an individual is involved in his or her religion (Koenig et al., 2001). More precisely, a religiously committed person is supposed to "adhere to his or her religious values, beliefs, and practices and use them in daily living"
Religious values	Based on values reflected within religious texts or by the influence of the lives of religious persons.
Scripture	The sacred writings of Christianity contained in the Bible.
Ummah	Worldwide community of Muslims

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