

Religious conflicts within families

Religious issues can cause conflict in a family whether that family is religious or not. It is perhaps inevitable that young people begin to question the beliefs and practices of their parents which they believed as children. This can lead to conflict about religion itself.

A child who has had a religious upbringing may convert to a different religious faith, which would worry and concern their parents and other family members

A child of atheist parents may become religious, which their parents may find very difficult to understand, especially since it is likely to involve a lifestyle change

Different generations often have different ideas about how people should live their lives anyway, and when these are combined with different religious views it can cause extreme conflict within families. Different members of the family may have different views on :

- Social behaviour - things like drinking alcohol or socialising with members of the opposite sex
- Moral issues - these may cause conflict if the teachings and beliefs of a religion contradict the beliefs of another member of the family- for example, cohabiting instead of/or before marrying or choosing to have an abortion.
- Jobs and careers - the choice of job may conflict with the rest of the family, For example, pacifist Christian parents would not be happy if their child chose to become a soldier
- Choice of boyfriend or girlfriend - if the child's (or parent's) boyfriend or girlfriend is from another faith, this could cause conflict.
- Raising children - Grandparents often have different ideas on how to raise children from the parents and this may be heightened by religious beliefs if the grandparents have different views from the parents. For example, things like attending Sunday school or Madrassah, or sending the children to a religious school may cause conflict

How religious families deal with conflict

Religion teaches that the relationships between family members should be based on mutual love, respect and responsibility. Christianity teaches that children should honour their father and mother, but parents are called not to "provoke your children to anger". Islam teaches that no child should cause harm to their parent and neither should parents cause any harm to their child. Muslims are called to obey their parents even in adulthood, and to accept the authority their wisdom and experience grants them