

Religion, the Individual and Society

Religion and social control: ethnicity and gender

Name and date begun:

Time allocation:

5 lessons

Learning objectives:

- Students should understand that religion and religious belief can act as a form of social control.
- Students should be able to understand that religions form a significant part of the socialisation process even for those who do not believe.
- Students should appreciate that religion can be used as a justification for gender control and the subjugation of people of different ethnicity and culture.
- Students should recognise that beliefs in God/gods can be gendered.

Key Concepts and vocabulary

See your lesson notes in addition to the following:

- Social control
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Charisma
- Patriarchy
- Ideology
- Feminism
- Non-Christian religious belief

Additional reading and references

Selfe and Starbuck (1998) *Access to Sociology: Religion* p 109 ff

Giddens (1997) *Sociology* 3rd edition p 449 - 52

Marcus and Ducklin (1998) *Success in Sociology* p 646 - 51

Make a note of any additional sources that you have used below

Personal Development ideas

- Use history texts, teachers, and CD-Rom to find out about the history of slavery. In particular, you are looking for the Christian justifications that were used to make slavery acceptable.
- Collect newspaper articles and information relating to the role of women in the church. Look at anthologies of recent journalism addressing this issue. You may find articles about the debate on CD-Rom versions of newspapers. Speak to RE teachers and ask for their views on the role of women in the church.
- Talk to people who are from different cultures about their attitude towards people of differing ethnicity from themselves and towards the females of their own religion. Do not be critical and prepare to be surprised – use an open mind for this exercise.

Overview of the debate

- How does religion form part of the control mechanisms of a society?
- What form do these mechanisms take with relation to the role of women?
- How are these mechanisms used to control the behaviour of people of different ethnicity from those of mainstream culture?

Revision tips

- Be certain that you understand how religions can contribute to social control.
- Make sure that you have some clear understandings of the feminist view with regard to religious belief.
- Make sure that you understand the concept of cultural relativity and can apply that analysis to an understanding of the way that religion can be used to justify racism and social intolerance.

What you should have in your folder when this work has been completed correctly:

- A clear explanation of each of the glossary terms
- Acceptable lesson notes.
- Evidence that you have looked at least two textbooks and made notes.
- Some photocopies of journalism and some Internet notes on the role of women (and ethnic minorities) within Christianity that you and your study partners have collected and shared.
- An essay plan to the question:

Evaluate the suggestion that religion in Britain is patriarchal in ideology.