

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD + -

DOES RELIGION CAUSE ALL WARS?

This segment comes from **EPISODE 1: WAR + PEACE**.

From Jesus' command to "love your enemies" to the idea of "holy war" is a giant leap. Yet from the Old Testament through to the Crusades and the inquisitions, Christian history is full of violence. Has Christianity been a major contributor to war? This segment tackles the popular belief that religion has caused all, or most, of the wars of history.

THEME QUESTION

Mark on the line your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: "Religion has caused all the wars of history."



ENGAGE

1. Think about disagreements and conflicts you have had with friends, family members and classmates over the last year. Write a list of common reasons for conflict to arise:

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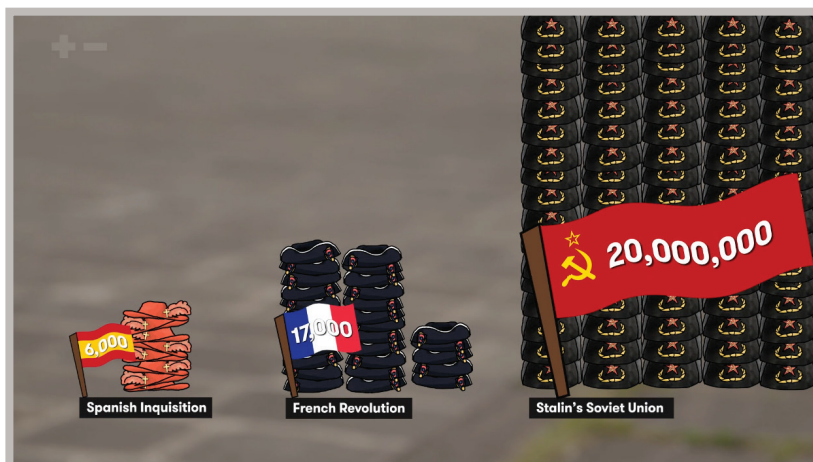
2. Compare your list with another student, and discuss the common themes.

UNDERSTAND AND EVALUATE



WATCH the segment: “Does religion cause all wars?” (cpx.video/violence)

1. The video segment opens with a quote from the French philosopher Voltaire: “Those who make you believe absurdities, can make you commit atrocities.” In your own words, explain what Voltaire meant by this.
2. Outline the point being made by these graphics from the video.



3. Justine Toh states that “the human capacity for brutality is vast”. What is your reaction to this statement?
4. In one sentence, summarise the argument that this segment makes about human violence.

BIBLE FOCUS

READ Psalm 14:2-3 and 1 John 1:8-9.

1. What do these verses say about the state of all humans? To what extent do you agree with this?
2. With these verses in mind, should we be surprised when people act in an immoral or sinful manner?
3. What hope do these verses give for humanity?

APPLY

1. Read the following quote from Christopher Hitchens from his 2007 best-selling book *God Is Not Great*, and write a short response to these words, based on the content in the video segment.

“Religion has caused innumerable people not to just conduct themselves no better than others, but to award themselves permission to behave in ways that would make a brothel keeper or an ethnic cleanser raise an eyebrow. ... As I write these words, and as you read them, people of faith are in their different ways planning your and my destruction, and the destruction of all the hard-won human attainments that I have touched upon.
Religion poisons everything.”

2. Mark on the line your level of agreement or disagreement *now* with the following statement: “Religion has caused all the wars of history.” Has your opinion changed since the beginning of the lesson?



Disagree Agree

3. Russian writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn wrote:

“If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?”

- a. How does this quote support the conclusion of the video segment?
- b. From your personal experience, do you agree with this quote? Why or why not?

EXTEND

1. Read this article from CPX Fellow Michael Bird, “[Ending religion won’t end the conflict](#)” ([cpx.video/conflict](#)). Imagine you have the opportunity to ask Michael Bird 3-5 questions to clarify or expand on the points he makes in his article. What would you ask?