



# Religious Prejudice and How It Harms People

KS4 RELIGIOUS STUDIES

PSHE

CITIZENSHIP

Ages 13-16 ⌚ 4 min read

## What Is Religious Prejudice?

**Religious prejudice** happens when someone judges or treats another person unfairly because of their **religion** or **faith**. Instead of getting to know someone as an individual, prejudiced people make negative assumptions based only on what religion that person follows.

It's different from having disagreements about beliefs—everyone can think different things are true. **Prejudice** goes further. It means forming fixed ideas about a whole group of people without good reason, then treating them badly because of those ideas.

Think of it like judging someone's whole personality by their football team. You see their shirt and assume they're all lazy, or loud, or dishonest—without ever actually talking to them.

## How Religious Prejudice Forms

Prejudice often starts with **stereotypes**—oversimplified ideas about what people of a certain religion are like. Sometimes these come from misunderstandings, fear of things that are different, or from hearing negative stories about one person and assuming everyone in that religion is the same.

Media, families, friends, or even just ignorance can spread these harmful ideas. When people don't mix with others from different faiths, it's easier for false beliefs to stick around.

## How Religious Prejudice Harms People

The effects of religious prejudice are very real and serious. People facing prejudice can experience **discrimination**—being treated worse than others in jobs, schools, housing, or shops. Some lose opportunities because of their faith, not because of their abilities.

Beyond practical harm, religious prejudice affects mental health. People who face constant prejudice report feeling anxious, stressed, and isolated. Young people may struggle with their identity or feel they don't belong.

Think of it like someone always assuming you're bad at maths before you even try—it makes you feel less confident and hurts your feelings.

Religious prejudice can also damage whole communities. When groups of people are treated as enemies or outsiders, tensions grow. This can lead to **hate crimes**, violence, and even conflict between communities that could otherwise live peacefully together.

## Why Understanding Matters

Learning about religious prejudice helps us challenge it. Understanding other religions, meeting people from different faiths, and speaking up when we see prejudice all make a difference. Creating a world where people are judged on their character and actions—not their religion—is something everyone can help build.