

Beliefs in Society

Handout 1.1: Football as a Religion

English football and its similarities to religion	
Football	Religion
Players are gods	God is key player
Stadium stands	Pews
England flags on faces	Crosses round necks
Chants & songs praising team, e.g. You'll Never Walk Alone	Chants & songs praising God, e.g. Abide With Me
Praying for a goal	Praying to God
Weekly match, building the collective bonds/conscience	Weekly service, building the collective bonds/conscience
Saturday	Holy day
Match of the Day	Songs of Praise
FA Cup and European Championships	Christmas and Easter
Stadiums	Churches, mosques, temples and synagogues
Football strip	Priests vestments
England winning the World Cup at Wembley, 1966	Christ crucified, Golgotha, c. 33AD
The hand of God	God's will
The one true team	The one true God
Lucky scarves, mascots	Crucifixes, icons, holy water
Team ground	Holy ground
Rituals, e.g. hugging each other when a goal is scored and mass frenzy of supporters	Rituals, e.g. communion, Mass, singing, crossing yourself, saying amen & shalom all the time
Competing clubs and fans	Competing religions
England v Germany	Christians v Muslims, Protestant v Catholics, Hindus v Sikhs
Specialist sports schools	Faith schools
Teams are symbols uniting the local community	Religious institutions and symbols bring communities together
Gives meaning to life	Gives meaning to life
Team coaches	Archbishops, popes, etc.