

# SUBJECT: Religious Education

## UNIT: YEAR 8 Unit 3 – Why is there suffering?



### How do people suffer?

Suffering tends to be categorised in three ways;

**Physical suffering** – *The pain you can feel. For example, breaking a bone, falling over, injury*

**Emotional suffering** – *The mental pain you feel from something. For example, loss of a loved one*

**Existential suffering** – *A feeling that life has lost all meaning. Hopelessness, seeing no way out, not wanting to exist.*



### The Origin of sin:

The Catholic Church teaches that all humans are born with **original sin** as a result of the fall of **Adam** and **Eve**. This means that all humans are born with the urge to sin and disobey God. Pope Paul VI consolidated the Catholic Church's standpoint on original sin, stating that through Christ's death on the cross, all are redeemed (forgiven) from original sin. The Church teaches that original sin can be removed and cleansed through **baptism**. This is why Catholics are baptised as infants.

### Why do the righteous suffer?:

The story of Job follows a righteous man who faces intense suffering after Satan challenges his faith. Despite losing his wealth, health, and family, Job remains faithful to God. After questioning his suffering, God responds, and Job humbly accepts His sovereignty. Job is ultimately restored and blessed.

The story of Job teaches that suffering is not always a result of wrongdoing, and faith in God should remain steadfast despite hardships. It emphasizes humility, trust in God's wisdom, and the mystery of divine will.

### How can God allow suffering?:

**Moral evil** – This is caused by humans misusing their free will. Murder and theft are examples of moral evil.

**Natural evil** - This is suffering that has not been caused by humans. E.g. Earthquakes, volcanoes, illness.

- Christians believe that God wants them to help those who suffer.
- Christians feel that they should pray for those who suffer from poverty, sickness, famine, war and so on.
- Many Christians believe that evil and suffering is not God's fault. According to Genesis 1, God created humans in His image, which means He created them with free will.
- As well as this, Christians feel evil and suffering may be part of God's plan.

### What do Humanists think about suffering? (comparison of Christianity, Buddhism and Humanism)

**Christians:** Christians believe that people suffer because they have free will, because God has a plan and sometimes to test their faith. To combat suffering they pray, help others in need and stay faithful to God.

**Buddhists:** Buddhists believe that people suffer as they are have desire, greed anger and ignorance. People attach themselves to material things. To combat suffering they follow the 'Middle Way' between luxury and poverty and follow Buddha's teachings as a guide.

**Humanists:** Humanists believe people suffer because of illness, poverty, old age, crime and violence. They believe taking medicine, living life to the fullest, helping others in need and having a general acceptance of death helps alleviate suffering. They also agree with euthanasia (ending their own life)