

Is it OK to...?

Instructions

Label one side of the room 'OK' and the opposite side 'Not OK'.

After listening to first statement the young people decide if they think the action is OK or not. They will move to the appropriate side of the room.

Repeat with each of the statements in turn, taking time to share opinions after each one.

As the severity of the consequences increases the young people are being challenged to decide where they would draw the line.

Scenarios

1. The armed forces know a certain building contains a key terrorist. Is it OK to bomb that building?
2. They think there could be other people in the building... Is it still OK?
3. It is certain that there are innocent civilians in the building...
4. Including children...
5. In the bombing of this building several nearby buildings will also be destroyed...
6. Including a school...
7. And a hospital...
8. It becomes clear that there are actually several key targets in the area...
9. The armed forces will need to launch a sustained bombing campaign on the town to eliminate as many of these targets as possible...
10. The armed forces have a powerful bomb which they can use. It will take out all targets...
11. This terrorist group will be defeated...
12. This bomb will also see the entire city destroyed...

Bombs such as this do exist, bombs which are capable of wiping out entire cities and bringing about the deaths of thousands of people. Nuclear weapons were first developed by the United States in the 1940s and first used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki towards the end of the Second World War, hastening the Japanese surrender but killing many civilians.

This workshop will go on to explore the ethics concerning nuclear weapons and the UK's nuclear arsenal. We will examine the situation, reflect on it in the light of faith, and think about the issue in the context of the coming General Election.

Nuclear Weapons in Numbers

Choose the correct number from below to answer the questions.
Each number will be used once.

	How many times have nuclear weapons been used in war?
	How many countries officially have nuclear weapons (according to international treaty)?
	How many countries are believed to have nuclear weapons?
	Britain has a submarine-based nuclear weapons system called Trident. How many Trident submarines are there?
	How many Trident submarines are always on patrol in the oceans?
	What is the maximum number of missiles each Trident submarine can carry?
	How many nuclear warheads does each missile carry?
	How many times more powerful is one of Britain's nuclear warheads compared to the bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945?
	What is the estimated cost (in £) of renewing Britain's nuclear weapons system?
	How far (in miles) can one of Britain's nuclear weapons travel after being fired?
	What is the estimated total number of nuclear weapons globally?
	In which year will Britain decide whether to renew its nuclear weapons programme?

1	2	3	4	5	8
9	16	2016	7000	16400	100 000 000

Source: www.wmdawareness.org.uk/nukes-by-numbers

Nuclear Weapons in Numbers - Answers

Choose the correct number from below to answer the questions.
Each number will be used once.

2	How many times have nuclear weapons been used in war?
5	How many countries officially have nuclear weapons (according to international treaty)?
9	How many countries are believed to have nuclear weapons?
4	Britain has a submarine-based nuclear weapons system called Trident. How many Trident submarines are there?
1	How many Trident submarines are always on patrol in the oceans?
16	What is the maximum number of missiles each Trident submarine can carry?
3	How many nuclear warheads does each missile carry?
8	How many times more powerful is one of Britain's nuclear warheads compared to the bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945?
100 000 000	What is the estimated cost (in £) of renewing Britain's nuclear weapons system?
7000	How far (in miles) can one of Britain's nuclear weapons travel after being fired?
16400	What is the estimated total number of nuclear weapons globally?
2016	In which year will Britain decide whether to renew its nuclear weapons programme?

1	2	3	4	5	8
9	16	2016	7000	16400	100 000 000

Source: www.wmdawareness.org.uk/nukes-by-numbers

Candidate Statements

Candidate A

believes in Nuclear Disarmament

I believe that the UK nuclear weapons programme should be scrapped and all nuclear weapons that belong to other countries should be removed from UK territories.

The vast loss of life and the environmental devastation associated with the use of nuclear weapons makes their use impossible; thereby undermining their power as a deterrent.

It is impossible for us to legitimately condemn other countries wishing to obtain these nuclear weapons whilst we hold our own nuclear arsenal.

The money that would be spent on renewing our nuclear capabilities would be better invested in healthcare, education, and green energy.

If elected I will work tirelessly to see that, by disarming, this country leads the way towards the global abolition of nuclear weapons.

Candidate Statements

Candidate B

believes in reducing the UK nuclear arsenal

The threats faced by 21st century Britain are very different to those of previous years. The Cold War has been over for many years, so we are no longer worried about nuclear-armed Communist states. Most of the threats today come from terrorist organisations against which nuclear weapons are wholly inadequate.

I believe that the changing nature of these threats means our nuclear weapons are outdated and do not represent value for money.

We no longer need constant at-sea patrol but, if the threat from a nuclear armed state were to increase, we must be able to protect ourselves.

For these reasons I support reducing the number of UK nuclear weapons. This would keep Britain safe in an uncertain future whilst taking an important step towards international nuclear disarmament.

Candidate Statements

Candidate C

believes in like-for-like replacement

I am committed to renewing the UK nuclear weapons systems with a like-for-like replacement. Continuous-at-sea deterrence is the ultimate guarantee of our national security and the next generation of Trident nuclear submarines is the only way to maintain this.

Whilst nuclear weapons exist in the world we cannot allow ourselves to be open to the threat of nuclear blackmail.

As one of the few long-standing nuclear armed states our role and prestige in the world depends significantly on our nuclear weapons capability. Giving them up would see our status in the world downgraded massively. This is unthinkable.

A vote for me is a vote guaranteeing that the long-term security of Britain remains in safe hands with a new generation of nuclear weapons.

What you can do

Be informed ...and inform others

Use the facts given on this sheet and other information from organisations listed to keep yourself and others up-to-date with the issue.

Prayer and reflection

- Discuss the moral and humanitarian aspects of nuclear weapons and Trident. How does government policy square with what the Church teaches? What should our response be as Christian citizens?
- Ensure that prayers are included in your church community that will guide the decision-making of government away from security that is based on weapons and war.

Action

- Host a meeting of local faith groups to reflect on what you might do and say together on this issue. Perhaps you could arrange a meeting with your local candidates in the run-up to the election.
- Join others in regular prayer vigils at Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Establishment <http://bit.ly/1f3HKJW> and other nuclear establishments around the country.
- Use these petitions in your church or community to engage in debate and discussion on the UK's nuclear weapons programme.

Rethink Trident Statement

Do you think that the government should scrap plans to spend over £100bn replacing Trident? Support the Rethink Trident statement. **Pax Christi** has endorsed this statement with the following Church leaders *Archbishop Malcolm McMahon and Bishops Marcus Stock, Philip Egan, William Kenney, Terence Brain, Peter Doyle, Thomas McMahon, Stephen Cottrell and Paul Bayes* <http://www.rethinktrident.org.uk/>

Scrap Trident Petition

The government is cutting billions from public spending on health care, education, welfare and services and at the same time it is spending billions every year on Trident nuclear weapons. Sign the petition at <http://www.cnduk.org/scraptrident/>. You can also download a paper copy of the petition here <http://www.cnduk.org/images/stories/petition2013.pdf>

Pax Christi, St Joseph's, Watford Way, London NW4 4TY

www.paxchristi.org.uk

January 2015



The Catholic Church and Nuclear Weapons

Action needed NOW

A decision on whether to replace the Trident submarine fleet, the UK's independent nuclear weapons system, is expected to be taken in 2016. This year we have a General Election and an opportunity to challenge candidates on where they stand. Our present government plans to replace Trident. Our voices must be heard **now** if we are to change this policy.



Did you know?

- Between them Russia, USA, UK, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea possess more than 17,300 nuclear weapons.
- Nuclear weapons create health and environmental catastrophes around the world. Testing in the Pacific, Kazakhstan, the United States, Africa, South Asia, and China has caused profound damage to the environment and local communities.

Did you know?

- The UK alone has 225 nuclear warheads.
- Each Trident submarine carries eight missiles with five warheads. Each warhead has an explosive power eight times that of the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.
- The cost of replacing Trident is now over £100 billion and government spending on research and development for nuclear weapons is over £320 million a year.
- One-third of British universities have received funding from the Atomic Weapons Establishment which designs and manufactures the UK's nuclear weapons.

***Integrity will bring peace,
justice give everlasting security***
(Is 32:17)

The peace we seek cannot come from weaponry, but from a commitment to justice and nonviolent actions which recognise the dignity of every human person and all creation.

We reject models of security that rely on fear, the demonisation of others or on the strength of arms - conventional and nuclear.

Pax Christi Vision Statement

Catholic Church Statements on Nuclear Weapons

International

Nuclear deterrence cannot be the basis for an ethics of solidarity and peaceful coexistence among peoples and states.

Pope Francis, December 2014

We cannot justify the continuation of a permanent nuclear deterrence policy, given the loss of human, financial and material resources in time of scarcity of funds for health, education and social services around the world and in the face of current threats to human security, such as poverty, climate change, terrorism and transnational crimes.

Archbishop Dominique Mamberti's Address at UN General Assembly in New York, 2013

Nuclear weapons, aptly described as the 'ultimate evil', are still possessed by the most powerful States which refuse to let them go... No weapon so threatens the longed-for peace of the 21st century as the nuclear... With the valuable admonition offered in the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, the international community can now see how the legal and moral arguments against nuclear weapons intertwine with the strategic: since nuclear weapons can destroy all life on the planet, they imperil all that humanity has ever stood for, and indeed humanity itself...

Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, 2011

What can be said, too, about those governments which count on nuclear arms as a means of ensuring the security of their countries? ... that nuclear weapons have any place in a civilized society, is not only baneful but also completely fallacious. In a nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims.

Pope Benedict XVI, 2007

England and Wales

The very existence of nuclear weapons has always posed grave moral questions... The Church has always been clear in its teaching about the vital necessity for eventual total nuclear disarmament. Our judgement is that, by decommissioning its nuclear weapons, the UK now has a unique opportunity to offer the international community an approach to security and legitimate self-defence without the unconscionable threat of nuclear destruction.

Catholic Bishops of England and Wales, November 2006

A moral concern

Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and humanity. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation.

Vatican II Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 1965, #80



A legal concern

There exists an obligation* to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

*Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

Legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, International Court of Justice 1996

A humanitarian concern

Nuclear weapons are unique in their destructive power and the threat they pose to the environment and human survival. They release vast amounts of energy in the form of blast, heat and radiation. No adequate humanitarian response is possible. In addition to causing tens of millions of immediate deaths, a regional nuclear war involving around 100 Hiroshima-sized weapons would disrupt the global climate and agricultural production so severely that more than a billion people would be at risk of famine.

International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

Useful organisations and websites

Action AWE

www.actionawe.org/

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

www.cnduk.org/home

Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

ccnd.gn.apc.org/

International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

www.icanw.org/unitedkingdom/

Nuclear Morality Project

www.nuclearmorality.com

Nuclear Information Service

www.nuclearinfo.org/



nuclear
information
service