RELIGION

"Rivers, ponds, lakes and streams – they all have different names, but they all contain water. Just as religions do – they all contain truths."

Muhammad Ali (1942 – 2016), American boxer

1. Religion Discussion

1. What are some of the major world religions? Do you know about the beliefs of these religions?
2. What is the main religion of your country? Does your country have an official state religion?
3. What other religions are practised in your country? What ancient religions existed in your country?
4. How important is religion in your life? Do you go to church or another place of worship?
5. Which religious ceremonies take place in your country? How important are these?
6. How have societies benefited from religion? Is religion necessary for a society with strong values? Where else do we get values from?
7. What is a religion? Is it more than simply a guide on how to be a good person? Where do religions come from and why do people believe in them?
8. Do you think your country is becoming more or less religious? Is this a good thing or a bad thing?

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2. Religion Vocabulary

- **secular** (adjective), **secularism** (noun) – *a disconnection between religion and affairs of the state; not religious*
- **atheist vs agnostic** (adjective, noun) – *while an atheist does not believe in God (or gods), an agnostic does not know whether or not God exists.*
- **faith** (noun) - *a strong belief in something, especially a religious belief or teaching.*
- **religious freedom** (noun) – *when people are free to practise any religion they choose without fear of persecution.*
- **to worship** (verb), **place of worship** (noun) – *to show adoration for someone or something, especially a god; a religious building, such as a church, temple or mosque, where people worship.*
- **to pray** (verb), **prayer** (noun) – *to make a request or give praise, especially to a god.*

Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun):

1. After learning that her son's army regiment was being mobilised, Helen **prayed** that he would return safely.
2. Due to persecution and a lack of **religious freedom**, many Europeans fled the continent to settle in the United States.
3. I have **faith** that you will pass this exam!
4. In a **secular** education system, there can be no religious symbols displayed anywhere in the buildings or by the teachers.
5. Many people assume Charles Darwin was an **atheist**, but in actual fact, he never denied the existence of God and referred to himself as an **agnostic**.
6. People should remove their shoes before entering any **place of worship** in Thailand.

Religion vocabulary comprehension questions

1. Should all governments be secular? Why or why not?
2. Why are some people atheist or agnostic?
3. What does faith give to people?
4. Which countries have the most religious freedom? Which countries have the least? How about in your country? Why are people persecuted for their religion?
5. What trivial things do people pray for?
6. How do people worship in your country?

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3. Video: The Five Major World Religions

You are going to watch a TED Ed video called "The Five Major World Religions."

Watch the video here: https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/esl-conversation-lesson-plan-religion/

While you watch the video, answer the following questions:

Multiple choice

1. What is karma?

   a) the afterlife ***b) cause and effect*** *c) a Hindu god*

2. What does Ganesha represent?

   a) creation *b) protection* ***c) success***

3. Where was promised to the Chosen People?

   a) Mesopotamia ***b) Israel*** *c) Egypt*

4. Who destroyed the Temple in 70AD?

   a) the Canaanites *b) the Samarians* ***c) the Romans***

Sentence completion

5. Every item in a Passover meal represents different aspects of the escape from **slavery**.
6. The mother of Siddhartha was visited by a **white elephant** in her sleep.
7. Buddhahood means compassion, insight, **peace** and steadfastness.
8. Jesus began his career as the living word of God at the age of **30**.

Short answer

9. When do Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus? **During Holy Week**
10. What do Christians eat and drink in the rite of Communion? **Bread and wine**
11. What does "Muslim" mean? **One who surrenders**
12. How many times per day do Muslims pray facing Mecca? **5 times**

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4. Religion Conversation Questions

1. Are there any religions you disagree with? How would you feel if a place of worship from a different religion were built in your neighbourhood?
2. Is a person's religion always chosen by the parents? If so, does that mean they are not free to choose their religion?
3. Does religion promote tolerance or intolerance?
4. Why do different religions often end up in conflict against each other? Have most of the wars in history been caused by religion, or has religion simply been used to justify political wars? Can you give any examples?
5. Why do some people who claim to be religious act in non-religious ways? Do people use religion to justify acts of evil? Can you think of any examples?
6. Karl Marx said, "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people." Why do you think he said that, and do you agree with him?
7. How much influence does religion have in society? Has this been a good thing or a bad thing?
8. How would the world be different if there had been no religions?

5. Religion Writing Task

Write about your opinion of religion. Try to use some of the vocabulary you learned earlier in this lesson. In your answer, you could include some of the following topics:

- What religion is.
- How important religion is, or has been, for society.
- The positive and negative effects of religion.

Alternative exam practice question:

Some people say that religion has no place in schools. Other people say that it is vital for religion to be taught in schools to teach children values. Discuss both of these views and give your own opinion.

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