

1 Can you name any religious cults? How did you hear about them and what do you know about them?

Read about it

I'M A BELIEVER

Jane Allison joined the Unification Church – the Moonies – three days after her 18th birthday



“I met up with some girlfriends and someone suggested going to a Moonies meeting for a laugh. We went along and were surprised – everyone seemed kind and intelligent. I started going to their meetings and hanging out with them at weekends. They talked about helping the elderly and poor and working towards a better world. I told my parents about them but they told me to stop seeing them immediately. I’m not a rebellious person but I didn’t see why I should stop – they knew nothing about it. Just after my 18th birthday the Moonies asked me if I wanted to join them officially in London. I said “yes”. It seemed the right thing to do.

I went to a big house in Kent to do a 21-day workshop. By the end of the 21 days everybody feels euphoric.

But what was actually going on without me realizing it was a classic form of brainwashing. I left to join a Moonie centre in Leeds. My life revolved around fundraising and trying to get new recruits. I got up at 8 am and didn’t stop until 11 at night, seven days a week. I carried on like that for nearly four years. I hardly ever saw my family. They kept writing and phoning but I wasn’t interested. I believed they were evil because they were trying to steal me away from the organisation.

One day I couldn’t take any more and when everyone was out I rang a friend to come and get me. You can’t imagine how difficult it was. I could have walked away physically at any time, but mentally it’s so difficult. They tell you you’ll never have a fulfilled life if you leave, and you believe them. It took me a long time to feel anything like normal. I felt guilt, shame and fear.”

19 Magazine

2 Put the events of Jane’s story in the correct order.

- a Jane did a three-week course with the Moonies in Kent.
- b Jane left the Moonies.
- c Jane rang a friend to ask for help.
- d Jane started to spend time with them at the weekends.
- e Jane started working full time for the Moonies.
- f Jane and her friends went to a Moonies meeting for fun.
- g Jane turned eighteen.
- h Jane’s parents told her to stop seeing the Moonies.
- i The Moonies invited Jane to become a member of their organisation.

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hanging out spending time
workshop course
euphoric unreasonably happy and excited
brainwashing forcing someone to reject old beliefs and accept new ones
fundraising getting money for the organisation
recruits members
fulfilled enjoyable and satisfying

Key Language

Read this sentence from the article.

... someone suggested going to a Moonies meeting...

Here **suggest** is followed by a **gerund**. The negative is **suggest not + gerund**.

Example:

Dave suggested not going to the meeting.

We can also use **suggest (that) + noun/pronoun + should(n’t)**.

Examples: Someone suggested we should go to a meeting.

Dave suggested we shouldn’t go to the meeting.

3 Imagine Jane’s parents asked you for advice about persuading her to leave the Moonies. Use the prompts to talk about your suggestions.

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| a don’t telephone her; just write to her | c don’t criticise the Moonies |
| <i>I suggested not telephoning her.</i> | d don’t give her any money |
| <i>I suggested they should just write to her.</i> | e find out more about the cult |
| b invite her home for the weekend | f go to one of the meetings |

Talk about it

4 Why do you think the Moonies waited until Jane was 18 before inviting her to join them? Why do you think Jane became a member and why did her parents object? Use evidence from the article, the box below and your own ideas.

THE MOONIES

- The organisation, also known as the Unification Church, has 2-3 million members worldwide and about 500 in Britain.
- Its leader Sun Myung Moon was born in Korea in 1920.
- The first Moonie centres were set up in Britain and the USA in the 1960s.
- Moonies must not drink alcohol, smoke or have sex before marriage.
- Moon, who calls himself The Lord of the Family, claims Jesus appeared to him in a vision and asked him to continue his work on earth.
- Moon says in his book *The Divine Principle* that Jesus died before he could get married and therefore failed to have a perfect family. He claims that he and his wife, known in the group as The True Parents, are putting this right.



5 What is the difference between being in a group like the Moonies and being a member of an established religious group like the Roman Catholic Church? Discuss these points:

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| • How new and how big is the group? | • Can non-believers participate? |
| • Who chooses the leader? | • Do members have to work for it full time? |
| • Is it easy to get clear information about the group? | • Are members brainwashed? Is it easy to leave? |

6 Roleplay a conversation between Jane and a friend who is trying to get her to leave the Moonies.