



# How Religions Support Human Rights and Equality

KS4 RELIGIOUS STUDIES

CITIZENSHIP

Ages 11-14 ⌚ 3 min read

## What Are Human Rights?

**Human rights** are basic freedoms and protections that belong to every single person, simply because they are human. These include the right to life, freedom from slavery, freedom of speech, and equal treatment under the law. Most religions around the world teach that these rights matter deeply.

## Christianity and Human Dignity

**Christianity** teaches that all people are created in the image of God. This is called the **imago Dei**. If everyone reflects God's image, then everyone deserves equal respect and kindness, no matter their background, wealth, or status. Jesus taught his followers to love their neighbours as themselves and to care for the poor and vulnerable. Many Christian leaders have fought against unfair treatment, like **Martin Luther King Jr.**, who used his Christian faith to challenge racism and demand equal rights for all people.

Think of it like a treasure chest: every person is a treasure, equally valuable to God, so they all deserve to be treated as treasures.

## Islam and Justice

**Islam** teaches that all humans are equal before God. The **Quran** emphasizes justice and fair treatment for everyone. The concept of **Ummah** — the global Muslim community — shows that believers see themselves as one family where everyone deserves respect. Islamic teachings encourage giving to the poor and protecting those who are vulnerable, which reinforces the idea that society should care for all its members equally.

## Judaism and the Value of Life

**Judaism** teaches that human life is extremely precious. The idea is that one person saving a life is like saving the entire world. Jewish law, called **Halacha**, includes many

rules designed to protect workers, ensure fair treatment, and prevent cruelty. These teachings show that equality and justice are central to religious practice.

Think of it like a school where every student's safety and wellbeing matters equally — no one gets treated as less important.

## **Buddhism and Compassion**

**Buddhism** focuses on reducing suffering and treating all living beings with compassion. Buddhist teachings say that everyone has the potential to achieve enlightenment, regardless of their social position. This belief encourages equality and respect for all people.

## **Why This Matters Today**

Religious teachings about human rights have shaped modern laws and societies. Today, many countries have **constitutions** and **human rights laws** inspired by religious values. When religions support equality and human dignity, they help create fairer, kinder communities where everyone's rights are protected.