

An Introduction to the Sociology of Religion

Why study the sociology of religion and religious belief?

Name and date begun:

Time allocation:

2 lessons

Learning objectives:

- Students should understand that religious ideology is central to the way that we organise our society.
- Our religious belief is central to our morality, norms and values.
- Our religious belief is an ideology that we all share even if we are not religious.
- There are a variety of forms of religious belief and behaviour in our society

Key Concepts and vocabulary

See your lesson notes for a list of ideologies and philosophies. These must be learned in addition to the following:

- Belief
- Knowledge
- Religion
- Humanism
- Magic
- Superstition
- Totemism
- Sacred
- Profane

Additional reading and references

It is strongly recommended that you buy a small introductory text such as:

Selfe and Starbuck (1998) *Access to Sociology: Religion* Hodder and Stoughton.

The ISBN for ordering this particular book from a bookseller is 0-340-71182-5

Haralambos and Holbourn (1995) *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives* p 445

Taylor *et al.* (1996) *Sociology in Focus* p 493

Jorgensen *et al.* (1997) *Sociology: An interactive approach* p 621

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

Personal Development ideas

- Speak to people about whether they have beliefs and what those beliefs actually are.
- Start to look in the Internet to see how many sites there are for religious organisations.
- Use CD-Rom to collect information about major world religions.

Overview of the debate

- Why do we need religious belief?
- What is the difference between religious and non-religious?
- What meanings does religion have for people?
- What other forms of belief are there?
- What forms of religious practice are there?

Revision tips

- Be sure that you fully understand Glock and Stark's five elements of religiosity
- Be sure that you understand the difference between belief and practice.
- Consider why society needs religion. What purpose does it serve for society?
- What other forms of belief are there?

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 on the functions of the education system.
- Evidence that you have considered the question of what religion is and what it means to people in terms of their daily lives.
- Rough notes on various forms of religious belief.
- Evidence that you have attempted to collect information via the Internet and textbooks on a variety of different religions.