



# **Course Companion for GCSE OCR Sections B and C**

Religion, Philosophy and Ethics in the  
Modern World

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## Teacher's Introduction

This resource has been designed to support the learning and teaching of *OCR GCSE Short Course Religious Studies Section B and C: Religion, Philosophy and Ethics in the Modern World from a Religious Perspective*. All areas of the specification are covered, and questions and activities are included to test knowledge and ability, and to help students to engage with the topics.

The information is comprehensive, and images help to illustrate concepts. are included to help students to understand the material and to further the brief introduction to the course and answering exam questions is provided exam questions feature throughout. Exam style questions that cover questions under the heading **Quick Questions**. More complex exam essay style questions under the heading **Now Try This...** Answers and a full mark scheme are included.

This course companion can be used in full as an alternative or complement or for independent learning or revision. Alternatively, teachers might use a classroom activity or homework.

This topic involves studying a number of different arguments, ideas and opinions from Christian and non-religious perspectives. This should both inform students enabling them to approach issues from different points of view.

We have sought a balance between explaining relevant concepts in sufficient detail, without oversimplification, while not going beyond GCSE level and becoming too complex. We have tried to present all views in a neutral and informative way.

Some material in the section on The Existence of God is closely linked to material in the *Christianity Companion for Christianity (Beliefs, Teachings and Practices)*. It is worth teaching the Christianity Companion first, or potentially studying the corresponding section in the Christianity Companion, and so it is worth referring to the Christianity Companion details.

**Note:** this companion covers several sensitive and potentially controversial issues such as war and terrorism, and euthanasia and abortion. It is advised that teachers review this material with their classes, and warn students about any content which may distress or offend.

Hopefully, this resource will encourage students in their learning and help them to succeed in exams. It should take the pressure away from teachers by providing the bulk of what they want to teach to their class.

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\* resulting from minor specification changes, suggestions from teachers and peer reviews, or occasional errors reported by customers

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# Introduction to the Course and How to Answer

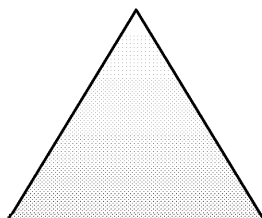
This course aims to cover Christian beliefs, teachings and arguments for one set of families. It also aims to cover Christian and non-religious beliefs, teachings and arguments in this section: dialogue between religious and non-religious beliefs and attitudes. The aim is to develop your understanding of these ideas and their place in the world today. You need to be able to understand the main religious tradition in Great Britain today, but that there are many, varied traditions in Britain.

This course companion is designed to equip you with the information you need to gain the knowledge and ability to answer related questions. Not all the questions and answers are exam-style, but those which are should be answered in particular ways.

The exam board will ask you to give quick facts and statements, as well as asking you to describe and outline. They will also ask you to 'explain', 'discuss' and 'evaluate' beliefs, opinions, experiences, arguments and practices. When answering all questions it is important to try to use technical terms where possible, and to write well, using both a style that is easy to follow and correct spelling and grammar. More or less writing will be required, depending on the number of marks. Try to spend as little time as possible on the shorter questions to allow yourself more time for the longer ones.

There will be two parts, one on each of the two sections, each including one 3-mark question, two 6-mark questions, and one 15-mark question. These questions could be on any material which you have learnt.

Hopefully, this resource will be interesting, informative, and help you to achieve good results.



The **3-mark questions** have varied formats. You could be asked to describe something, such as a term/belief/teaching/argument; to state or name three things; or to give three reasons for something, or what something is, or why something is the case.

Do not let the different wording throw you off – essentially there are two formats. In one, you will be asked to state or name three things, in which case you can be brief about each point – you will get one mark for each of the three things. In the other, you will be asked for one thing – therefore you need to go into some more detail – make three points or examples about the one thing to get three marks.

The **6-mark question** asks you to outline, describe or explain something – sometimes the importance of something, or the importance of a practice. However, it could also ask you to explain an argument, give different views, give reasons for something being done.

The different types of 6-mark questions can be a little confusing. In each theme the first 6-mark question will be 'outline/describe/explain'. In the second will be 'explain/compare/how'. In the first 6-marker you need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding (explain) 6-marker you need to show both knowledge and understanding and analysis and evaluation. In both types of 6-marker you also need to refer to sources of wisdom and authority. Some questions referring to philosophers, theologians, other religious writings, or Christian/secular origins. In both types of 6-marker you may get a mark for making a point, developing it, giving an example, or evaluating it.

**Note: In the exam these different questions will be part b) and part c). Questions in this resource will be 'Quick Questions', part c) questions will be 'Now Try This...'**

The **15-mark question** is the longest. You will need to discuss a statement. This means giving arguments for and against a statement (so agreeing with it, and also suggesting an alternative point(s) of view). Make sure you have given arguments for both sides and link them together well. You should come to a conclusion, picking the most convincing side of the arguments (and saying why you think this is the case. You should refer to sources of wisdom and authority in your answer where/if relevant. You also need to refer to similar and different views/practices within Christianity and the importance of the views.

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# Relationships and Families

Many Christians look to their religion to provide them with **moral** guidance. Teachings regarding family, **marriage** and sexual relationships in Christianity. **homosexuality**, **contraception** and **divorce** are controversial within the religion.

## Keywords:

- ♦ **morality** – ideas about what is right and wrong
- ♦ **marriage** – a legal joining of two people. In Christianity, this is normally a religious joining is seen as spiritual as well.
- ♦ **homosexuality** – a sexual orientation where people are attracted to people of the same sex
- ♦ **contraception** – methods which aim to stop someone becoming pregnant or sexually transmitted infections
- ♦ **divorce** – the legal ending of a marriage

## Christian Attitudes towards the Role and Purpose of the Family

### Keywords:

- ♦ **procreation** – making/having children
- ♦ **faith** – belief and trust in something, here in Jesus and God
- ♦ **baptism** – a sacrament which involves being anointed with or immersed in water
- ♦ **sacrament** – a particularly important worship practice which has even higher status such as the Catholic and Orthodox churches

There are various beliefs about the role and purpose of families, and there are many different types of families.

### Role of the Christian Family

Many Christians feel that the family makes up the basis for a stable society. The Catholic Church especially feels that heterosexual, nuclear families (see below) are the ideal model of a family, and help to build a framework for a good society – parents support children, children support parents, and families support families.

Some Christians feel that the human family reflects the family of God; the family of God is seen throughout the world. Therefore, they should work to have a harmonious family and practice the love of Jesus.

### Role of Parents and Children

Parents and children have different **roles** in the family.

Parents look after their children, caring for them and teaching them. This includes protecting their children, and educating them, sometimes including raising them. Having brought their children into the world it can be argued that they have a duty to care for them more than their children do to them (children do not choose to be born).

Children obey their parents and learn from them. Christianity stresses the duty of children to their parents. Children may also look after their parents in their old age. The Greek philosopher Aristotle believed that children do have an obligation to their parents because their parents raised them.

*‘Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honour your father and mother” is the first commandment with a promise: “so that it may be well with you and you may prosper.”’ (Ephesians 6:1–3 NRSV)*

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## Different Types of Family

In the twenty-first century there are many different types of family. There are different cultures and family circumstances, and also because of changes in society.

Type of Family	Description	Possible Christian Views
Nuclear	A family unit where two parents (traditionally heterosexual) live with their biological children or adopted children. Some think of this as the traditional family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most Christians see this as the traditional family.</li> <li>Some Christians see a same-sex couple having children as a variation on the nuclear family.</li> </ul>
Single-parent	A family unit where just one parent looks after their child or children. This is a variation on the nuclear family (with one less parent). This can be due to the death of one parent, the end of a relationship between parents, or (in recent times) where a woman has become pregnant with donated sperm or a single person has adopted a child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Christians may see a single parent taking on all the responsibilities of two parents which would not be ideal.</li> <li>Some Christians see single-parent families as a necessary response to a breakdown, or as a choice if they feel that a couple cannot provide a stable environment for their children.</li> </ul>
Same-sex Parents	A family unit where both the parents are the same sex/gender. They could have adopted a child; one member of a lesbian relationship could have become pregnant with donated sperm; or one member of a male gay relationship could have fertilised a donor egg.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some Christians see same-sex couples as a variation on the nuclear family, but others see it as a challenge to the traditional family.</li> <li>Christians who are opposed to homosexuality may disapprove of same-sex couples raising children, as they see this as a challenge to the traditional family and as an example for children to follow. Some Christians feel that children need both genders in the family.</li> </ul>
Blended	A family unit where at least one member of the couple has children from a previous relationship. The children, therefore, live with one parent and one step-parent, and any children of the new couple live with their half-sibling(s). This is a variation on the nuclear family (as children live with two adults, but one is not their parent / not the parent of all children in the family).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Christians may see a blended family as a new family unit, but others see it as a challenge to the traditional family, because it is not based on a single parent and one step-parent, and any children of the new couple live with their half-sibling(s).</li> <li>Some Christians see blended families as a necessary response to a breakdown, but others see it as a challenge to the traditional family.</li> </ul>
Extended	A family unit where extra members of the family live with parents and their children; for example, grandparents or aunts, uncles and cousins.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Christians may see an extended family as a variation on the nuclear family, but others see it as a challenge to the traditional family.</li> <li>Christians may see extended families as a necessary response to a breakdown, but others see it as a challenge to the traditional family.</li> </ul>

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## Purpose of the Christian Family

### Procreation

Many Christians feel that they should have a family because God told human children in Genesis. Therefore, the purpose of having a family is to fulfil God's plan and having a family is important because the family is part of God's plan for the world.

*'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth...'* (Genesis 1:28)

Some Christians, such as Catholics, feel that all sexual acts should be open to procreation. Some Christians take this even further – Christian movements oppose any forms of **contraception** or family planning (including natural family planning method), as they believe all children are a blessing from God. They feel that to stand in the way of God giving them children, and often have very large families. Some Christians do believe in family planning, and being responsible about the number of children.

Some Christians believe in **marriage** but do not feel that they need to, or want to, have children. Not all married Christians feel called to procreation. It is becoming increasingly common for a Christian and not have a family.

Additionally, some couples cannot have children even if they want to due to infertility (in either or both members of the couple). They may accept remain infertile, fertility treatment, adoption or fostering. Those who adopt or foster a child have the same purpose is to have children, just not through procreation. Note: while the Catholic Church teaches that all sexual acts *should* be open to the possibility of procreation, it also accepts couples who are infertile through no fault of their own. It does not condemn such couples, but encourages infertile married couples to have a sexual relationship. Catholic teaching does not allow fertility treatment such as IVF, but encourages adoption.

### Stability and Protection of Children

Many Christians (and others) feel that one purpose of a family is to provide a stable environment for children, who can grow up in a loving and safe environment – parents should protect their children. Many religious and some non-religious people feel that **marriage** is the basis for a stable family for children, as this shows the commitment of a couple to stay together permanently, without disrupting their children's family unit. Others will disagree, and feel that a couple does not need to be married to provide stability for children – happy cohabiting parents may provide more stability than unhappy married ones. They may also feel that different types of families, e.g. single-parent families, or separated parents who share custody of their children, can still provide a stable and safe environment for their children.

### Educating Children in a Faith

Christians may also feel that part of the purpose of a family unit is to raise children in the Christian **faith**; the Catholic Church makes the couples it **marries** promise to raise their children in the Catholic faith. The family is, therefore, important as a place for learning about God and Christianity. Most Christians also feel that it is their responsibility to educate their children in other respects and many non-religious people also see the family as important in the **moral** education and general education of children, but without the focus on religious education.

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Many Christian families get their children **baptised**, to show that they are making them as a Christian and educating them in the **faith**. Baptism also symbolises faith. As an alternative, they may dedicate their child(ren) to God, holding a service where the **sacrament** taking place, so the child(ren) can choose baptism themselves.

*'And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline of the Lord.'* (Ephesians 6:4 NRSV)

## Other Purposes of Families

- ◆ People may feel that it is a personal choice to have children, and that the family is important in fulfilling the desire of parents to have children.
- ◆ Some people feel that a purpose of having a family is so that you have children to look after you in your old age, and that families are important for this reason. Others feel that this is a selfish reason to have a family, but they may agree that families with different members often support each other.

Discuss with you what your purpose for having children is, and how your views on family life may change as you get older.

## Impact and Influence

An increasing acceptance of casual sex and the widespread acceptance of divorce has led to a divergence in the types of family which exist in twenty-first century. There has also been wider acceptance of same-sex parents, and there are now more single-parent families with children.

With people living longer, there has been increasing demand for children to look after their parents. Some do this by taking them into their homes, or living close by and helping them. Others may pay for them to be looked after in a nursing home.

## Quick Questions

1. State three types of family.
2. Describe Christian attitudes to the purposes of a family. Refer to sources of Christian wisdom and authority.

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## Christian Attitudes towards the Importance and Purpose of Marriage

The Bible contains teaching about **marriage**, and different church **denominations** have different views about marriage, which may be due to different interpretations of the Bible. For many Christians, marriage is a union of two people, which is also seen as a spiritual union in Christianity. For many Christians, marriage is a union of two heterosexual people of opposite genders, as this is how it is described in the Bible. For more liberal Christians, marriage can be seen as a commitment between two people.

### Keywords:

- ♦ **monogamous** – only having one sexual partner, and being faithful to them

### Key Concept – Fidelity

**Fidelity** basically means faithfulness. Christians aim to be, and expect their partners to be, faithful in their marriage. Fidelity in a sexual relationship generally implies that the relationship is exclusive, meaning the partners only have a sexual relationship with each other. However, fidelity also involves faithfulness – not only to do Christians aim to be faithful physically, but they aim not to be unfaithful in other ways – desire, those other than their partners. Fidelity also involves supporting one another, and remaining loyal to them (including in areas other than sex).

Fidelity as a concept is relevant to areas such as marriage, divorce, and adultery.

### Importance of Marriage

- ♦ For some Christians marriage is a **sacrament**, an important religious practice, which they believe conveys God's grace. This is taught by the Catholic Church, and some other branches of Christianity.
- ♦ All Christians believe that marriage is an important commitment, because it is a promise made to God and to another person about how someone will spend the rest of their life.
- ♦ Marriage within Christianity is **monogamous**; it is a commitment between two people to stay faithful to each other. **Fidelity** is very important within Christian marriage.
- ♦ Many Christians believe that marriage helps to maintain a stable society by providing a stable environment for children, creating a steady environment for children.
- ♦ Christians believe that marriage is a gift from God.

*'You shall not commit adultery.'* (Exodus 20:14 NRSV) [from the Ten Commandments]

*'But from the beginning of creation, "God made them male and female." "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.'* (Matthew 19:4-6)

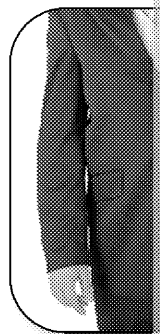
### Purposes of Marriage

- ♦ A purpose of marriage for Christians is **procreation** and raising a family. For many Christians, being married is seen as a good thing *if* you want to have a family, to provide a stable environment for children. Other Christians think that once married you *should* have a family and should actively try to have children. This is based on Bible verses such as Genesis 1:28, which tells humans to have children. This is taught by the Catholic Church, and by many other Christians, including Catholics and some more conservative Orthodox Christians or Protestants.

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- ◆ A purpose of marriage for Christians is to allow couples to express love and friendship; to care for and support each other through life. This makes marriage important because a married couple's love and friendship play a very large part in their lives.
- ◆ A purpose of marriage for many Christians is being able to have sex. Most Christians see sexual relationships as important, and not something to be entered into casually, because they see them as something which conveys love and commitment. Jesus' words in Mark 10 indicate that sex forms a bond between a couple, so sex is significant. Many Christians believe you should not have sex before marriage, or at least that long-term sexual relationships should lead to marriage, to make them official. This makes marriage important as it allows them to express their love for and commitment to their partner.
- ◆ Many Christians also think a purpose of marriage is to symbolise the relationship between God (represented by the husband) and his church (represented by the wife). Because of this; this is indicated in Ephesians 5. So marriage represents a relationship of love and authority. Some feminist Christians may not like this as it makes the man seem superior to his female partner.



A groom

*'For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church...*

### Significance of Beliefs and Teachings Reflected in a Christian Marriage

Aspects of Christian **marriage** ceremonies help to indicate and reinforce the significance of marriage. Christian marriage ceremonies also show the significance of certain Christian teachings.

- ◆ The minister in the ceremony may mention that marriage is a **sacrament**, which means that it reflects the relationship of Jesus and the church, and other aspects of the purposes of marriage.
- ◆ Marriage vows make promises to God and one's spouse – to love and to be faithful.
- ◆ Giving one's spouse a ring shows the commitment which goes with marriage. The ring symbolises that the spouse intends to be faithful to the other, and to love them.
- ◆ Those present at the wedding may make promises to support the couple.

Christian weddings show the importance to Christians of God's initial creation of relationships such as marriage, so that humans may support each other.

*And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman as one of his ribs. Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be joined to me, and they will become one flesh.' Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and is joined to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.*  
(Genesis 2:22–25 NRSV)

Because Genesis indicates that marriage was created by God, this can make marriage important for Christians – they know that it is part of God's plan for humanity. This passage also tells Christians that marriage is the correct place for sex, and the marriage ceremony is a way that marriage allows spouses to have a sexual relationship.

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Some Christian marriages will emphasise different roles of husband and wife, with the husband as the husband's helper. However, many will emphasise that husbands and wives should both support each other.

*Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.' (Genesis 2:18 NRSV)*

Christian marriage ceremonies note that marriage is a lifelong commitment, emphasising the significance of Christian teaching against divorce. The minister notes that the married couple are becoming one.

*He answered, 'Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning "male and female" and said, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh"? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.' (Matthew 19:4–6 NRSV)*

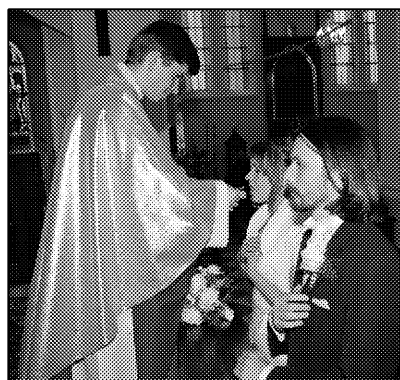
Christian marriage ceremonies will often reference the importance of procreation, as couples should have children. The minister may say that marriage is given so that the couple can have children.

*God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth with your offspring.' (Genesis 1:28 NRSV)*

## Reasons for Differences in Practice

There are many differences in Christian marriage practice.

There are some major ones, including that most Christian denominations will not conduct same-sex marriages, but some denominations, such as the Quakers and United Reformed Church, do. These denominations believe that they should not discriminate, and that anybody should be able to get married. However, many churches disagree with same-sex marriage (see reasons in the next section).



Roman Catholic couples often receive the Eucharist at their wedding.

Another major difference in marriage practice between Christian denominations is whether a church will permit remarriage. Some churches will do; however, the Catholic Church does not. A Catholic cannot be ended by divorce, and so would not be considered to be married to another. The Church of England allows someone a maximum of three marriages (after a divorce).

The Church of England is more open to marriage between Christians of different denominations than the Catholic or Orthodox churches. The Church of England is open to a Catholic to a Christian of a different denomination, but they prefer Catholics to marry other Catholics. The Church of England will marry Orthodox Christians to Christians of other denominations.

Some churches, such as the Orthodox Church, will only marry Orthodox Christians to Orthodox Christians, but if Orthodox Christians choose to marry non-Christians, they cannot marry. These restrictions are due to belief that marriage is easier if the partners have the same faith. The Orthodox Church feels that marriage, as part of the Christian faith, so should involve two Christians. The Church of England accepts that people of different faiths can marry, those of the same belief, and wants couples of different beliefs to be able to marry.

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If someone cannot get married in a particular church, they may be able to get married in a civil ceremony (e.g. in a registry office) rather than in a church.

The ceremonies of different denominations will also differ according to Church of England ceremonies will be more formal in more formal churches.

### **Impact and Influence**

Many people in Britain get married: Christians, those of other religions, and those of no religion. However, not getting married to one's partner is becoming more socially acceptable.

### **Quick Questions**

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3. Give three reasons why Christians may get married.

### **Now Try This...**

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4. Explain how Christian teachings about marriage influence Christian marriage ceremonies. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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## Same-sex Marriage

**Same-sex marriage** is a controversial issue for Christians. Some Christians see it as a problem, while others see no problem with it, and there is a whole spectrum of views in between.

### Keywords:

- ◆ **celibacy** – refraining from sexual activity
- ◆ **civil partnership** – a legal union like a marriage, and giving equivalent legal rights
- ◆ **denomination** – a particular branch within a religion, e.g. Catholicism, Anglicanism
- ◆ **homosexuality** – a sexual orientation where people are attracted to people of the same sex
- ◆ **immorality** – acting wrongly
- ◆ **natural law** – rules about morality drawn from nature and reason
- ◆ **prayer** – communication with God
- ◆ **same-sex marriage** – a legal/spiritual joining of two people of the same sex
- ◆ **sexuality** – sexual feelings and the ability and desire to have sexual relationships
- ◆ **sexual orientation** – which sex/gender someone is attracted to
- ◆ **sin** – an act against God's will

### Key Concept – Understandings of Sexuality

**Sexuality** refers to humans' sexual feelings and their ability and desire to have sexual relationships. Someone's sexuality is affected by their **sexual orientation**: whether they are attracted to people of the opposite sex/gender, **homosexual** (attracted to people of the same sex/gender), **bisexual** (attracted to people of both sexes/genders). Sexuality also involves people's sexual identity, such as if they identify as cisgender (the gender they were born as) or transgender (the opposite gender to which they were born).

In order to understand Christian beliefs about same-sex marriage, it is important to understand views on heterosexual relationships and marriage, and on homosexual relationships.

### Heterosexual and Homosexual Relationships

Christians approve of **monogamous** heterosexual relationships: relationships between a man and a woman. This is because they believe such relationships were instituted by God and because Jesus emphasised the importance of heterosexual **marriages**.

*'... the one who made them at the beginning "made them male and female", and he shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' (Matthew 19:4–6 NRSV)*

Some Christians, such as Evangelical Christians, believe that homosexuality is a **sin**. If people **pray** to God, he will help them to stop having homosexual feelings and live according to the Bible.

*'You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.'* (Leviticus 18:22)

*'We must not indulge in sexual immorality...'* (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Some other Christians believe that homosexual activity is a **sin**, but that homosexuality is not sinful if people control them and do not act on them, because their feelings are not sinful. They believe people should not have homosexual relationships, or possibly that they should have homosexual relationships.

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This is taught by the Catholic Church, and also believed by some conservative Orthodox and Protestant Christians. They believe homosexual activity is sinful because it is prohibited in the Old Testament – for example, in Leviticus – and sexual **immorality** is prohibited in some New Testament letters, and some interpret these references to include homosexual sex.

The Catholic Church is also against homosexual sex because its position is that sexual activity should be open to the possibility of **procreation**, and this is not possible with homosexual sex. This is because the Catholic Church follows **natural law** (the belief that God has revealed what is right through nature and reason) and they believe that homosexual activity is not natural for human beings – because nature shows that sexual activity is for procreation. They may also feel that it undermines the role of the *traditional* (heterosexual) nuclear family as a foundation for society.

*‘... Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, the Church has always declared that “homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.” They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life.’ (Catholic Catechism 2356)*

However, some Christians, such as more liberal Protestants, are not opposed to homosexual relationships. One reason for this is that they may feel that the commandments in the Old Testament do not need to be followed any more because Christians are not bound by the Jewish law. For example, Christians do not keep many Jewish dietary restrictions, which Jews maintain for purity or cleanliness, as Christians feel that they have Jesus’ death – they may see commandments against homosexuality as relating to the **old morality**, and so they would also be redundant in this way.

Some Christians also feel that love is more important than following rules, and that if relationships harm no one, so should not be stopped.

Furthermore, there is no record of Jesus condemning homosexuality, and he did not judge others, and did not always condemn those who had committed sins. In the case of the woman in John 8. Some Christians may feel that homosexuality is sinful, but it is not a sin against God, so it is unfair to treat homosexuals badly when no one is perfect.

*‘Or how can you say to your neighbour, “Let me take the speck out of your eye,” and not see the plank in your own eye?’ (Matthew 7:4 NRSV) [Jesus on not judging others, when you are not perfect]*

*‘Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone...’ (John 8:7) [Jesus on not judging others, when you are not perfect]*

## Interpretations of Scripture

One reason for different views on **homosexuality** is different interpretation of the Bible. Leviticus 20:13 can be interpreted in different ways:

*‘If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; their blood is upon them.’ (Leviticus 20:13 NRSV)*

Many English translations include the word ‘abomination’, which makes homosexuality a **moral** atrocity, which should be rightly condemned, and even punished. Some interpret it in such a way.

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However, some scholars have suggested that the word should actually be in the sense of mixing two things which should not be mixed – they become confused. This may sound much better initially, but if this is a better translation, this adds weight to the claim that homosexuality was prohibited due to purity rather than morality, as Jewish law was concerned with keeping everything in its proper place, and not mixing things which should be kept separate. Therefore, if this is the case, the passage can be interpreted as forbidding mixing rather than morality and, therefore, Christians do not have to worry about following Jewish purity laws.

1 Timothy 1:81–0 can also be interpreted in different ways:

*'Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it legitimately. This means understanding it not for the innocent but for the lawless and disobedient, for the godless and sinful, for those who kill their father or mother, for murderers, fornicators, sodomites, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching...'* (1 Timothy 1:81–0)

On first glance it clearly condemns homosexuality – it claims that fornicators (people who have sex outside of marriage) and sodomites (someone who has anal sex) are **sinful**.

However, it can also be interpreted in other ways.

- ◆ It is possible the fornication was regarded as such a sin because it took place with prostitutes, and sex with prostitutes was seen as polluting. This is very different from sex within a loving relationship, especially one which leads to marriage. So some Christians do not view such 'fornication' within relationships as bad because it is in a different context to the fornication emphasised in biblical passages such as 1 Corinthians 6:18.
- ◆ If fornication (sex outside of marriage) is such a sin, then if homosexuals marry, as they now can in the UK and many other countries, they would not be committing this sin.
- ◆ If sodomy is forbidden, this does not necessarily also forbid homosexual relationships which do not involve anal sex.
- ◆ There is also debate about how the word 'sodomite' is used in the Bible. It refers to someone from the place Sodom, which God condemned in the Old Testament for its refusal to help others, as the male inhabitants of Sodom wanted to rape two angels. However, other places in the Bible claim that Sodom's sin was not homosexuality but its refusal to help others. The violence and rape which the inhabitants committed, regardless of whether it was homosexual in nature. So some argue that the word 'sodomite' used negatively in the Bible, refers to these 'sins' and not to homosexuality.

*This was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, they were not to aid the poor and needy. (Ezekiel 16:49 NRSV)*

If this passage is read taking these points into account, it may not be interpreted as condemning homosexual relationships.

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## Reasons for Disapproving of Same-sex Marriage

Many Christians disagree with **same-sex (homosexual) marriage**, because they disagree with homosexuality / homosexual relationships – see above.

To reiterate, apart from a disagreement with homosexual relationships for other reasons, including teaching in the Bible, the Catholic Church disagrees with homosexual sex as it cannot produce children, and as the Catholic Church sees **procreation** as an important purpose of marriage, same-sex marriage for this reason.

Even Christians who accept homosexual relationships do not all accept same-sex marriage because they feel that marriage is a special institution for heterosexual (opposite-sex) couples, as how it was created by God and described by Jesus. They do not think human beings have the ability to change this.

*‘But from the beginning of creation, “God made them male and female.” “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” So they are no longer two but one flesh...’ (Mark 10:6–8 NRSV)*

Some also feel that if Christian **denominations** accept homosexual marriage, those who do not agree with homosexual marriage will be forced to perform such marriages in the face of such challenges.

## Reasons for Accepting Same-sex Marriage

However, some liberal Christians do accept same-sex marriages, for the reasons mentioned above regarding homosexuality in the section above. They may feel that just because marriage is defined as a union between a man and a woman, this does not mean that God intended for it to be so. Some Christian **denominations** who will practise same-sex marriage are the United Methodist Church and the Reformed Church. Some Protestant churches offer same-sex couples a blessing if they have a civil wedding (in the discretion of the minister).

## Civil Partnership

A civil partnership is an official, legal union which entitles the partners to the same rights and responsibilities as a marriage. While civil marriages are legal in many countries including the UK, a civil marriage is not the same as a civil partnership – although it is very similar. In the UK, only same-sex couples can enter into civil partnerships (since 2004).

Many Christians who disagree with same-sex marriage disagree with same-sex civil partnerships for similar reasons. Christians who support same-sex marriage are likely to support same-sex civil partnerships. Some Christians who do *not* support same-sex marriage *do* support same-sex civil partnerships – they feel that homosexuals should be entitled to the right of marriage, as marriage is a heterosexual union, given by God, and so should remain this way.

There has been opposition to the UK only allowing same-sex civil partnerships. Some couples wanting to enter a civil partnership rather than a marriage. This is because marriage is seen as an unequal institution, and many feel that even civil weddings have religious connotations – which those who are non-religious may not want. Some countries have legalised civil partnerships, including the Isle of Man and Gibraltar. These partnerships are

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UK. France also offers a Civil Partnership (PACS) to both same-sex and opposite-sex couples. While a PACS has some of the same legal benefits as a marriage, it does differ. For example, it is much easier to dissolve.

Some Christians support the introduction of an opposite-sex civil partnership, believing that all people should be entitled to choose which sort of union they enter. However, others believe that relationships should be formalised through marriage, and that the state should not provide a secular alternative. Most Christians would want to enter a marriage, rather than a civil partnership. Marriage is promoted in the Bible, and many Christians also want a religious ceremony to emphasise the spiritual importance of their marriage.

### Impact and Influence

For many years, **homosexuality** was illegal in the UK, and still is in some parts of the world, partly due to religious views. However, more liberal religious and non-religious views have become more popular, and have been reflected in the law of many countries. Same-sex marriage is legal in many countries, and has been legal in the UK (except Northern Ireland) since 2014. There is now a much more open debate about sexuality, and it is more socially acceptable to be homosexual or transgender.

### Quick Questions

5. Describe one Christian attitude towards same-sex marriage.

### Now Try This...

6. Explain why Christians have different beliefs about same-sex marriage, and identify the sources of wisdom and authority.

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## Sexual Relationships – Pre-marital sex, Cohabitation, ...

### Keywords:

- ♦ **adultery / extramarital sex** – sex where at least one of the participants is married to another person, but not the person they are having sex with
- ♦ **cohabitation** – living with a partner unmarried, often in a sexual relationship
- ♦ **open marriage** – a marriage where the partners agree they can have sex with other people
- ♦ **premarital sex** – sex before being married

### Key Concept – Ethical Modes of Relationship

An ethical mode of relationship is a type of relationship which is **moral**. (It has a similar meaning to 'model'.) As seen above, Christianity promotes **heterosexual marriage** – this is seen as moral/ethical. There is controversy about same-sex marriage – not all Christians view **homosexual** relationships as ethical modes of relationship. There are different views on what is acceptable outside of marriage for heterosexual couples. **Premarital sex**, but **cohabitation** is becoming more common, and more people are likely to oppose **adultery**.

### Premarital Sex

Many Christians believe that sexual relationships should take place only within marriage. This is the teaching of the Catholic Church, and a more conservative Christian view. The purpose of marriage is the time when men and women can be joined sexually, and teach about **immorality**, which some believe to include **premarital sex**.

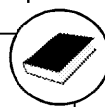
*'...the one who made them at the beginning "made them male and female", and so the man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' (Matthew 19:46– NRSV)*

*'We must not indulge in sexual immorality...' (1 Corinthians 10:31)*

*'Fornication is carnal union between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman contrary to the dignity of persons and of human sexuality which is naturally ordered to the procreation and education of children.' (Catholic Catechism 2356)*

However, some other Christians have a more relaxed view to premarital sex, especially if it is within a committed relationship. The Church of England accepts long-term, committed (heterosexual) couples having sexual relationships if this is a step towards marriage, because they see love as the most important thing; it is important for Christians to love and accept others, and important for there to be love in relationships.

*'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)*



Some more liberal Protestants do not see a problem with more casual sexual relationships before marriage (as long as they are consensual), e.g. cohabitation or a committed relationship. Jesus did not teach about sexual relationships, other than marriage, and some liberal Christians feel that their sexual life is not of particular importance, as long as they are not hurting anyone.

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## Reasons for Cohabitation

Most Christians approve of marriage, and want to get married if they meet a suitable partner, but a few may prefer the idea of **cohabitation** long-term when they do not intend to marry. A person who is not married but lives with a partner, because they feel that love and commitment are the most important things in a relationship, may view cohabitation as a step towards marriage. They may feel that it is sensible to live together before making a lifelong commitment, or that cohabitation may be easier to end than marriage. They may not afford to get married immediately – marriages can be expensive, and couples may need to save for a while. Some think that cohabiting couples still help to form a stable society and are good at raising a family.

Some feel that people can live together in just the same way without a 'piece of paper'. Some are married, and some feel that cohabiting is more sensible (long and/or short-term). Some feel that cohabitation is better because many couples split up, and having to go through a **divorce** is messy and expensive. It does not help with stability for any children involved.

Some tolerant Protestants have no problem with cohabiting couples and think that marriage is not essential. They will accept cohabiting couples working towards marriage.

## Reasons against Cohabitation

However, some Christians feel that there are valid religious and ethical objections to **cohabitation**:

- ◆ The Catholic Church and conservative Christians feel that sex should only take place within **marriage** because of biblical teaching, e.g. Jesus describing marriage as the time when a couple would be joined physically.
- ◆ Being comfortable with cohabitation may mean that couples move forward too quickly with a relationship which may then mean they get stuck in an unloving relationship for a long time, making a more difficult break-up.
- ◆ Cohabitation and sex before marriage may be a bad idea if children are born. Children born from an unstable cohabiting relationship.
  - Cohabitation where the couple have children may provide less stability. If the couple are not committed, the couple may be less committed to staying together (although they may be as committed to staying together as married ones).

## Adultery

Most Christians disapprove of **adultery**, also called **extramarital sex**, which is when a person who is married has sex with someone who is not their spouse (husband or wife). The Ten Commandments – important rules in the Old Testament which many Christians follow – include the commandment against adultery, generally seen to be the opposite of being loving. Most people would not want to be caught doing something they would not want done to them, so Christians feel it is wrong to do something they would not want done to them (The Golden Rule). Jesus also spoke out against adultery, including that desire to commit adultery is wrong.

*'You shall not commit adultery.'* (Exodus 20:14 NRSV) [from the Ten Commandments]

*'In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.'* (Matthew 22:37-40 NRSV) [The Golden Rule]

*'You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.'* (Matthew 5:27-28 NRSV)

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Many Christians will not see open marriages (where a couple is married, but can have sex with other people) as acceptable because they believe that married partners should only have sex with each other. Catholics believe in **marriage as a sacrament**, which means that marriage vows are sacred and holy, and breaking them is a sin to break what is holy.

## Celibacy

Some Christians believe that it is better to refrain from all relationships – one of the apostles, Paul, believed that it was better to be **celibate** and unmarried, to remain unmarried. Many Christians have agreed with this, and remain unmarried to commit their lives to God. Some Christians join religious orders and become monks or nuns, and in the Catholic Church, priests are required to be unmarried and celibate, as they are seen to be committed completely to God.

*'... he who marries his fiancée does well; and he who refrains from marriage does better.'  
(1 Corinthians 7:38 NRSV)*

However, heterosexual marriage is seen as the model relationship for most Christians. Christians are not expected to remain celibate for their whole lives (though some feel they should). St Paul advised that if people desired a sexual relationship then they should marry. It was clear that for married couples, sex was normal and healthy, and Christians were encouraged to be celibate during marriage (though they might want to refrain from sex to devote more time to God and **prayer**).

*But if they are not practising self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be consumed by passion. (1 Corinthians 7:9 NRSV)*

*Do not deprive one another except perhaps by agreement for a set time, to devote yourselves to prayer, then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your passions. (1 Corinthians 7:5 NRSV)*

## Impact and Influence

Cohabitation is becoming increasingly popular and increasingly socially acceptable. Changing attitudes towards relationships. Long-term cohabitation now affords couples many of the same rights, though not as many as marriage does.

Christian views on sexual relationships before and outside of **marriage** do not play a part in the law of the UK, where **premarital sex** and **adultery** are both legal. However, there is disapproval of adultery within society, and there is still some social stigma around premarital sex in conservative communities. **Celibacy** is not a popular option in the modern world.

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## Quick Questions

- Describe what is meant by celibacy.
- Outline why keeping sex within marriage is important for many Christians. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

## Contraception

Different Christians have different attitudes to **contraception** and family planning. Some Christians use different types of contraception.

### Keywords:

- ◆ **contraception** – methods which aim to stop someone becoming pregnant or prevent sexually transmitted infections
- ◆ **emergency contraception** – contraception used after sex which may prevent pregnancy
- ◆ **encyclical** – an open letter from the Pope to Catholics, instructing them
- ◆ **Humanae Vitae** – an encyclical about the importance of life and not using contraception

Some Christians, such as some Catholics, and evangelical or conservative Christians, oppose some forms of artificial **contraception**, as they believe that God created sex for the purpose of procreation. God told humans to have children when he created them, according to the Bible. The Church teaches that all sexual acts should be open to the possibility of new life. In 1968, Pope Paul VI continued the Church's stance against artificial contraception in his **encyclical** *Humanae Vitae*.

*'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth...'* (Genesis 1:28)

*"every action which, whether in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, is not ordered towards its development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to elude the law of God which is impossible" is intrinsically evil* (Catholic Catechism 2370, quoting Pope Paul VI)

The Catholic Church also disagrees with artificial contraception because of the belief that natural law is that God has shown humans what is right through nature and that humans have the ability to know how to act. Because sex naturally carries the possibility of producing children, many Catholics feel that artificial contraception goes against nature, and disobeys natural law.

However, many Christians from other **denominations**, such as many Protestant denominations, are not opposed to contraception and family planning in general, but may approve of some methods but not others. They allow artificial contraception because *there is nothing in the Bible which expressly forbids contraception*, and because they believe people should be able to plan the size of their families without having to stop having sex if they do not want more children.

Among other things, contraception:

- is likely to improve the health of women (especially in developing countries) who are constantly have children;
- improves women's social position because they can have other roles than just mother to choose;
- improves the health of children, because parents will be able to provide better care and
- improves the quality of life for children and parents because people can have more children when they are able to look after them, provide for them, and when they are healthy.

Further, in the modern world, many people believe that overpopulation can be a problem. If people want to have fewer, or no, children, this means there is more to go around. Some forms of contraception such as condoms can also prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections.

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One (natural) method of contraception which some Catholics accept is the **withdrawal method** (also referred to as Natural Family Planning), which is where couples try to have sex when the woman is less fertile, lowering the likelihood that she will become pregnant. While the possibility of procreation, it allows couples to plan their family better while still being able to conceive at any time, if God wills. Most Christian couples who approve of artificial contraception are much more likely to use artificial contraception instead, or in addition, as it is more effective.

One type of contraception which Christians who approve of artificial contraception accept is **barrier method** contraception, such as condoms. This type of contraception is acceptable because it stops sperm from reaching an egg and prevents fertilisation. Even if it fails, it in no way risks harming an embryo if conception does take place.

Some Christians also approve of **sterilisation**, where someone has minor surgery to make them unable to conceive in the future. Christians may feel this is sensible if someone wants no more children, and does not want to have to worry about contraception. Some object on the basis that Christians could feel called by God to have more children. However, some types of sterilisation can be reversed if necessary. The Catholic Church disapproves of sterilisation for the same reasons it disapproves of artificial contraception, though it accepts vasectomy as a medical treatment for other reasons; for example, removing the uterus (which is not reversible).

Many Christians are happy to use **hormonal methods** of contraception such as the contraceptive pill; hormonal methods involve using chemicals to convince the female body not to conceive, such as by stopping it releasing an egg. Some Christians, however, will not use such methods, or some such methods, if there is the small chance that if conception takes place, the hormones will also likely cause an early abortion – some Christians feel that this is murder, and murder is forbidden in the Ten Commandments (see below).



Some Christians will not use the **withdrawal method** of contraception, where the man pulls out from the woman's vagina before ejaculating semen (containing sperm), because of the teaching against this in the Bible. In Genesis 38 a man called Onan uses the withdrawal method which displeased God, but that Onan did not want to fulfil his duty to have children with his dead brother's wife to raise children for his dead brother. However, some other Christians would probably not use this method as a main method of contraception as it is not reliable.

While many Christians agree with artificial contraception, most are opposed to the **morning after pill**. This method of contraception is used after sex, and is designed to delay the ovulation or prevent the egg from being fertilised. Some people argue that certain types of emergency contraception have the potential to change the condition of the uterus, which might mean that an embryo would be destroyed – so the embryo would be destroyed. Many Christians believe that life begins when the sperm meets the egg and becomes an embryo. These people are opposed to artificial contraception in case it does destroy an embryo, which should be treated as a human life. The Bible teaches not to murder people in the Ten Commandments. Some also believe that life begins at the moment of conception.

*'You shall not murder.'* (Exodus 20:13 NRSV) [from the Ten Commandments]

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Some Christians will allow emergency contraception as being the most loving circumstances; for example, if a woman was raped.

Christians who are against contraception might argue against those who argue there is no need for contraception to stop diseases or pregnancies in unstable relationships. They might argue that sex with their lifelong **marriage** partner. However, this does not answer the question at all, even with their spouse, or those who want a reliable way of limiting the number of children they have, and of choosing when to have them.

### Impact and Influence

Contraception is freely available in the UK, but people can choose which forms to use, or not use any, depending on their personal beliefs.

### Quick Questions

9. Give three types of contraception.
10. Describe different Christian attitudes to contraception. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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## Ethics of Divorce, Annulment and Remarriage

As well as teaching about **marriage**, the Bible also teaches about **divorce**, and different **denominations** teach different positions, while different Christians have different views.

### Keywords:

- ◆ **annulment** – the cancelling of a marriage, saying it never existed
- ◆ **compassion** – showing care for others
- ◆ **divorce** – the legal ending of a marriage
- ◆ **remarriage** – where people who have been married before marry other people (not the same person again)
- ◆ **sanctity** – holy, of spiritual importance
- ◆ **separated** – where a couple remain married legally, but do not live together

### Against Divorce and Remarriage

Some Christians have very strict views when it comes to **divorce**. The Catholic Church does not allow divorce, and does not acknowledge legal divorce (so they would see a divorced person as still **married**, but **separated** from their spouse). This is because the Catholic Church sees marriage as a **sacrament** given by God, and Jesus taught that people should not separate what God had joined together – they feel that marriage vows have **sanctity**. However, **annulments** in some circumstances, which say that the marriage has never been valid by a Catholic marriage tribunal, and reasons for annulment include that the marriage was not consummated (the couple never had sex), one of the partners was not **baptised**, or one of the parties was tricked or coerced into marriage. For a Catholic to get an annulment they must first have obtained a legal divorce. However, divorce is not allowed for Catholics (when one partner leaves the other and refuses to continue with the marriage).

The Catholic Church will not **remarry** people who are divorced because they were in the first marriage, so they view it as adultery: cheating on the person's first spouse. They have to get a Catholic annulment and a legal divorce in order to be remarried in the Catholic Church. (Catholics will, however, remarry those whose spouses have died.)

The Catholic Church interprets Matthew 19:49– (and the corresponding passage in Mark) as marriage is a bond created by God, humans cannot break this through divorce. It is wrong, because it is spiritually impossible – even if someone thinks they are divorced in the eyes of God. It also interprets the passage to mean that God does not allow to divorce each other, and this is wrong. As they feel Jesus has already established that marriage is a bond, they do not interpret the end of the passage as him allowing divorce for unmarried people. This strongly disallowing remarriage for divorced people, as well as disallowing divorce.

*He answered, 'Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning "male and female" and said, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh"? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.' They said to him, 'Why then did Moses command us to give a certificate of divorce?' He said to them, 'It was because you were so hard-hearted that Moses allowed you to do this, but at the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except on the ground of adultery, and marries another commits adultery.'* (Matthew 19:48– NRSV)

*'The Lord Jesus insisted on the original intention of the Creator who willed that marriage be a permanent union. He does not abrogate the accommodations that had slipped into the old Law.'* (Catholic Catechism)

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They can refer to other passages, such as Mark 10:11–2 to claim that Jesus person's previous spouse is alive) as adultery. (If a divorced Catholic without remarry, they must get married outside of the Catholic Church.)

*He said to them, 'Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; whoever divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.'* (Mark 10:11–12)

The Catholic Church, and other **denominations**, allow married couples who do not want to down to separate – to live apart and refrain from having sex. This can be done on a temporary basis, so that the couple will get back together, or on a permanent basis. As long as the couple does not enter into a new relationship, this is seen as acceptable – the marriage vow is still intact, but the couple do not have to live in an unloving relationship.

## Reasons for Divorce and Remarrying

While some non-Catholic Christians also hold strict views on **divorce**, most do not. Many allow divorce in some circumstances. For example, moderate Protestants may allow divorce in circumstances, such as:

- ◆ if someone's spouse committed **adultery** against them;
- ◆ abused them; or
- ◆ deserted them.

In these cases, they may feel that the other person broke the **marriage** vow and that continuing the relationship with them is dangerous or practically impossible. While many do not disapprove of divorce, they feel that it implies that God does allow divorce in some circumstances. They also feel that it allows divorce and remarriage in the case that the spouse is not perfect. They also feel that it allows divorce and remarriage in the case that the spouse is unfaithful to them. Jesus appeared to accept divorce in the case of unfaithfulness.

*"It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce, so that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.'* (Matthew 5:31–32)

Moderate Protestants also believe that God forgives sins and mistakes, and so they will not only forgive divorce, but will allow **remarriage** in church for those who have had good reasons (such as those given above) for divorce. (While they feel that Matthew 19:6 shows that God is against divorce, they see it as something which God will forgive, rather than something which is not possible.) All churches will remarry someone if their spouse has died.

Divorce was much higher than in the 19th century, but it has come out (and so has the divorce rate).

*'... for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'* (Matthew 26:28 NRSV)

Remarriage is up to the individual vicar or minister, and some may not marry someone who has been divorced; did not try sufficiently hard to save a marriage, or have had more than one divorce.

More liberal Christians, such as liberal Protestants, allow divorce for many reasons. They may decide that they are no longer in love. If the couple have children, it may be better for them to divorce so that the children do not have to live with unhappy parents. Divorce can have a negative effect on their welfare. Some such **denominations** are happy to remarry someone who has previously been divorced, if they believe they are genuinely making this new relationship work.

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remarry people who have abused previous marriages if they believe they have changed (and their mistakes), and may choose to remarry those who have had several failed marriages. Some believe people always deserve another chance, and Jesus taught that you should

*‘Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against you, how many times should I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven.”’ (Matthew 18:21-22 NRSV)*

Reasons for remarriage may include:

- ◆ A divorced person falls in love again.
- ◆ A divorced person desires to have a fulfilling sexual relationship and they should marry their new partner in order for this to happen.
- ◆ Marrying a new partner may provide security for existing children.

When Christians feel that their marriages have failed, or that they are having marriage problems, not all will want to seek a divorce (or an **annulment**). Some will **separate** from their spouse (as briefly mentioned above). This usually means living separately, and means that the couple remain married, but do not live as a married couple. Also, couples who definitely plan to divorce often separate before the divorce is finalised.

There are various reasons for separating without definite, or any, plans to divorce:

- Some Christians want to make their marriage work, and hope that by separating they will be able to fix their relationship.
- Some separate as a trial divorce, to see if they really want to split up.
- Some separate because they do not believe that divorce is acceptable. They no longer wish to be with their spouse. Some Christians believe that divorce is acceptable for adultery (see above), but that separation is acceptable in circumstances such as mental or physical abuse. Separation can be a practical end to an unhappy marriage, but without breaking the marriage bond.

The passage of the Bible which deals with separation (1 Corinthians 7:10-11) commands Christians not to separate, but gives instructions in the case that they do (interpreted by some to mean that separation is wrong, like divorce, but that remarriage after separation is acceptable). The passage (which is a command) knows that some people will do it anyway, so he is making it clear that remarriage after separation is still completely unacceptable. Others feel that the passage is to be preferred, but that for those whose marriages do break down, while they do not remarry, they can live apart, either forever, or while they repair their relationship.

*To the married I give this command – not I but the Lord – that the wife should not leave her husband (as the church leaves the body of Christ, which is the church, which he has saved with his blood, to cleanse it by the word of water, by the word of the cross, to present it to himself a holy church, without stain or wrinkle or anything of the kind, that he might present it to himself in glory, without stain or wrinkle or anything of the kind). (1 Corinthians 6:12-13 NRSV)*

Not all Christians have the same perspectives on marriage, as this can be seen in the different views of the Catholic Church. Catholics may have more liberal views on divorce than the Catholic Church, but many think that their churches are too lenient with accepting divorces and allowing remarriage. Opinions on divorce may change depending on their circumstances, and so

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that people should break their marriage promises to God and their partner may still wish to get a divorce themselves if they feel that their marriage has failed.

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Christians might also argue that divorce is not only a promise to God, but also a promise to one's spouse, and allowing divorce at all, or allowing divorce for any old reason, makes people take commitment unstable society. However, while these may be reasons for taking marriage get a divorce once a relationship has broken down, those involved are likely fresh start.

Both religious and non-religious people may feel that there are negative side breaking promises to God and/or one's spouse. People who get divorced off, and may find it hard to afford living costs on their own. Children of divorce break-up emotionally tough. However, some people may feel that unhappy better for their children in the long run, as unhappy parents will also have on their children.

Many Christians allow divorce because they feel that it is the most loving thing should treat others as they would wish to be treated. They feel it is **compassion** have a second chance, because they believe that God is a loving God, who and does not want them to suffer for their mistakes.

*'In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law of love'*  
(Matthew 7:12 NRSV) [The Golden Rule]

## Impact and Influence

Divorce is becoming more socially acceptable, and most people can obtain also legal, and there is no legal limit on the number of times someone can

## Quick Questions

11. Describe what is meant by an annulment.
12. How do some Christians justify divorce and remarriage? Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

## Now Try This...

13. Explain why some Christians believe that divorcing and then remarrying is always wrong. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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## Summary for Relationships and Families

- ♦ Christians may feel that families provide a foundation for a stable society. They may feel that parents and children have different **roles**; parents raising and obeying their parents. There are many different types of families, such as nuclear families (where there are additional relatives) and extended families (where there are additional relatives). Many Christians feel that the purposes of families include **procreation**, stable children, and educating children in the **faith**.
- ♦ **Marriage** is important within Christianity. It is seen to be an important cornerstone of a stable society. Christian marriage is monogamous – fidelity is important – is entered into for purposes such as **procreation**, expressing love within a relationship because Christians believe that God intended humans to marry. The Christian beliefs about marriage. Not all Christian marriage ceremonies are the same, with differences according to **denomination**.
- ♦ Human **sexuality** is not uniform; people experience different sexual desires and attractions between sexes/genders. Heterosexuality is approved of by Christians, but not all Christians approve of **homosexual** relationships. Some object on biblical grounds, while others do not, and accept **homosexual** relationships. **Same-sex marriage** and civil partnerships are controversial in Christianity, for many of the same reasons that **homosexuality** is controversial in general.
- ♦ Different Christians have different attitudes to sexual relationships. Some feel that sexual relationships should take place within **marriage**, while others feel that some sexual activity is acceptable. Some Christians disapprove of **cohabitation**, but others accept it or have no problem with it. Most Christians disapprove of **adultery / extra-marital sex** and promotes **celibacy** before marriage, but promotes Christians marrying and having sex within marriage. However, it sees celibacy as an alternative path to marriage.
- ♦ Different Christians have different attitudes to **contraception** and family planning. Some do not use any artificial contraception, feeling that all sexual activity should be open to the possibility of **procreation** – the Catholic **encyclical Humanae Vitae** states that they might use the rhythm method as a way of limiting the likelihood of pregnancy, but not use barrier methods or sterilisation. Some will use hormonal methods, but others do not, because of the chance that they could cause a miscarriage.
- ♦ There are also different Christian positions on **divorce** and **remarriage**. The Catholic Church will not allow divorce, but will allow an **annulment** in some circumstances. The Church will not remarry those who are divorced, but may remarry those whose partner has died, or those who have had marriages annulled. Other Christians may allow divorce in limited circumstances, such as in the case of **adultery**, as Jesus appeared to allow divorce in this instance. Some are much more lenient in allowing divorce for other reasons. Churches which allow divorce may choose to allow divorced people to remarry. If people fall in love again, want to have a committed relationship, and want to provide a stable environment for children, Christians generally allow **separation**, even if they do not accept divorce.

### Now Try This...

14. 'All sexual relationships outside of heterosexual marriage are wrong.' Discuss this statement.

Argue for **and** against this statement, referring to different Christian beliefs and sources of wisdom and authority. Explain and evaluate the importance of marriage from a Christian perspective. Reach a conclusion which follows from your arguments.

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## Men and Women

## Roles of Men and Women in Christian Family Relations

Some Christians see different **roles** for men and women in the family, and in

**Keywords:**

- ◆ **complementarity** – a state of a relationship where the different people have different skills that can be used to improve the relationship, e.g. men and women complement each other
- ◆ **role** – a part or job carried out
- ◆ **equality** – not necessarily being the same, but being treated with the same respect and having the same level of authority

## Key Concept – Equality of Men and Women

**Equality** is an interesting concept – it does not necessarily mean being treated the same way, but it does mean being treated with the same respect. Most Christians today see men and women as equal – they do not think that either should be superior. This has not necessarily always been the case within Christianity, with some early Christians regarding women as inferior to men.

However, there is debate within Christianity about what is needed for equality. Some Christian **denominations** and individual Christians do not give women the same status as men, and expect men and women to fulfil specific **roles**. Many other Christians believe in treating men and women equally.

Many Christian attitudes to the **roles** of men and women in the family are based on the Bible. For example, in his letter to the Ephesians, St Paul writes that husbands are to love their wives in the same way that Jesus is the head of the Church. This indicates to some Christians that women are subordinate to, or inferior, less important, than men, and are under their authority. If men are in charge of their wives, then the husband's role in the family is to lead, and the wife's role is to follow. Note: St Paul's teaching does not suggest that husbands can abuse their power. They are to love their wives as they love themselves.

*‘Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives as the church loved Christ and gave himself up for her... In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself... Each of you, however, should love his neighbor as himself... You should respect her husband.’ (Ephesians 5:22–25, 28, 33 NIV)*

*Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, as you love your own bodies, just as you love yourself, just as the church loves itself, which it sanctifies by the word, that it may present to itself the church without stain or wrinkle or anything of the kind, that it may present itself to God in its own holiness, without stain or wrinkle or anything of the kind, that it may present itself to God in its own holiness, without stain or wrinkle or anything of the kind.* (Colossians 3:18-19 NRSV)

Some Christians also justify different roles for men and women by using Genesis 2 as a basis. As man was made before woman, this shows men to be more important, and as a helper for man, wives should serve their husbands. The woman also tempted Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, and some use this as an indicator that husbands should lead. St Paul also echoes this teaching in 1 Timothy 2.

*"Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a partner.'" (Genesis 2:18 NRSV)*

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*Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived and became a transgressor. (1 Timothy 2:11–14)*

Important women in the Bible are often important as wives and mothers; Mary is important to Christians because of her role as Jesus' mother. This may lead some Christians to feel that it is important for women to be wives and mothers, and see this as their main responsibility.

Some **denominations**, such as the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, and some conservative Protestants, feel that men and women should be complementary in their roles in the family (and elsewhere). They believe that God created men and women as different so that there could be **complementarity** in their relationship – they would support each other, and have different strengths (with women's, for example, allowing them to be submissive and good mothers).

However, some other Christians have argued that men and women should not have different roles in the family. They may disregard the teaching of St Paul in Ephesians and Colossians, which is a letter to a small group of Christians; not intended to teach Christians several centuries later. Equally, they may claim that St Paul was just a human and humans make mistakes. They may argue that what God wants for the family is not to have different roles, but to have equality. Moreover, St Paul also teaches that in Christianity there should be no distinction between man and woman (though in a spiritual rather than physical sense). Indeed, there is no record in the Gospels of Jesus saying that women should have different roles from men in the family. In Luke 10:38–42, Jesus visits a woman called Mary, who chooses to listen to him teaching rather than helping her sister Martha with her traditional female role of doing the housework.

*'But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord said to her, "Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Which is the better part, which will not be taken away from her."' (Luke 10:40–42)*

Furthermore, it can be argued that the word for 'helper' in Genesis 2 is also used on several occasions in the Old Testament to describe God, and, therefore, if a wife is her husband's helper, this in no way makes her less important than him; it would actually indicate that the role of helper is more important.

Read  
Ephesians  
to get  
the  
context

Christians who think that men and women should have different roles in the family, from wives, and fathers differing from mothers – might try to argue that biology explains these differences. They could argue that differences between men and women show that they are created to perform different roles. However, those who disagree argue that science shows that there are not many psychological differences between men and women who are created equal, and that any differences between men and women can be explained environmentally. They argue that we prepare them differently, expecting them to perform different roles.

### Quick Questions

- Describe what is meant by equality.
- Outline different Christian attitudes to the role of men and women in the family. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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# Roles of Men and Women in Christian Communities

## Keywords:

- ♦ **apostles** – Jesus' disciples who saw him after his death, who spread Christianity
- ♦ **apostolic succession** – the belief that priests in certain denominations can trace their lineage back to Jesus and his disciples and that this is important
- ♦ **laity** – those Christians who have not been ordained (most Christians)
- ♦ **ordained** – the word used to describe someone who is a member of the clergy, someone who has had training and has authority to perform services and administer sacraments

## Key Concept – Freedom of Choice and Restrictions on It

In the modern world it is generally accepted that people should have freedom of choice. People are able to do as they please. There are some general, and generally accepted, restrictions on freedom of choice. People are not free to choose to hurt others, break the law, or act in ways which damage the environment.

However, there are also other restrictions on freedom of choice. For example, in many religions, women are expected to do, or not do, certain things, they may be unable to choose. So a woman is not free to be both a Catholic and to be a priest. Some Christians are pressured into the role of motherhood. Women may accept these restrictions, or they may not. They may, for example, join a **denomination** which does allow them to be a priest.

Other than having different roles in the family, some Christians feel that women should have the same roles as men, and should not be **ordained** as priests, e.g. conservative Protestants, the Orthodox Church, and the Catholic Church. Therefore, they have different roles in worship, and they cannot have the highest level of authority, as they do not hold ultimate human authority. This is partly due to the teaching of St Paul and also due to the fact that Jesus and his 12 disciples were male. The Catholic Church's view of male priests is traditional – that Catholic priests can trace themselves back to the apostles (**apostolic succession**). The Orthodox Church does not have female priests, nor does it have them, and the belief that Jesus would have instructed his disciples to do this.

*'I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man...' (1 Timothy 2:12)*

*... women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but as the law also says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. (1 Corinthians 14:34-38)*

However, other Christians feel that it is unfair not to ordain women; they feel that women should be able to fulfil all the same roles and have the same authority as men, including being a priest. They argue that St Paul's teaching, such as 1 Timothy 2:11–12, was aimed at a few communities in the first century, and is no longer relevant – the society at the time was male-led and women were not educated – if women are educated today, then this should not apply. They may also argue that as Paul mentions women 'ask[ing] their husbands at home' when he is saying women should not speak in church, this passage refers to women not being disruptive during church, rather than speaking as part of the service.

Discuss with friends whether you think the roles of men and women in your life are filled by men or women. Do you think about your parents, teachers, or youth leaders, politicians, or religious leaders in the modern world being different from the roles of men and women in the past? Do you think this will change in the future?

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Christians in favour of female ordination can argue that Jesus' 12 disciples reflected the culture of the time, and Jesus clearly valued women becoming involved with him. The story of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:40–2). They may also argue that there were female apostles and leaders in the Early Church (see Romans 16, where Junia is mentioned) and so it is a break from the original tradition to disallow female ordination. There are many reasons to ordain women for reasons including these.

*I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae... Greet my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and so was I. (Romans 16:1, 7 NRSV)*

While this answers the question of whether women should be able to be priests in Christian communities, there are other roles which women can fulfil. The Anglican and Quakers allow women to fulfil any of the same roles as men within the church. The Orthodox Church allows women to be deacons. The early Orthodox Church was *ordaining* female deacons. This fell out of fashion, but has been revived recently. It is possible that the Orthodox Church will begin to ordain more female deacons in the future. Currently, the Orthodox Church does not have female deacons, but they have not ruled out having them in the future.

Deacons have a similar role to that of a priest. They are ordained in some denominations, and are lay (**laity**) positions in others. (In the Catholic Church, only men are ordained, hence no female deacons. In the Orthodox Church, both men and women are referred to as being ordained, although they do not have the same authority as a priest, which usually goes with ordination as a priest. The ordination ceremony for women is slightly different to that for male deacons, but many argue that they should be considered to have equal authority.) Some Christians become deacons before becoming priests/vicars, but Catholic deacons cannot become priests if married, and female Orthodox deacons cannot become priests. Deacons may have normal jobs as well as being a deacon. They can perform many of the same things as priests/vicars, including performing and/or assisting with certain **sacraments**; they cannot lead the Eucharist. Some deacons may preach. In some ways they are similar to lay preachers in other denominations.

Therefore, in the Orthodox Church, women may be said to be allowed a level of authority to perform sacraments and preach. Women in the Catholic Church are also allowed to participate in worship, such as reading the Bible and helping to distribute the Eucharist. They do not have the same authority as such.

While certain denominations and Christians feel that there are different roles for men and women in the family and in the holding of positions of authority / leading worship, women can play a similar role in the Christian community – they will help with the life of the church within their community.

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## Summary Table of the Roles of Men and Women within Different Churches

<b>Evangelical Protestants</b>	Do not allow women to be ordained or lead. Women are not allowed to perform roles which assist with worship. They often stress the authority of men over women.
<b>Catholic Church</b>	Does not allow women to be ordained or lead. Women are not allowed to assist with worship leading, e.g. reading the Gospels. They do not have the same authority as men. They may be considered in the future.
<b>Orthodox Church</b>	Does not allow women to be ordained as priests. They can be <i>ordained</i> as deacons. Women may help with worship but cannot achieve the highest levels of authority. There is allowing women a greater level of authority in the future.
<b>Church of England / Anglican Church</b>	Now allows women to have authority on an equal level with men. Ordination has been allowed since 1993, but women have not been allowed since 2014. There is a large divide between traditional Anglicans not supporting women and modern Anglicans supporting women for church leadership and worship roles.
<b>Many Protestant Churches</b>	Now allow women to have authority on an equal level with men. A favour of gender equality increased during the 20th century.
<b>Quakers</b>	Have always allowed women to have authority on an equal level with men. (They were founded in the 1600s.)

### Quick Questions

17. State three roles which someone can fulfil in a Christian community.

### Now Try This...

18. Explain why Christians have different beliefs about women performing authority in the Christian community. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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## Roles of Men and Women in the Religious Upbringing of Children

### Key Concept – Duty to Family and Community

Christians feel that they have a duty to their families – parents should love their children and children should love and obey their parents according to Ephesians 6. Look back to *Attitudes towards the Role and Purpose of the Christian Family* to get a better understanding of the roles of men and women in the family. Christians feel they have a duty to their family.

Christians also feel that they have a duty to their community. This includes their local community and also the general community. Jesus taught Christians to help others, especially the poor (see the parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25). Christians want to live by their faith, and also help when they have any issues in their lives.

Some Christians will feel that roles within family and community will vary from family to family, while others will not.

Many Christians will feel that they should raise their children as Christians. Jesus came to him when he was teaching, and many Christians see this as a model for their faith enhances their lives, and they want this for their children.

*'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs...'* (Mark 10:14 NRSV)

Both mothers and fathers are responsible for their children's upbringing as Christians. Parents will teach them about God and the Bible at home, for example by reading them Bible stories. They will aim to set them a good example. They are likely to take them to attend Sunday school and family worship. They may also encourage them to go to Christian youth groups. Parents may **baptise** their children as infants, or encourage them to get baptised when older to show their commitment to raising them as Christians / allow the child to express their own Christian commitment. Parents may send their children to a church school to help with their religious education.

In some Christian families the mother will have a larger role in the upbringing of children, including their religious education, if that family can afford it. This reflects the importance of mothers in the Bible, such as Mary, and may be seen in the way that mothers spend more time with the children. This may also be seen to fulfil the 'helpmeet' role of women in Genesis 2:18; the man may be seen as the breadwinner / primary earner, with the mother caring for the children while he works to provide for the family.

However, more liberal Christians are very likely to try to share childcare duties between both parents, if they believe that men and women should have equal roles in the family. Gender roles in society are shifting – women are not necessarily expected to be the primary carers of children – and this shift is increasingly reflected within many branches of Christianity.

Christians may feel that they should possess many of the characteristics of God. They also feel that Christianity should be a community – not only do Christians care for their own children, but they care for others as well (see 1 Peter 2:1–7).

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*Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slanders. Instead, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation – if indeed the Father's will is good. Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy people, eager to do good deeds, sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture: 'See, I am laying a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.' But for those who do not believe, 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner'... (1 Peter 2:1–7 NRSV)*

Why Features of a Christian Upbringing May Lead to or Reinforce Belief in God	Features of a Christian Upbringing that may lead to or Reinforce Belief in God
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May interest children in the Christian faith through stories and celebrations, bringing the religion to life and making it interesting/exciting.</li> <li>If children enjoy time spent in a Christian environment, they may make positive associations between this and a belief in God.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading or being read to</li> <li>Celebrating Christmas and Easter</li> <li>Attending Christian worship (e.g. Church, Sunday School, Christian Brigade)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May believe what they are told and surrounded by, and accept it as normal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having Christian parents</li> <li>Knowing other Christians</li> <li>Attending a Christian church</li> <li>Attending Sunday activities (e.g. Boy Scouts, Girl Guides)</li> <li>Being taught to pray</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children are likely to believe in God, if they believe that someone they trust has definitely experienced God.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowing people who believe in God personally</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children may feel that they have experienced God personally, if they feel him talking to them, or answering their prayers, or feel connected to God through worship.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being taught to pray</li> <li>Attending Sunday activities (e.g. Boy Scouts, Girl Guides)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children may feel that God, God's word, or people who teach about God, help them to lead their lives and give them useful guidance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being taught to pray</li> <li>Reading or being read to</li> <li>Attending Sunday activities (e.g. Boy Scouts, Girl Guides)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If children think Christian figures are a good example, they may associate this with a belief in God in a positive way.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeing Christian figures as a good example</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children may believe that they should believe in God, because they have been taught to follow rules telling them to believe in God, and they or their parents may have made promises about them growing up in the Christian faith.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being taught to follow the Ten Commandments</li> <li>Being baptised</li> </ul>

## Quick Questions

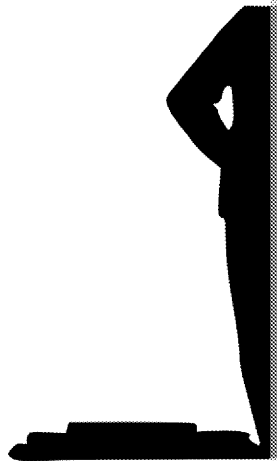
- Give three features of a Christian upbringing.
- Outline different ways that a Christian upbringing may reinforce faith in God. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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## Summary for Men and Women

- ◆ Some Christians believe that men and women should have different **roles** in the family; for example, due to passages in Ephesians and at the start of Genesis.
- ◆ Some Christians may also feel that men and women should have different roles in other respects, e.g. women should not be **ordained**. However, others feel that such biblical teaching is outdated, and that it is not loving to give men and women different roles. Men and women's roles within the Christian community often depend on their **denomination**.
- ◆ Men and women both play a part in the religious upbringing of their children, but women may play a greater part if they are doing more childcare.



## Now Try This...

21. 'Men and women should have different roles.' Discuss this statement.

Argue for **and** against this statement, referring to different Christian beliefs and sources of wisdom and authority. Explain and evaluate the importance of these roles from a Christian perspective. Reach a conclusion which follows from your arguments.

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# Christian Understandings of Equality

## Christian Teachings and Beliefs about Equality

### Key Concept – Justification of Equality

There are many justifications given for people being equal. Christians, and other religions, will argue for equality on the basis that God created humans equal and there should be equality because it is just – there is no reason to treat anyone differently; this does not seem fair. The philosopher John Rawls justified equality by saying that if he knew who they would be in the world – rich or poor, black or white, male or female – he would want there to be equality so that they were not treated badly. He argues that people should treat others equally – because you would never want to be the one who is not treated with respect.

Bear in mind, it is also possible to use religion, culture and society to try to justify inequality.

### Key Concept – Equality and Difference

There are different ways of looking at equality. One way is called being difference-blind, which means treating everyone the same, regardless of their differences. This may be acceptable in some cases, for example women who want to be treated the same as men. However, there are cases where this is not appropriate; for example someone with learning difficulties may require extra assistance. Treating people equally may require treating them differently by giving help.

Another way of looking at equality is to be difference-blind in most respects but allow for exceptions, such as giving extra help to someone with learning difficulties. These exceptions also include allowing a Muslim to wear a hijab or a Sikh to wear a turban, which is often forbidden in schools. Some Christians might argue that treating women differently (e.g. in dress) is also acceptable, as God wants men and women to be treated differently. However, this is not always seen as equal.

Christianity teaches that humans are **equal** before God. Various Bible passages talk about both men and women being created in the image of God – this means that all humans (men and women) are spiritually equal as all are created in God's image.

*So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27 NRSV)*

Jesus also taught that people should show love for others and treat everyone equally. He said that we should not treat only certain groups of people well, but treat everyone with love.

*'I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, that you also love one another.'* (John 13:34 NRSV)

*'In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the love that abides in them.'* (Matthew 7:12 NRSV) [The Golden Rule]

Jesus also taught that it was not only those who seem holy who are doing God's work. He taught the Good Samaritan Jesus teaches that a priest who avoids helping someone in need is not following God. In contrast, someone who would be looked down upon but who does help others is following God.

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God's will. This shows Christians several things, including that they should not judge people by appearance – knowing them – people they do not expect to be good people may well be good. It also shows Christians that helping others and treating them well is very important to God.

*'...Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the ditch? Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'*

The New Testament continues the theme of practical equality, with Jesus' teachings that Christians should not treat certain people better than others.

*You do well if you really fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law. (James 2:8–9 NRSV)*

The New Testament also continues the biblical theme of spiritual equality, teaching that all people are created by God and equal in his eyes.

*Then Peter began to speak to them: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, and that anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.' (Acts 10:34–35)*

*'... From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would seek him and perhaps grope for him and find him – though indeed he is not far from each one of us. (Acts 17:26–27)*

*There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; you are one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28 NRSV)*

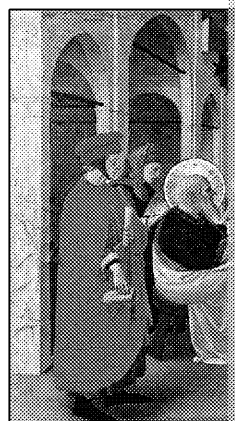
These teachings imply that Christians should believe all people are equal. This is not the case, depending on Church teaching and culture, but today many do believe in equality. However, not always treated people equally, a notable example being the slave trade. While equality have not resulted in Christians treating people equally, and also some people are overlooked and certain Christians have felt that they are superior to other Christians.

One belief which can result in some Christians feeling superior to other people is the belief that only Christians will receive salvation and go to heaven. This can result in Christians feeling they are better than non-Christians, or better than Christians who do not follow the same teachings.

## Importance of Equality for Individuals, Communities and Societies

Christians believe that equality is very important. Christians feel that it is important to treat others equally because they are following Jesus' teachings, and because implementing equality in societies and communities allows everyone to contribute to society – those treated unequally may have a lot to offer society, as with the Good Samaritan.

Being treated unequally can damage how people feel about themselves. Inequality in communities and societies is also very damaging, as it creates a divide between those who feel superior and those who feel inferior.



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who feel they are being treated unfairly. Churches speak out against inequality and call for change to make things equal.

One example of inequality being harmful is the damage which apartheid – a system of racial segregation – did in South Africa. Separation included racially segregated housing and facilities between people who were not deemed to be the same race. This took place throughout the twentieth century, but abolishing apartheid in law in the 1990s did not mean people automatically became friends and forgot what had happened.

The Christian Church, including members such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, worked to reconcile white people and black people after apartheid in South Africa. He helped set up the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* which held hearings to hear from people on both sides. The Commission wanted to discover the truth about everything which had happened during apartheid. Those who had done wrong could ask for forgiveness, and could also hear about the pain they had caused. The Commission wanted to heal the rifts between people so they could begin to treat each other as equals, rather than as inferiors or oppressors.

However, some Christians do not always feel that practical equality is important – for example if they believe that women should be treated differently.

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## Quick Questions

22. What was the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* in South Africa?

## Now Try This...

23. Explain why equality is important to Christians. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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## Influence of Culture on Attitudes and Views about Equality

### Key Concept – Relationship between Religion and Culture

The relationship between religion and culture goes two ways – culture influences religion and religion influences culture. It can be argued that many things become part of a culture in which the religion develops, and also due to the culture of place where the religion is practised (if the religion spreads further afield). For example, as Christianity developed in a patriarchal society (where Judaism and Greek and Roman culture were very influential), it influenced its patriarchal hierarchies. Furthermore, many argue that Christmas, which came to be celebrated at times already associated with pagan festivals, was able for Christianity to coexist well with the existing culture.

Culture has influenced Christianity throughout history. In its early history, the church leaders did not stop Christians from keeping slaves. Then during the transatlantic slave trade, many Christians accepted slavery because it was the norm – something that was not necessarily unacceptable. Culture has influenced Christianity more recently with regard to sexual relationships. As premarital and casual sexual relationships have become more common, the church has also become more socially acceptable, many Christians and Church denominations have become more accepting of relationships which Christianity has traditionally not accepted.

Religion also has a large influence on culture. In countries with a majority religion, laws are often based on religious principles, and so people may act on religious principles whether they are religious or not – for example, seeing it as wrong to murder or to steal. Christianity has also had an impact on homosexuality being less culturally acceptable in some countries.

Christians have also rebelled against things which are seen as culturally acceptable. William Wilberforce campaigning against the slave trade, and Martin Luther King campaigning against racial inequality in America. They have helped to make slavery and racial inequality less culturally acceptable.

There is extensive debate as to whether Christianity, or the culture it evolved in, is responsible for inequality, such as gender inequality or slavery. If culture is responsible for these, it is also debated whether Christianity should still hold its position on these, or whether it should support inequalities, even if it did not initially cause them.

### Key Concept – Embedded Inequalities

Inequalities can be embedded – set in ways which are hard to overcome. It can be argued that some inequalities are embedded biologically – men are, on average, stronger than women. Only women are able to be pregnant, and breast feed.

Biological difference can also lead to inequalities becoming embedded in culture. For example, men are expected to do the majority of childcare.

It is not just biological inequalities which are embedded in culture – racial inequalities are also embedded in culture, making it hard for people of certain ethnicities or nationalities to get certain jobs, etc. Such inequalities may not just be embedded in culture, but also in law, as in apartheid – meaning that it is illegal for certain groups of people to have certain rights.

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Inequality between the rich and poor is also often thought to be embedded in a society. It can be a lot harder for someone from a poorer background to achieve the same as someone from a more privileged background.

It may be possible to overcome embedded inequalities – many women share responsibilities with their male partners, and many people from poorer backgrounds and disadvantaged ethnicities get a good standard of education, and have successful careers and lives. However, embedded inequalities are not always easily overcome. There are laws preventing complete equality.

As seen in the section above, culture can have a large impact on attitudes and views about equality – many white South Africans felt that it was acceptable to treat black people unequally, at a time when this would have been completely unacceptable in many countries in Europe (for example). The white South Africans were used to the culture of apartheid, and so many of them did not see anything wrong with it.

Culture also plays a strong part in attitudes and views about equality with regard to gender and sexuality. In countries where it is becoming more culturally acceptable for women to focus on education and work, and to share childcare responsibility with men, this may influence people's opinions and beliefs – they may see women as equal to men because there is greater practical equality. Homosexuality becoming more culturally acceptable influences people to see homosexual relationships as equal to heterosexual ones.

Of course 'culture' is an interesting concept – it is shaped by people and their beliefs and practices. So really, when some people in a society make something more commonplace, such as being open about having homosexual relationships or approving of them, this is shaping their culture, which in turn means that others consider their opinions, and may also adapt, changing a culture further.

Of course believing that someone *is* equal to someone else, and believing that they are *practically equal* / treated equally is another thing. Because experience shows that it is still more culturally acceptable for women to do a majority of childcare (at least for young children), and it is still more culturally acceptable to be heterosexual than homosexual, many people may feel that, culturally, there is not true equality, even if they believe there should be.

Homosexuality was not legal relative to heterosexuals until the twentieth century. However, because of more social acceptance, as culture changes, homosexuality has become more acceptable in 50 years than it was 50 years ago.

### Quick Questions

24. What is meant by an embedded inequality?
25. Describe ways in which culture and religion affect each other. Refer to your own experiences of wisdom and authority.

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## Gender Equality

### Key Concept – Gender Inequalities

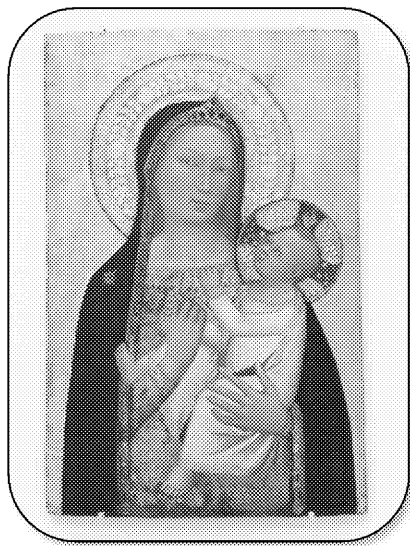
Gender inequalities have already been covered somewhat. The terms refer to a member of one gender is believed to be worth less, or treated with less respect than the other gender. Generally speaking, many gender inequalities disadvantage women (although this is not always the case).

### Keywords:

♦ **gender equality, equality** between men and women is an important issue

There are different opinions about **gender equality** within Christianity and

Those who do *not* support different **roles** for men and women in the family and church **ordination**, may feel that giving them roles based on gender does not show respect for both genders. While equality does not necessarily mean being treated the same, it does mean the same respect, many feel that if women are seen as inferior to men, or made to feel they are not allowed to be priests, they are not being treated with the same respect.



An image of Mary, Jesus' mother, with Jesus

A counterargument is that those who treat men and women differently within Christianity claim that men and women are not equal. Therefore, if men and women are given different treatment and different roles in the church, they are not equal. They argue that God created male and female for different purposes, and if humans treat them differently, they cannot be treating women unequally. For example, they feel that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is highly regarded, especially in the Catholic and Orthodox churches, and is seen as unequal to men though she is a woman.

However, Christians who feel that giving different roles makes them unequal, and who believe that men and women should be treated equally, claim that giving different roles is not in the spirit of Christianity. The teachings of the Bible are about love, and

treating men and women equally, and that they have equal roles in the family and elsewhere. Some Christians believe that men and women should be treated equally, and if he sees them as no different (Galatians 3:28), he should not treat them differently either. In Genesis 1 there is no mention of man being created first, but of them both being created at the same time in the image of God. This does not mean they have different roles, but that they are both equal. The Bible shows that Jesus had equal relationships with men and women, spoke to women and treated them kindly, such as the Samaritan woman in John 4, and the woman in Mark 7, who other Jews would not have had contact with. Many Christians believe in equality over other biblical teachings, and believe that if he supported gender equality, Jesus would have acted on his actions, including in the passage about Mary and Martha (Luke 10:40–42).

*'So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.'* (Genesis 1:27 NRSV)

*'... there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus'* (Galatians 3:28)

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Christians have also argued that biblical teaching must be understood in the context of the time it was written, and what may have been good teaching at the time, about wives not speaking in church, etc. in a male-dominated society, is out of date in the twenty-first century and is no longer relevant.

Some Christians who think men and women should be equal in the family but accept different roles, may still accept that men and women are likely to have different strengths and weaknesses. For example, men can lift heavy things, and women can breast-feed, and women can. However, they may see it as the couple's choice about how to share parenting responsibilities and an individual's choice about what they do with their time. If both parents are trying to take equal responsibility, they may expect a father to change after his child, as well as the mother, even if not all individual tasks can be done by both.

Gender equality is in many ways a relatively modern concept, which has developed over the last hundred years. It was not until the twentieth century that women began to be treated as equal to men, such as being able to vote – women such as those in the suffragette movement fought for this. The First and Second World Wars contributed to calls for female equality, as women took significant parts in contributing to the war effort and maintaining the country. Some Christian groups, such as the Quakers, were ahead of their time in promoting gender equality. Modern Christian groups have become more gender-equal in line with modern society.

### Quick Questions

26. Give three reasons a Christian might support gender equality.
27. Outline different Christian attitudes to the meaning of gender equality and refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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## Gender Prejudice and Discrimination

**Gender prejudice** is where someone thinks that women or men cannot or should not do certain things, or are different in an inferior way because of their gender. **Gender discrimination** is where gender prejudice is put into practice, and someone treats someone differently because of their gender, by not allowing them to do certain things, or making them do certain things. Those with gender prejudice often see women as inferior to men, and gender discrimination is often against women; however, it can also disadvantage men. Gender discrimination is illegal, but despite this, there is still much gender discrimination, and women especially experience it, for example in the workplace.

### Keywords:

- ♦ **prejudice** – a biased belief about someone or a group of people
- ♦ **discrimination** – treating someone differently or unfairly because of prejudice
- ♦ **gender prejudice** and **gender discrimination** are **prejudice** and **discrimination**

## Opposition to Gender Prejudice and Discrimination

As seen above, many Christians believe that Jesus treated women well, and that he was good for men and women; he died to save everyone. Moreover, some early Christians did not view men and women differently, and many Christians believe this today. **Prejudice** and **discrimination** on the basis of **gender** are wrong.

*‘... there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus’ (Galatians 3:28)*

Examples of Christian opposition to **gender prejudice and discrimination** include the Christian **denomination** the Quakers, who aim to treat men and women equally. They have allowed women to speak at Quaker meetings from the beginnings of the movement (in the 1600s), giving them equal status during worship.

Several other denominations have also allowed women to become vicars and bishops in recent years, allowing women to perform the same **roles** as men on an equal footing – not believing they should not, or preventing them, because of their gender. In the Church of England, women have been able to become priests since 1993, and bishops since 2014.

Christians have also worked against gender prejudice and discrimination in other areas outside of the church. Many Christians have worked to help the (female) victims of domestic abuse by supporting refuges. They have aimed to stop women being trafficked (moved) around the world as sex slaves, either by donating to existing charities or working with charities; some Christian charities work to end inequality against women. Some Christians have also campaigned against issues relating to discrimination against women. This is becoming more common as more women have political rights. A contemporary issue which Christians work on is the Tampon Tax – whether women should have to pay taxes on necessary sanitary products.

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## Examples of Gender Prejudice and Discrimination

However, it can also be argued that some Christians are **prejudiced** based on **gender**, and **discriminate** based on **gender**. It can be argued that this is done by Christians who think there should be, and implement, different gender **roles** in the family; and by Christian **denominations** who will not allow women to perform certain roles, such as becoming a priest in the Catholic Church (see the sections above on these issues).

Such Christians and denominations claim that the Bible provides reason for different roles; for example, Jesus' closest 12 disciples were all men, and so against women becoming priests, because this is a pattern set by God. However, such treatment of women is not *prejudiced*, because prejudice implies that without reason; they believe this is justified by God.

Christians who do believe that there are valid reasons for discriminating against women are unlikely to be able to convince non-religious people of their points of view. However, what they believe God wants, and some of the ways they discriminate are often based on biological differences which (may) exist between women and men.

There are still instances of gender discrimination in everyday British society, although on average, less than men. Other examples of gender discrimination include women expected to wear certain clothes, or given different legal rights (including different access to education) due to gender. While these *should* not occur in the UK, where they do, e.g. in some Islamic countries such as Iran, women must wear a headscarf.

## Debate

Some non-religious people and Christians will argue that **gender prejudice** is wrong; however, there are some biological differences between men and women. It is prejudiced to believe, for example, that men are generally stronger than women, or that women are generally better at something heavy, for example, because of this.

Others (Christians and non-religious people) will note that while there may be differences between women and men, people should try to avoid making generalisations or decisions based on generalisations (for example, if you want something lifted, there may be a woman stronger than the men present), in order to promote an **equal** society.

## Quick Questions

28. What is meant by gender prejudice?
29. Give three examples of gender discrimination.

## Now Try This...

30. Explain why gender discrimination is an important issue for Christians. Consider the different sources of wisdom and authority.

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## Summary for Christian Understandings of Equality

- ◆ There are many teachings about **equality** in the Bible – both expressing that all humans are equal before God, and teaching Christians to treat everyone favourably because of this. Equality is not just important to Christians because Jesus taught this, but because it can help to improve people's lives. One example of Christians working for people to view each other as equals was the Christians taking part in the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* in South Africa.
- ◆ Culture can have a great influence on religion – shaping what is seen to be acceptable, such as the position of women and different ethnicities. Religion also influences the status of homosexuals.
- ◆ Christians who feel men and women should have different **roles** may still believe in **equal** before God. Other Christians believe that giving men and women different **roles** is unequal, but that the Bible teaches that men and women are equal in God's matter, so humans should not treat them differently.
- ◆ Different Christians have different positions on **gender prejudice and discrimination**. Some Christians believe these are wrong, and many **denominations** allow men and women to have the same **roles**. Christians have also campaigned for and worked towards the end of prejudice and discrimination. However, other Christians do disagree in some ways, because they believe they should *not* carry out all the same



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### Now Try This...

31. 'Christians believe that everyone is equal.' Discuss this statement.

Argue for **and** against this statement, referring to different Christian beliefs, sources of wisdom and authority. Explain and evaluate the importance of the Christian perspective. Reach a conclusion which follows from your arguments.

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# Dialogue between Religious and Non-religious Views and Attitudes

## Challenges for Religion

In the modern world, there are many challenges to religion from **secular** culture. Society is changing. Far fewer people identify as Christian. Many people are people in Britain of non-Christian religions and no religion that Christianity has too strong an influence in public life, such as in law and in education. Opinions on what religion should have in society vary greatly.

### Keywords:

- ♦ **atheist** – someone who does not believe in God or gods
- ♦ **census** – a way of counting a population and collecting statistics about them
- ♦ **denomination** – a particular branch within a religion, e.g. Catholicism, Anglicanism
- ♦ **faith** – belief and trust in something, here in Jesus and God
- ♦ **humanist** – someone who tries to live a good life without religion

Note the differences between the terms below:

- ♦ **secular** – not religious
- ♦ **secularism** – separating religion and the state (policy becoming more secular)
- ♦ **secularisation** – society (people) becoming less religious and more secular

## Importance of Christian Religious Traditions in British Society

Christianity has had a great influence on Britain. For many people, especially Christians, this has great importance. For example, many UK laws, festivals and traditions are based on Christian tradition. Christians may find it important that laws have a Christian basis as this gives the laws justification. Many Christians also enjoy celebrating their lives, and festivals and traditions which are linked into British culture help with this. Festivals, such as Christmas, which many non-Christians celebrate, this can be seen as a way for Christians to work to share the positive aspects of their faith, such as sharing love and goodwill.

Many laws, such as laws against theft and murder, have a basis in the Bible (and Jewish) religion and values.

*You shall not murder... You shall not steal. (Exodus 20:13, 15)*

Many people respect these laws, and see them as universal – principles like these are found in many non-Christian religions, and non-religious world views.

However, there are many UK laws which have a basis in Christian tradition which some Christians disagree with. For example, until relatively recently (1967) homosexual marriage has only been legal in the UK (apart from Northern Ireland). Those who supported homosexuality or homosexual marriage being illegal included Christians, views against homosexuality. Christianity has also been used in the past, and inferior rights for women – though many Christians will claim that these are interpretations of Christianity, and that Christianity promotes fairness. Limiting euthanasia have also been influenced by Christian views that life is precious and should not be destroyed.

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However, many laws which are based on Christian teaching (e.g. banning homosexuality) have been changed, and Britain's laws are becoming less influenced by religion as Britain becomes less religious. Some secular people will argue that it is wrong for Christianity to have such influence, and it is important to remove religious influence from laws on such issues.

In the UK, Christian festivals are often celebrated (to some extent) by many people, and sometimes by people of other religions.

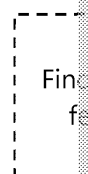
Christmas and Easter are the two largest Christian celebrations, and many people observe these whether they are Christian or not. At Christmas, people decorate their homes, and there are special events and occasions for socialising; people give presents, spend time with family and friends. Many people have an Advent Calendar – often with chocolate, and give chocolate eggs, and many people 'give something up' for Lent.

Many festivals and traditions within British culture which are not as obviously connected to Christianity do have a basis in or link to it. 'Pancake Day', for example, is a tradition in Britain – many people will observe the day by eating pancakes, in some form, at some point during the day. This does not seem particularly Christian, but it is a Christian tradition. Shrove Tuesday, as it is otherwise known, is the day before the start of Lent (which falls on a Tuesday in February or March) when Christians traditionally used up foods such as eggs and butter (for example, by making pancakes) before beginning their fast (not eating certain luxury foods) in Lent. Such traditions are an important part of British cultural life for many people.



Many other festivals have links to Christianity. Valentine's Day started out as a day to remember this saint on 14<sup>th</sup> February. Mother's Day started out as Mothering Sunday, as most churches celebrate Mothering Sunday as a celebration of mothers (as opposed to Mother's Day). However, the original meaning of Mothering Sunday was as a day when people visited their mother churches – if they had moved away they would return to worship at their mother church. Even Guy Fawkes Day / Bonfire Night / Firework Night, which is now effectively a celebration that a Catholic did not manage to blow up the Protestant monarchy! Even Halloween has Christian links – it falls on the day before All Saints' Day. So many festivals and traditions which do not seem to be Christian, or Christian-influenced!

However, as followers of other religions increase in Britain, festivals and traditions from other religions have become increasingly evident. Many people are aware of Muslims fasting during the Islamic month of Ramadan, and some schools with high numbers of Muslim pupils will close for the Muslim festivals of Eid.



It is not only religious festivals which have influenced British tradition. For example, the tradition of not eating meat on Fridays stems from the Catholic tradition to not eat meat on Fridays (and many businesses do not open on Sundays, and British shops traditionally close on Sundays, reflecting that it is the Christian holy day – when Christians believe Jesus was crucified). Christianity also influences education: many schools are Christian schools and promote Christian worship during assembly and church services. Many people disagree with the amount of influence Christianity has on British culture (see detail later).

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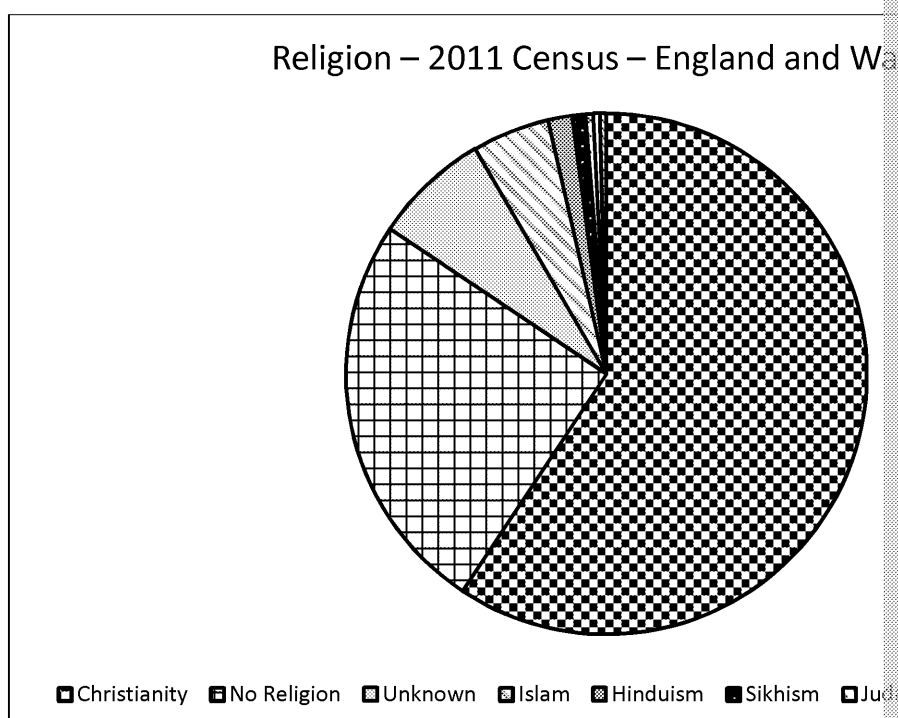
## Christianity as the Established Religion in a Country of Diverse

Britain is traditionally a Christian country. The state religion is the Church of Christianity – and approximately one million people attend Church of England. Britain does not only contain Christians, but people of many other religions. Christian religions have spread to Britain through migration and immigration (arrival of Christianity), and through the movement of ideas over various means. British people are also free to convert to different religions (or none).

In 2011 there was a **census** taken of the population in England and Wales. An option of telling the government their religion.

Here are the results of the data on religion from the 2011 census:

Christianity – 59.3%, No religion – 25.1%, Unknown (the question on religion was not asked) – 4.8%, Hinduism – 1.5%, Sikhism – 0.8%, Judaism – 0.5%, Buddhism – 0.4%, Jainism and Paganism) – 0.4%.<sup>2</sup>



So, in 2011, basically about 60% of the population was Christian, 25% was non-religious, and there was a very small percentage of other religions (though this is still a small number). Of course, some people (about 7%) did not answer, so it is worth bearing in mind the small numbers of people in all of these groups.

An interesting point to note was that the census did not find religion evenly spread. Up to about 5% of the complete population, several areas had over 20% Muslim population. The census found that many religious groups had concentrated in certain areas. That in many areas of Britain, other religious traditions are very important.

It is worth noting that while the census classed non-religious people together, they do not all have the same beliefs. Those who do not believe in God or gods are **atheists**, many, but not all, are **humanists** – they believe in promoting ethical behaviour for the benefit of humans, but base their philosophy on reason, and not religion.

<sup>1</sup> Data from <https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/facts-stats.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/articles/religionineurope>

## Key points:

- ! While numbers of Christians in Britain are decreasing, in 2011 over half of the population still identified as Christian, so it is still the majority religion and has many followers.
- ! Britain is becoming more diverse, with higher numbers of other religions, and no religion. (London is the most diverse)

**Taking it further**  
Find out how high the numbers of people with no religion are. [bbc.co.uk/news/health-12345678](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-12345678)

## The Monarch as the Supreme Governor of the Church of England

Christianity (including all **denominations**) is the majority religion of the United Kingdom. The Church of England is the majority religion in England, with the Queen (the head of state) also the head of the Church of England.

Because the Queen is both in charge of the country and the Church of England, the two are closely linked. Part of the Queen's title is 'Defender of the Faith'. However, the Queen does not want everyone to join the Church of England, or wants to stop certain beliefs – it means she protects the Church's interests, making sure that people in England have their faith. The Queen has spoken about how she wants the UK to be a country where all religions can practise their faiths – part of her Christian faith involves tolerance for everyone.

Links between the church and the Queen include:

- ◆ The Queen was crowned in church.
- ◆ Church of England vicars pledge allegiance to the Queen.
- ◆ The Queen officially appoints certain senior positions in the Church of England, such as the Archbishop of Canterbury.

## Quick Questions

1. Give three Christian traditions important in British society.
2. How do Christians influence Britain with Christianity? Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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## The Role of Religion in Public Life

Whether or not you approve, religion plays a large part in public life – officially in the UK this is mainly the Christian religion.

### Keywords:

- ♦ **Sabbath** – the Jewish holy day

### Key Concept – Equality in Society

**Equality** generally means people being treated with the same respect and the same opportunities. Often factors which affect equality of opportunity are outside of someone's control, for example their gender, sexuality or ethnicity.

There are some debates about how best to apply equality. Most people would agree that in some cases in which people should not be given equal opportunities; for example, a person with medical training should be employed as a doctor over someone without. However, not everyone takes the same approach to education. Many people argue that children at school should be given extra help, and maybe even have extra money spent on them (they should be given a shot at equal opportunities in life by being treated differently (or more help)).

Religion raises interesting questions for equality in society – if one religion is particularly prominent in public life, is this fair to other religions and those of no religion? Some people argue that so long as non-Christians are given the same rights as Christians, the dominance of Christianity is not a problem. Others feel that it is unfair, and either Christianity should not play a part in public life, or other religions and humanism should be able to play a part too.

Religion can also clash with the equality of individuals in society. Think back to the example of how women and homosexuals, for instance, may be treated/viewed differently. There can be a clash between respecting religions and treating individuals differently.

## Bishops in the House of Lords

The Houses of Parliament in the UK are made up of the House of Commons (elected Members of Parliament – MPs) and the unelected House of Lords. In general, laws must be approved by both houses, though the Lords have less influence than the Commons. The House of Lords has been seen as controversial in recent years, because it means that laws are not just being passed or blocked by those who have been democratically elected, but also by others. Several political parties are in favour of reforming the House of Lords, so that it contains at least a higher proportion of elected representatives.



The

There are currently around 800 members of the House of Lords. Currently, 27 are bishops (additional bishops or vicars may also be made Lords). They are known as the Lords Spiritual.

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Some people feel that it is good to have bishops in the House of Lords. They can be more objective as they are not tied to political parties, and that they should not be disadvantaged in society, following Jesus' teaching to love and care for all.

The bishops in the House of Lords received some positive press in 2012 when they had enough support for an amendment to a bill (law) meaning that the law could be changed but needed review by the House of Commons. Their amendment meant that it should include child benefit in a cap on benefits, meaning that families on benefits could claim money above the benefits cap to support their children. Rt Rev. John Sentamu of Leeds argued that everyone should get child benefit, and that this should not mean to give a family with children the same benefits as a family without children extra money for their offspring.

However, many people feel that it is wrong to have bishops in the House of Lords. They have been elected, give Christianity more influence over the law than other religions (there is no quota in the Lords as the bishops do), and also automatically give religion a privileged position.

Some people, including many Christians, are in favour of keeping Church of England in the House of Lords but also making sure that other branches of Christianity and other religions are represented. They feel that a religious voice in politics is beneficial, and that religious leaders can represent the interests of the public.

However, many people feel that there should be no bishops, or other religious figures specifically appointed to the House of Lords. They feel that it is wrong for religion to have such an influence on politics, in an age where many people are not religious, or do not follow the particular religion of the Church of England. Humanists UK are campaigning against there being bishops in the House of Lords because they feel that it is wrong that they are unelected and promote a particular religion, which many British people do not hold, in politics. The National Secular Society also campaigns against this, believing there should be no official religious representatives in the House of Lords because religion should not be privileged. They also argue that there should be no prayers or religious oaths in the House of Lords to fully separate religion and law.

Humanists UK  
Humanist Association  
for humanism  
promoting their views  
influence politics

The National Secular Society  
completely  
campaigns against  
as Humanist  
viewpoint

There were recent proposals to reduce the number of bishops in the House of Lords to go ahead.

### Christian Services to Mark Key Events

Church services are very common in Britain as part of key events. Obviously, they occur at celebrations such as Christmas and Easter, but they occur at other times too.

There are services for Remembrance Day in November, and the UK's national Cenotaph (an important war memorial) is religious, containing prayer and hymns.

State weddings and funerals, such as the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and the funeral of former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, are held as religious ceremonies or coronations.

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Many schools hold church services to mark the start and end of term.

On a more informal level, local council meetings may hold prayers, and many religious services, is regularly broadcast, for example *Songs of Praise*. The BBC programme is controversial for not including non-religious speakers. This inclusion and beliefs in such places has been criticised, including by the National Secular Society.

Christian services are often used to mark many personal events as well. Many practising Christians, and even those who are completely non-religious, get married in church, or have a funeral which is held in a church. Being married in a non-Christian funeral is becoming more common, but these rites of passage and associations are still very much a part of British life.

### Public Holidays Based on Christian Celebrations

Of the eight bank holidays in the UK, four are connected to Christian festivals: Good Friday, Monday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day. However, while Good Friday and Christmas Day are observance for Christians, Easter Monday and Boxing Day are not necessarily a celebration – though 26<sup>th</sup> December is also St Stephen's Day, and Boxing Day is a time for charitable giving of 'boxes' of gifts and/or leftovers at Christmas time.

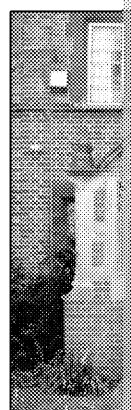
People of other religions are also free to celebrate their festivals, and though they may not get a holiday from work, many employers will respect holiday requests for those who observe religious holidays.

The Equality Act 2010 protects those who want to take holiday, or other time off, for religious reasons. Employers are not forced to give time off for religious holidays, but if they refuse, this potentially grounds for them to be prosecuted for legal discrimination. For religious days, religious people may want to take time off regularly, for example a Muslim might take a long lunch break on a Friday to go to the Mosque, and a Jew might take time off for the **Sabbath**. (Christians may also want to observe certain times, such as Lent.) If an employer can accommodate this, employees could sue for discrimination if they cannot.

### Church Schools

Many schools in the UK are church schools – 1 in 4 primary schools and 1 in 16 secondary schools are Church of England schools, with about one million students educated at these.<sup>3</sup> There are also other primary and secondary schools linked to different Christian **denominations** – there are many Catholic schools, for instance.

These schools vary in their emphasis on religion, and their emphasis on students belonging to Christianity, but there are always links to the faith. For some schools, you must prove that you attend church in order to get a place at the school. This is controversial, as often desirable schools happen to be church schools and some parents may attend church with their children just to get a place at the school, while many non-religious parents will feel it unfair if their child may end up at a church school because they cannot attend a successful church school.



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<sup>3</sup> Data from: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/facts-stats.aspx>

Most church schools will hold religious assemblies, and may hold church services at the start and/or end of term (including services for Christmas and Easter). More religious services more often – for example they may hold regular Eucharist services at the start of Lent. Sometimes these are optional and students only attend them if they wish. Schools may provide additional religious activities outside of assemblies or services on other days. Chaplains are also likely to be accessible regularly to students.

There may be more lessons allocated to religious studies than at other schools. Some schools are required to sit a full RS GCSE. Many church schools provide a full and balanced curriculum in RS classes, though there may be a heavier focus on Christianity. Faith schools may have a different curriculum – they could, for example, choose not to include lessons on human evolution. Some religious subjects for assemblies or RS classes, e.g. evolution will be covered, but creationism will not – however, some schools will have a stronger religious focus in general and may promote religious views more broadly, including teaching creationism as science.

**Note:** Any schools receiving funding from the state are not allowed to teach creationism as science, but this does not mean that it does not happen. If schools are privately funded then they have more leeway. Sex and relationships education is compulsory in the UK schooling system, but some religious schools may have exemptions. For example, Catholic schools are likely to promote abstinence before marriage and limit contraception use, where non-church schools are less likely to be subjective in their education.

Do you have a non-Christian friend who is a member of a church, school, or other religious group?

### Quick Questions

3. Give three ways religion may affect a church school.

### Now Try This...

4. Compare Christian and secular views on the place of religion in law, for example in the House of Lords. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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## Concept of Secularisation

**Secularisation** is where society becomes less religious over time – more people become **agnostics**, and those that are religious attend services less regularly, for example.

### Keywords:

- ♦ **agnostic** – someone who believes nothing can be known about whether God exists or whether God/gods exist

### Key Concept – Secularism as a Mode of Thought and Being

Many people in the modern world are secularists. This means that they believe that religion should not be involved in public life, the state and politics. It does not mean that they should not be allowed to be religious, or practise their religion, but that this should be a private matter for their own lives. They may feel that the monarch should not also be head of the church, and that the state should not be involved in law making (e.g. bishops in the House of Lords), or that there should be church schools. Secularists think that keeping religion and state separate is fair, just, and democratic, and believe that this would create a better society. Many secularists may feel that religion and the state should be separate because religion should not have influence for public life to have. However, some secularists are religious – they want religion to be separate from public life.

### Key Concept – Tolerance

Tolerance applies to religious people and non-religious people, including allowing or enduring something or someone, regardless of difference. Secularists believe that many religious people are not tolerant of those who do not have the same beliefs, and that they actively oppose something such as same-sex marriage. However, religious people may believe that secularists are not tolerant of religion in public. They might argue that a child educated in a church school, then this is their choice. **Note:** Those who are tolerant will also accept it, for example someone may be perfectly happy to both tolerate and accept the existence of different religions, seeing the diversity as positive. However, someone can tolerate something *without* truly accepting it, for example tolerating that a certain religion is in one's country while still disagreeing with it in principle.

## The Place of Religion in a Secular Society

For **secularists**, the place of religion in a **secular** society is completely the private domain. They believe what they like, and practise what they like in their own home, attend church, and associate with religious people, but laws and education, etc. should not be influenced by religion.

However, in reality though many societies are becoming increasingly secular, religion is not completely private. Religion may have less say in law making, and in prescribing what is taught in schools, but may be quite present in many ways – where religious people are in the public sphere, and where the public sphere is the public sphere.

One example of a secular society, where religion is kept out of public life is France. In France, the way in which religion is absent from public life is in a way in which it is not in the UK. Religious symbols (including religious dress) in state schools. These schools would also not have a chapel or worship facility. French state schools would not hold nativity plays.

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the public sector, e.g. the police, are also forbidden from wearing religious symbols or discussing their religion when working. The lines are more blurred in the private sector. Politicians tend to keep religious talk out of political talk. However, many Christian festivals are still celebrated and are public holidays.



Nativity scenes at schools. Would you be allowed to have one in your school?

## The Effects of Secularisation on Religion

**Secularisation** can have diverse effects on religion.

Religion may suffer in some ways, for example if fewer people attend church, then churches may have less money and end up closing. On the other hand, if being religious is becoming more acceptable, many people from religious families may become religious, and numbers of religious people may drop. On the other hand, secularisation has some benefits for religion – those who commit to a religion may be more genuine. People may also want to put pressure on others to show secular society that religion is good.

Secularisation may cause a religious backlash from the religious if they feel that their values are being challenged. People may dislike modern **secular** values. Religious extremists might protest if they dislike liberal attitudes, for example to abortion.

Secularisation can also help to liberalise the religious. For example, people who were previously believing that homosexuality is wrong for religious reasons may change their views if they are surrounded by many secular people who hold different views – they may question their beliefs and potentially change them. This sort of change can also happen in the Church of England accepts cohabiting couples, not because they suddenly start having sex outside of marriage, but because they want to be **tolerant**. These effects can be seen as positive or negative, depending on your viewpoint.

Secularisation might also help to reinforce the beliefs of already-liberal Christians. It supports a climate of investigation into the Bible, and reading it critically. This helps it to develop more fully.

An interesting effect of secularisation, which in a way impacts on religion, is that more people want to have benefits of religious organisations without the religious beliefs. Sunday Assembly started in 2013 as a secular alternative to church. There are no religious beliefs, food, and more, with the aim of building a community and helping people. It is a place to celebrate life and help others.

## The Rise of Humanism

**Humanism** is becoming increasingly popular. It is hard to back this up with statistics, but it is now more socially acceptable to be non-religious, and previously many people were **atheists** and humanists without making a big deal about it, or even admitting it. However, the percentage of non-religious people in Britain rose from 14.8% in 2001 to 25.1% in 2011,<sup>4</sup> as recorded in the **censuses**. Many of these non-religious people are humanists – they want to live good lives and help others, and for

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/articles/religioninbritain>



values without religion. Humanists UK currently has more than 60,000 members. Humanist Day, which humanists may celebrate on 21<sup>st</sup> June.

Humanists UK works for issues that it feels are important, for example it supports homosexual marriage. It states that there are four main areas which it campaigns on: schools and education (campaigning about monitoring/limiting the place of religion in the system); human rights and equality; secularism (aiming to reduce religious influence in public ethical issues (such as supporting euthanasia)).

Many religious people view humanism positively – they believe in supporting a good life and help others. However, others may view humanism negatively, trying to remove religious values from society, and impose values which they believe are better.

## Quick Questions

5. Describe what is meant by humanism.
6. Outline ways in which secularisation may affect religion. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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## Potential Clashes between Religious and Secular Values

### Secular Ethics and Values in Schools, Including in Faith Schools

Within schools, there may be clashes between the religious status of a school or teachers' individual religious beliefs and secular ethics and values.

For example, a school may promote a particular religion, through services, within religious studies lessons, and within the values of the school, but this may marginalise the beliefs of students (or teachers) of different religions or no religion.

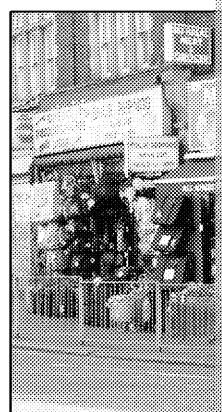
The Education Reform Act of 1988 meant schools needed to have Christian acts of worship, such as assemblies, and needed to teach Religious Education (RE) to all pupils aged 5-16 (in state schools). While other religions had to be taught, there was a focus on Christianity as the dominant religion of Britain. This clashes with secular values of giving students religious freedom, whether or not to worship, or follow a particular religion – even if schools are required to do so. If schools follow a particular religion, it could be seen as unfair influence on young people.

Faith schools may promote the life of one particular religion. Students may be encouraged to attend religious services, and, for example, to sing hymns regardless of whether they are of the promoted (e.g. Christianity) or not. One argument which faith schools often use is that if people choose a faith school, they should accept the religious ethos, including singing. However, it can be argued that people may choose a faith school because of their religious beliefs, and should not have to undergo forced religious activity to attend a school. In faith schools, decisions are often decided upon by students' parents, and a parent may believe that their children still have freedom of religion and belief (and practice) and do not have to follow what their parents believe.

Schools may promote religious attitudes about relationships, sex and contraception. In the UK, consensual sex is legal at 16, and secular ethics generally promotes allowing young people to have sex with and when, as long as it is consensual. Secular ethics also promotes the use of contraception to avoid sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy. Some schools may promote waiting until marriage for sex, or at least promote only having sex within committed relationships. Some schools may not be fully LGBT friendly, if the leadership believes that all relationships should be heterosexual. For example, some schools will not allow gay or lesbian teachers. Catholic schools may also promote an anti-contraception stance.

Other issues, such as abortion and euthanasia, may be covered mainly from religious perspectives in some schools, and in some faith schools there may be discrimination on the basis of religion or gender among staff or students.

The National Secular Society believes that ultimately there should be no faith schools, and no unfair emphasis on religion in teaching – teaching about religion should be broad and objective as with many other subjects.



Halal meat – school

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Some schools (including non-Muslim schools) have started to provide halal meat. The National Secular Society campaign against meat being sold in the UK which has led to death, and also campaign for all meat to be labelled to say whether it has been ritually slaughtered, or given fewer alternatives if meals containing meat.

Faith schools in particular may provide food in line with particular religious beliefs. Humanist values do include freedom of religious practice, and so providing halal or kosher standards, for students who have particular beliefs may be viewed as tolerant and correct by humanists (but not necessarily by

Kosher (Jewish) meat is not allowed to be stunned. Some methods of stunning are used for halal meat, and a majority of halal meat in Britain has been stunned before death. However, meat must be stunned, but Jews and Muslims are allowed exemptions.

Muslims and Jews argue that their methods of slaughter are not inhumane, and that they treat animals well. Research on whether kosher and halal methods of slaughter are less inhumane than western practice are inconclusive – some conclude that they are and others conclude that they are not.

There is controversy about halal meat being labelled as such – so that people can choose to buy it. Humanists have argued that meat is being produced by halal methods but then being sold on the market and eaten by non-Muslims, and so this could be seen as illegal, as this meat is not stunned meat being sold to non-Jews and non-Muslims.

This is complicated further by the fact that some supermarkets buy meat which has been slaughtered to halal practice (and so has been prayed over), but then do not handle it in line with halal means that they do not label it halal. This semi-halal meat is not being labelled.

## Quick Questions

7. Give three issues which may cause clashes between the religious and the secular in education.

## Now Try This...

8. How might secular and religious values clash in schools? Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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## Potential Clashes between Religion, Tradition and Sec

### Key Concepts – Freedom of Belief, Expression and Practice

In the UK people have many legally protected freedoms. These include be they choose – to hold any religion or none, and form their own opinions. what they believe and also to criticise what they do not agree with (as long as it is not hatred against others). People are also free to practise their religion, for ex

In modern society, many people feel that these freedoms are very important. Some people feel that these freedoms need limits, for example if they interrupt. Muslims be allowed to take work or school breaks at the times they believe. They clash with equality (should Christians be able to wear cross necklaces in public policy?). There can also be a very fine line between acceptable freedom of expression which is legal, but may be deemed offensive/unacceptable; and illegal expression which is hatred.

This links closely to tolerance – people may feel that these freedoms should be tolerated. Where certain freedoms are not tolerated, it is because they should not be tolerated. Where certain freedoms are not tolerated, it is because or that it *is* just not to tolerate a certain practice because it clashes with c

### Key Concept – Self-determination

**Self-determination** is the freedom to make one's own choices. **Secularism** often supports this. Religious people generally support this to a certain extent to live free and happy lives. However, they may also not support people making choices that conflict with their religious tradition. For example, religious people may not support making certain choices about marriage. They might also feel that issues of life and death, as examples, are not for humans to choose.

## Religious Teachings and Attitudes about Marriage

Many religions teach that people should wait until marriage to have sex. In Great Britain it is still completely acceptable to form relationships with who one chooses to get married if one wants. Some denominations are more strict about who one can marry (see above in the theme on *Relationships and Families*). However, some Christians do not accept same-sex relationships or marriage. The Catholic Church does not accept same-sex relationships or marriage. Some Christian denominations disapprove of it, as it is seen as destroying a union. Some people disagree with adultery.

*'But from the beginning of creation, "God made them male and female." "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.'* (Matthew 19:4-6)

*You shall not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:14 NRSV)*

In some religions, there are also strict rules about relationships before marriage. Some religions keep males and females (outside of family) groups quite separate, and so men and women do not have many non-family relationships with the opposite sex/gender before marriage. Some religions interact with members of the opposite sex, but are forbidden from touching

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family). Some only observe this for 'affectionate' touch, such as hugging and kissing, but others include any touch.

In Britain, Christian views on marriage are quite traditional. Waiting until marriage for sex is not unusual, though it may be becoming more unusual. Same-sex marriage was not legal until 2014 in England, Scotland and Wales (and is still not legal in Northern Ireland). Divorce has been legal for hundreds of years, although it has become much easier to get a divorce in the last century, including greater divorce rights for women.

However, it is perfectly legal to have premarital sex, homosexual marriage is now legal in Great Britain, and it is relatively easy to get a divorce. People of different religions are not generally segregated in society, and are expected to interact (though not in single-sex schools). This shows a clash between religion and secular law.

One, perhaps surprising, way in which religion still influences secular law is in the area of divorce. Divorce can only take place between a man and a woman – someone cannot divorce someone of the same sex under adultery (they would have to cite unreasonable behaviour). Religious beliefs also still influence social attitudes – many homosexual people have married, though many are starting to be open about this. Many people may also feel uncomfortable with divorce even if they are not religious.

## Responses to Forced, Arranged and Child Marriages

### Forced Marriage

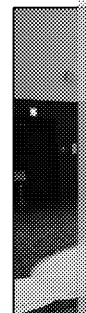
Forced marriage is where someone is coerced into being married, with physical or emotional pressure. Forcing someone to marry someone else has only been officially criminalised since 2014 in Britain. From 2007 there have been legal protections from forced marriage, but those forcing the marriage could not be prosecuted on those grounds. Forced marriage is strongly condemned by many in both the religious and non-religious communities. Christianity does not support forced marriage; neither does Islam nor any other major religions.

However, there are still hundreds of people who are forced into marriages (or into marriages) every year. Often media reports associate this with Islam, but Muhammad forbid it:

*... Ye are forbidden to inherit women against their will... (Qur'an 4:19)*

### Arranged Marriage

However, arranged marriages are not illegal. Arranged marriages are where parents find a partner for the person (their child) to marry. It may be that they find several partners to be chosen from. Arranged marriages are different from forced marriages in that they must be consented to. For some, arranged marriages are acceptable, as they provide a way of finding a partner – some feel that parents know their children best and will find a well-matched partner. Others may feel that arranged marriage is really forced marriage, as children may be pressured not to reject their parents' choice.



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Arranged marriages used to be common in the UK in the Christian community, especially among the upper classes. Consider, for example, *Pride and Prejudice*, published in 1813, a time period, where Lady Catherine de Bourgh wants to arrange a marriage for her daughter, Elizabeth Darcy. Royal marriages are often arranged – it is only becoming common for couples to choose their partners now. However, arranged marriages are now rare among the western world.

Arranged marriages are still common among some Muslim communities, as well as Orthodox Judaism and some branches of Sikhism. In some cases, arranged marriages are expected, and with others, parents may arrange a marriage if their child wishes to marry a suitable partner on their own. If someone feels forced into having an arranged marriage, it can become a forced marriage and would clash with secular law.

In the modern age, many people believe that arranged marriages will not be common anymore. Sometimes the case (as may be the case with any marriage), many couples who have arranged marriages report being happy, and some studies show similar levels of happiness as couples who choose their partners.

### Child Marriage

Child marriage is generally defined as marriage before the age of 18. Cohabitation before the age of 18 would also be counted (in terms of something campaigners against child marriage want to protect children from). Therefore, child marriage by this definition is technically not illegal in Great Britain. 16 and 17-year-olds can marry in Scotland, England and Wales, though they need parental consent in England and Wales (the general age for marriage is 18 in England and Wales). However, child marriage – as marriage below the age of 16 – is illegal. Though the UK does not permit marriage under the age of 16, some reports have shown that illegal child marriage is occurring in the UK.



Picture of the young girl who was married to her cousin, Prince Louis of Burgundy to his father, Philip the Bold.

Marriage at a younger age was traditionally permitted in society, and in many religions now condemn child marriage, or certainly marriage below puberty. The Catholic Church still allows marriage at 14 for a girl and 16 for a boy, though the Catholic Church is required to follow the legal requirements for marriage in the country they live in. Some countries allow marriage to children below 10. However, marriage below 16–18 is not allowed in many countries, including the UK, and is not allowed by many Catholics or Muslims.

Even though marriage at 18 (or 16/17) is allowed in Great Britain, it is generally not common. Most people will get married later than this. Society may find it strange when someone gets married at a younger age than this, and may feel that they are being pressured, either directly, or because of cultural expectations, to be married in order to have sex, and they want to have sex.

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## Religious Attitudes to Equality

**Equality** usually refers to being equal and/or being treated equally. To treat people equally means treating them all with the same respect and dignity, and giving them the same rights regardless of their personal situation or characteristics. In the UK, the Human Rights Act guarantees the right to equality; for example, everyone has the right to be free and not a slave; everyone has the right to vote (there are some exceptions; children cannot vote). Equal rights extend to everyone: everyone has an equal right to education, and an equal right to protection from discrimination. In the UK, everyone has protection for men and women, heterosexuals and homosexuals, for example.

Many religious and non-religious people feel that equality is a good thing. For example, the person who was enslaved or not allowed to vote, so most people want everyone to have these rights; if not because they want to be fair, because they would not want to experience inequality themselves.

However, as covered in the section on *Relationships and Families* some religions have not put equality into practice with regards to certain groups, such as women and children. Until not that long ago, the Church also supported the slave trade, and did not support equal rights. (Indeed, not all non-religious people treat everyone equally either.)

*Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was the head of the church, as his body, of which he is the head, saved the church by his blood, to cleanse it by water with the word, that he might present it to himself, a holy church without blemish. (1 Timothy 2:11-14)*

*'You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.'* (Leviticus 18:22)

Any religious attitudes which suggest that certain groups of people are not equal are in conflict with secular law which protects their equality (though not necessarily with traditional Christian views, e.g. the man as the head of the household).

However, religious teachings can also be used to back up equality for all, with secular law.

*So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27 NRSV)*

*There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; you are one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28 NRSV)*

## Potential Clashes with Equality Laws

There can be disagreement about how to apply equality laws. For example, does being treated equally mean being treated the same as everyone else, or do people need to be treated differently to be treated equally? For example, in France, a secular country, religious symbols are banned in schools, including Muslim headscarves and Sikh turbans. Some French people believe that it is important that everyone is treated in the same way. However, in the UK, Muslim headscarves and Sikh turbans are generally allowed in schools, because the UK government recognises that if someone feels that they should dress in a certain way because of their religion, it is treating them with equality to allow them to do so.

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There are disagreements about what equality must allow one to do – does it mean that all of their human rights are fulfilled, or are they still being treated unequally in social or political life? In France, many religious people would claim they cannot apply for public sector jobs if they want to wear religious symbols, even if they are not wearing them.

However, in some cases freedom of religion may conflict with equality laws. For example, a company might be allowed to only employ male priests, when normally companies could not do this. Religious people may also not be allowed to fully act on their religious beliefs if they conflict with equality laws.

### Quick Questions

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9. Describe one way in which Christianity might clash with equality laws.
10. Outline different Christian teachings about marriage and how they relate to secular law. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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## Potential Clashes between Religious Teachings and Science in Medical Ethics

### Keywords:

- ♦ **abortion** – terminating a pregnancy and ending the life of a foetus
- ♦ **euthanasia** – sometimes called mercy killing. Generally helping someone die the life of someone who is unable to make such a decision for themselves, for where it is believed they would wish this
- ♦ **genetic manipulation** – changing an organism's genetic make-up
- ♦ **person** – in philosophy, a being with certain qualities, not always the same as a human
- ♦ **quality of life** – how good one's life is; some argue that if life is 'not worth living' then it is not preserving it
- ♦ **sanctity of life** – a belief that life is sacred and/or special, implying that life should be protected

### Key Concept – The Value of Human Life

The value of human life is often judged either in terms of sanctity or quality of life.

Some people believe in the **sanctity of life** – that life is sacred, or very special, and therefore the belief that life should be protected. It is often specifically applied to human life, which implies that humans should never cause the deaths of other humans. This concept is often associated with religious perspectives, but non-religious people may use it to describe what they believe life is very important.

An argument for the sanctity of human life (based on Christian belief) might be:

- ♦ God created life and gave it to humans
- ♦ Humans are created in the image of God
  - ↳ Human life is sacred because it is given by God and created in His image
- ♦ It is wrong to destroy what is sacred
  - ↳ Humans should not destroy human life (for any reason) – supported by the prohibition to murder in the Ten Commandments

**Note:** people who believe in the sanctity of life can still have a range of views. For example some will feel that it is wrong to kill in all circumstances, whereas others will support killing for reasons such as compassion or defence – they will still feel that human life is sacred, but sometimes a/some life should be destroyed for the greater good.

The **quality of life** refers to how good it is to live a particular life – for the individual. Many people in the modern, developed world have a good quality of life, but some people may not have good lives:

- ♦ Poverty or other circumstances may deprive them of necessities such as food, shelter, and healthcare, meaning that life is very difficult.
- ♦ Illness or injury may reduce their quality of life.

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### Statements from the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches

Both the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church have spoken about potential religious teaching and scientific development in medical ethics.

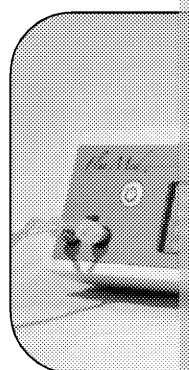
For example, ex-Archbishop Rowan Williams has said that just because something is possible, this does not make it right. This can be applied to all the issues because because the creation of life may be possible, this does not mean that it is right. The Church wants to make sure that medical actions are evaluated on whether they are right and not just done because they can be.

Pope Francis has spoken out against embryo research because of his beliefs. The Catholic Church strongly condemns **euthanasia** and **abortion**.

### Euthanasia and the Right to Die

**Euthanasia**, also known as mercy killing, is helping someone to die, or ending someone's life because they wish this to be the case, or because it is believed that they would wish this.

Some people believe that there are some situations in which allowing someone to die is the most compassionate thing to do. This may be because they are in great pain, or because they lack the ability to do anything for themselves; for instance, if they are paralysed, or for other reasons.



A medical professional

The issue of euthanasia arises when someone is unable to end their own life and therefore, needs help in order to die. Normally, killing someone is classed as murder, but some people believe that euthanasia is different because it is in the best interests of the person.

*Killing* anyone for any reason, including euthanasia, is currently illegal in the UK. This has been debated. However, some countries such as Switzerland allow it in some circumstances. Some people from the UK have travelled there for this purpose.

### Types of Euthanasia and Associated Concepts (When they may be carried out)

#### Assisted suicide

This is where someone wants to die but is unable to do so on their own. They might get a friend to help them, or a doctor might prescribe a drug so that they can take an overdose. This is called **voluntary euthanasia**.

#### Voluntary euthanasia

This is where someone asks to die, but is unable to do so on their own. They might ask a friend or medical professional to help them. This is called **voluntary euthanasia**.

#### Non-voluntary euthanasia

This is where someone is unable to ask for help, but it is felt that they are in a coma, but it is felt that they are not wishing to die. Friends and family might decide to prolong this person's life, and ask medical professionals to help them.

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**Involuntary euthanasia**

This is where people are killed against their will. The doctor believes it would be better if they were dead than the Nazis. Most people view this as morally unacceptable.

**(How they may be carried out)****Active euthanasia**

This is where someone actually kills the patient, possibly by administering a poison. This is illegal in many countries.

**Passive euthanasia**

This is where life support is removed; not killing a person in a normal state, or kill someone by giving a poison. However, breathing equipment may be removed, medicine and water may be withheld. This is legal in the UK, though there may be legal grey areas. It is acceptable to withhold food and treatment.

**Double effect**

This is sometimes associated with euthanasia. It is for a doctor to prescribe a high dosage of painkillers to a patient. These may ease pain but may also have the *additional effect* of killing the patient. So medicines which are used to treat pain are responsible for killing them.

**Do Not Resuscitate orders (DNR)**

This is where someone who is seriously ill asks doctors not to save their life; for example, after a heart attack or stroke.

**Arguments for and against Euthanasia**

Arguments sometimes given in favour of **euthanasia**:

(Not all are relevant to both **voluntary and non-voluntary**)

- ◆ People deserve *dignity*; if their life is not dignified, they should be allowed to end it on their behalf.
- ◆ People deserve *quality of life*; if they do not believe that their life is worth living, they should be allowed to end it.
- ◆ People have a *right to die*; people should be able to make their own choice to end their life.
- ◆ Keeping euthanasia illegal is *discriminatory* (in the UK – not necessarily in all countries). People who are able to commit suicide are legally able to do so. However, people with mental health problems are not, and the most pain, and the people who have the most reason to end their life.

Arguments sometimes given in opposition to euthanasia:

- ◆ **Sanctity of life** – all life is sacred and humans do not have a right to end the life of another for any reason.
- ◆ Euthanasia is *murder* – it is wrong to kill someone.
- ◆ There is a problem with *conscience* – it is wrong to expect someone to kill another, especially medical professionals who have sworn to protect life.
- ◆ It is a *slippery slope* – if euthanasia becomes legal this will make it easier to kill ill relatives murdered and it will make disabled and old people feel like they are a burden.

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- ◆ Some people might *recover* – it is possible that someone might recover from an illness which doctors thought was terminal, or that a treatment or cure might be found soon which could help the person who wants to die.

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## Christian Views

Many Christians oppose **euthanasia**, because they believe in **sanctity of life**. They believe that murder is wrong, and that euthanasia is murder. Some also believe that suffering is part of being human, including those who suffer physically and those who suffer mentally. Some believe that they are called by God to protect those who are suffering. Hospices – places where terminally ill people get care and pain relief, instead of dying. Religious passages teach that Christians should protect, rather than harm, those in need. In particular, is opposed to euthanasia. **Note:** many of these objections to euthanasia. Some forms of **passive euthanasia** – such as where the life-support of a person who has been declared brain-dead is switched off – or **DNRs** may be viewed as allowing nature to take its course.

*‘So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.’ (Genesis 1:27 NRSV)*

*‘You shall not murder.’ (Exodus 20:13 NRSV)*

*‘... if you hold back from rescuing those taken away to death, those who go staggered will say, “Not he who keeps watch over your soul know it? And will he not repay all according to his work?”’ (Proverbs 24:11–12 NRSV)*

However, some other Christians believe that euthanasia should be allowed because it is cruel to let people suffer unnecessarily. They believe that Jesus taught that we should love our neighbour as ourselves, and that in some situations, the most loving thing to do is to allow someone to die. Quakers.

*‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ (Matthew 22:39)*

## Non-religious Views and Disagreements

Surveys have shown that over 80% of the British public may support legalising euthanasia in certain cases (such as the terminally ill). Medicine has advanced so that people can live longer by taking certain medicines/drugs. However, the law against euthanasia is based on arguments against killing people (as well as the reluctance of many doctors to perform such procedures).

Euthanasia is much more of an issue in the modern western world where science has meant that a lot of severely ill people can be kept alive. Years ago, people who were severely ill would have died without the medicines available today. People in vegetative states who cannot eat naturally would have died because there was no technology to keep them alive. Now that science is able to keep many people alive, society is questioning who it should allow to die. They want to die. Humanists UK are among those calling for changes to the law. They believe that the choice to die should be someone’s own, and the government should not allow someone that they cannot end their life.

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## Abortion

**Abortion** involves ending a pregnancy and the life of a fetus. There are different reasons for getting an abortion and different attitudes to abortion.

### Reasons for Having an Abortion

There are different reasons why someone might want to have an abortion. These are reasons why an abortion may be allowed in the UK:



A young person

Reason	Examples	
The mother's life is in danger, or her health is at risk	Some pregnancies make a woman very ill, such as ectopic pregnancies where the foetus grows in the wrong place  Alternatively, someone may have a medical condition which needs treating, and the foetus would be killed by, or needs to be removed for, the treatment, e.g. chemotherapy for cancer	For people who are against abortion, this is probably the only way people would have an abortion if their health is in danger.  Some may consider this a serious and
The pregnancy or raising a child would be too difficult for the woman to cope with mentally or physically (or might endanger the wellbeing of existing children)	If the pregnancy is the result of rape, the woman might find it very hard to carry her rapist's child  Someone might have a mental illness, and would be placed under great strain to go through with a pregnancy  Someone may have several children already and be unable to afford to raise another  In the case of a teenage pregnancy it might be seen that the woman could not cope with pregnancy or raising a child	Many people consider these circumstances unfair to put a woman through, especially if the pregnancy is the result of rape, or if the woman is young or financially unstable.  Others feel that a woman should be able to cope with a pregnancy, or that she should be supported to have an adoption.
The foetus would be born with a serious disability	This could be that they will be born without a particular organ functioning properly  The foetus might have a genetic disorder, such as Down's Syndrome	Some people believe that children who are born with a low life expectancy should not be placed in the world.  Some people believe that it is not fair to make a child that many children have, and often leads to a life of suffering.  They might consider it a valuable and precious life, and not want to destroy it, or place a burden on the family.

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The UK Abortion Act 1967 allows for abortions in such circumstances if two conditions are met and the abortion is carried in an approved medical facility. If there is a physical danger to the woman (or her children), it is evaluated whether continuing with having an abortion would be better or worse for the woman's (or her children's) health.

Normally abortions are *not* allowed after 24 weeks into pregnancy, though in extreme circumstances (great risk to woman or great chance of severe disability to child).

Some countries do not allow abortion for any reason. In the Republic of Ireland, it is only allowed if there is a risk to the mother's life. Other countries allow abortion for different combinations of reasons.

Other reasons some people may want an abortion include:

- ◆ They do not want children, or do not want children now.
  - ↳ Some people view abortion as an acceptable method of birth control, while others see it as selfish and that such pregnancies should continue and the child should be born.
- ◆ Some people wish to get abortions because they desire a baby of a different gender.
  - ↳ Many people feel that this is a bad reason to have an abortion and that people should be able to choose to have children on the basis of their gender, or other reasons.
    - Gender-motivated abortion may happen in any country, but more often in countries with laws limiting the number of children people can have, which has been the case for many years. It is also more likely to happen in areas where there is a cultural preference for male children. Some people are motivated to have children for cultural or financial reasons (e.g. some people feel it is more likely to find a job with children or may see having male children as necessary if they are going to help to earn the family income), which has caused problems in some countries.

Abortion is not permitted for either of these reasons under UK law.

### Sanctity of Life

Many people (generally religious) who believe in **sanctity of life** also believe that human life is sacred. This is because if human life is sacred and no humans should destroy human life, then it follows that embryos and foetuses, because these are still believed to be created in the image of life by God. Such arguments are also likely to oppose forms of emergency contraception and extremely early termination of pregnancy, e.g. the morning after pill.

However, the sanctity of life could also be used to argue for abortion in the case of a woman at risk; because the woman's life is sacred and should be protected. This argument is strong in the case that allowing a pregnancy to continue would likely result in the death of the woman *and* the foetus, because in this case abortion would be preserving more life than not aborting.

### Quality of Life

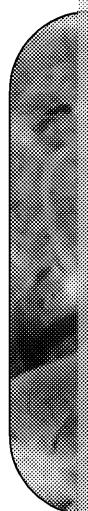
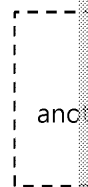
Many people have used the concept of **quality of life** to argue for **abortion**. Some people might use quality of life to argue for abortion in different scenarios.

- ◆ If a foetus is severely disabled and will not have a good quality of life, it is likely to suffer.
  - ↳ People might also argue that caring for a severely disabled child is a burden on the family of the child, reducing their quality of life.

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- ◆ A pregnancy due to rape, or one which places extreme mental strain, on a woman's quality of life, that abortion is kinder for her.
- ◆ If a woman does not have sufficient financial and other resources to care for another child, bringing another child into the world might severely diminish the quality of life for the whole family (parents, existing children and new child).
  - ✎ Some people also argue that a woman has a choice about what to do with her life and if having a child at that moment is not part of her plan then this will damage her quality of life. Some people argue that a woman should have a choice about what to do with her body from arguments about quality of life.



An image of a person's face, possibly a woman, looking down.

## Other Arguments Related to Abortion

Some people have argued that **abortion** is acceptable because a foetus is not a **person**. They do not see being a person as the same as being a human. They may believe that a foetus becomes a person at the moment of birth, for example.

Some may believe that you need to have other characteristics in order to qualify as a person with a right to life and a right not to be killed. For example: being self-aware; having language skills; having a sense of past and future. Foetuses, especially at early stages of development, do not have such characteristics. Philosophically, however, this argument could lead to a position that most people would not support: newborn babies do not have many of these 'personhood' qualities either, and most people who wish to argue for abortion to be allowed do not wish to argue that it is acceptable to kill newborn babies. So where we draw the line regarding 'who is a person?' is important.

### Pause for thought:

What makes a person? A set of characteristics? Having human DNA? Having a soul? Is someone a person from the moment of birth? Or from when they could survive on their own outside the womb?



Some people, religious and non-religious, believe in a special part of someone which is called a soul. This is often classed as the 'person' within the body. Some people believe only humans have souls, while others believe humans and animals have souls. People often believe souls are present from birth, or from some point after birth. Those who believe souls are present from conception. Those who believe souls are present in foetuses have souls may be more likely to support abortion.

Some people argue against abortion on the grounds that there are still small risks; there may be larger risks in less economically developed countries and abortion could endanger the life of a woman. Furthermore, some studies suggest that people regret having abortions, and may experience mental pain and stress. In such cases, abortion may not seem a sensible decision for a woman's health.

However, it can be argued that physical risks from abortion in countries like the UK are very small. Many disagree that evidence proves that abortion damages women's mental health.

## Christian Views

Christians usually disapprove of **abortion**, for reasons including belief in the sanctity of life. The Bible tells Christians not to murder, and many consider abortion to be murder. Some Christians believe a soul is present in a foetus from the moment of conception, which would make abortion the same as murder.

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spiritually equivalent to killing an adult. The Bible teaches that God creates people before birth (and even before conception), strengthening the belief that they should be treated like other humans and not killed. The Catholic Church does not permit an abortion procedure to be carried out, rather than where an abortion occurs as a medical treatment) in any circumstances.

*'You shall not murder.'* (Exodus 20:13 NRSV)

*For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.*  
(Psalm 139:13 NRSV)

*'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I dedicated you, O Israel.'*  
(Jeremiah 1:5 NRSV)

However, some Christians, including more liberal Protestants, will accept abortion in certain circumstances, such as if the mother's life is in danger or the pregnancy is a result of rape. They believe that the woman should also be protected and treated with love and respect.

*In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the love of God.*  
(Matthew 7:12 NRSV) The Golden Rule

The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) was founded by a group of people of all faiths and none and is not a specifically religious organisation. It believes that life starts at conception, and so abortion is like any other murder. It also opposes **euthanasia** and any other destruction of human life, such as embryo research. It claims that many people have abortions because they feel unable to financially cope or do not want more support for parents. They also raise awareness of the potential for psychological harm to those who go through with abortions, and their partners, may suffer.

### Non-religious Views and Disagreements

Many religious people are opposed to abortion, or opposed to abortion in certain circumstances. However, abortion is possible, and in the western world it is generally safe, legal and common.

Secularists believe there should be more information about abortion in schools so that young people are fully informed about their options. They do not want abortion education kept in the hands of religious schools/teachers who disapprove of abortion. Many non-religious people believe that the choice to have an abortion belongs to the woman considering it (and possibly her partner). Those who believe that embryos should have the same rights as babies or adults. It is also those who argue that women have a right over their bodies, including abortion. This is a large issue that abortion legislation is often heavily influenced by male politicians (who tend to have a higher proportion of male representatives), and this is seen as unjust discrimination.

In the abortion debate, it is important to note that arguments are often sourced from different positions. Those who value a foetus as a human being under the law do not see it as being killed, but those who do not see a foetus as a full human being do not necessarily see it as being terminated. It is also important to bear in mind that 'pro-life' and 'pro-choice' are not always used when discussing abortion, are not always helpful – there are many different views on abortion, and they are not all fully in support, or fully against.

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## Issues of Genetic Manipulation

**Genetic manipulation**, also called genetic engineering, means changing an organism's genetic make-up / DNA. This can be used to do various things – to breed larger animals, create more resilient plants, to clone animals, to alter a human's genes... The list is long.

Some uses of genetic modification are fairly easy to understand. Creating bigger plants or animals means more food, for example.

More complex uses include making vaccines, or developing animals which are closer to humans in genetic make-up so that they could potentially be used for organ transfer.

Genetic manipulation is beginning to be used for curing diseases – if a faulty gene can be replaced, this may cure, for example, Parkinson's disease. It can also be used to change genes in embryos. This raises questions about which genes should be changed – if it is possible to change anything from whether a child will inherit a particular trait.

### Christian Views

Christians are very divided on genetic manipulation. Some approve of forms of genetic manipulation which do not involve humans, e.g. modifying plants, but not modification of humans. Some approve of manipulations which will help humans, e.g. curing Parkinson's, but not those which do not directly benefit people.

Areas which Christians tend to be concerned with include experimenting on embryos – if they are seen as life which should be protected, and not experimented on – and any manipulation which could be used to produce 'designer' humans. Christians may approve of removing genes from an embryo which could cause a painful disease, but most do not feel that it would be appropriate to alter other aspects – they believe that life is given by God – people are divinely designed, not adapted by other humans. This issue is one where there is a lot of disagreement – if it becomes acceptable to alter humans in some ways, to help them with disabilities, then it might be seen as acceptable to alter them in other ways, to make them look like a particular type of person.

Conservative Christians tend to be more opposed to genetic manipulation (creation/destruction/alteration) than more liberal Christians. This may include Protestants and Catholics. Liberal Christians, such as many modern Protestants, are more likely to support genetic manipulation if they believe it is for the greater good.

### Non-religious Views and Disagreements

Many non-religious people would argue that genetic manipulation is important for improving the world, and it helps the world, and there is no reason not to try to improve it.

They may also argue that while it is possible that there should be limits on how it is used for, using it to cure diseases is not a slippery slope to 'designer' humans. They may also argue that there should be strict regulations in place.

They are also likely to feel that it is more ethical to experiment on embryos in the lab than on adult humans, and that religious people should not be able to stop this work.

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## The Creation of Life

Scientists can now modify DNA and have cloned animals. Some people believe that in the future scientists will be able to create artificial life – they have already begun this work.

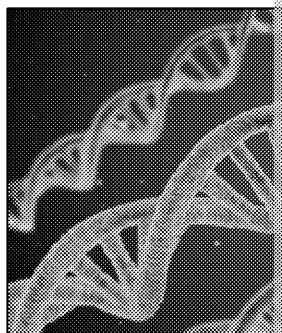
This could be used for many purposes. Scientists might be able to recreate extinct animals (like Jurassic Park, but with more recently extinct animals – dinosaur DNA is almost always recoverable). They might also be able to create synthetic human life, which could be used for many purposes, with the aim of improving medicine and medical techniques.

**Some atheists** use this to suggest that God is not necessary to create life, and that if we can create life there can be no spiritual realm; as humans would not create souls or a spiritual life.

Separately to this, scientific methods can also be used to help in the creation of life through in vitro fertilisation (IVF) where egg and sperm are joined outside the body and then implanted.

### Christian Views

Christians and other religious people may have various responses to scientists creating life. Some may feel that even if scientists can create life, this does not negate God – God had to create life so that this life (humans) could create more life. They are, therefore, not necessarily worried by the prospect that scientists may be able to replicate life. However, many also feel that scientists will not be able to create complicated life from scratch.



Some welcome the ideas of artificial 'life' – they may feel that it is acceptable to experiment on an artificial embryo – they may feel that it has the same rights as natural life.

Others feel that creating life is playing God, and is wrong. They may feel that creating human life – natural or artificial – is unethical, and being able to create life is a power that should only be used by God.

Christians have very diverse views on IVF. Some feel that IVF shows Christians that if they are not able to have children naturally the joy of having a child. The Church of England and many other churches oppose IVF and neither do many Protestant denominations. The Bible deals with the issue of being unable to have a child (for example, Samuel's mother Hannah in 1 Samuel 1) and shows a way to solve this.

However, many Christians also oppose IVF, the Catholic Church especially. The Church is concerned about the creation of embryos for contraception taking place outside of a sexual act, and is concerned about the IVF process. Generally speaking, of any embryos implanted, most will not result in a pregnancy (usually only one is implanted to increase the likelihood of a pregnancy). Also, normally many embryos are created. These will then either be destroyed, or experimented on and then discarded. The Church believes that these embryos are human life which should be protected and that the treatment is wrong.

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## Non-religious Views and Disagreements

The issues here are similar to those with genetic manipulation. Christians may oppose artificial life, because they believe all life should be protected, and because of the contrast with natural processes. Others may argue that this will benefit humanity, and that there is no need to worry about playing God.

The issues with IVF are similar to those of **abortion** – the scientific community encourages people to have children, but some Christians argue that protecting all human life is more important.

## Quick Questions

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11. Outline one Christian view about the scientific creation of life.
12. Describe Christian attitudes to euthanasia. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.
13. Describe Christian attitudes to abortion. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

## Now Try This...

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14. Explain why different ideas about sanctity of life cause clashes between religious and secular. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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## Summary for Challenges for Religion

- ♦ Christianity has a very important place in British society. It influences law (such as Christmas), and traditions (such as not shopping on Sunday). While Christianity is the main religion of Britain, there are many non-religious people, and also people of other religions, making Britain a diverse society. The monarch – the Queen – firmly unites the state, as she is head of both.
- ♦ Christianity is very present in public life. Bishops sit in the House of Lords and at national events, such as Remembrance, many public holidays are based on Christianity and many schools are Church schools, which incorporate aspects of Christianity, including holding worship, having Christian values, and teaching a lot about Christianity. Groups such as Humanists UK and the National Secular Society are working to reduce the influence of religion on public life.
- ♦ As Britain becomes **secularised**, this raises questions about the role of religion. Should religion remain completely out of public life, or should there just be more of a balance between the religious and the non-religious? Is it possible to completely remove religion from public life when there are religious people in public life? **Secularisation** can damage religion, as more people become non-religious, but it can also strengthen the faith of some. As fewer people associate as religious, many associate as **humanists** – they want to live a good life, but without religion.
- ♦ There are many clashes between religious and **secular** values in education. Religious people may want worship incorporated into education, but others do not. Religious schools may teach religious education and relationships education, but others do not. Religious schools may cater to particular religious dietary needs, some will feel that this limits choice, and this potentially poses issues for animal welfare.
- ♦ There are also clashes between religion, tradition and secular law.
  - Many religions promote certain values surrounding marriage, such as monogamy, and not getting divorced, but these are both legal in Britain.
  - Most people oppose forced marriage and child marriages, but some religions accept them. Arranged marriages are legal, and some people accept these, but others think they are still unfair.
  - Religious people may have different ideas about **equality** – some believe in equality for women or homosexuals. However, legally, women and homosexuals have equality. This can mean clashes between religion and equality laws, such as the right to marry homosexual couples.
- ♦ Religious teaching and science/medicine is also an area of difference. Not all religions approve of **euthanasia**, **abortion**, **genetic manipulation** or creating life. Some approve of some or all of these. Other people raise arguments about choice, disagreement, and argue that sometimes things are important for the greater good.



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### Now Try This...

15. 'There are some situations where euthanasia is the best thing to do.' Discuss this statement.

Argue for **and** against this statement, referring to different Christian beliefs and sources of wisdom and authority. Explain and evaluate the importance of these from a Christian perspective. Reach a conclusion which follows from your arguments.

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# Dialogue within and between Religions

There are many different attitudes of religious people towards others. Some see one's own religious group as completely wrong, but many attempt to learn from them.

## Christian Attitudes towards Each Other and towards Non-Christians

Christians have a variety of attitudes towards each other and towards non-Christians.

### Keywords:

- ♦ **ecumenism** – cooperation between different churches and different denominations
- ♦ **evangelism** – spreading the news about Jesus and trying to convert people
- ♦ **exclusivism** – the belief that there is only one correct religion and way to God
- ♦ **inclusivism** – the belief that one religion contains the most truth, but that other religions have some truth too
- ♦ **inter-faith** – between different faiths
- ♦ **intra-faith** – within one faith
- ♦ **pluralism** – the belief that many religions are ways to God, and may contain some truth

### Key Concepts – Consensus, Diversity and Uniformity

**Consensus** is a general agreement. Within Christianity there are consensus and also many disagreements. The same goes between Christianity and other religions. People reach a consensus in order to work together.

**Diversity** means that there is a range of difference. For example, there are many different churches in Christianity. Many people value diversity.

**Uniformity** means being the same. Christians are not uniform; however, some people think there should be more uniformity.

Bear these terms in mind when reading the sections below, and think whether they apply.

## Exclusivism

**Exclusivism** is the view that only one religion is right and others are wrong. Exclusivists believe that only Christianity is right, and that it is the only way to heaven. Exclusivist Christians believe that only Christians will go to heaven.

Christianity lends itself to being an exclusivist religion because of the belief in the only incarnation of God on Earth, whose death brought humanity salvation. 'God' in this sense, it makes him unique, and this unique relationship between God and humanity is supported with the New Testament. For a religion, this is a fairly large claim. For those who believe it, no other prophets or teachers compare to Jesus.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God, and he was God. He was full of grace and truth. He came in the flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only Son. (John 1:1, 14 NRSV)*

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Jesus also taught his disciples to **evangelise**, and emphasised this in the Gospel by sending out of his disciples before his ascension to heaven. In Mark's version of the Gospel, Jesus says that those who do not believe (in his disciples' message; in him), that people need to follow Christianity in order to be saved, and that no one

*'The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned.'* (Mark 16:16 NRSV)

This is also reinforced in John 14:6 which says that Jesus is the only way to God. This can be interpreted to mean that Christianity is the only way to God, and, therefore, that people need a relationship with God and be saved.

*Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'* (John 14:6 NRSV)

The exclusivist view is often held by evangelical Protestants, who often take a literalist view of the Bible and so fully believe that those who do not believe in Jesus will not be saved. They believe that non-Christians so that they can know God and be saved.

## Inclusivism

**Inclusivist** Christians on the other hand believe that Christianity is the correct religion (the only way to God), but that those who follow other religions can also know God – although they believe that they should follow Christianity because the New Testament teaches that they believe that they will have eternal life through believing in him.

*'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.'* (John 3:16 NRSV)

However, they do not feel that this rules out people coming to God, and recognise other ways (though they believe that all salvation is still due to Jesus' sacrifice). For John 14:6 means that people can only know God as Father through Jesus, but not by knowing God without believing in Jesus.

Inclusivist belief is backed up by Jesus' teachings that God is love, and that God loves everyone. Inclusivist Christians feel that God would not punish someone for following another religion if they are aiming to serve him and lead a good life. Therefore, they believe that all people can have salvation because of God's grace (and because they lived a good life – see the parable of the goats in Matthew 25 – different inclusivists will have different beliefs about how many Christians are saved).

*Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:7)*

Many inclusivist Christians also feel that as God originally spoke to humanity in the Jewish religion, Jews who follow God's commands will still be saved. Inclusivist Christians believe that Christianity does share many beliefs with religions such as Judaism, it would be wrong to say that other religions have no claim to truth, or no knowledge of God.

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. (Deuteronomy 6:4)*

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**Exclusivist** Christians might argue that although God originally revealed himself in the Jewish religion, Jews should now convert to Christianity. They can argue that although God loves everyone, he still wants them to follow him, and will punish them unless they turn to him. This can be backed up by God's apparent hatred of worshippers of other gods throughout the Old Testament, and God sending prophets so that people would follow him correctly. (They could also argue that Christianity is the correct continuation of the Jewish religion of the Old Testament, as modern-day Judaism is quite a different religion anyway, since the destruction of the Temple in the first century CE.)



An artist's impression of the Temple in Jerusalem

*You shall annihilate them – the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Jebusites – just as the LORD your God has commanded (Deuteronomy 20:17)*

Inclusivist Christians could argue that God's dislike of other religions in the Bible was because these involved idol worship, and often horrible practices such as child sacrifice. They could also argue that many of the world's religions are similar, and that Christianity, like them, worships the same God.

Christians from many denominations are inclusivist. This tends to be the view of the Anglican Churches, who believe that those of different faiths are still on path to God. Christianity is the correct faith (although the Catholic Church was traditionally exclusivist). Catholic theologian Karl Rahner coined the phrase 'anonymous Christians' to describe people of other faiths – he felt they were following Jesus, but without knowing it. Some Christians are inclusivist in their description and is liberal in not excluding non-Christians from salvation. However, this label is patronising as it could be taken as devaluing other faiths in the process.

## Pluralism

**Pluralism** is the view that there are many paths to God, and that different religions may contain equal religious truth, or at least that one is not much more right than others. This is not a particularly common Christian position, but is held by some liberal Christians.

If you are a pluralist, you would hold that all religions are equally valid.

One Bible quote which can be used to support this is John 14:2, in which Jesus is talking about heaven. Whether it is translated that he is saying that there are many houses or rooms, some people have interpreted this to mean that there is space for all different religions (and perhaps that there are different versions of heaven). This quote can also be used to support an **inclusivist** view.

*'In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places...'* (John 14:2)

**Exclusivist** Christians could easily argue that this is a lot to interpret from what Jesus was talking to his disciples at the time, it could also be interpreted to mean that there are many people – this may not refer to people of different religions.

Exclusivists and inclusivists can also argue that many religions appear to contradict each other. For example, Islam teaches that Muhammad was the final prophet, and that Jesus was a false prophet.

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hand, (most) Christians feel that Jesus ended the line of official prophets and was God. There is a strong argument that Christians and Muslims cannot both be right in their beliefs about these issues, even if they agree on many other things. Therefore, exclusivists and inclusivists would argue that one religion must be more right.

Pluralists attempt to see past these differences, and may argue that much religion is human interpretation of God, rather than experiencing God directly. Disagreements in religion arise from humans' limited capability to understand the divine, and disagreements between different religions, who have interpreted the divine differently. Pluralists believe that religious experience, and the way it is reported, is shaped by culture. Therefore, religions should compare areas of similarity, and these are most likely to be areas of similarity. There may be misinterpretations of God – and there may be different misinterpretations. This view also makes sense of why there are many religions. Otherwise, if one religion is the only true one, it is easier to come to the conclusion that other religions are completely made up. While some exclusivists believe that religions other than their own are made up, many inclusivists would find this view more acceptable. They would not want to be this rude about other religions. However, it can be more difficult to argue that all religions are valid in some ways but imperfect when you are arguing that one religion is the only true one to some people.

**Note:** Religious pluralism is also used to describe societies where there are many different beliefs.

### **Ecumenism and Intra-faith Communication**

While it may seem that whatever Christians believe about other religions, they will have a better relationship within Christianity, this is often not the case. There are vast areas of difference within Christianity. For starters, the Catholic Church emphasises the authority of the Pope and priests; Protestants reject this, and many believe that the Bible is the ultimate authority on God (e.g. Methodists). Some Protestants, such as Pentecostals and Quakers, feel that the Holy Spirit is the ultimate authority. There are also many other different beliefs and practices within different denominations. Christians, as everyone is different and has different beliefs about their religion, serve God – you will have studied some of these differences elsewhere.

Therefore, because there are differences between denominations, it is important to have communication so that Christians maintain good relationships with each other and work together for things which are important to all of them.

As covered in *Course Companion for Christianity (Beliefs, Teachings and Practices)*, part in **ecumenism** – ecumenism can involve intra-faith dialogue in different ways. Joint activities promotes dialogue between Christians of different denominations so that they build healthy relationships. Some activities will promote more communication, for example ecumenical house groups or Bible studies allow Christians of different denominations to share ideas and beliefs and see what others think. This can make them more tolerant and help them to consider views they had not previously thought about, and promote understanding. Discussing religious matters with Christians of other denominations promotes cohesion, and make Christians feel part of one religion, rather than only feel part of a particular group within it.

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Intra-faith dialogue also takes place on more official levels, with senior members of different denominations meeting to discuss important issues, with the aim of working towards common Christian goals, such as peace and helping the poor. For example, the World Council of Churches is an ecumenical organisation made up of many of the main Christian denominations. They work together and feel united within their religion.

The Catholic Church is not a member of the World Council of Churches, though it does interact with it. Unlike many (though not all) other Christian denominations, the Catholic Church has traditionally presented the view that it is the correct branch of Christianity, and that other forms of Christianity, though not invalid, are not the best paths to God.

However, the Catholic Church has been working more closely with other denominations in recent years. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and Pope Francis have met on several occasions to talk and build the relationship between the Catholic and Anglican Churches. The two want to work on areas of similarity so that the different denominations can be as united as possible. The Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission has existed since the mid-1960s, to promote theological dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches. The International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission was set up in 2012 and works on cooperation between the Churches.

Also, in 1965, the Catholic and Orthodox Churches nullified the excommunications of each other which had occurred in 1054 CE. Although this does not mean that they have fully reunited, it does show that the Catholic Church wants to show a willingness to work with other Churches and work with them.

## Inter-faith Dialogue

**Inter-faith** dialogue is also being taken seriously in the modern world. Many Christians want to have a good relationship with those of other religions, recognising that many have similar goals and beliefs. With increasing **secularisation**, there may also be more motivation for inter-faith dialogue, as Christians may look for support from other faith communities when campaigning about religious issues. Many Christians also learn from other religions, from their values, their methods of understanding scripture, and their worship.

Inter-religious dialogue has often been most apparent in the media at times of crisis. For example, after the 2015 Paris attacks, many Muslims attended a Catholic mass in France in July 2016 when two terrorists, who were part of the Islamic State, murdered a Catholic priest. The Muslim community was united with the Catholic community and condemned terrorist actions. Equally, when the London Bridge attacks occurred in June 2017, leading to the deaths of several people, many Christians joined to show solidarity.

The Catholic Church showed its stance on inter-faith dialogue in the 1990s with the document *Ut Unum Sint* – the Mission of the Redeemer. It stated that although the Catholic Church is the correct religion, God can be found in other religions, and the Church can learn from other religions while also engaging in dialogue with other religions. The document states that all humans are created in the image of God, and so should be respected, and that dialogue is important.

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The Church of England also promotes a positive stance on inter-faith dialogue in its document *Sharing the Gospel of Salvation*. The Church of England holds a positive view of other religions – all are made in God's image and should be treated with respect. It has benefited from ideas from other religions and philosophies and that Christians in Britain, live in a multi-faith society, and so need to interact with those of other faiths. It recognises that all (theistic) religious believers have the aim of having a relationship with God, and there should be dialogue which respects common aims.

The Churches Together movement works for inter-faith dialogue, encouraging Christians to understand other faiths and pray for them.

Inter-faith dialogue is particularly important for Christianity, as Christians (including the Church of England) are still trying to evangelise, including evangelising people of other religions – engaging in inter-faith dialogue at the same time helps to build relationships with other religions, who may not be best pleased with Christians trying to convert them. It is not as disrespectful. Both **intra-faith** and inter-faith dialogue are examples of putting Christian teachings into practice and loving their neighbour, aiming for understanding.

*He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it, to love your neighbour as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*  
(Matthew 22:37–40 NRSV)

## Importance of Inter-faith Dialogue in Twenty-first Century Britain

**Inter-faith** dialogue is important in twenty-first-century Britain for many reasons. Some of the issues dealt with above, but they include:

- ◆ Different religions often share goals and beliefs and can work together.
- ◆ Different religions can learn from each other.
- ◆ Most religions believe that all humans have worth. Dialogue between different religions can help to build relationships.
- ◆ People of different religions often have to interact with each other, and so need to work together.

A point of particular importance in twenty-first-century Britain is that racism is still a problem. This can be due to a number of factors, including that some people are seen as 'foreign' because many foreign people in the country taking jobs and services, and that some people are linked to certain religions and beliefs.

Those of non-Christian religions are often perceived as foreign, even if they are British. Certain religious beliefs may be associated with terrorism.

It is important for religions to stand together to prevent intolerance, as if religions can show that they support each other and that acts of terrorism are not representative of their faith, they may help society to become more **tolerant** of difference, and be more united.

## Quick Questions

16. Why might a Christian be an exclusivist?

## Now Try This...

17. Explain the importance of Christian beliefs about whether other religions are valid. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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## The Relationship between Religion and Wider Society

Religion has an impact within society regardless of whether it has a place in

### Keywords:

- ♦ **proselytisation** – the act of converting someone to one's religion

### Key Concepts – Freedom of Choice and Freedom of Expression

Freedom of choice is quite self-explanatory – people have a right to choose what to believe, and choosing how to act (as long as this is within the law). Some might argue that if there is true freedom of choice then religion should not be linked to national identity, as this may make it feel that if you are a certain national identity you must follow the associated religion. Some people will argue that **proselytising** is wrong, as people have a right to choose what they believe and not have other religions forced on them.

Freedom of expression has been covered earlier. Freedom of expression is a different direction to freedom of choice. People might argue that people should be free to express their religious beliefs, and also free to link this to their national identity. Therefore, people should be free to proselytise, as they are free to say what they want. However, people have a choice whether to convert or not.

## Religion and National Identity

For many, religion is linked to national identity. It is not uncommon to hear phrases like 'Christian country'. Some people will use such phrases to justify the place of religion in public life – that Britain is traditionally Christian, and is majority Christian.

Sometimes Christianity being associated with British national identity can affect things which are not Christian. People can get very angry about tax money being spent on other religions or **humanists** wanting to appear on *Thought for the Day*. They might argue that the state does not have to put money into other religions or publicly represent non-religious people. However, many are people who would appreciate these. This is highly controversial.

Religion being linked to national identity may also lead to misrepresentation of religious observance. Because the Church of England is the state religion, many people may associate themselves as belonging to the Church of England (for example, they may have been christened, and may christen their children), but in practice they may not act or think much differently from non-religious people – they may not have an active relationship with God.

Religion and national identity can affect sport. For example, *Jerusalem* is a particularly popular song sung by English sports fans. Many of these people are non-religious, and sing *Jerusalem* as a national song. However, it is a Christian hymn, and its use as an anthem shows that links between religion and national identity can be subtle, and not always deliberate.



Football is

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## Proselytisation

**Proselytisation** (or proselytism) refers to the act of converting someone to (a new religion or to) a different religion. Someone who converts is known as a proselyte. As mentioned above, many religions encourage their followers to **evangelise**, or proselytise, people, so that they can have a relationship with God. However, to proselytise people of other religions is more common among **exclusivist** religions than **pluralists**, as there is less motivation to convert people if you believe they can go to God without converting.

There is a good chance you will have experienced people trying to proselytise in town centres and busy areas, and you may have had someone try to speak to you about their religion.

There are different attitudes to proselytisation within Christianity. Some feel that it is a priority to actively proselytise. Some Christians feel that it is right to talk to people, but that it is disrespectful to actively try to convert followers of other religions.

*And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember that I will be with you and will continue to support you until the end of the age.'* (Matthew 28:18–20 NRSV) [The Great Commission]

Some Christians feel that the best way to proselytise is to live a good life and help others, and that if people feel there is something missing in their lives, they will be inspired by good Christians. They feel they should talk to people who are interested about Christianity, but that they should not press their views on others without invitation. They see this as inconsiderate and unloving. Many Christians also feel that street preaching and trying to proselytise strangers is ineffective, as it annoys and alienates people, so it puts them off Christianity.

## Quick Question

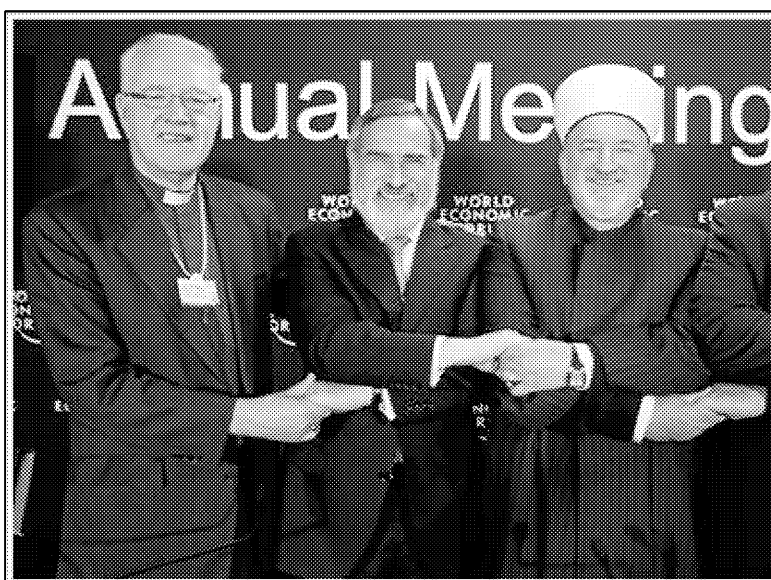
18. Give three ways in which religion is linked to wider society.
19. What is proselytisation?

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## Summary for Dialogue within and between Religious Groups

- ◆ There are different views within Christianity about the truth of other religions. **Inclusivists** believe that Christianity is the only way to God. **Exclusivists** believe that Christianity is the only way to God. **Pluralists** believe that many ways to God, and there is not necessarily one which is more true. Many believe that **inter-faith** dialogue and **ecumenism** are important, so all Christians can work together and feel a sense of unity. Many also believe that **inter-faith** dialogue is important so that people can learn from and support each other.
- ◆ Religion impacts on society in various ways. It can be linked to the nation. For example, Britain with Christianity. Religious people can also impact on society. Some believe their religion commands this, while others feel that religion is ineffective.



Leaders from different religions at the World Economic Forum 2009 Annual Meeting

### Now Try This...

20. 'Christians should not accept the validity of other religions.' Discuss this statement.

Argue for **and** against this statement, referring to different Christian beliefs and sources of wisdom and authority. Explain and evaluate the importance of religion from a Christian perspective. Reach a conclusion which follows from your arguments.

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# Dialogue between Religious and Non-religious

There is a range of shared values between many religious and non-religious people. Dialogue can often be positive. However, there are also disagreements, so dialogue between religious and non-religious is not always smooth.

## Different Christian Views and Attitudes towards Non-religious

### Key Concepts – Beliefs, Religious Values and Secular Values

Beliefs are opinions which someone holds to be true. People hold many beliefs, and some are as important as others. However, beliefs about what is right and wrong, and whether there is a God can matter a great deal to people.

Religious values can often be divided into values about God and worship. For example, Christians value loving God, and loving their neighbour. Religious values also include valuing life and valuing truth – common to many religions. Christians may value **tolerance** and compassion. Some religious values may be seen as strict, such as following laws, and disapproving of homosexuality.

**Secular** values include no values about God, but many religious and secular values overlap. For example, secular people may also value life and truth, equality and compassion. However, there may be differences, often resulting from having different world views. Secular people may value choice over life (e.g. in the case of abortion or end of life decisions) and more emphasis on valuing freedom of choice.

For some, secular values also include **secularism**.

Some conservative Christians may automatically dismiss non-religious world views because they are **atheistic**. However, others feel that many non-religious world views may also help Christians to fully evaluate their own views.

Many Christians share common scientific world views, accepting the Big Bang and natural phenomena such as climate change. Science is not specifically religious or non-religious, and areas not necessarily covered by religion. Christians may find science useful where religion does not.

There are many non-religious people who are moral, and many liberal Christians who share values which contain many of the same moral principles as religion, but without the religious basis. They may feel that moral actions have equal worth, regardless of whether they are religious or non-religious people.

There will be political world views which certain Christians share and others do not. For example, some will support capitalism and free markets, while others will desire more regulation.

While many general morals are shared by religious and non-religious people, consider values which may not be shared. Ideas about marriage and sex, gender and sexuality vary greatly between religious and non-religious world views. Christians may disagree with non-religious world views which do not match their own.

Consider how these world views hold. For example, how do they link back to the sections on values? It is likely to be different.

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## Christian Agreement and Disagreement with Atheism, Agnosticism and Secularism

Christianity may share some values and ideals with some of these groups, but there are also potential, and definite, areas of disagreement.

### Atheism

Christianity does not specifically share any values with **atheism**. This is not to say that Christians and atheists do not share any of the same values, but Christians believe in a God, and atheists do not, so they differ in this respect.

### Agnosticism

In the same way, Christianity does not necessarily share any values with **agnosticism**, if an agnostic is someone who is not sure if they believe in God or not. However, if an agnostic is taken as someone who does not know if there is a God or not, or to know about God, some Christians may agree that they do not fully know God in this life, as he is much beyond humanity. They may also feel that they cannot prove God, and that that is why they have faith.

### Humanism

Christianity can share many values with **humanism**. Humanists UK includes values such as humanist values, and also treating others well. Most Christians and humanists value human rights. Most Christians would feel that these values are reflected in Christianity. If someone who does not love God, they are trying to love their neighbour.

*He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*  
(Matthew 22:37–40 NRSV)

Some Christians may feel that they do not value understanding others, if only because it is not a central part of Christianity, but this is not a majority view.

Christians also tend to value the use of reason, another humanist value – though some Christians feel that God gave humans reason so that they could understand his will. Humanists only use hard evidence to form their views, and they would not include spiritual experiences within this. So while Christians value reason and evidence like humanists, they also include religious evidence which humanists would not include, and come to their conclusions with their reason. They differ in that belief in God affects how they view the world.

Some Christians will feel that some humanists have enough in common with Christianity to save them for living good lives. For example, Jesus teaches in the parable of the Good Samaritan in Matthew 25 that those who feed the hungry and help people in need will be rewarded. He does not mention religious belief being necessary. Some Christians might feel that there are places in heaven for good non-religious people.

*'In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places...'* (John 14:2)

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## Secularism

Christians may completely reject **secularist** values to separate religion from public life. They may feel that religion and public life should not be separated. They may feel that it is important to include religion in education, and for religion to influence law, etc... They may feel that there should be freedom of religion within public life. They may also feel that there should be freedom of religion in public, e.g. providing halal school dinners so Muslims have a meat option.

However, other Christians may share certain values with secularists, and may believe that:

- ◆ They may feel that religion is important to them, but believe that everyone has the right of belief and practice, and so they should not impose their beliefs on others, e.g. through bishops influencing the law in the House of Lords.
- ◆ They may feel that people should have freedom of choice, and so secularists should not force students attend acts of worship, or teach a particular religion as if it was the only one. They should be given a balanced education which allows them to choose whether to believe in religion, and how they wish to conduct themselves (e.g. with respect to relationships).
- ◆ Christians may also not feel that it is fair that religious people may suffer from equality laws, such as Catholics not employing female priests – if secularists then should religious people be given a loophole?

Some Christians feel that religion and public life should be kept separate but that people should follow religion appropriately and also follow the state appropriately. This means they should not force religious belief into public life – they are serving the state.

*... 'Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's' (Matthew 22:21 NRSV)*

However, even Christians who hold some secularist values are still unlikely to support groups such as the National Secular Society, who do not just want to remove religion from education, but also want to limit it in other public places such as on television. Many Christians think that this is taking things too far, as if religious people want to watch television, they will feel that this is fair, in the same way that television caters to many different tastes. They may also be less extreme about secularism in general – for example they might support acts of worship in schools, but that this should be optional.

## Significance of Shared Values and Ideals between Religious and Non-Religious Groups

Shared values and ideals between religious and non-religious groups can be important for several reasons, including:

- ◆ This means that there can be tolerance and cohesion between religious and non-religious groups.
- ◆ This means that religious and non-religious groups can work together to achieve common goals.

Where there are shared values and ideals between people with different beliefs, common ground is important. If religious and non-religious people can agree on key beliefs, then this means they are more likely to get on with each other, and support each other. Intolerance and disharmony in society may be more likely when groups feel isolated from other groups and feel that their values and beliefs are not shared.

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If religious and non-religious people share the same values then they can all agree. If they both want to stop laws promoting welfare cuts, or they both want to keep the centre open, then shared values will help them to work together.

## **Significance of Areas of Disagreement and Difference for Individuals and Societies**

However, disagreement is also significant.

Individuals who hold different beliefs due to their stance on religion may find it difficult to get on with each other. There is also the potential for people to see others as purely members of a religion and not judge them on their individual personality and beliefs.

Communities can face disharmony and intolerance, for example high levels of discrimination against members of a particular religion, or marginalisation of certain religious groups.

Both of the above (not getting on with people and having community intolerance) can lead to other negative outlets, such as the formation of gangs. Intolerance does not always lead to violence, but often has physical negative results in the world.

Taking society as a whole, disagreement and difference produce conflict and tension. Should religion get a say in law making? Should religion play a part in education? Should it influence medicine? This is significant for people whichever position they take. As laws and policies result from debate, these have the potential to affect many people's lives. People think about the impact of religion in their everyday lives.

## **Quick Questions**

21. Why might disagreement between religious and non-religious people be significant?
22. Describe ways in which Christianity may be similar to humanism and secularism. Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

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## Should Secular Values Take Precedence over Christian

Many Christians will argue that **secular** values should not take precedence (or be more important) over Christian values in society. A key argument which they make is that many secular values are already included within Christian values – Christians value **tolerance**, so secular values are not needed for people to be valued and treated fairly.

Christians can also argue that, of secular values which are not shared with Christians, some could be dangerous for religious freedom. For example, if **secularism** took precedence over Christian values, then Christians might not be able to educate their children in church schools or have freedom of choice/practice, e.g. if the Catholic Church had to employ female priests.

People of non-Christian religions may have mixed views on whether it would be better to have more secular values and fewer Christian ones in society. They might feel that their own religious values should have equal consideration with Christian beliefs, if there was equality for all and no discrimination. However, they might also feel that secular values could be damaging, and that Christians should have equal consideration for all religions. For example, secular values might mean no religious exemptions to laws.

However, many secular people (and potentially some Christians) will argue that secular values should take precedence over Christian (and other religious) views. They could counter the Christian argument by claiming that if many religious and secular values are similar, there is no problem for Christians if secular values are prioritised. Secularists could argue that non-religious applications of equality and tolerance will actually be fairer for all, as Christian equality and tolerance may be seen as hypocritical. For example, many Christian law makers are still opposed to LGBTQ rights.

They might also argue that secular values will not violate any Christian or religious rights, as Christians are entitled to educate their children in religion at home, and campaign against laws which they feel are unfair. They could claim that any religious exceptions to laws, such as allowing religious slaughters is not fair because if restrictions are for animal welfare reasons then these should be upheld no matter what. They feel that minimising religion in public life is in everyone's interests, as then everyone will be comfortable in society and can choose how to live in private.

Organisations such as the Tony Blair Foundation argue that religion is a force for good and that religious influences are positive for humanity. However, many atheists and secularists argue that whatever Christians think of non-religious values, some religious values are harmful.

### Quick Question

23. Describe what is meant by secularism.
24. Describe one Christian attitude to whether secularism should take precedence over Christian religious values.

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## Summary for Dialogue between Religious and Non-religious

- ♦ There are various levels of agreement and disagreement between Christians and non-religious world views. Some Christians reject any non-religious world views, but **Atheists** and **agnostics** have completely differing views to Christians and do not share many moral values with **humanists**. Christians may agree with **secularists** on the separation of religion and state, or feel that religion is a positive influence on society. Different groups may contribute to cohesion and **tolerance** and allow for greater equality. However, disagreements and difference can do the opposite.
- ♦ Christians may argue that Christian religious values should take precedence over secular values. Christians promote **equality** and **tolerance**, and having religion influence society is especially for those who are religious. However, **secularists** will disagree, arguing for greater equality if secular values take precedence, and feeling that secular values should be the basis of society.



Painting promoting tolerance

### Now Try This...

25. 'Christians and non-religious people have more similar beliefs than differences.' Discuss this statement.

Argue for **and** against this statement, referring to different Christian beliefs and sources of wisdom and authority. Explain and evaluate the importance of religion from a Christian perspective. Reach a conclusion which follows from your arguments.

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# Answers

## Remember!

Always check the exam board website for new information, including changes to assessment material.

This mark scheme can be used with all the exam style questions in this resource.

- Exam style questions that cover questions (A) and (B) are included under the 'Exam style questions' section.
- More complex exam essay style questions (C) and (D) are covered under the 'Exam essay questions' section.

## Mark Schemes

Question Type	Marking Criteria
(A)	Accept any correct/relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 3)
(B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low level of knowledge and understanding of religion, such as different perspectives and influence, lacking detail and connection to question. Some mistakes.</li> <li>• Adequate but underdeveloped level of knowledge and understanding including some reference to different Christian perspectives and influence. Some understanding of issues, linked to question. Some reference to appropriate sources of wisdom and authority.</li> <li>• Good knowledge and understanding of religion, such as different Christian perspectives and influence, with relevant detail, developed understanding of issues, linked to question. Good reference to appropriate sources of wisdom and authority, linked to question.</li> <li>• Accept any correct/relevant point</li> </ul>
(C)	<p><b>AO1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic knowledge and understanding. Little explanation of relevant sources and authority.</li> <li>• Good knowledge and understanding. Appropriate explanation of relevant sources and authority.</li> <li>• Accept any correct/relevant point</li> </ul> <p><b>AO2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only one perspective lacking good justification, no evaluation of ideas and a conclusion.</li> </ul> <p>(For the bands below, some, or all, of the components are needed.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several perspectives lacking good justification. Some analysis of importance and influence of issue on Christians. Basic evaluation of ideas and a conclusion.</li> <li>• Several perspectives which are discussed. Some relevant analysis of importance and influence of issue on Christians. Evaluation of ideas and a conclusion.</li> <li>• Range of perspectives which are explored appropriately. Good relevant analysis of importance and influence of issue on different Christians. Evaluation of ideas and a conclusion.</li> </ul>
(D)	<p><b>AO1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low level of knowledge and understanding of religion, such as different perspectives and influence, lacking detail and connection to question. Some mistakes.</li> <li>• Adequate but underdeveloped level of knowledge and understanding including some reference to different Christian perspectives and influence. Some understanding of issues, linked to question. Some reference to appropriate sources of wisdom and authority.</li> <li>• Good knowledge and understanding of religion, such as different Christian perspectives and influence, with relevant detail, developed understanding of issues, linked to question. Good reference to appropriate sources of wisdom and authority, linked to question.</li> <li>• Accept any correct/relevant point</li> </ul>

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Question Type	Marking Criteria
<p><b>D</b> (cont.)</p>	<p><b>AO2</b> (For the bands below, some, or all, of the components are needed.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only one perspective lacking good justification, or several perspectives lacking good justification. There may be some mistakes. Little structure.</li> <li>Several perspectives lacking good justification. Some analysis of issue on Christians. Little evaluation of ideas. There may be some relevant reasoning with some structure.</li> <li>Several perspectives which are discussed. Some relevant analysis of influence of issue on Christians. Comparison of different arguments and a conclusion. Mostly relevant reasoning with some structure.</li> <li>Range of perspectives which are explored appropriately. Good importance and influence of issue on different Christians. Critical arguments from different Christians. Evaluation of ideas and a conclusion and relevant reasoning which is well structured.</li> </ul>

## Relationships and Families

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
1 <b>A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nuclear Family</li> <li>Extended Family</li> <li>Blended Family</li> <li>Single-parent Family</li> </ul>
2 <b>B</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many Christians believe they should procreate, and so the purpose is to fulfil God's command. <i>'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth...'</i> (Genesis 1:28 NRSV)</li> <li>Some do not feel that procreation is necessary, but that God has commanded people to have families.</li> <li>Christians believe that one purpose of a family unit is to care for and create a stable environment for them.</li> <li>Many Christians believe that a purpose of a religious family is to pass on faith, e.g. Christian parents may baptise their children and bring them to church.</li> <li>Christians believe that different members of the family have different roles, but each other, but children should obey parents, and parents discipline their children.</li> <li>Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <i>'Honor your father and mother: this is the first commandment with a promise: 'so that it may go well with you and you may live long on the earth.'</i> And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:1-4)</li> </ul>
3 <b>A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To have sex.</li> <li>To have children.</li> <li>To express their love for their partner.</li> <li>Because marriage is given by God.</li> </ul>
4 <b>C</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Because marriage is believed to be a lifelong commitment, where partners stay together for their whole lives.</li> <li><i>'But from the beginning of creation, "God made man and woman, and he made them one flesh." So they are no longer two, but one flesh. So they will leave their father and mother and be united to each other, and they will become one flesh.'</i> (Mark 10:6-9)</li> <li>This verse is also relevant to the Christian belief in the sanctity of marriage between husband and wife. This may be referenced in the context of divorce.</li> <li>Partners also exchange rings, to show their love and commitment, and that they intend to be monogamous, as fidelity is considered important (and adultery is forbidden).</li> <li><i>'You shall not commit adultery.'</i> (Exodus 20:14)</li> </ul>

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Question No. & Type	Indicative Content	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As many Christians believe that marriage is for having children.</li> <li><i>'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth...'</i> (Genesis 1:28 NRSV)</li> <li>Some Christians believe that the husband should be in charge of the marriage and be referenced. Others do not believe this, and so will stress that the husband and wife should help each other and be equal.</li> <li><i>'For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church'</i> (Ephesians 5:26 NRSV)</li> <li><i>Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make a helper as his partner.'</i> (Genesis 2:18 NRSV)</li> <li>Christians believe that they should support others in marriage and so should do so during the ceremony.</li> <li>Christians believe that marriage is a commitment to both God and each other. Marriage vows reflect this.</li> <li>Many Christian denominations believe that the Bible teaches that marriage is between a man and a woman, and so they carry out heterosexual marriages. Others believe that marriage is an important thing, and will also marry homosexual couples.</li> </ul>	
5 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some Christians believe that same-sex marriage is acceptable.</li> <li>They believe that Bible teachings against same-sex marriage are out of date.</li> <li>They feel that Jesus taught that love is the most important thing in marriage, and so they will be able to get married, including same-sex couples.</li> </ul>	
6 (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some Christians, such as evangelical Protestants, believe that same-sex marriage is wrong because the Bible teaches that marriage should be between a man and a woman.</li> <li><i>'... the one who made them at the beginning "made them male and female". For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh.</i> (Matthew 19:4-6 NRSV)</li> <li>They may also believe it is wrong because the Bible teaches against homosexuality.</li> <li><i>'You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.'</i> (Leviticus 18:22 NRSV)</li> <li>Catholics additionally disagree with same-sex marriage because marriage is for having children and homosexual couples cannot have children.</li> <li><i>'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth...'</i> (Genesis 1:28 NRSV)</li> <li>Other Christians, such as some liberal Protestants, accept same-sex marriage. They believe that Bible teachings in the Bible against homosexuality, and supporting celibacy, are out of date.</li> <li>They feel that Jesus taught to love others and not to judge them. So they believe that same-sex marriage should be allowed.</li> <li><i>'Or how can you say to your neighbour, "Let me take the speck out of your eye"?' (Matthew 7:4 NRSV)</i></li> <li>Also, they may not feel that all married couples need to have the ability to have children together, and so homosexual couples are not excluded from marriage on these grounds.</li> </ul>	
7 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Celibacy is refraining from having sex.</li> <li>This may be a permanent state, or the state until someone starts having sex – for Christians, this may be at marriage.</li> <li>Some Christians believe that celibacy is beneficial in helping someone focus on God.</li> </ul>	(3 marks)
8 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adultery is forbidden in the Ten Commandments, so Christians should not have sex with anyone who is married to someone else.</li> <li><i>'You shall not commit adultery.'</i> (Exodus 20:14 NRSV)</li> <li>Even without being forbidden in the Ten Commandments, adultery is hurtful to the people being cheated on.</li> <li>Many Christians believe that marriage is the correct place to have sex, and so they should not have sex before this. They may believe that a sexual union is very powerful, joining you to someone, and so should not be entered into casually.</li> <li><i>'... the one who made them at the beginning "made them male and female", and said, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh"? So they are no longer two, but one flesh.'</i> (Matthew 19:4-6 NRSV)</li> </ul>	(6 marks)

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Question No. & Type	Indicative Content	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Bible teaches against sexual immorality, and this may be taught of / before marriage. <i>We must not indulge in sexual immorality...</i> (1 Corinthians 10:33)</li> <li>If people have sex outside of marriage, people may end up having a relationship.</li> </ul>	
9 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rhythm method</li> <li>Barrier method contraception, e.g. condoms</li> <li>Hormonal contraception, e.g. the pill</li> <li>Emergency contraception</li> </ul>	
10 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Catholic Church teaches against using artificial contraception; all sexual acts should be open to the possibility of new life. <i>"every action which, whether in anticipation of the conjugal act or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, as a means, to render procreation impossible" is intrinsically evil</i> (Catholic Church quoting <i>Humanae Vitae</i>)</li> <li>They believe this because they feel they should follow God's command to have children. <i>'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth...'</i> (Genesis 1:28 NRSV)</li> <li>They also disagree with artificial contraception because they feel it is against the law.</li> <li>However, the Catholic Church does allow natural contraception; this does not prevent conception from taking place.</li> <li>Many other Christians, including most Protestants, agree with this as there is nothing in the Bible which forbids it.</li> <li>They feel it is better for parents health wise (for mothers) and to limit the number of children they have.</li> <li>However, not all agree with hormonal or emergency methods as they cause the destruction of an embryo, if they feel that they should not. <i>'You shall not murder.'</i> (Exodus 20:13 NRSV)</li> </ul>	
11 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An annulment is a way of cancelling a marriage and saying that it was never valid.</li> <li>Someone cannot get an annulment without a legal divorce.</li> <li>It is the only way to end a Catholic marriage (other than death) as the end of a marriage.</li> </ul>	
12 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus appeared to allow divorce in the case of adultery. <i>'It was also said, "Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce, so that she may marry another man. Whoever marries her, though she has been divorced, commits adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery."'</i> (Matthew 5:31–32 NRSV)</li> <li>Many Christians believe that divorce is the most loving thing in many situations, and especially feel that someone should not be forced to stay in an abusive marriage. <i>'In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.'</i> (Matthew 7:12 NRSV) [The Golden Rule]</li> <li>Christians believe that even if God disapproves of divorce, he will forgive people for getting a divorce, and Christians should forgive divorcees too. <i>'Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times."'</i> (Matthew 18:21–22 NRSV) <i>'... for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'</i> (Matthew 26:28 NRSV)</li> <li>Many Christians believe that as well as allowing people to divorce, people should be allowed to remarry as this is loving – people may fall in love again.</li> <li>Also, allowing people to remarry helps to provide stability for their children.</li> </ul>	(6 marks)

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Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
15 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If something or someone is equal to another it means they are</li> <li>• For equality to be practised, people must treat others with the</li> <li>• There are many different types of equality, including gender equality</li> </ul>
16 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some Christians believe that men and women should have different roles. For example that the husband should be in charge of his wife. <i>'Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord...'</i> (Ephesians 5:22-24 NRSV) <i>'Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. He is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the saviour, who never treat them harshly.'</i> (Colossians 3:18-19 NRSV)</li> <li>• Some Christians believe that the wife's role is to help her husband. Genesis 2, and that she should not lead him. <i>'Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner."'</i> (Genesis 2:18 NRSV) <i>'Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no man to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve, and Adam was the head of the church, the body of which he saves, himself purifying his body by the word of water, that he might present to himself the church, holy and without stain, that he might present to himself the church, that he might purify it by the word of water, that he might present to himself the church, that he might purify it by the word of water, that he might present to himself the church, that he might purify it by the word of water.'</i> (Ephesians 5:22-24 NRSV)</li> <li>• Some Christians feel that women should focus on motherhood and their role in childcare, because many women in the Bible are emphasised for their role as mothers, e.g. Jesus' mother Mary.</li> <li>• However, many other Christians feel that men and women should have equal roles in the family. They feel that biblical teachings about different genders are outdated.</li> <li>• They believe this because the Bible teaches that both genders should be treated well, going against the social norm of his time. He supported his teaching rather than doing housework. <i>'But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to me and said, "Lord, do not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."'</i> (Luke 10:40-42 NRSV)</li> </ul>
17 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minister (priest/vicar/pastor)</li> <li>• Deacon</li> <li>• Parent (mother/father)</li> </ul>
18 (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some Christians believe that women should not perform roles of authority in the Christian community, because they believe that woman was created to be subordinate to man. Many of the New Testament letters teach against women having authority. <i>'Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner."'</i> (Genesis 2:18 NRSV) <i>'I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man...'</i> (1 Timothy 2:12 NRSV)</li> <li>• Such Christians may also feel that women should not be deacons and/or priests, as such positions of authority in churches should be reserved for men. The New Testament contains teaching that women should not speak in church. <i>... women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. (1 Corinthians 14:34-35 NRSV)</i></li> <li>• Churches such as the Catholic Church believe this because they believe that the priest takes the role of Jesus during the Eucharist, and follows on from Jesus' apostles, and Jesus and his apostles were men (apostolic succession).</li> <li>• However, others believe that women should be able to perform roles of authority in the Christian community because teachings against them doing so are out of date.</li> <li>• Additionally, they may feel that women did fill such roles in the early Church, and so saying that they cannot do so today does not follow. <i>I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae... Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. (Romans 16:1, 7 NRSV)</i></li> </ul>

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(6 marks)

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content	
19 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baptism</li> <li>• Instructing children in prayer</li> <li>• Reading the Bible</li> <li>• Sunday school</li> <li>• Christian youth group</li> </ul>	
20 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A religious upbringing may reinforce faith in God by getting children involved in religious activities. For example, celebrating religious festivals often creates positive experiences with God.</li> <li>• It may reinforce faith in God because children learn morality through religious teachings that it is good to act in particular ways. They may admire religious figures and aspire to be like them. <i>'Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy and all such rubbish; and put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator, in order that you may learn to know what is the will of the Lord, that you may walk in it, as you are being renewed, and that you may bring forth the fruit of good works, to the glory of the Father through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven, and who is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the saviour, himself the church, which he has cleansed by the word of water with the word, that he may present to himself the church, holy and without blemish, that he may present it to himself in glory, without stain or wrinkle or anything of the kind, that he may present it to himself as holy and without blemish.'</i> (Ephesians 4:22-32 NRSV)</li> <li>• It may reinforce faith in God through acts which dedicate a child to God. Children may feel grateful to God for saving them.</li> <li>• It may reinforce faith in God if children feel that they have experienced God's love through prayer.</li> <li>• It may reinforce faith in God because they believe that they are loved and cared for by God. <i>'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is the will of my Father in heaven that the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.'</i> (Mark 10:14 NRSV)</li> </ul>	
21 (D)	<p>Points and Justification for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Bible teaches that wives should obey their husbands. <i>'Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord...' (Ephesians 5:22 NRSV)</i></li> <li>• The Bible teaches that woman was a helper for man. <i>'Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner."' (Genesis 2:18 NRSV)</i></li> <li>• The Bible emphasises the role of women as mothers, e.g. Mary the mother of Jesus.</li> <li>• The Bible teaches that women should not have authority over men, or speak in church, so they should not be ministers. <i>'I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man...' (1 Timothy 2:12 NRSV)</i></li> <li>• The Catholic Church teaches that priests must be men because of apostolic succession – the tradition of male disciples, apostles and priests.</li> </ul>	<p>Points and Justification for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biblical teaching suggests that men should be in charge of the church.</li> <li>• When woman is taught to obey, she does not necessarily lose her identity – God is also described as Father.</li> <li>• Women can be important in the church, having significantly contributed to the faith who are also important in the church.</li> <li>• Biblical teaching also suggests that women should not have authority over men, as the church may refer to the Bible. <i>... women should be subject to Christ, as the church is, which is his body, of which he is the saviour, himself the church, which he has cleansed by the word of water with the word, that he may present to himself the church, holy and without blemish, that he may present it to himself in glory, without stain or wrinkle or anything of the kind, that he may present it to himself as holy and without blemish.'</i> (Ephesians 5:22-32 NRSV)</li> <li>• The Bible appears to have female deacons and female apostles, so women should be able to lead in church today. <i>I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae... Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. (Romans 16:1, 7 NRSV)</i></li> </ul>
22 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was hearings which aimed to find truth about apartheid and reconcile people on both sides of the divide.</li> <li>• It heard from both those who had worked for apartheid, and those who had suffered under it.</li> <li>• Some of its leaders were those such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who wanted to use it to ensure healing in South Africa.</li> </ul>	

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Question No. & Type	Indicative Content	
23 ©	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Bible teaches that humans are equal before God, and so equality is a principle within Christianity. <i>So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27 NRSV)</i></li> <li>There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)</li> <li>The Bible teaches that Christians should not treat others unequally; equality is also important to Christians. <i>You do well if you really fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. (James 2:8–9 NRSV)</i></li> <li>Jesus showed that equality is not only important because it is right, but also because it helps others. Further, people should be treated well by you, and it is wrong to treat someone badly when they could serve you. <i>'... Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who robbed him?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.' (Luke 10:36–37 NRSV)</i></li> </ul>	
24 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An embedded inequality is one which is set into something, such as a law or a custom.</li> <li>Embedded inequalities can be biological, such as men and women having different features.</li> <li>Embedded inequalities can also be social or legal, such as black people being universally different from white people, and being barred from certain places.</li> </ul>	
25 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Culture can influence religion heavily, for example patriarchal religions, such as Christianity, which became male-led like the societies it interacted with.</li> <li>Culture can also affect religious festivals, such as Christmas being celebrated at the same time as a pagan festival.</li> <li>Religion can influence cultures drastically by influencing laws, so that certain things are acceptable or wrong. <i>'You shall not murder.' (Exodus 20:13 NRSV)</i></li> <li>Religion can also influence cultural acceptability of things, even if they are not, such as homosexuality. <i>'You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.' (Leviticus 18:22 NRSV)</i></li> <li>Religious figures may also help to reform culture, because of their moral authority. For example, William Wilberforce opposing the slave trade.</li> </ul>	
26 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Christians may believe in gender equality because they believe that God created humans in the image of God.</li> <li>They may believe in gender equality because Galatians 3 teaches that before God, there is no gender.</li> <li>They may believe in gender equality because they believe that Jesus treated women equally with men.</li> </ul>	(3 marks)
27 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most Christians feel that men and women are spiritually equal, and so, as people before God, everyone has gender equality. <i>'So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.' (Genesis 1:27 NRSV)</i> <i>'... there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:28 NRSV)</i></li> <li>Many Christians also believe that men and women should be practically equal – treated in the same way. <i>You do well if you really fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. (James 2:8–9 NRSV)</i></li> <li>They feel that giving men and women different roles is not treating them equally, and so this is not gender equality.</li> </ul>	(6 marks)

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Question No. & Type	Indicative Content		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>However, others feel that men and women can be equal and set up different roles, because God wanted men and women to have different roles, and if God made these different roles, then to use them cannot be incorrect before God.</li> </ul> <p><i>'Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helper as his partner."' (Genesis 2:18 NRSV)</i></p>		
28 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender prejudice is thinking that someone is worth less because of a good reason / knowledge of the people who they are judging.</li> <li>Gender prejudice often involves men (and sometimes women) being seen as inferior in some way to men.</li> <li>It is different from gender discrimination, because prejudice often involves treating anyone differently.</li> </ul>		
29 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paying women less than men.</li> <li>Not allowing women the same level of education as men.</li> <li>Not allowing women to be priests. [Note: Catholics would argue that women can be nuns.]</li> </ul>		
30 (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As Christians believe that all humans are equal, they oppose unequal treatment. <i>'So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.' (Genesis 1:27 NRSV)</i> <i>'... there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:28 NRSV)</i></li> <li>There are many instances of gender discrimination in the world, such as the pay gap, and women in certain countries lacking access to education. Gender discrimination is current and relevant to Christians, and sometimes Christians potentially do something about it.</li> <li>Jesus taught Christians to treat others as they would want to be treated. If not want to be discriminated against, Christians should seek to follow the Golden Rule: <i>'In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; this is the love of God.'</i> (Matthew 7:12 NRSV) [The Golden Rule]</li> <li>Some Christians believe that some gender discrimination is fair, such as women not speaking in church. They need to be able to defend this discrimination.</li> <li><i>... women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, as the law also says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church, as the Lord says. (1 Corinthians 14:34-35 NRSV)</i></li> <li>For Christians who believe that this discrimination is wrong, and that such gender discrimination is an important issue because they believe in equality, and feel that this discrimination is stopping this from being achieved.</li> </ul>		
31 (D)	<p>Points and Justification for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Bible teaches that all humans are equal before God. <i>'So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.'</i> (Genesis 1:27 NRSV) <i>'... there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus'</i> (Galatians 3:28 NRSV)</li> <li>The Bible teaches Christians not to treat anyone differently. <i>You do well if you really fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.</i> (James 2:8-9 NRSV)</li> </ul>	<p>Points and Justification against:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Bible teaches that women should not have authority over men. This suggests that they are not equal. <i>'I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man...' (1 Timothy 2:12 NRSV)</i></li> <li>The Bible seems to teach that women cannot lead in church, which seems to suggest they are unequal. <i>... women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church, as the Lord says. (1 Corinthians 14:34-35 NRSV)</i></li> </ul>	(15 marks + 3 SPaG)

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Bible teaches to treat everyone with love. <i>'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'</i> (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)</li> <li>Many Christian denominations allow everyone, men and women, people of all ethnicities, to fulfil all roles, and do not discriminate against them, e.g. the Quakers.</li> <li>Jesus treated women well and had many female followers.</li> <li>Christians such as William Wilberforce and Martin Luther King have stood up for equality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus was male – if men should have his women.</li> <li>Christians have been unequal, such as apartheid.</li> </ul>

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## Dialogue between Religious and Non-religious Beliefs

Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
1 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Celebrating Christmas</li> <li>Pancake Day</li> <li>Eating fish and chips on Fridays</li> </ul>
2 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Christians have influenced British law, for example some laws are reflected in British law. <i>You shall not murder... You shall not steal. (Exodus 20:13-15)</i></li> <li>Many people celebrate Christian festivals such as Christmas with the birth and death of Jesus.</li> <li>There are also traditions such as Pancake Day, which started with the Christian Shrove Tuesday.</li> <li>Many people eat fish and chips on Fridays, which comes from the tradition of not eating meat on Fridays.</li> <li>There are restrictions on Sunday trading, because Sunday is a day of rest (because it is the day Christians believe Jesus rose from the dead).</li> </ul>
3 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There may be (more) services of worship.</li> <li>Religious matters may be raised in assemblies.</li> <li>You may need to be religious to get in.</li> <li>There may be more religious studies lessons.</li> <li>These may be more focused on Christianity.</li> </ul>
4 (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many Christians feel that it is appropriate for religion to be in law because it provides good guidance. <i>You shall not murder... You shall not steal. (Exodus 20:13-15)</i></li> <li>Many Christians may also feel that it is traditional for religion to be in law in Britain.</li> <li>Many Christians feel that having bishops in the House of Lords is not tied to a political party and will stand up for the poor, following Jesus' example.</li> <li>Secularists disagree. Humanists UK argues that there should be no Lords because they are unelected and represent a barrier to democracy.</li> <li>The National Secular Society also feels there should be no Lords or the say of religion in law, and feels that there should be no Lords because this is also privileging religion.</li> </ul>
5 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humanism is a non-theistic philosophy.</li> <li>It holds that people should be treated equally and with respect.</li> <li>It supports people forming beliefs from reason.</li> </ul>
6 (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secularisation can mean that religion suffers. There may be a decline in religious belief which can lead to church closures.</li> <li>Secularisation can mean that people want certain beliefs to be in law – for example the Sunday Assembly runs popular secular services.</li> <li>Secularisation can make certain people more religious and more opposed to secularisation.</li> <li>Religious people may make more effort to show respect for others.</li> <li>Secularisation can cause religious extremism in a backlash.</li> <li>Secularisation can make religious people more liberal and more open to non-religious views.</li> </ul>
7 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There may be issues over whether to teach about certain religions.</li> <li>There may be issues about whether to have acts of worship in schools.</li> <li>There may be issues about whether to serve halal meat in schools.</li> </ul>

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Question No. & Type	Indicative Content
8 ©	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Education Reform Act 1988 means that schools must not teach religious education. This clashes with the secular values of faith schools.</li> <li>Certain schools may promote a particular religion beyond what is taught within religious studies lessons. This contrasts with the secular value to choose what to believe.</li> <li>Schools promoting religious activity such as singing hymns may be seen as a breach of freedom of practice.</li> <li>Religious values which go against sex before marriage and contraception, can conflict with the secular value of freedom of choice in schools.</li> <li>Religious people often value having faith schools, but the secularists argue there should not be any faith schools.</li> <li>Some schools provide halal meals for Muslim students. Some members of the National Secular Society feel that not all halal meat for students should not be allowed.</li> </ul>
9 Ⓐ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Christianity might clash with equality laws over views on marriage. Some believe homosexual relationships are acceptable.</li> <li>For example, a Christian registrar might refuse to marry a couple if it is not their legal right.</li> <li>They might also refuse to allow a homosexual couple to marry. This also breaches equality laws.</li> </ul>
10 Ⓑ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many Christians believe that sex should take place only within marriage and adultery are both legal in the UK. <i>You shall not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:14 NRSV)</i></li> <li>Many Christians disagree with divorce because marriage is a sacred bond that should not be destroyed, but divorce is legal in the UK. <i>'But from the beginning of creation, "God made them male and female." "Man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What God has joined together, let no one separate.' (Mark 10:6–9 NRSV)</i></li> <li>Some Christians also believe that sex should be between a man and a woman. However, homosexual marriage is legal in Great Britain.</li> <li>Technically, the Catholic Church allows girls to marry at 14, but in practice, however, marrying at 14 is illegal in many countries – so the Church does not actually want people to go against the law.</li> <li>Christianity does not accept forced marriage, which is illegal in the UK.</li> </ul>
11 Ⓐ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many Christians, such as Catholics, do not agree with abortion because life begins outside of the womb, because they believe that conceiving a child is sacred.</li> <li>They also disagree with the scientific creation of life, because they believe that life is created by God and not experimented on, and they believe that this is wrong.</li> <li>They also believe that it is wrong to kill spare embryos created for IVF, because they are sacred.</li> </ul>
12 Ⓑ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many Christians believe that euthanasia is wrong because it is against the commandment: <i>'You shall not murder.'</i> (Exodus 20:13 NRSV)</li> <li>They may feel that euthanasia is wrong because life is a gift from God and should be protected.</li> <li>For these reasons, the Catholic Church does not allow euthanasia or passive euthanasia or double effect.</li> <li>Many Christians believe that they should support those who are suffering. They believe that suffering may be sent as a test, so they do not support euthanasia. <i>'... if you hold back from rescuing those taken away to the slaughter... Does not he who keeps watch over you repay all according to their deeds?' (Proverbs 24:11–12)</i></li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>However, some Christians, such as Quakers, feel that in certain circumstances, because they feel that people should be treated with consideration, and given the dignity of dying when the time comes, they may accept abortion. <i>In everything do to others as you would have them do to you. (Matthew 7:12 NRSV) The Golden Rule</i></li> </ul>	
13 Ⓑ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many Christians believe that abortion is wrong because the embryo/foetus is a human life, and to kill it is murder. <i>'You shall not murder.'</i> (Exodus 20:13 NRSV)</li> <li>They may feel that abortion is wrong because life is sacred.</li> <li>The Bible teaches that God creates foetuses and knows their future, which reinforces this belief for many Christians. <i>For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. (Psalm 139:13 NRSV)</i></li> <li><i>'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I dedicated you. (Jeremiah 1:5 NRSV)</i></li> <li>For these reasons, the Catholic Church does not allow abortions for any reasons.</li> <li>Pro-life group SPUC was started by Anglicans and conducted campaigns against abortion because it is killing a foetus and abortion is traumatic.</li> <li>However, some Christians feel that abortion is acceptable because they feel that people should be treated with love and compassion. <i>In everything do to others as you would have them do to you. (Matthew 7:12 NRSV) The Golden Rule</i></li> </ul>	
14 Ⓒ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many Christians believe in sanctity of life. They believe that life was created by God, in his image, and that it should be treated with respect, and that murder is wrong. <i>'So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.'</i> (Genesis 1:27 NRSV)</li> <li><i>'You shall not murder.'</i> (Exodus 20:13 NRSV)</li> <li>However secular people may not believe in sanctity of life, as they do not believe in God, and so they may think that there are situations where it is acceptable to end human, as well as other disagreements.</li> <li>For example, secular people may be more open to allowing the death of a person. Christians may feel that the foetus's life already begins at fertilisation. They believe the foetus is in God's image, and also has a soul. <i>'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I dedicated you. (Jeremiah 1:5 NRSV)</i></li> <li>In cases of euthanasia, secular people are more likely to support it, and so allow euthanasia where there is low quality of life, and prioritise sanctity of life, even when someone is in great pain.</li> <li>Regarding issues of genetic manipulation, religious people believe that human (and animal) life has been created by God and should not be meddled with. However, secular people are likely to support genetic manipulation and not worry about 'playing God'.</li> <li>Sanctity of life is also relevant to scientists creating new life. Some want scientists to do this, as they feel that life is something that should be created and this makes it special. However, secular people may not see a difference between life created in a lab and other life, as they do not believe in God.</li> </ul>	
15 Ⓓ	<p>Points and Justification for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some people are brain-dead and will never recover; there is no point in prolonging the suffering of relatives.</li> </ul>	<p>Points and Justification against:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It violates the sanctity of life, as it is killing a human being, which is against God, human rights, and the Bible. <i>'So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.'</i> (Genesis 1:27 NRSV)</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People have a right to dignity; people may prefer to die rather than be unable to do anything.</li> <li>People may feel they have no quality of life and prefer not to live in pain.</li> <li>It may be more loving to kill someone / let someone die, than to let them suffer. Some Quakers believe that this is the case. <i>'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'</i> (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)</li> <li>Some Christians feel that love is the most important thing and takes priority over preserving life.</li> </ul>
16 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Believing that Jesus was God means prophets from other religions are not as significant on the same level.</li> <li>Jesus said that those who did not believe in him would be condemned.</li> <li>Jesus said that people could only come to God the Father through him.</li> </ul>
17 (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If Christians are exclusivists and believe that other religions are false, this is particularly important. <i>'The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned.'</i> (Mark 16:16 NRSV)</li> <li>If Christians are inclusivists and believe that other religions are true, then this is likely to lead to inter-faith dialogue and better relationships with other religions. <i>In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places.</i></li> <li>If Christians are not pluralists and do not believe that other religions are true, Christianity then this could imply that they believe their religion is the only true one, which could be seen as insulting. This could cause issues in inter-faith dialogue.</li> <li>Because there are different Christian beliefs about what Jesus means that there is no consensus, and could mean tension between different denominations.</li> <li>If Christians are inclusivists or pluralists, they are more likely to have better relationships with other religions, which could mean a more united society.</li> </ul>
18 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Religious songs are used as sports chants.</li> <li>Public holidays often reflect religious festivals.</li> <li>Religion is often the topic of radio and television programmes.</li> </ul>
19 (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proselytisation is trying to convert someone to your religion.</li> <li>In Christianity, it is often referred to as evangelism.</li> <li>In Christianity proselytisation is a response to Jesus' command to spread the Gospel about him.</li> </ul>

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20 ①	<p>Points and Justification for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus is the son of God, and no other religions can compare to this. <i>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1, 14 NRSV)</i></li> <li>Jesus taught his disciples to evangelise and said that those who did not believe in him would not be saved. <i>'The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned.'</i> (Mark 16:16 NRSV)</li> <li>Jesus said that he was the only way to God the Father. <i>Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'</i> (John 14:6 NRSV)</li> <li>Evangelical Protestants often believe this and so try to evangelise in order to save people.</li> <li>Some Christians believe that accepting the validity of other religions denies the truth of Christianity.</li> </ul>	<p>Points and Justification for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus taught his disciples to evangelise and said that those who did not believe in him would not be saved. <i>'The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned.'</i> (Mark 16:16 NRSV)</li> <li>Jesus said that he was the only way to God the Father. <i>Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'</i> (John 14:6 NRSV)</li> <li>Evangelical Protestants often believe this and so try to evangelise in order to save people.</li> <li>Some Christians believe that accepting the validity of other religions denies the truth of Christianity.</li> </ul>
21 ②	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals may find it harder to get on with each other.</li> <li>There may be intolerance or marginalisation within communities.</li> <li>There can be conflict about important issues such as abortion, gay marriage, etc.</li> </ul>	
22 ③	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humanism believes in respecting others and treating them fairly. For example, in the parable of the sheep and the goats, Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and most important commandment. And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." On these two commands hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40 NRSV)</li> <li>Christianity also promotes the use of reason, like humanism, so that people can work out how to act according to God's will.</li> <li>Some Christians agree with secularists that there should be no religion in Parliament, as this is not fair on people with different beliefs.</li> <li>Some Christians agree with secularists that schools should not have religious worship or within religious studies lessons, because of the choice of religion.</li> <li>Some Christians agree that there should not be legalisation of same-sex marriage, such as those regarding gender or sexuality, because of their beliefs.</li> <li>Some Christians, like secularists, believe all religions should be treated as separate, because of Jesus' teaching that both can be true. <i>... 'Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.'</i> (Matthew 22:21 NRSV)</li> </ul>	

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