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WJEC EDUQAS GCSE (9–1) **Religious Studies** **ROUTE A**

Chris Owens, Ed Pawson
Joy White, Amanda Ridley

Covering:

- **Component 1:** Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World through Christianity, Islam and Judaism
- **Component 2:** Study of Christianity
- **Component 3:** Study of Islam and study of Judaism



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GCSE (9–1)

Religious Studies

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How to use this book

Introduction

This book covers the subject content, from a Western religious perspective only, for the new Eduqas GCSE Religious Studies qualification. The book spans the whole of the philosophical and ethical core content, and the Christianity core course content. It also includes material for the study of the two religious traditions of Islam and Judaism.

The book is set out in the order of the Eduqas specification to help students and teachers work through any course of study in specification order.

The book includes information on all of the key concepts and detailed content for each part of the specification.

There is some inclusion of references to relevant sources of wisdom and authority, including scripture and/or sacred texts.

There is no choice of questions in any of the three Eduqas examination papers, all questions are compulsory.

In your course of study there are some important things you might need to consider about religious belief and practice in Great Britain today.

- ▶ This book takes account of the changing landscape of religious belief and practice in Great Britain. Christianity was traditionally the main religion in Britain but today there is great diversity of belief and practice.
- ▶ All of the six main world faiths are practised by people in Britain.
- ▶ Within different religions there is some diversity of belief and practice.
- ▶ Many people claim to have no religious belief and practise no religion and may describe themselves as atheists, agnostics or humanists.

What is the assessment structure?

The assessment structure for the GCSE Religious Studies qualification requires students to complete three component examination papers.

Component one

Component one is the compulsory study of religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world. The approach is to adopt a distinctive issues-based approach. This component consists of four distinct themes. These themes are entitled:

- ▶ Relationships
- ▶ Life and death
- ▶ Good and evil
- ▶ Human rights.

Each theme is covered in detail in this textbook.

The length of the examination paper for this component is two hours.

In response to question (c) you need to be able to reference your answers to **two different religions or two religious traditions**.

In response to question (d) you need to be able to reference your answers to **religion and belief and non-religious belief**.

This component is worth 50 per cent of the total marks.

Component two

Component two is the compulsory study of Christianity. The focus of this component is on the beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity.

The length of the examination paper for this component is one hour.

This component is worth 25 per cent of the total marks.

Component three

Component three is the study of one optional religion. The focus of this component is on the beliefs, teachings and practices of the chosen world faith.

The length of the examination paper for this component is one hour.

This component is worth 25 per cent of the total marks.

Assessment objectives

In each component there are different types of questions on the examination paper to assess the two different assessment objectives. The assessment objectives are referred to as A01 and A02 in the specification.

The two different assessment objectives test different dimensions of your religious knowledge and understanding.

In the GCSE examinations, each assessment objective is worth 50 per cent of the total mark.

Assessment objective 1

You need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- ▶ religion and belief*, including belief, practices and sources of authority
- ▶ the influence on individuals, communities and societies
- ▶ similarities and differences within and/or between religions and belief.

The form of questions for this assessment objective will vary but common rubric instructions for this assessment objective are:

- ▶ State . . .
- ▶ Define/What is meant by . . . ?
- ▶ Describe . . .
- ▶ Explain . . .

Assessment objective 2

You need to analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief*, including their significance and influence.

*The term 'belief' includes religious and non-religious belief as appropriate to the subject content requirements.

The form of question for this assessment objective will provide you with a statement followed by the rubric instruction:

- ▶ Discuss this statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. (You must refer to religion and belief in your answer.)

Answering the questions

It is important to know the structure of the exam paper and the type of questions that will be asked. In each of the units you study there will be examples of exam questions and reminders of how to answer them. At the end of each unit there will be some exam type questions with points to consider when answering them.

For all exam questions consider two questions:

- ▶ **How** many marks are awarded for the question? This will help you consider how much **time** should be spent on your answer and the depth of your answer.
- ▶ **What** is the question asking **you to do**? No question will ever ask you to write all that you know! What are the most important words in the question? Remember you can highlight them to help you focus on what the question is asking.

It is important to remember that there are **four types** of questions. Each has the maximum number of marks after the question. The space in your exam booklet will give you an idea of how much to write. There is never a compulsion or expectation to fill all of the lines; quality is always more important than quantity. It is also important to look at the marking grids so you can see what is required for each of the mark bands.

Question (a)

- ▶ Give one mark to candidates who provide an account limited in scope or content.
- ▶ Give two marks to candidates who make an accurate and appropriate account of the concept and/or provide an accurate and relevant example.

These are always the first question in each unit. They ask you to explain what the key concept means. Your explanation can include an example.

Throughout the book you will find definitions and examples of all the key concepts. You will find there are 8 each for the Philosophy and Ethics areas you are studying, 8 for Christianity and 8 for your second religion.

Remember there are only two marks available for these questions, so it is important you are able to give an accurate definition which is to the point. Examples of (a) type questions and how to answer them can be found on pages 82, 192, 249 and 305.

Question (b)

In these questions you will be expected to describe a particular religious teaching or view. There is a maximum of five marks for this type of question. To gain full marks you should be able to show your **knowledge** using appropriate **religious terms** and any **relevant sources of wisdom** or **sacred texts**.

Band	Band Descriptor	Mark total
3	An excellent, coherent answer showing knowledge and understanding of the religious idea, belief, practice, teaching or concept. An excellent understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies. Uses a range of religious/specialist language, terms and sources of wisdom and authority extensively, accurately and appropriately.	4–5
2	A good, generally accurate answer showing knowledge and understanding of the religious idea, belief, practice, teaching or concept. A good understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies. Uses religious/specialist language and terms and/or sources of wisdom and authority generally accurately.	2–3
1	A limited statement of information about the religious idea, belief, practice, teaching or concept. A limited understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies. Uses religious/specialist language and terms and/or sources of wisdom and authority in a limited way.	1
0	No relevant information provided.	0

Question (c)

These questions expect you to ‘explain’ a key practice, belief or issue in the religions you have studied. There is a maximum of eight marks for this type of question. To gain full marks you should be able to show a detailed knowledge which shows **diversity*** of opinion or practices. You need to use appropriate religious terms and relevant sources of wisdom or sacred texts.

Band	Band Descriptor	Mark total
4	An excellent, highly detailed explanation showing knowledge and understanding of the diversity of the religious idea, belief, practice, teaching or concept. An excellent understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies. Uses a range of religious/specialist language, terms and sources of wisdom and authority extensively, accurately and appropriately.	7–8
3	A very good, detailed explanation showing knowledge and understanding of the diversity of the religious idea, belief, practice, teaching or concept. A very good understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies. Uses a range of religious/specialist language, terms and sources of wisdom and authority accurately and appropriately.	5–6

*Diversity is only explicitly requested in Component 1 (c) questions and this marking band refers to those questions only. The (c) questions for components 2 and 3 do not demand diverse views.

2	A good, generally accurate explanation showing some knowledge and understanding of the diversity of the religious idea, belief, practice, teaching or concept. A good understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies. Uses religious/specialist language and terms and/or sources of wisdom and authority generally accurately.	3–4
1	A limited and/or poorly organised explanation showing limited knowledge and understanding of the diversity of the religious idea, belief, practice, teaching or concept. A limited understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies. Uses religious/specialist language, terms and/or sources of wisdom and authority in a limited way.	1–2
0	No relevant information provided.	0

Question (d)

These are very important questions as they are worth 15 marks. The question requires you to read and understand a statement and then:

Discuss this statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. (You must refer to religion and belief in your answer.) (15)

For each question consider:

- ▶ **How** many marks? The question is worth 15 marks and therefore is worth half of each unit. It is important to consider what you are going to include in your answer before you begin.
- ▶ **What** is the question asking you to do? In the question you are asked to include some different viewpoints. These do not need to be contrasting, such as two points for and two against, but must be different. The answer must also include religion and belief in the answer.

All (d) questions can include non-religious beliefs but Life and death (d) questions **must also** include non-religious beliefs.

Throughout the book there are exemplar answers and tasks which help to practice answering (a), (b), (c) and (d) questions. There are also tasks which will help you develop skills needed for the examination:

- ▶ Using religious and sacred text references
- ▶ Using religious language and terms
- ▶ Showing the diversity of beliefs and practices within a religious tradition
- ▶ Answering questions on people and charities.

Question 1(d), 3(d) and 4(d)

Band	Band Descriptor	Mark Total
5	<p>An excellent, highly detailed analysis and evaluation of the issue based on detailed knowledge of religion, religious teaching and moral reasoning to formulate judgements and present alternative or different viewpoints. An excellent understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies.</p> <p>Uses and interprets religious/specialist language, terms and sources of wisdom and authority extensively, accurately and appropriately.</p>	13–15
4	<p>A very good, detailed analysis and evaluation of the issue based on accurate knowledge of religion, religious teaching and moral reasoning to formulate judgements and present alternative or different viewpoints.</p> <p>A very good understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies.</p> <p>Uses and interprets religious/specialist language, terms and sources of wisdom and authority appropriately and in detail.</p>	10–12
3	<p>A good, generally detailed analysis and evaluation of the issue based on a generally accurate knowledge of religion, religious teaching and moral reasoning to formulate reasonable judgements and recognise alternative or different viewpoints. A good understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies.</p> <p>Uses and interprets some religious/specialist language, terms and/or sources of wisdom and authority.</p>	7–9
2	<p>Limited statement(s) of more than one viewpoint based on limited knowledge of religion, religious teaching and moral reasoning to formulate judgements. A limited understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies.</p> <p>Uses limited religious/specialist language, terms and/or few sources of wisdom and authority.</p>	4–6
1	<p>A poor, basic statement of a point of view and a very limited attempt or no attempt to formulate judgements or offer alternative or different viewpoints. Tenuous attempt or no attempt made to demonstrate how belief influences individuals, communities and societies.</p> <p>Poor use or no use, of religious/specialist language, terms and/or sources of wisdom and authority.</p>	1–3
0	No relevant point of view stated.	0

Question 2(d)

Band	Band Descriptor	Mark Total
5	<p>An excellent, highly detailed analysis and evaluation of the issue based on detailed knowledge of religion, religious teaching and moral reasoning to formulate judgements and present alternative or different viewpoints. An excellent understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies.</p> <p>An excellent, highly detailed consideration of non-religious beliefs, such as those held by humanists and atheists.</p> <p>Uses and interprets religious/specialist language, terms and sources of wisdom and authority extensively, accurately and appropriately.</p>	13–15
4	<p>A very good, detailed analysis and evaluation of the issue based on accurate knowledge of religion, religious teaching and moral reasoning to formulate judgements and present alternative or different viewpoints.</p> <p>A very good understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies.</p> <p>A very good, detailed consideration of non-religious beliefs, such as those held by humanists and atheists.</p> <p>Uses and interprets religious/specialist language, terms and sources of wisdom and authority appropriately and in detail.</p>	10–12
3	<p>A good, generally detailed analysis and evaluation of the issue based on a generally accurate knowledge of religion, religious teaching and moral reasoning to formulate reasonable judgements and recognise alternative or different viewpoints. A good understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies.</p> <p>A good, reasonably detailed consideration of non-religious beliefs, such as those held by humanists and atheists.</p> <p>Uses and interprets some religious/specialist language, terms and/or sources of wisdom and authority.</p>	7–9
2	<p>Limited statement(s) of more than one viewpoint based on limited knowledge of religion, religious teaching and moral reasoning to formulate judgements. A limited understanding of how belief influences individuals, communities and societies.</p> <p>A limited consideration of non-religious beliefs, such as those held by humanists and atheists.</p> <p>Uses limited religious/specialist language, terms and/or few sources of wisdom and authority.</p>	4–6
1	<p>A poor, basic statement of a point of view and a very limited attempt or no attempt to formulate judgements or offer alternative or different viewpoints. Tenuous attempt or no attempt made to demonstrate how belief influences individuals, communities and societies.</p> <p>A very basic consideration or no consideration of non-religious beliefs, such as those held by humanists and atheists.</p> <p>Poor use or no use, of religious/specialist language, terms and/or sources of wisdom and authority.</p>	1–3
0	No relevant point of view stated.	0

Additional note

The complete Eduqas specification is available on the Eduqas website.

There are a variety of digital resources and other materials to support the teaching of this specification on the Eduqas website.

Further information may be found in the specification content about alternative routes through the specification based on the study of other world faiths (Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism) not included in this textbook.

There is also information about an alternative Catholic route (Route B) through the specification.

1

Issues of relationships

► The Big Picture

Key Concepts



Adultery Voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and a person who is not their spouse.



Divorce To legally end a marriage.



Cohabitation To live together in a sexual relationship without being married or in a civil partnership.



Commitment A sense of dedication and obligation to someone or something.



Contraception Methods used to prevent a woman from becoming pregnant during or following sexual intercourse.



Gender equality People of all genders enjoying the same rights and opportunities in all aspects of their lives.



Responsibilities Actions/duties you are expected to carry out.



Roles Position, status or function of a person in society, as well as the characteristics and social behaviour expected of them.

Core Questions



Is there such a thing as a typical family?

Are women and men equal?

Should divorced individuals be allowed to remarry in places of worship?

Is cohabitation more popular than marriage?

Should same-sex marriages be allowed in a place of worship?

Do men and women have equal roles in leading worship?

Overview

Human relationships are at the heart of human existence. Many human beings are born into a family and the family is the basic building block of society. Because of the importance of relationships for many aspects of human life, all religions have attitudes to, and beliefs about, the importance and nature of human relationships.

In this theme you will have the opportunity to consider the attitudes towards and teachings about relationships of the three **monotheistic religions** of Christianity, Islam and Judaism and also the attitudes of a non-religious people, such as humanists.

You will also consider a number of the most important issues regarding relationships. These include:

- ▶ The changing nature and role of family life in Britain. Christianity, Islam and Judaism all regard marriage as the basis for family life and many humanists would agree with this view.
- ▶ Changing attitudes to marriage as people are increasingly choosing to cohabit or marry in non-religious ceremonies. These changing attitudes raise issues about topics such as adultery, separation, divorce and remarriage.
- ▶ Different attitudes to sexual relationships. All three religions have specific teachings about the nature and purpose of sex and the conditions under which contraception may be used. In twenty-first-century Britain there have been significant changes in attitudes to same-sex relationships.
- ▶ Attitudes towards men and women and issues of gender equality.

Task

Discuss some of the 'core questions' on page 1 in pairs. Write a brief answer to one of them, showing you have thought about different perspectives.



Diversity within religion and society

In order to understand the range of teachings and attitudes about human relationships in and between religions it is important to understand the diverse nature of religious belief in twenty-first-century Britain.

Some religious believers think that the teachings contained in sacred texts need to adapt or change because of changing views in society. Others do not believe in changing any teachings and hold them to be absolutely true. The diversity of attitudes and beliefs towards issues relating to relationships is explained by this.

In addition to the diversity within religious traditions, twenty-first-century Britain is an increasingly **secular** country with a steady decline in the number of people claiming to belong to any religion or belief. Many people who claim no religious affiliation may describe themselves as atheist, agnostic or humanist and may not accept traditional religious viewpoints. There is an increasing **pluralism** of religious belief and practice in British society and different religions will have different perspectives and viewpoints on human relationships. The increasing pluralism and secularisation in Britain has implications for changing attitudes towards issues concerning relationships.

Monotheistic religions religions that believe there is only one God.

Secular a society where religious beliefs and practices are increasingly less important to a growing number of people.

Pluralism the existence of different groups and beliefs within society.

Relationships

What is a family?

Task

- 1 In the quote on the right, Rabbi Schneerson says the 'family is a microcosm of the universe.' By this he means a representation of the universe in miniature. Why do you think he calls the family this? (The rest of the quote should help you.)



The family is the foundation for all human activity. It is where all human relationships begin and are developed. Within each family the norms and values of society are lived out in practice and a new generation of children are brought up into adulthood. The importance of the family for society may be summed up in the following quotation:

'The home should be perceived as a microcosm of the universe: The harmony that permeates the home and the family extends beyond, fostering harmony between families, communities, and ultimately the nations of the world. In the absence of harmony between one's own family, we can hardly expect to find harmony between strangers.'

Rabbi Menachem Schneerson



Task

Look at each type of family discussed on this page. In pairs discuss the positives and negatives of each family type.



Types of family

There are many different types of family. The traditional form of the family, an extended family, has been replaced by a variety of family forms.

The most common types of family are:

Nuclear family

The most common type of family in modern Britain is the nuclear family. It consists of two parents and one or more child(ren) all living in the same house.

Extended family

The extended family structure consists of a number of adults and children who are related living in the same home. This may include many relatives living together in close proximity; for example, cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents all living together and sharing in family roles.



Extended families consist of different relatives all living together

Reconstituted family

Some divorced adults choose to remarry or live in a co-habiting relationship. This may lead to the creation of a reconstituted family. This type of family structure is made up of a mix of step-parents and step-children.



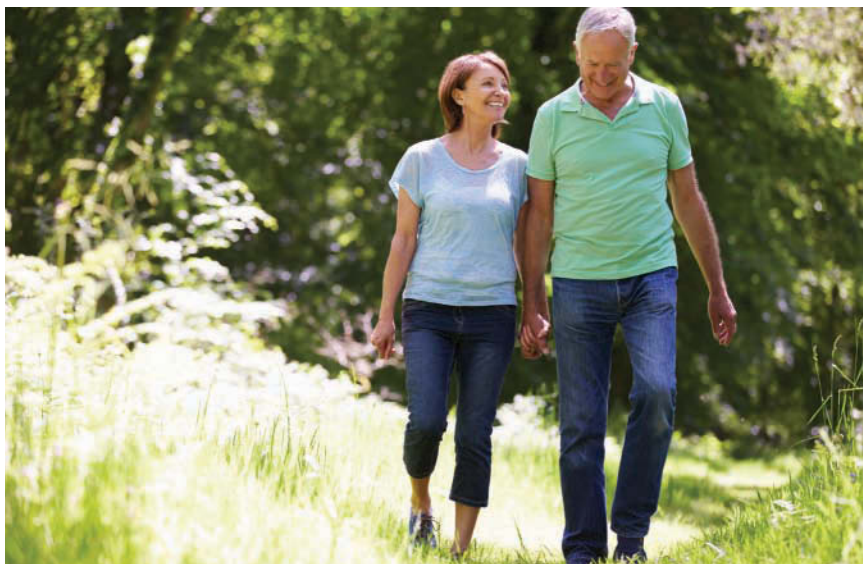
Single parent families are becoming more common in Britain

Single parent family

The single parent family is where one parent raises one or more children alone. The number of single parent families has continued to rise in modern Britain as a result of an increasing rate of divorce.

Childless family

A childless family is where a married or co-habiting couple are either unable to have children naturally or decide not to have children. Same-sex couples are often a childless family.



Some couples decide not to have children

► Roles of men and women in the family

Key Concepts



Roles Position, status or function of a person in society, as well as the characteristics and social behaviour expected of them.



Responsibilities Actions/duties you are expected to carry out.

Within a family the members have different **roles** and **responsibilities**. These could include:

- caring for children
- caring for other family members, for example looking after elderly relatives
- maintaining the family home
- earning money to support the family.

Both women and men aim to provide love, comfort, protection and support for each other and for any children. Both have a role to play in the education of children to become responsible adults and future parents. They should show mutual support of each other. Men and women are both important role models for children.

Traditional views

In the past Christianity, Islam and Judaism all held a very traditional view of the role of women and men in family life. The man was responsible for providing for the family through work and the mother was responsible for domestic life. The views of the three religions were '**patriarchal**' (the opposite of **matriarchal**) in the sense that the man was seen very much as the leader of the family.

For example, the following quotation from the Qur'an shows a very traditional view of the family roles. Men are in charge of the family unit, with women referred to as their 'subjects'. Women are responsible for the home and children:

'God's Apostle said, "Surely! Everyone of you is a guardian and is responsible for his charges: The Imam [ruler] of the people is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects; a man is the guardian of his family [household] and is responsible for his subjects; a woman is the guardian of her husband's home and of his children and is responsible for them; and the slave of a man is a guardian of his master's property and is responsible for it. Surely, everyone of you is a guardian and responsible for his charges."

Hadith Sahih Bukhari 9:89:252

The last sentence, however, could be used to support a more modern view in which both parents are responsible for the children in a family.

Patriarchal a family or society controlled by men.

Matriarchal a family or society controlled by women.

Task

Look at the different roles in the family. Which do you think were traditionally carried out by:

- women
- men
- both men and women?

Do you think this has now changed in society? Discuss as a class, using evidence from these pages.

Christians, Jews and Muslims all regard family as the most important foundation of society and as such believe in the need to create strong nuclear and extended families.

Changing views

These traditional views are changing, however, and women and men are now often regarded as much more of a partnership in family life with shared responsibilities.

It is now much more common for women to go on working when they get married and have a family, and increasing numbers of men are taking on the role of 'house-husband' while their wives or partners go out to work. In 2014 the Office for National Statistics reported that the number of 'stay at home' dads has doubled since 1993, with over 229,000 fathers staying at home to look after their children.

The law is also changing to reflect this. In 2015 it became possible for men and women to share parental leave. Parents can decide who takes leave to care for the baby, rather than it automatically being the mother.

Task

The photos and the list below show some examples of how faith is experienced in family settings. For each, explain how the family is important in strengthening religious belief and/or practice.



What have families got to do with religion?

Religion and the family are interlinked in many ways.

For many people it is in the home where religious belief is 'taught' and 'caught'. The family is a domestic arena in which religious belief, practices and teachings are lived out. Family life is where religion is experienced by young children and young adults through the example of their parents. Most religious believers think it is a religious duty for parents to bring up their children to share in their faith and teach the values which are important to them, such as the Ten Commandments. These basic values, or attitudes to living, are shared by Christians, Muslims and Jews: respect your parents, no killing or murder, no adultery, no stealing, no lies and no envy or greed.

In terms of religious practice, parents:

- ▶ are expected to take their children to a place of worship
- ▶ teach them how to read and understand sacred texts
- ▶ teach them how and when to pray
- ▶ join in the celebration of festivals
- ▶ understand the importance of rites of passage.

Many people today, such as humanists, think that children should make up their own ideas about religion or that parents should not share their religious beliefs and faith with their children. Humanists believe all people should be able to make a free choice about accepting or rejecting religious beliefs.



1 Jewish family worshipping together in a synagogue.



2 Christian family baptising their child.



3 Muslims celebrating the festival of Eid.

Worldwide family

For many religious believers, those who share in their faith are regarded as an extended family. Christians use the phrase, 'People of God' for all Christians, and Muslims use the word 'ummah' for the worldwide community of Islam.

'It is very important to reaffirm the family, which remains the essential cell of society and the Church; young people, who are the face of the Church's future; women, who play a fundamental role in passing on the faith and who are a daily source of strength in a society that carries this faith forward and renews it.'

Pope Francis

In the Christian tradition, the quotation from Pope Francis reinforces two ideas:

- ▶ The family is the basis of human society.
- ▶ The role of the mother in passing on religious faith is fundamental.

▶ The nature and purpose of marriage

Key Concept



Commitment A sense of dedication and obligation to someone or something.



Humanist attitudes to marriage



Humanists view marriage as a significant part of human life and understand why a couple may want a special ceremony to show their commitment. Such a ceremony may reflect the important nature of marriage and the significance for a couple and society but would include no religious aspect.

The traditional teaching of Christianity, Islam and Judaism has been that marriage is the basis of family life. Marriage is regarded as:

- ▶ God given
- ▶ the best basis for creating an environment into which children should be born
- ▶ a lifelong **commitment**.

A wedding ceremony is an important rite of passage in many religious traditions. It is a celebration that recognises the importance of marriage and it includes ritual and symbolism, which often reflect the purposes of marriage.

Christian attitudes to marriage



Some Christians regard marriage as a gift given to humanity by God – a sacrament. In the Christian wedding service the phrase 'ordained by God' is used giving marriage a very special significance for all Christians. The vows exchanged between a bride and a groom in a Christian wedding ceremony reflect this.

In the Gospels Jesus teaches about the importance of marriage. This refers back to the idea in Genesis that, as part of God's creation, God made man and woman. Jesus uses powerful language to convey the meaning that marriage is



the complete joining together of two people in a very special way. It is implied that the relationship becomes the most important human relationship for the couple who are married.

'But at the beginning of creation God "made them male and female". "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh". So they are no longer two, but one flesh'.

Mark 10:6-8

The phrase from the marriage service 'what God has joined together, let no man put asunder' is interpreted to mean marriage should be a lifelong union.

Christian wedding ceremony

Christians believe that marriage is a gift from God and traditionally Christian marriage ceremonies have taken place in a chapel or church to reflect this belief.

A typical wedding ceremony in the Church of England is performed by a vicar and would be as follows:

- The vicar welcomes everyone and gives a short sermon on the nature and purpose of marriage.
- The couple exchange their vows which reflect the main Christian beliefs about marriage:

*To have and to hold
From this day forward
For better for worse
For richer for poorer
In sickness and in health
To love and to cherish
Till death do us part
According to God's holy law
And this is my solemn vow.*

- The couple exchange rings as a sign of commitment and say:

*With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

- The vicar declares the couple married.
- There are prayers and Bible readings and the priest gives a sermon.
There may also be hymns with an appropriate theme.
- The legal requirement in Britain is for the newly married couple to sign the register, witnessed by a registrar and witnesses, which makes the marriage ceremony legal.

Different denominations have different names for the member of the clergy who carries out the wedding ceremony:

- minister (Baptist Church)
- pastor (Evangelical Churches)
- priest (Catholic Church)
- vicar (Church of England)



■ In an Orthodox wedding the ceremony has a different format. During the wedding ceremony a bride and groom are 'crowned'. The placing of crowns on the heads of the couple represents the power of the Holy Spirit.





■ In an Anglican Church the couple always marry in front of an altar or table.



■ In a non-conformist chapel there is no altar so a couple marry in front of a table or lectern. There is more of an emphasis on Bible readings and hymn singing.

Tasks

- 1 The Church of England wedding vows reflect the main Christian teachings about marriage. Can you match the vows to their meaning?

Vows	Meaning
(a) To have and to hold	(i) To be physically together in a sexual relationship
(b) From this day forward	(ii) That the marriage is ordained by God
(c) For better for worse	(iii) That the marriage should last whether the couple are wealthy or poor
(d) For richer for poorer	(iv) That the marriage is expected to be a lifelong commitment
(e) In sickness and in health	(v) This day marks the beginning of the marriage
(f) To love and to cherish	(vi) That the vows are a serious commitment taken by the couple
(g) Till death do us part	(vii) That the marriage should last through both good times and times when life is more difficult
(h) According to God's holy law	(viii) The couple should support and care for each other
(i) And this is my solemn vow.	(ix) And in spite of mental or physical illness

- 2 Look at the two photos of different Christian wedding ceremonies above. Choose one or two symbols which show that this is a Christian wedding ceremony.

Explain what the symbol means and how it is related to Christian views on the nature and purpose of marriage.

Muslim attitudes to marriage

In the Qur'an there are a number of references to the importance of marriage and how it is the basis of family life. All Muslims are encouraged to marry in order to have a companion and, although divorce is permitted, the ideal is that marriage is for life.

The following quote from the Qur'an shows that Muslims believe marriage is a gift from God and that people

should marry. It says that within this relationship the couple are able to show affection towards one another and are able to support each other in their religious faith.

'And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.'

Qur'an 30:21

The Muslim wedding ceremony

The nikah is a simple marriage ceremony in which a man and woman declare their commitment to one another as husband and wife. It might take place in a mosque, where it could be led by an imam. However, it may also be at the bride's home.

- The wali or woman's guardian in marriage offers the bride to the groom.
- There must be two witnesses who have attained adulthood and are good Muslims.
- There is the payment of mahr (dowry or marriage gift) by the groom to the bride.
- A marriage contract is signed by the bride and groom and witnesses. For the nikah there must be the consent of both parties.
- A sermon is given to bless the marriage.
- Vows are not necessary but may be exchanged if the bride and groom choose to do so. Traditionally the bride would vow to be honest, obedient and faithful and the husband would vow to be helpful and faithful.
- The wedding ceremony ends with prayers for the bride and groom, their families, the local Muslim community and the worldwide Muslim community.
- The wedding banquet or walima is traditionally held by the groom after the nikah has taken place. It may take place immediately following the nikah or on the following day but the purpose of the banquet is for family and friends to share in the groom's happiness on the occasion of his marriage and to give thanks to God.

A separate civil ceremony must also take place to make the marriage legal.



■ Muslim weddings can take place in various settings



Temporary unannounced marriage

Some Shi'a Muslims, those known as Twelver Shi'as, practise Nikah Mut'ah, which means temporary unannounced marriage.

This is a form of marriage that lasts only for a limited period of time. It is a formal arrangement; there is a contract (a nikah) which specifies the terms of the arrangement, including the length of the marriage and any rules of behaviour during the marriage. The man may give the woman a gift (dowry/mahr).

Historically, during the time of Muhammad, the practice was used by men who were travelling away from home for a long period of time to allow them to take a wife while they were away. Today in the UK some Shi'a Muslims are engaging in temporary unannounced marriages because they want to date and socialise with members of the opposite sex and wouldn't otherwise be allowed to do so under Shari'ah law.

Twelver Shi'as point to passages in the Qur'an and hadith that say temporary unannounced marriage is acceptable.

Sunni Muslims and other Shi'a groups say that temporary unannounced marriage is completely wrong. They say that it is simply a means of having sex before marriage, which is not permitted in Islam. Sunni Muslims point to the teaching of the Second Caliph (second successor to Muhammad in Sunni Islam, see pages 224–25) who banned temporary unannounced marriage.

Task

Read the information about the Muslim wedding ceremony and create a spider diagram which summarises its key features.



Jewish attitudes to marriage



Jews regard marriage as being a blessing from God and it is an important spiritual ceremony. Both partners must enter marriage with the right intentions and are expected to respect and be faithful to each other. Marriage is seen as the basis of family life.

Weddings can take place in a synagogue, or any suitable place. The ceremony is made up of two parts:

- The kiddushin
- The nisuin



■ A Jewish wedding ceremony being held under a huppah.



The Kiddushin

- The ketubah is the formal marriage contract that states how the husband will care for his wife. The wife will retain the ketubah throughout the marriage.
- A wedding will be conducted by a rabbi and the main part of the ceremony will take place under a chuppah. This is a shelter with four sides, often with a blessing in Hebrew written across it. It represents the Jewish home.
- Under the chuppah the groom will make the declaration: 'Behold you are consecrated to me by means of this ring according to the rituals of Moses and Israel'. He will also read the ketubah aloud.
- Two blessings are said in the kiddushin – one for the wine and the second for the commitment that the bride and groom make to each other.
- The groom stamps on a glass. This could act as a reminder of the fragility of marriage or some people believe it is a reminder of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem.
- The groom places a ring on the bride's index finger, which is believed to be connected to the heart. The round ring is a symbol of eternity.

The nisuin

In the second part of the ceremony seven blessings are said. These blessings praise God for creating the human race and bringing happiness to the couple. The blessings are:

- 1 Blessed are you, God, who brings forth fruit from the vine.
- 2 Blessed are you, God who shapes the universe. All things created speak of your glory.
- 3 Blessed are you, Holy One, who fashions each person.
- 4 We bless you, God, for forming each person in your image. You have planted within us a vision of you and given us the means that we may flourish through time. Blessed are you, Creator of humanity.
- 5 May Israel, once bereft of her children, now delight as they gather together in joy. Blessed are you, God, who lets Zion rejoice with her children.
- 6 Let these loving friends taste of the bliss you gave to the first man and woman in the Garden of Eden in the days of old. Blessed are you, the Presence who dwells with bride and groom in delight.
- 7 Blessed are You, who lights the world with happiness and contentment, love and companionship, peace and friendship, bridegroom and bride. Let the mountains of Israel dance! Let the gates of Jerusalem ring with the sounds of joy, song, merriment, and delight — the voice of the groom and the voice of the bride, the happy shouts of their friends and companions. We bless you, God, who brings bride and groom together to rejoice in each other.

Task

Read the information on the Jewish wedding ceremony. What key beliefs about the nature and purpose of marriage does it symbolise? Try and find at least five symbols and their meaning.



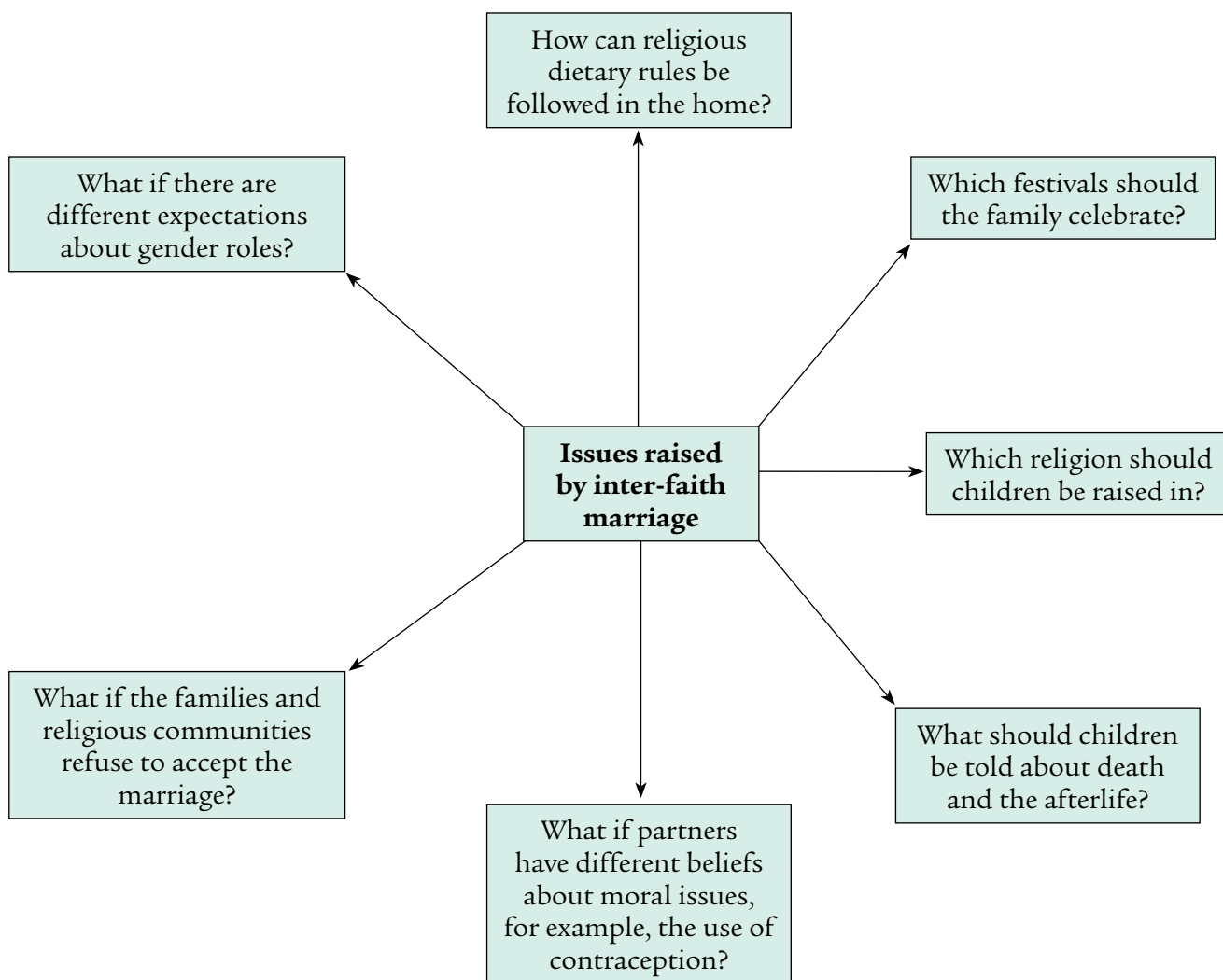
► Marriage outside religious traditions

In a pluralist society inter-faith marriage – where two people of different faiths marry – is an issue which religions have to respond to. Some of the issues raised by inter-faith marriage are outlined in the mind map below. There may also be an issue about where an inter-faith wedding ceremony can take place.

Examples of issues raised by inter-faith marriages are:

- In the Christian Orthodox tradition a marriage in church only takes place if an Orthodox Christian is marrying a baptised Christian.
- In the Catholic tradition the partner who is not Catholic must agree to any children of the marriage being allowed to follow the Catholic faith.
- In the Jewish Orthodox tradition only Jews may marry each other in a synagogue.

Where there is an issue about people marrying in a place of worship because of different religious beliefs, it is possible to have a civil ceremony followed, for example, by a religious blessing.



Cohabitation

Jewish attitudes to cohabitation



For many Jews it is important that couples get married rather than cohabit. In the Torah, for two people to live as husband and wife, they require the blessings of God. This may only take place when they declare marriage vows. In practice though, some Jewish people do choose to cohabit.

Key Concept



Cohabitation To live together in a sexual relationship, without being married, or in a civil partnership.

Cohabitation is where two people who are not married live in a romantic partnership which may involve an intimate and sexual relationship. Some couples choose to cohabit and never marry, while some couples will marry after a period of cohabitation.

In 2012 there were 5.9 million people cohabiting in the UK and it was the fastest growing family type.

Muslim attitudes to cohabitation



Although in practice some Muslims may choose to cohabit, according to the teachings of Islam it is always wrong. Muslims believe that for a couple to live together in a sexual relationship they must first be married.

Christian attitudes to cohabitation



Although Christian doctrines have traditionally prohibited cohabitation there has been an increasingly more tolerant line taken in some denominations towards couples who cohabit. Liberal Anglicans, for example, accept cohabitation where it is part of a committed relationship, although they still believe that marriage would be the ideal.

However, some denominations disagree with cohabitation as they believe it devalues the special and sacred nature of sex, which should only take place within marriage. The Catholic Church and more conservative Anglicans do not accept cohabitation and expect a couple to not have sex before marriage. Some Baptist Churches may refuse to marry a couple who are cohabiting.

Adultery

Key Concept



Adultery Voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and a person who is not their spouse.

Extra-marital sex or **adultery** is when a married person has a sexual relationship with someone other than their husband or wife. In Britain the vast majority of people disapprove of adultery on moral and social grounds and the law recognises adultery as a justifiable reason for the granting of a divorce.

Christianity, Islam and Judaism all consider adultery a great sin. Adultery is clearly forbidden in the Ten Commandments.

Task

Acrostics are a good way of remembering key information. Can you think of one for adultery? The first letter has been done for you:

Against the Ten Commandments

D
U
L
T
E
R
Y

Christian attitudes to adultery

Christianity teaches that adultery is wrong for the following reasons:

- Marriage is sexually exclusive and should not be shared with anyone else.
- The Ten Commandments forbid adultery:

'You shall not commit adultery.'

Exodus 20:14

- Marriage is a sacrament – a gift from God – and adultery goes against this.
- Committing adultery destroys the special relationship between a husband and wife.
- Committing adultery can harm the family unit and cause the partner to feel cheated and betrayed.

Jewish attitudes to adultery

Judaism teaches that adultery is wrong for the following reasons:

- The Ten Commandments forbid adultery:

'You shall not commit adultery.'

Exodus 20:14

- Sex is only acceptable within a marriage.
- Halakhah (code of conduct) emphasises that a husband should be sexually considerate towards his wife and not be sexually disloyal.
- Men and women are most fulfilled through marriage, which is referred to as 'kiddushim' (sanctified).

Muslim attitudes to adultery

Islam teaches that adultery is wrong for the following reasons:

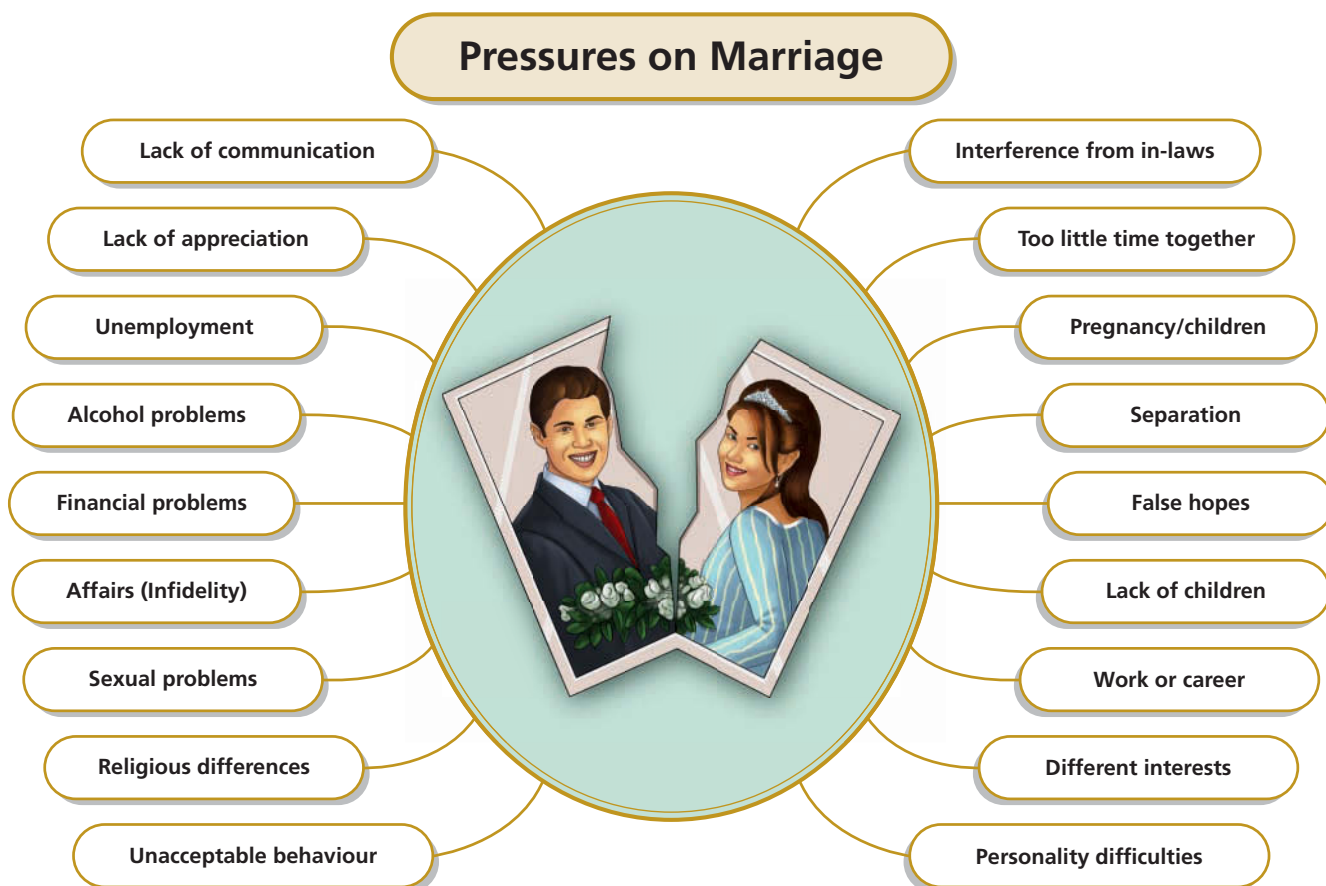
- Sex outside of marriage is generally strongly disapproved of.
- Marriage is a life-long union based on trust, morality and devotion.
- Vows promising to be faithful to one another might be exchanged in the marriage ceremony.
- Adultery is seen as harmful to society, so against the unity and peace of the ummah (brotherhood).
- Adultery is seen as a form of theft of the worst possible sort.
- The Qur'an teaches that adultery is wrong:

'And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way.'

Qur'an 17:32

► Why some marriages fail

All religions understand that there is conflict in human relationships, including within marriages. Within a marriage there are many things that may cause conflict as the diagram below shows.



Task

Look at the pressures on marriage diagram. Can you categorise the pressures under different headings?

Once you have categorised them discuss in pairs the key causes of conflict in a marriage.

When people argue or are in conflict, making up is essential and is known as 'reconciliation'.

Religious communities can help couples who are having relationship problems to reconcile. The religious leader might offer counselling and guidance to the couple, or the wider community might offer support and prayers.

However, sometimes a couple cannot reconcile, in which case they might decide they no longer wish to be married and set about ending their relationship. This might involve:

- divorce – the legal ending of marriage
- separation – deciding to live separately
- annulment – a legal way of cancelling a marriage in the Catholic Church.

Eventually a person who has been married may want to marry someone else. This is known as remarriage.

▶ Divorce and separation

Key Concept



Divorce To legally end a marriage.

When a couple's married relationship breaks down they are likely to separate and decide to live apart. Separation may only be for a short period until they can get a **divorce** or some couples may not get a divorce and just remain separated. For example, the Catholic Church does not permit divorce. So some Catholics many remain separated rather than divorce.

If one of the partners wants to remarry they need to have a divorce first; marriage to someone else while still married is known as **bigamy** and is illegal.

Divorce is the legal ending of a marriage and couples need to apply via the court system.

Bigamy entering into a marriage with someone while still being legally married to another person.

Christian attitudes to divorce and separation



There are significant differences between the different Christian denominations when it comes to attitudes towards divorce.

The Catholic Church does not recognise divorce and regards marriage as a lifelong commitment. In the situation where a marriage breaks down and there is no chance of a reconciliation the two options for a Catholic are either an annulment or separation. Catholics base this belief on teachings of the Bible, for example:

'Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."

Matthew 19:8–9

'Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.'

Mark 10:9

Catholics who are separated are expected not to cohabit with anyone else and if they do this they are not allowed

to receive Holy Communion during mass. Of course some Catholics do get divorced, however, this would not be recognised by the Catholic Church.

In other Christian traditions there is diversity of viewpoints. Because divorce is the legal ending of a marriage by the state, all other Christian denominations accept divorce but the issue becomes complicated if a divorced Christian wants to remarry. For example, in the Anglican church divorce is accepted but remarriage of a divorced person is left to the personal decision of a minister.

The diagram on the next page outlines some of the different denominations' attitudes towards divorce.

Annulment

An annulment (or 'nullity of marriage' or 'nullity of domestic partnership') is when a court says your marriage or domestic partnership is not legally valid. The Catholic Church teaches that annulment is the only acceptable way a marriage can be dissolved. An annulment may be granted for the non-consummation of marriage, which means a married couple have not had sex, or where it is proved the marriage should not have taken place. →

Is divorce acceptable?

MAYBE

Depends on individual circumstances.

NO

It is not believed to be God's intention.

It is a breaking of the solemn promises made before God and the Christian family.

Anglicans

- accept divorce, as UK law allows it
- discourages remarriage (but if chosen a non-church wedding is preferred): some vicars will agree to a service of prayer and dedication.

Non-conformists (e.g. Methodist/United Reformed)

- divorce best avoided
- remarriage permitted if it seems suitable or acceptable to all concerned
- no minister can be forced to conduct a remarriage against their will.

Catholics:

- do not recognise divorce
- marriage is a sacrament that cannot be dissolved except for special reasons (such as one partner not freely choosing to marry)
- some marriages can be annulled, where there are good reasons (such as the marriage never having been consummated)
- if a Catholic remarries without an annulment they can attend Mass but cannot receive Holy Communion.

Jewish attitudes to divorce and separation

Task

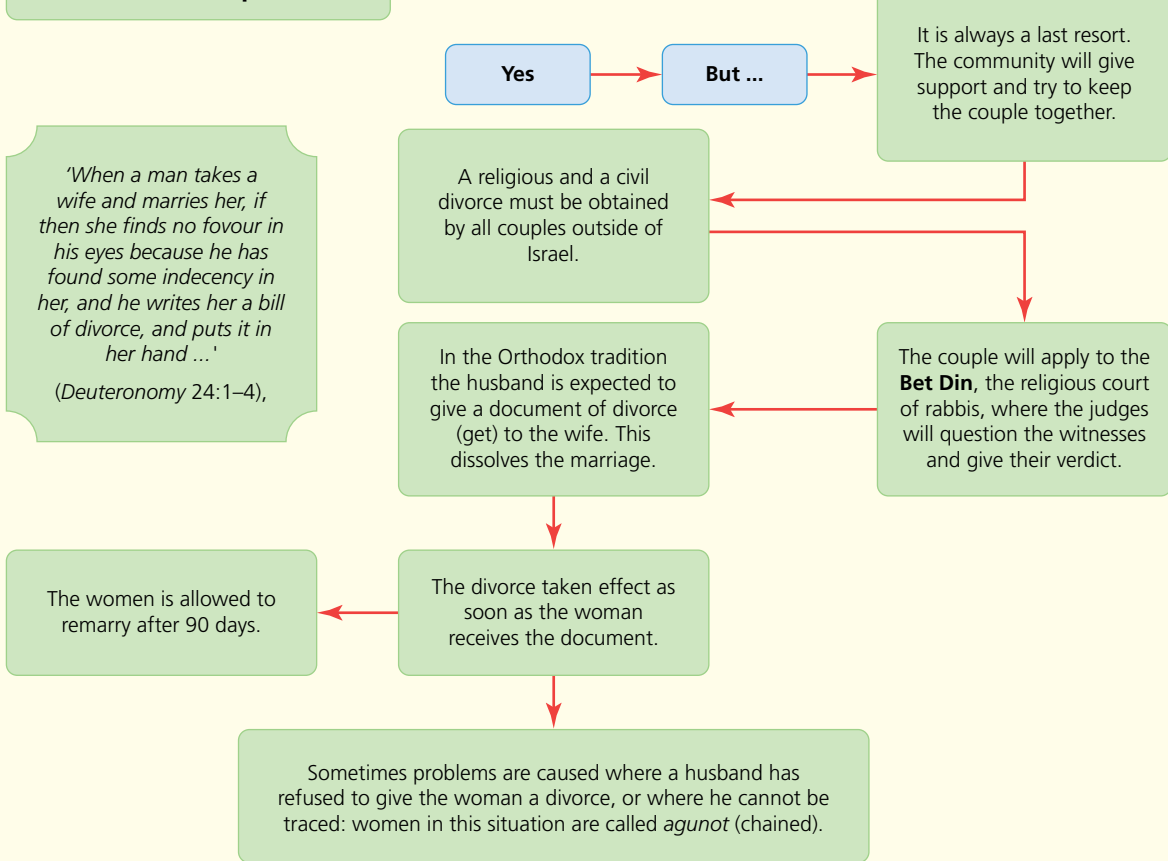
Read the quote from Deuteronomy 24:1–4 on the next page. Explain how it supports the Jewish attitudes to divorce shown in the diagram.

Judaism recognises that some marriages fail and therefore accepts divorce. As well as applying for a civil divorce, which legally ends the marriage, orthodox Jewish people wishing to divorce must also apply for a 'get'. The get is a religious certificate of divorce.

Without the get there would be problems with either member of the couple remarrying in a synagogue. The couple obtain the get by appearing in front of a Bet Din – a Jewish court. The diagram on the next page outlines Jewish attitudes towards divorce.



Is divorce acceptable?



Muslim attitudes to divorce and separation

Muslims believe that married couples experiencing conflict should try to reconcile. Before a divorce takes place an imam and the Muslim community would seek to try and help a couple.

The idea of reconciliation before divorce is referred to in this passage from the Qur'an.

'And if you fear dissension between the two, send an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire reconciliation, God will cause it between them. Indeed, God is ever Knowing and Aware.'

Qur'an 4:35

However, Muslims reluctantly accept that reconciliation is not always possible, so do accept divorce. When divorce does occur Muslims believe each partner should be free to remarry in the future. As well as a civil divorce, which legally ends the marriage, Muslims believe that the marriage must also be ended in the eyes of God. They can apply to a Shari'ah council to obtain an Islamic divorce.

There is a period of three months after they apply to the council, to give the couple time to reconcile and to ensure the woman is not pregnant (as the quote below from the Qur'an explains). At the end of this period a religious divorce is granted.

'Divorce is twice. Then, either keep [her] in an acceptable manner or release [her] with good treatment. And it is not lawful for you to take anything of what you have given them unless both fear that they will not be able to keep [within] the limits of Allah . But if you fear that they will not keep [within] the limits of Allah , then there is no blame upon either of them concerning that by which she ransoms herself. These are the limits of Allah , so do not transgress them. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah – it is those who are the wrongdoers.'

Qur'an 2:229

Task

In groups of three, each take one of the quotes on divorce from the Qur'an:

- Qur'an 4:35
- Qur'an 2:229

Summarise what it says about divorce in two to three bullet points and explain it to the rest of the group. Then copy and complete the table below:

Quote	Key points about divorce	How it supports Muslim attitudes to divorce
Qur'an 4:35		
Qur'an 2:229		

Is divorce acceptable?

SOMETIMES

As a last resort. The Prophet Muhammad said: 'Of all the things which have been permitted divorce is the most hated by Allah.' It is expected that the family will try to help the couple to be reconciled.

If the couple do decide to divorce then: The husband must state in front of witnesses on three separate occasions that the marriage is over.

A period of three months begins (*iddah*). The couple will stay in the same house but not sleep together. (*This ensures that there is no confusion about who is the father of any children born after the divorce.*)

If the couple finally decide to divorce, then the wife is given the final part of her dowry. Both parties should act toward the other with kindness and charity.

Humanist attitudes to divorce and separation

Humanists believe that marriage and family breakdown is best avoided and would say that couples should try to work through their difficulties. This is particularly important when there are children involved. However, humanists recognise that this is sometimes not possible and believe people only have this life so it is important this life is enjoyed and lived to the full. When people are unhappy it is acceptable for them to separate and divorce.

▶ Remarriage

Remarriage is where a person who has previously divorced decides to marry again.

Different religious traditions have different viewpoints about remarriage and there are often differences of opinion within traditions.

Catholics, for example, who decide to go against Church teachings and get a civil divorce may not remarry in a Catholic church. Divorced Catholics may choose to remarry in a different place of worship or in a civil ceremony. In the Anglican tradition, a minister may exercise personal judgement in deciding to remarry a divorcee depending on the circumstances of a divorce. Some Anglican ministers will not marry a divorced person but may perform a church blessing ceremony after a registry office wedding.

In Islam, remarriage is not an issue, because divorce is accepted. Remarriage is encouraged because there is no idea of celibacy in Islam. In Judaism remarriage is also encouraged.

▶ Arranged marriage

Within the Muslim community some Muslims may decide to have an arranged marriage. This is where parents choose a suitable partner for their daughter or son.

In a strict Muslim society where women and men do not freely mix, arranged marriages serve an important function in matching Muslim partners, based on the wisdom of parents to select a suitable partner for their daughter or son. No Muslim should be compelled to marry someone against their will.

Task

List some of the advantages and disadvantages of arranged marriages.



► End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Adultery
- Divorce
- Cohabitation
- Commitment
- Responsibilities
- Roles

Key teachings about:

- the nature and purpose of families
- the roles of men and women in family life
- marriage
- cohabitation
- divorce and separation
- remarriage
- arranged marriage

Knowledge check

- 1 Write a short paragraph (roughly three sentences) to explain what is meant by divorce.
- 2 Write a long paragraph (roughly eight to ten sentences) to explain how adultery, divorce and separation are linked.
- 3 Consider the following statement:

'Cohabitation undermines the sanctity of marriage.'

Draw a table with two columns. Add five reasons for agreeing and five reasons for disagreeing with the statement.

Agree	Disagree

- 4 Create a mind map diagram to show the main types of families in twenty-first-century Britain.
- 5 Rewrite the Church of England wedding vows for twenty-first-century Britain.

Skills Link

- 1 What is meant by 'vows' in a religious marriage service?
- 2 Describe ways in which families are important in a faith community.

The Big Question

'Parents should allow their children to choose their own religion.'

Your task

Respond to the statement above, showing that you have considered more than one point of view. Give reasoned judgements on the validity and strength of these views.

Task

For both of the religions (or denominations) that you are studying, you need to explain in detail religious teachings about **divorce**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Christianity and a second one for your other chosen religion or denomination. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote

This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Christians such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/Because of this they

Their beliefs do/do not differ because

■ Sexual relationships

All religions regard sexual relationships as an important part of being human. Sex is regarded as a gift from God and part of God's creation. It allows for the continuation of the human race and is an important part of human identity. It is also a physical way in which people may express love to each other.

Promiscuity having a number of casual sexual relationships.

Fidelity two people being sexually faithful to each other.

Procreation reproduction.

Promiscuity is regarded as something which is always wrong, or a sin, because religions teach that sex should only be part of a committed relationship between two people who have deep feelings for each other. As sex can result in children, **fidelity** in sexual relationships is really important for the upbringing of children by two parents.

► Purpose of sex

Sex is a powerful human instinct and drive. For most of the history of the world it has been linked with **procreation** but the development of successful and widely available contraceptive methods, such as the contraceptive pill, has allowed the act of sex to be divorced from the act of procreation. It has allowed people to have sex without the prospect of becoming pregnant and it has significantly changed attitudes towards sexual activity. Religious views on the purpose of sex may have changed as a result of the availability of contraception but promiscuity is still not deemed as acceptable.

Christian attitudes to sex



Christians believe that sex should generally take place within marriage. It is viewed as a gift from God and is holy and sacred. This is why it should be something that you only do with the person you love.

Casual sex (promiscuity) is seen as devaluing both people and sex itself and is unacceptable. There is concern that children may be born outside of a stable home environment.

Jewish attitudes to sex



Jews believe that sex should take place within marriage and it is seen as one of the three stages of marriage:

- Betrothal (the promise to marry)
- Contract (the wedding)
- Consummation (sex).

Muslim attitudes to sex



Muslims believe that sex should happen within marriage – married partners are expected to meet each other's needs, including their sexual needs. It is considered an act of worship.

For a Muslim, sex outside of marriage is wrong as shown in the following quotation from the Qur'an:

'And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way.'

Qur'an 17:32

Because Muslims believe sex is an act of worship this means it may only take place within marriage. To have sex outside of marriage is simply wrong because it may lead to promiscuity.



The Silver Ring thing encourages young people to wear a silver ring on their wedding finger until they are married to show they will remain chaste.

Task

Discuss whether you think people who marry as virgins will have a stronger bond of trust and commitment.

► Chastity

Chastity is the state in which a person does not have sexual relationships until married. In the traditional teachings of Christianity, Judaism and Islam a person would remain chaste until marriage. In America the 'silver ring thing' was promoted as a physical expression of this viewpoint. Unmarried Christian teenagers and young adults wear a silver ring on their 'wedding finger' to show they will remain chaste until they are married, when married, they will replace the silver ring with a wedding ring.

► Celibacy

Celibacy is when a person decides never to have a sexual relationship. In the Catholic faith, for example, there has been a tradition of celibacy. Monks, nuns and priests take a vow of celibacy. This is a decision not to marry or to have any sexual relationships. It is made as a positive choice of lifestyle in order to dedicate one's life to the service of God.

Islam and Judaism teach that an adult should marry in order to have a companion in life and that no one needs to live a celibate life.

► Contraception and family planning

Key Concept



Contraception Methods used to prevent a woman from becoming pregnant during or following sexual intercourse.

Contraception means deliberately using methods to prevent pregnancy. There are two types: artificial and natural. Natural contraception is where a person abstains from sex during the time of the month when a woman is most likely to conceive. Artificial contraception methods include the use of the contraceptive pill or injection and barrier methods to prevent conception.

Religious attitudes towards contraception are very varied.



There are many types of contraception available, some types (like condoms) act as a barrier to stop the sperm reaching the egg. Other types, for example the contraceptive pill, may prevent an egg from being released or prevent fertilised eggs from implanting in the womb.

Christian attitudes to contraception

Most Protestants believe in the use of different forms of contraception for family planning purposes but the Catholic Church has opposed artificial methods of contraception. In the current debate about the effects of population growth on the planet, many Catholics find this particular teaching difficult to follow and will instead follow their conscience. Many Catholics also want to enjoy sex without the worry of having more children than they can look after or afford. The complexity of any discussion about contraception may be demonstrated in reference to Thomas Aquinas' Five Precepts.

Thomas Aquinas and Natural Law



■ St Thomas Aquinas was a Dominican friar who was a leading theologian and philosopher of the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages.

Natural Law is an ethical theory associated mainly with Thomas Aquinas. An ethical theory tries to help guide humans on how to live and how to make moral decisions.

Aquinas thought there were some fundamental laws which were laid down by God and are the basis of how humans should live their lives. He set out five primary precepts:

- 1 Self-preservation/preservation of the innocent
- 2 Continuation of the species through reproduction
- 3 Education of children
- 4 To live in society
- 5 To worship God

From these he set out secondary precepts or rules which help us fulfil the primary precepts. For example, the second primary precept says that humans must reproduce, so a secondary precept might be that contraception is wrong as that would prevent reproduction.

The Catholic Church takes an absolutist view of Aquinas's Natural Law, which means it believes that the rules he laid down should always be followed. Therefore it states that contraception should not be used because it goes against Natural Law.

However, other Christians and some Catholics believe that Natural Law shouldn't be seen as an absolute set of rules that should never be broken. Instead, God gave humans intelligence and creativity in order that they should use their conscience to decide what is right in a given situation. There may be some circumstances where using contraception is the responsible and moral thing to do. For example, many Christians are concerned about the overpopulation of the planet and contraception is a way of controlling this. Similarly, contraception doesn't just prevent pregnancy but also stops the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, so is a good thing for this reason.

Muslim attitudes to contraception

The Qur'an does not make any explicit references to contraception, although it is generally accepted that a form of contraception was used during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. As a result Muslims believe in the use of contraception, but certain criteria must be met.

These are:

- that it must not harm the body
- that it only should be used if both the husband and wife consent to its use.

Most Muslims accept the use of contraception to limit the size of families but would not generally accept permanent forms of contraception, such as sterilisation.

Jewish attitudes to contraception

In Judaism there is a diversity of views over the use of contraception. Orthodox Jews, for example, may regard natural methods of contraception as the only permissible form of contraception. Reform Jews would accept the use

of any contraceptive method to limit family size. In common with Christians and Muslims, all Jews would take the view that contraception must be agreed between a husband and a wife.

Humanist attitudes to contraception

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The humanist viewpoint is that contraception is permissible in order to help people to enjoy their lives and limit the size of families. Sex is regarded as an expression of human affection and love between two people and it has no religious or sacred aspect.

Science should be used to improve the quality of life for human beings, therefore if the use of contraception limits the size of families and leads to an improvement in the quality of life it should be used.

Same-sex relationships



Same-sex couples in the UK can either marry or have a civil partnership.

In the past romantic relationships have been seen as a relationship between a man and a woman rather than between two men or between two women. It was only in 1967 that homosexuality was decriminalised in the UK. As British society has changed, many people's attitudes to same-sex relationships have also changed. The Civil Partnership Act in 2004 enabled same-sex partners to have essentially the same legal rights and responsibilities as married couples. This was followed by the Marriage (same-sex couples) Act in 2013, which legalised same-sex marriage in England and Wales. So now same-sex couples who wish to be legally joined have two routes they can take.

Same-sex relationships divide people's opinions, both for those with religious faith and those without. The three monotheistic religions of Christianity, Judaism and Islam have traditionally taught that same-sex relationships are wrong. However, within individual religions there is sometimes disagreement about these teachings.

Christian attitudes to same-sex relationships

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Same-sex marriage cannot currently take place in Christian Churches. However, same-sex relationships divide opinion among Christians from different denominations. Many Christians oppose same-sex marriage on biblical grounds, quoting a number of verses from both the Old and New Testaments:

'If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.'

Leviticus 20:13

'We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine.'

1 Timothy 1: 8–10

However, other Christians believe that these passages reflect the cultural and social values of the time they were written in and that they don't apply in today's society. They might point to the fact that there are lots of things condemned in the Bible that would be seen as perfectly acceptable today.

The Catholic Church

The doctrine and teachings of the Catholic Church prohibit same-sex marriage as it believes that sexual relationships should only exist between a man and a woman in a marriage.

In April 2010, Pope Francis wrote,

'A marriage [made up of man and woman] is not the same as the union of two people of the same sex. To distinguish is not to discriminate but to respect differences . . . At a time when we place emphasis on the richness of pluralism and social and cultural diversity, it is a contradiction to minimise fundamental human differences. A father is not the same as a



mother. We cannot teach future generations that preparing yourself for planning a family based on the stable relationship between a man and a woman is the same as living with a person of the same sex.'

Other Christian Churches

At the moment the Anglican Church does not believe same-sex marriages should take place in church. There

are some individual clergy who do not agree with this decision and might decide to perform a church blessing. Other Christian denominations, such as Quakers, will conduct a same-sex service but a same-sex couple will still need a civil ceremony as well in order to be legally married.

The United Reform Church has recently decided to allow same-sex marriages to take place in their churches.

Muslim attitudes to same-sex relationships



Islam forbids same-sex marriages and homosexual and lesbian relationships, believing that sex should only take place between a husband and wife. Muslims regard marriage as the only place where sexual relationships should take place and regard marriage as a sacred contract between only a man and a woman.

The quotation to the right from the Qur'an is used by Muslims who view homosexuality as immoral.

And [We had sent] Lot when he said to his people, "Do you commit such immorality as no one has preceded you with from among the worlds? Indeed, you approach men with desire, instead of women. Rather, you are a transgressing people."

Qur'an 7:80-81

Muslims interpret this to mean that same-sex relationships are wrong.

Jewish attitudes to same-sex relationships



In Judaism there is a diversity of views on the topic of same-sex relationships.

Orthodox Judaism maintains the traditional Jewish view which forbids same-sex relationships as stated in the two references from the Book of Leviticus in the Torah.

'Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind; it is abomination.'

Leviticus 18:22

'If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.'

Leviticus 20:13

There are, however, some Orthodox Jews who do accept same-sex relationships.

Reform Jews generally support same-sex relationships.

Humanist attitudes to same-sex relationships



The humanist approach is that human beings should find personal happiness in this lifetime and same-sex relationships are a positive expression of this view.

► End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Contraception

Key teachings about:

- the purpose of sex
- chastity and celibacy
- the use of contraception
- same-sex relationships

Knowledge check

- 1 Write a short paragraph (roughly three sentences) to explain what is meant by chastity.
- 2 Write a long paragraph (roughly eight to ten sentences) to explain why contraception is important.
- 3 Consider the following statement:

'Celibacy has an important role today.'

Draw a table with two columns. Add five reasons for agreeing and five reasons for disagreeing with the statement.

Agree	Disagree

- 4 Create a mind map to show the main beliefs about sexual relationships for the religions you are studying.
- 5 Write a letter to a national newspaper stating the case for same-sex marriages to be allowed in a place of worship.

Skills Link

- 1 From two different religions or two religious traditions, explain attitudes to same sex relationships.
- 2 'Sex outside marriage is always wrong.' Discuss this statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. (You must refer to religion and belief in your answer.)

The Big Question

'Sex should only take place in marriage.'

Your task

Respond to the statement above, showing that you have considered more than one point of view. Give reasoned judgements on the validity and strength of these views.

Task

For both of the religions (or denominations) that you are studying, you need to explain in detail religious teachings about **same-sex relationships**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Christianity and a second one for your other chosen religion or denomination. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote
 This means that/Because of this they
 Some/other Christians such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote
 This means that/Because of this they
 Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/Because of this they
 Their beliefs do/do not differ because

■ Issues of equality: gender prejudice and discrimination

Key Concept



Gender equality People of all genders enjoying the same rights and opportunities in all aspects of their lives.

One of the most significant changes in society in recent times is the changing relationships between women and men around issues of equality, not only in this country but across the world. **Gender equality** aims to stop any form of gender discrimination.

In UK law, men and women have equal rights in employment and discrimination on the basis of gender is illegal. The 2010 Equality Act simplified previous laws to protect people from discrimination on the basis of several protected characteristics, including sex.

However, traditionally women and men had different roles in religions particularly in relation to their role in authority (leadership) and worship. These traditional roles have been debated in recent years as the role of women has changed in society to become more equal to that of men.

Christian attitudes to the roles of women and men in worship and authority



In Jesus' time it was normal for men to take up positions of authority. Society is different now and men and women are more equal.

In the early Christian Church the original disciples were all men.

Jesus' actions showed that he respected women and he had women amongst his closest followers, which would have been very unusual at the time.

Quotes like the one below from Galatians indicate that gender is irrelevant as long as you have faith in Jesus:

'For all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.'

Galatians 3:27–29



■ Reverend Angela Berners-Wilson was one of the first Christian female priests

In the Parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus taught that you should not discriminate.

Christians believe that all humans are created in the image of God, so each human life is equal and sacred.

Biblical teachings like the one below indicate that women are different to men and that women should not have authority over men:

'A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet.'

1 Timothy 2:11–12

The Catholic and Orthodox Churches

In the Catholic and Orthodox Churches women can take up active roles in worship and authority. They can become a nun or 'sister', taking vows to devote their life to God. They are equal members of Church congregations with men and can support the Church in a number of ways, from administrative functions like serving on Church finance committees to helping ministers lead worship.

However, women are always lay people in these Churches, they cannot be ordained. Ordination is the process where people are granted religious authority, so women cannot become priests for example.

One reason for this is that these Churches believe that while men and women are equal they have different strengths and contributions to make to society. Men take more religious leadership roles, while women have an equally important role to play in their families and communities. Pope Francis has praised the role women play in the Church and expressed the hope that women can play a bigger part in Church life, but in a way that

allows them to continue to do their important work supporting their families.

The Anglican Church

There have been significant changes in the role of women in worship in the Anglican Church to allow men and women to take up equal roles in Church leadership and worship. Thirty-two female ministers were ordained in 1994 and the first female bishop was ordained in 2014. This means that women can become ministers and lead Christian congregations in worship.

When the Church of England voted to allow women to become Bishops the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said that the Church was entering a 'completely new phase of our existence'. However, he warned that it might take up to ten years before there were even numbers of male and female bishops.

In other Protestant denominations women play an important role in worship, working as ministers and leading acts of worship and reading in services.

Task

Look at the mind map on page 29. Identify the attitudes and teachings the Catholic Church might use to support its views on women and which the Anglican Church might use.



Jewish attitudes to the roles of women and men in worship and authority



In biblical times men had authority over women, but in society today there is much more equality.

Some of the mitzvot (laws) do not apply to women; they do not need to wear tallit and tefillin, for example.

Jews believe that all people are made by God and are all equal, so they believe discrimination is wrong.



■ A female rabbi leading worship

Jewish holy texts, such as the Talmud, describe equal but different roles for men and women.

Some religious duties, such as bringing in the Shabbat (see page 307), are done by women.

Reform and Liberal Judaism

In Reform and Liberal Judaism women can be ordained as rabbis and lead worship. In Reform Judaism the first female rabbi was ordained in 1972. However, female rabbis don't have complete equality with men and there are some things they cannot do:

- they cannot lead certain parts of the service

- they cannot serve as a judge on a Bet Din (a Jewish court)
- they cannot be counted in a minyan (prayer service that requires a minimum of 10 men).

This is because of the laws in the Torah.

During worship women and men sit together in the synagogue.



Orthodox Judaism

In the Orthodox tradition worship was led by men and this continues to be the case, although there is a growing campaign for women to be able to be rabbis. Women's primary role is believed to be nurturing and caring for the family and this is seen as being equally as important as the role played by men.

During worship women sit in a different part of the synagogue to men.

There are some within the Orthodox community who campaign for women to have more equality and to be able to be able participate in worship in the same way as men.

Task

Look at the mind map on page 30, using the different ideas:

- 1 Write a short paragraph to explain why a Reform Jew might think women should be able to be rabbis.
- 2 Write a short paragraph to explain why an Orthodox Jew might disagree.



Muslim attitudes to the roles of women and men in worship and authority



The quote below describes how Allah creates all people from the same soul and so Muslims are against discrimination:

'O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear God, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed God is ever, over you, an Observer.'

Qur'an 4:1

In the Hadith there are mentions of two of Muhammad's wives, Aisha and Umm Salamah, leading prayers.

The Qur'an does not mention whether females can act as an imam and lead prayers, although traditionally it has been a male role.



■ A male imam leads prayer in a UK mosque

An imam must be a good Muslim to lead a community in prayer. The quote from the Qur'an below says that gender is irrelevant to whether a person can be a good Muslim:

'Whoever does an evil deed will not be recompensed except by the like thereof; but whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer – those will enter Paradise, being given provision therein without account.'

Qur'an 40:40

The quote from the Qur'an below indicates that men should have authority over women in the event of a divorce, so is the same true in worship?

Divorced women remain in waiting for three periods, and it is not lawful for them to conceal what God has created in their wombs if they believe in God and the Last Day. And their husbands have more right to take them back in this [period] if they want reconciliation. And due to the wives is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable. But the men have a degree over them [in responsibility and authority]. And God is Exalted in Might and Wise.'

Qur'an 2:228



For most Muslim groups women cannot be imams and lead men in prayer. Some Muslims scholars claim that having a female imam would invalidate men's prayers. Some Sunni groups allow women to act as imams and lead prayers if the congregation is made up of other women or close family. However, she will not lead the prayers by standing in front of the congregation as a man would, instead she would stand in the congregation.

Women and men are also usually separated during worship.

However, there is increasing pressure from some within the Muslim community for women to be allowed to lead mixed sex congregations and worship together with men. Some high profile female imams have led mixed congregations in countries like Canada and the UK (see the information on Raheel Raza on page 144).

Task

Look at the mind map on page 31. If a woman wanted to become an imam, which do you think are the two most convincing arguments? Explain why.



End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Gender equality
- Roles

Key teachings about:

- the roles of men and women in worship and authority

Knowledge check

- 1 Write a short paragraph (roughly three sentences) to explain what is meant by gender equality.
- 2 Draw a table with two columns as below.

Agree	Disagree

Give five reasons in each column to discuss the following statement:
'Men and women should have equal roles in leading worship.'

- 3 For your chosen religion write a letter of application from a woman for a position of religious leadership. You should explain why she feels women should be considered for the role.

The Big Question

'The arguments for women and men having equal roles in authority and worship are stronger than those against.'

Your task

Respond to the statement above, showing that you have considered more than one point of view. Give reasoned judgements on the validity and strength of these views.

Task

For both of the religions (or denominations) that you are studying, you need to explain in detail religious teachings about the **role of men and women in worship and authority**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Christianity and a second one for your other chosen religion or denomination. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote

This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Christians such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/Because of this they

Their beliefs do/do not differ because

► Exam focus

Issues of relationships

(c) questions

In (c) questions there are opportunities to show a deep knowledge and understanding of an issue. In the Philosophy and Ethics papers you will often be asked to explain from the point of view of two different religions or two distinct denominations of the same religion, for example, Catholic and Church of England, Baptist and Jehovah's Witness etc.

When answering from two different traditions it is important to show the distinctions and the similarities between the two religions. Sometimes religions and denominations will have similar views on certain issues. It is important to state this in your answer. Look at the question below:

(c) From two different religions or two religious traditions, explain attitudes to same sex relationships. (8)

Before you answer, consider:

- How many marks are available? Eight marks are given for this answer but two different religions are expected.
- What is the question asking me to do? The question requires a consideration from two different religions or denominations about the attitudes to same-sex relationships. It is important to remember that an attitude will often come from the interpretation of religious teachings. For each of the two religious traditions you have studied, identify one religious teaching you could use as evidence in your answer.

(d) questions

These are very important questions, as they are worth 15 marks. The questions require you to:

- read and understand a statement and then;
- discuss the statement showing you have considered more than one point of view. (You must refer to religion and belief in your answer.)

For each question consider:

- How many marks are available? The question is worth 15 marks and therefore it is worth half of each unit. It is important to consider what you are going to include in your answer before you begin.
- What is the question asking you to do? In the question you are asked to include some different viewpoints. These do not need to be contrasting such as two points for and two against but must be different. The answer must include religion and belief in the answer.

You will need to consider what are strong points and which arguments would not be relevant to the question.

Helen's points are listed below. She has written down a range of different points of view but now needs to consider which reasons are strong and which reasons are not relevant.

Identify which four views are the strongest. What further evidence could she use to support each?

(d) 'Sex outside marriage is always wrong.'

Discuss this statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. (15)

(You must refer to religion and belief in your answer.)

- ▶ Sex should be part of a committed marital relationship.
- ▶ Adultery is condemned by a number of religious traditions.
- ▶ Wedding ceremonies are important family occasions.
- ▶ Some people are divorced and may not be allowed to remarry.
- ▶ There are many different forms of contraception.
- ▶ Adultery can cause distress in a family.
- ▶ Sex outside of marriage can show a lack of commitment.

2

Issues of life and death

► The Big Picture

Key Concepts



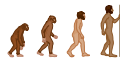
Afterlife Life after death; the belief that existence continues after physical death.



Environmental sustainability Ensuring that the demands placed on natural resources can be met without reducing capacity to allow all people and other species of animals, as well as plant life, to live well, now and in the future.



Euthanasia From Greek, *eu* 'good' and *thanatos* 'death'. Sometimes referred to as 'mercy killing'. The act of killing or permitting the death of a person who is suffering from a serious illness.



Evolution The process by which different living creatures are believed to have developed from earlier less complex forms during the history of the earth.



Abortion When a pregnancy is ended so that it does not result in the birth of a child.



Quality of life The extent to which life is meaningful and pleasurable.



Sanctity of life The belief that life is precious, or sacred. For many religious believers, only human life holds this special status.



Soul The spiritual aspect of a being; that which connects someone to God. The soul is often regarded as non-physical and as living on after physical death, in an afterlife.

Core Questions

Could life have developed by itself?

Are there different ways of understanding religious scriptures?

Do humans have an immortal soul?

Are the lives of people more valuable than those of animals?

What is environmental stewardship?

Does the unborn baby have a right to life?

Should we be able ask someone to help us die?

Overview

This chapter explores beliefs about the world, the value of life, beliefs about death and the afterlife, issues about sanctity and quality of life and medical ethics.

We begin by exploring differing perspectives on the origin of the universe and of life. Can the world have ‘made itself’, or do we need to look for an external cause? Or perhaps the universe has always existed?

Belief in a creator God, or some sort of supernatural intervention, is still strong in Western countries. However, with the increasing popularity of scientific thinking, many people today, including many religious believers, accept the theories of the Big Bang and evolution. In the eighteenth century William Paley taught that there was evidence of God as designer of the universe. In the twenty-first century, Richard Dawkins argues that the world’s apparent design is an illusion.

The chapter explores different ideas about **creation** from the perspective of religious and non-religious beliefs. Not all religions have creation stories and believers have different approaches to interpreting them.

The chapter then explores religious and non-religious beliefs about the value and sanctity of life. Why is life so valuable and who does life belong to? Can we measure the value and quality of life? Is human life more important than animal life? What do the great religious traditions teach? We look at the complex issues of abortion and euthanasia, discussing when life begins, the right to life, the right to die, hospices and palliative care.

The chapter then looks at religious teachings about stewardship, dominion and environmental sustainability. How should we treat the earth? Should we treat its resources as if we are borrowing them or as if they are ours to keep?

The final topic is about the afterlife. Traditionally the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) teach that, at the end of time, God will come in judgement, raising the righteous to eternal life and casting the wicked into hell. However, the Eastern religions teach that the next life depends on our actions and that our **karma** will determine what form we are re-born into. Today, there is a growing movement in Britain which rejects beliefs about the afterlife, preferring to say that we only live once and that death is the end. This section concludes by exploring the way in which death and funeral rituals reflect people’s beliefs about the afterlife.

Creation the idea that the universe was planned and brought into being by a divine power (for example God).

Karma the ‘energy’ stored in your soul reflecting good and bad deeds.

Tasks

- 1 Read the quote from Psalm 139. Explain what it is saying about human life.
- 2 (a) What does Jacques Monod believe about the creation of human life?
(b) How is it similar to Richard Dawkins' ideas on creation?

Life: chance or God's plan?

Most religious believers say that there is a divine mind behind all life. The Bible tells us that God knows all people before their birth and has a plan and a purpose for all living beings.

'For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.'

Psalm 139:13,16

Atheists and humanists believe that life is a result of blind chance.

'Man at last knows that he is alone in the unfeeling immensity of the universe, out of which he emerged only by chance. Neither his destiny nor his duty have been written down.'

Jacques Monod

'Natural selection ... has no purpose in mind. It has no vision, no foresight.'

Richard Dawkins



An image of planet earth taken from space. Scientific study continues to tell us more and more in answer to questions like: 'What is the origin of the universe?', 'Is life on earth unique?' and 'How should we treat the environment?'

■ The world

► The origin of the world: religious and scientific perspectives

Religion: creation stories

Many of the world religions have important beliefs about how the world came into being. The monotheistic traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam are based on the belief that there is one, all-powerful creator God who is the source of all life. Their creation stories, which are found in their holy books, all tell of a unique creation event at the beginning of time, when life sprang into existence from nothing at the command of God.

Hindus also have important creation stories, but they are not usually understood as historical events. Hinduism and Buddhism do not teach the existence of a single monotheistic creator God at their centre. In general, the Eastern religions tend to see the origin of the universe in a more mysterious and mythological way. Their belief in a cyclical world view tends to suggest that the world may have been created and then recreated countless times.

The way religious people understand their creation stories today varies enormously. Creationists take a literalist view of the Bible. They say that creation stories describe literal, historical events, whereas liberal Christians say that they are myths which carry deep, symbolic meaning.

Jews, Christians, Muslims and Sikhs are referred to as theists: 'God-believers'.

The traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism are sometimes referred to as the Eastern religions.

Tasks

- 1 What are the key differences between the creation stories in Christian, Jewish and Muslim traditions, in comparison with the Eastern religions?
- 2 How do Creationist Christians view creation stories?
- 3 How do Liberal Christians view creation stories?
- 4 Using the table below, create a glossary of key terms linked with Creation.

Term	Definition	Summarised
Monotheism		One God
Religious belief	Accepting that there is a spiritual purpose in life.	

- 5 Explain why ideas about creation have changed over time.

Science: evolution and the Big Bang theory

Since the sixteenth century there has been a massive shift in the way people in Western Europe understand the natural world. Until the rise of scientific thinking there was an acceptance within Christian society that the Bible was the absolute, unchanging word of God. The traditional Christian view was that the earth had been created by God, as described in the Book of Genesis.

However, as more and more evidence built up in the fields of geology and biology it became clear that the earth is far older than had previously been understood. It was Charles Darwin who was the first person to show convincingly that life had arisen through the slow, natural process of evolution and therefore the earth must be many millions of years old.

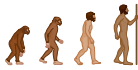
In the seventeenth century, Archbishop Ussher confidently pronounced that the world had been created in 4004 BCE.

In the twentieth century scientists began to look beyond the earth to space for an explanation of how the world was created, but it was not until 1965 that the Big Bang theory became the accepted explanation for the origin of the universe.

The theory of evolution

Key Concept

Evolution The process by which different living creatures are believed to have developed from earlier, less complex forms during the history of the earth.



'[Evolution is] the single best idea anyone has ever had.'

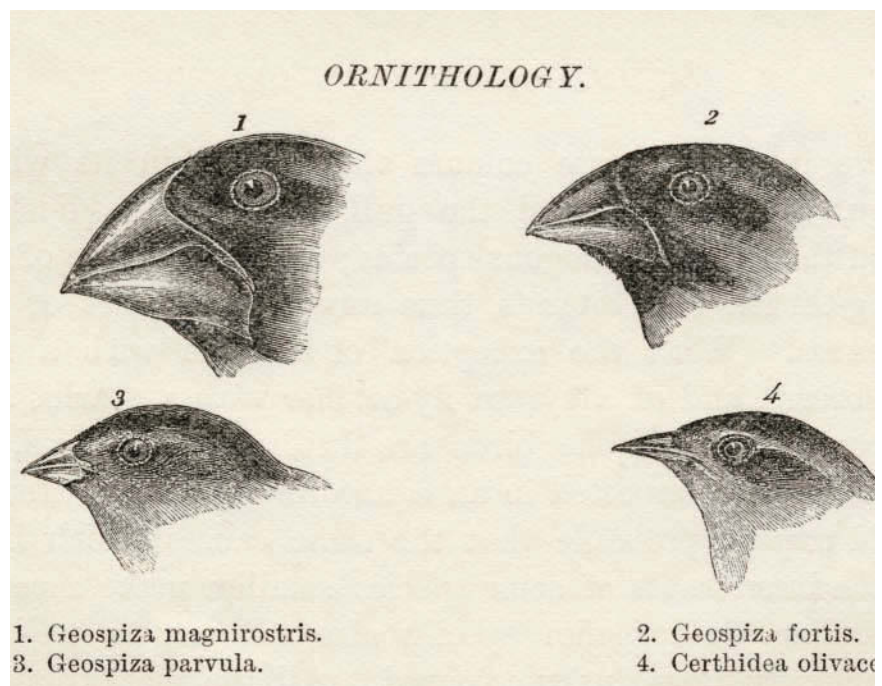
Daniel C. Dennett

Evolution by natural selection the idea that the species that flourish are those which are best suited to their environment.

In 1859 Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of Species*. This controversial book set out his Theory of **Evolution** by Natural Selection, explaining how living creatures have evolved through a process of gradual change over millions of years. His ideas were backed by the detailed evidence which he had gathered through over 30 years of scientific research.

On the Galapagos Islands, off the coast of South America, Darwin had observed birds (finches) on the different islands. He noticed that different types of finches lived on different islands. Some had fat beaks; they tended to be found on islands where seeds were the main food-source. On other islands, where fleshy cactus fruits were abundant, the finches had thin, pointed beaks.

His theory suggests that characteristics like these happened by chance as natural variety in an animal's offspring (just like you might be brown eyed and your brother might be blue eyed). However, sometimes these characteristics were actually very useful, so long pointed beaks gave those finches an advantage in eating the cactus. So animals with these characteristics were more likely to survive and breed, and pass the characteristic on to their offspring. This became known as the 'survival of the fittest'. Darwin put forward the idea that this process had repeated itself over and over again, over very long periods of time, leading to completely new species of animals emerging.



Darwin observed differences in the beaks of finches. He assumed that all finches had a common ancestor. This led him to the theory of **evolution by natural selection**



This 'Jesus fish' is a Christian symbol which was used by the early church.



This is a 'Darwin fish'. Do you think it is a symbol used by Christians who believe in evolution or a symbol used to mock Christian beliefs about creation? Can you explain your answer?

Religious reaction to Darwin

Today, there are many religious believers who welcome Darwin's theories. Liberal Christians accept the idea that science can teach us things that the writers of the Bible had no understanding of. Most Jewish people have no problem in accepting the theory of evolution.

However, some Evangelical Christians and many mainstream Muslims see Darwinian evolution as an attack on their beliefs:

- ▶ Evolution implies that life has developed by chance, whereas religious scriptures (for example the Bible, the Torah and the Qur'an) teach that God is the creator.
- ▶ Undermining the Bible, the Torah or the Qur'an risks undermining the morals we share as human beings, leading to crime and disorder.
- ▶ Religious scriptures teach that humans alone have a God-given soul, but if we have evolved from animals, there is no special place for the human soul.
- ▶ Evolution challenges the teachings of the Bible, because Genesis says that each species was made 'according to its kind' (i.e. species don't change, they are fixed for all time).

Tasks

- 1 Explain what evolution is. Ensure that you use the following terms in your answer: theory, natural selection, survival of the fittest, Charles Darwin.
- 2 Summarise the main problems some religious believers have with the theory of evolution.
- 3 Look at the quote below from Charles Darwin, do you think he is an atheist or a theist? Explain your opinion.

'It seems to me absurd to doubt that a man may be an ardent Theist and an evolutionist ... I have never been an atheist in the sense of denying the existence of a God.'

Charles Darwin, 1879

▶ The Big Bang theory

The study of the origins of the universe is called cosmology. Throughout history, some thinkers have argued about whether the universe had an origin or whether it has always existed; whether it is expanding or whether it is static (at rest). In 1965 cosmologists published conclusive evidence to show that the universe did in fact have a beginning. This theory, that time and space began around 15 billion years ago, became known as the Big Bang theory.

Stephen Hawking

One of the physicists who have made the biggest contributions to the field of cosmology for over half a century is Stephen Hawking. Hawking's story is all the more remarkable because he has been confined to a wheelchair for much of his adult life, suffering from motor neurone disease that is slowly paralyzing him. For many years now he has only been able to speak with the aid of a computerized voice synthesizer. In the late 1960s his ground-breaking research showed that, at the birth of the universe, the cosmos must have emerged from a singularity. His studies demonstrated that the universe may look as if it is static, but it is actually expanding at an astonishing rate and that this expansion can be traced back to an initial event: the Big Bang.

According to the Big Bang theory the universe began from a 'singularity', an infinitely tiny point. This 'singularity' was infinitely hot and infinitely dense and, as it expanded, sub-atomic particles and then atoms began to appear. This led to the formation of stars and planets, which make up the universe as we know it today. Most physicists believe that the universe will continue expanding for countless billions of years to come, becoming bigger and colder.

Today most scientists accept this as an accurate explanation for our world. The evidence for the Big Bang theory comes from the discovery of background radiation, which is thought to be left over from the initial expansion at the start of the universe. This can be detected with powerful telescopes.

Religious reactions to the Big Bang theory

Buddhists, Hindus and Sikhs tend to be quite accepting of the Big Bang theory. They believe that the world has been formed, destroyed and re-formed countless times and so this fits well with the idea that the universe is in a state of development.

Liberal Christians, Jews and Muslims find no problem in accepting the Big Bang theory. They have no reason to question the evidence on which it is based and accept that this is a way that God may have chosen to allow the universe to create intelligent life.

Religious creationists are very critical of these ideas. For them it contradicts the truth that God has formed all life through his own power.

Even if scientists are correct in saying that the universe began with a 'Big Bang', have they really solved the question 'Where does the universe come from?'. We are still left with the question of what caused the Big Bang. Some Christians have argued that it was God.

Tasks

- 1 (a) In one sentence, describe the Big Bang theory.
- (b) Outline the process of the Big Bang theory, using a flow chart.

There was 'singularity' – a tiny point of hot dense matter



This matter expanded

- 2 What are the problems with the Big Bang theory? Refer to two different problems in your answer.
- 3 Copy and complete the table below, by placing the following words in the correct column:
chance, design, faith, evidence, change, accident, purpose, plan, origin, probability, value, life, beliefs, reasoning, hope, trust, facts, proof

Scientific concepts	Religious concepts

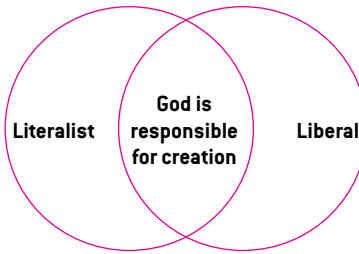
Interpretation the way we make sense of a piece of writing. Different believers interpret passages from the holy books in different ways.

Literal understanding something exactly as it is written.

Liberal free thinking.

Task

Reproduce the Venn diagram below. Complete it by identifying key beliefs about creation for literalist and liberal believers.



How did the world begin?

The sacred texts of Christianity, Islam and Judaism all contain accounts of the creation of the world. These three religions all share common roots, so it is unsurprising that there are elements of the Genesis creation stories in the Bible which also appear in the Qur'anic version. However, within these religions different believers hold different **interpretations** of these accounts:

► Literal interpretation

Some religious believers are literalists. They believe that their holy text, whether it's the Bible, the Torah or the Qur'an should be understood word for word. Creationists are literalists: for them the creation of the world happened exactly as it is described in sacred texts.

'All scripture is God-breathed.'

2 Timothy 3:16

This statement, from Timothy, suggests that the Bible was inspired by God.

► Liberal interpretation

Other religious people take a liberal view. They believe that people should be free to understand the holy books in any way they choose. They say that the stories they contain should be understood more like parables or symbolic stories. They are true because the stories carry real meaning, even if they don't refer to actual historical events.

Christian attitudes to the creation of the world



There are two stories which describe God's creation of the world, found in the Book of Genesis. (For more detail see pages 174–76.)

Genesis 1:1–2:3

The first creation story describes how God created the earth over six days: from the creation of earth and sky, through the making of the sun, stars, plants, animals and then finally human beings. Humans are the peak of God's creation, made in his image, giving them a unique status as God's stewards of the earth. On the seventh day God rested.

'And God said: "Let there be light", and there was light.'

Genesis 1:3

'Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness . . ."

Genesis 1:26

Genesis 2:4–2:25

The second creation story teaches that God made Adam first, before the animals, and placed him in the Garden of Eden to live in paradise. Adam was formed from the dust of the ground and the breath of God (symbolising the human soul), making him the son of the earth, but also a child of God. To give Adam a partner and a companion, God created Eve out of one of Adam's ribs.

Christian sacred writings and science

For Christians the Bible has a unique status as the inspired 'word of God'; it is unlike any other piece of human writing. However, the way in which Christians interpret the Bible varies considerably.

Evangelical Christians

Many Evangelical Christians are creationists. They refer to the Bible as 'God-breathed', meaning that it has come directly from the mouth of God: every word is true and accurate. They say that scientific theories of evolution



and the Big Bang must be false, because they contradict the literal understanding of the creation stories. However, there are different ways of understanding **creationism**:

- **Young Earth creationism** is the view that the world was created by God, in seven actual days, and this happened less than 10,000 years ago.
- **Old Earth creationism** agrees that God must have created the world, but it accepts the idea that creation took place millions of years ago. The seven days of creation refer to long eras of time, rather than 24-hour periods.

Liberal Christians

Liberal Christians say that it makes more sense to understand the Bible accounts as myths (stories which contain religious wisdom); they should not be understood as historical events. The very fact that the two creation narratives in Genesis seem to contradict each other is evidence that these are stories, not factual accounts. [Genesis 1 says humans were created on the

last day of creation; Genesis 2 says that humans were created first, before the animals.]

Liberal Christians accept that scientific thinking gives us an accurate picture of reality. They say that the Christian scriptures were written thousands of years ago by people living in a pre-scientific age and are better understood as a metaphor. Liberal Christians tend to agree with evolution, but they may disagree on the way God was actually involved in bringing life into being:

- **Theistic guided evolution.** The belief that life came about through evolution, but this process was guided by the direct intervention of God.
- **Natural evolution.** Many Christians accept the evidence put forward by science, which says that evolution is the natural process through which life has emerged. However, they would say that God set down these laws of nature before the universe existed.

Creationism the belief that all life was made by God.

Muslim attitudes to the creation of the world

The Qur'an teaches that God is the Creator and Sustainer of all life, but, unlike the Bible, there is no one single creation story. Passages about the creation are scattered throughout the Qur'an. Muslims believe that God created the heavens and the earth from formless matter over six long periods of time. He created humans out of clay, molding Adam and breathing life and power into him. He took Adam to paradise and made a wife for him.

'Indeed, your Lord is God who created the heavens and earth in six days and then established Himself above the Throne. He covers the night with the day, [another night] chasing it rapidly; and [He created] the sun, the moon, and the stars, subjected by His command. Unquestionably, His is the creation and the command; blessed is God, Lord of the worlds.'

Qur'an 7:54

Islamic sacred writings and science

Islam teaches that the Qur'an is a sacred text and that the words it contains are the actual word of God. Most Muslims believe that the Qur'an must be understood

literally, not metaphorically. Because of this, many Muslims are creationists: they say it was God who made the earth; it could not possibly have come about by itself. Islam tends to teach Old Earth creationism, the idea that God created the world over six long periods of time.

Some Muslims will criticise the theory of evolution because ideas about evolution are often linked to atheism. The Qur'an makes specific reference to Adam's creation by God, so many Muslims, even if they accept most aspects of evolution, refuse to accept the idea of human evolution.

Although, like the Bible, the Qur'an refers to creation taking six 'days', the Arabic word used in the Qur'an is understood to mean six long periods of time, rather than exactly 24 hours.

'Is not He who created the heavens and the earth Able to create the likes of them? Yes, [it is so]; and He is the Knowing Creator.'

Qur'an 36:81



However, there are also many Muslims who have no difficulty with accepting scientific explanations of the world while also believing in the Qur'an. They have no major disagreement with science and they accept evolution, because they say that scientific ideas cannot disprove the existence of God. An important part of being a Muslim is to strive for better understanding of the world, so greater scientific knowledge gives a deeper awareness of the way God has created the world.

'Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them and made from water every living thing? Then will they not believe?'

Qur'an 21:30

'The book of God and the book of Nature can be aligned.'

Dr Hasan

Jewish attitudes to the creation of the world



The Torah is the most sacred of all Jewish scriptures. It is a collection of five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Jewish tradition teaches that these books were revealed to the Prophet Moses and they understand them to be the 'word of God'. However, many Reform Jews believe the Torah can be adapted sometimes and not taken literally.

The Torah is part of the Tenakh. Christians call the Tenakh the Old Testament. Jews and Christians both view the Tenakh/Old Testament as sacred scripture, but they don't always interpret the stories and teachings in the same way.

Jews believe that there is one God who is the source and purpose of all life. The Book of Genesis, which is the first book in the Torah, tells two stories about the origins of the world.

The first creation story says:

'In the beginning of God's creating the heavens and the earth when the earth was astonishingly empty ... God said: "Let there be light".'

Genesis 1:1–3

This account goes on to describe the six 'days' of creation. On the sixth day God created human beings: 'So God created Man in his image...'

The second creation story (Genesis 2:4–25) gives a different account of God's creation, with Adam and Eve being created and placed in the Garden of Eden.

Many Jews believe that the Torah is the 'Word of God', but if this is the case, then how can both these stories be true?

Orthodox Jews believe that these stories are true accounts of the origin of the world. They say that they were revealed to Moses by God and they argue that the different accounts only appear to contradict each other because we have not understood them properly.

Reform Jews question whether Moses was the actual author of Genesis. They might argue that there are different stories because they were written by different authors and only put together in the Torah at a later date.

Jewish sacred writings and science

Some Orthodox Jews would understand the Genesis creation passages as historical fact, so they would have difficulties accepting modern scientific ideas. The creation stories picture God creating all species of animals just as they are today, fixed forever. This leads them to reject ideas of evolution, where species change and emerge over millions of years.

Other, more progressive Jews have no problem in accepting scientific theories like the Big Bang and evolution. However, they would not accept the conclusions that humanists come to, to say that therefore there is no need for God. They still have faith in God as a sustainer and provider, but they argue that God kick-started the universe through the Big Bang and has guided the creation of life through evolution.

Humanist attitudes to the creation of the world

H

Humanists believe that we can understand the world through science and that religious explanations of the world are unreliable. They say that there are no good reasons for believing in the existence of God and there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the world formed by itself, through slow gradual processes over billions of years. Evolution can help us to understand the way species are related to each other today, rather than relying on the religious belief that the creation of life is a 'mystery'.

Humanists for a better world (H4BW) is a humanist group which was set up in 2011. It aims to create networks for Humanists to share ideas about the need to be active in

campaigning on issues such as peace and international co-operation, global justice, climate change and the environment. They argue that the future of the world is in our hands and if we do not act now we will do irreparable damage to the planet.

'The humanist perspective places a strong emphasis on personal responsibility for our actions and the importance of social co-operation, and we very much hope that Humanists for a Better World can build upon this tradition.'

Andrew Copson, Chief Executive of the BHA

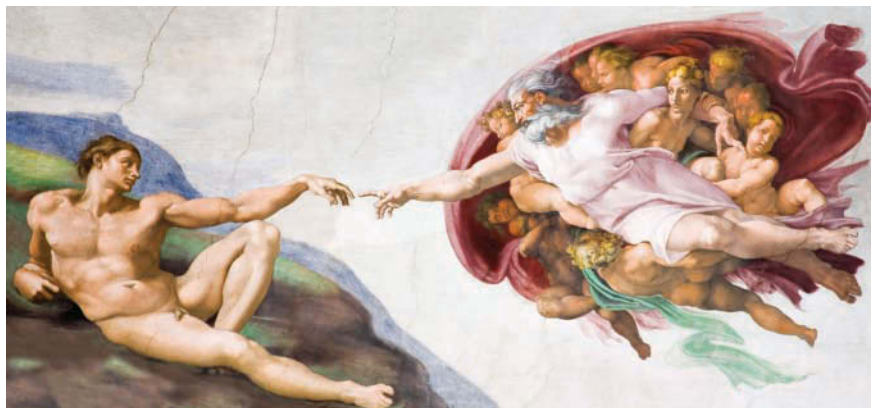
Tasks



- 1 What is a creationist?
- 2 How do creationists and humanists differ in their ideas about the natural world?
- 3 Read the statement from Pope Francis.

'When we read about Creation in *Genesis*, we run the risk of imagining God as a magician, with a magic wand able to do everything. But that is not so. God created human beings and let them develop according to the internal laws that He gave to each one so they would reach their fulfilment.'

Explain whether or not you think Pope Francis is a creationist. Use quotes from his statement to support your point.



The ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, painted by Michelangelo, shows the creation of humankind by God.

► Was the world designed?

The design argument

Many religious believers say that the fact that the world is so beautiful and well ordered gives us strong evidence for the existence of a creator God. They argue that the complexity and interconnectedness of nature could not have come about by itself. There must be a divine mind behind creation.

William Paley

In 1802 the theologian William Paley put forward the famous watch analogy. If you were to find a watch, by accident, you would think that it must have been designed by a watch-maker.

In the same way, when looking at the world with its complex patterns and structures, you would come to the conclusion that there must be a cosmic world-maker, a designer God.

Intelligent design the idea that certain features of life are best explained by an intelligent cause, rather than an undirected process, such as natural selection.

Intelligent design

Intelligent design is a popular belief in the USA today among some Christians. The theory states that there are some organisms alive today that cannot have come about through the process of slow, random evolution.

Michael Behe is a creation scientist who argues for intelligent design. He uses the example of a mousetrap. He says that a mousetrap depends on five parts and if one of the parts was not there it would not work. The function of the mousetrap requires all the pieces. He argues that the same is true for life: the individual parts cannot have come together by chance; they must have all been designed together.

William Paley argued that the human eye must have been created through God's design. He tried to show that it could not have come about through gradual change and progression from simpler light-sensitive organs. However, evolutionary biologists today believe that there is good evidence to show how the human eye has evolved from

other, less complex eyes in earlier species.

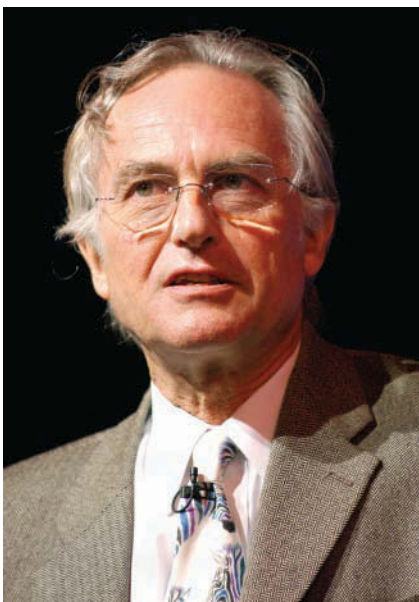


The illusion of design

The biologist Richard Dawkins argues that the theory of evolution is the best explanation of how life has come about. He argues that the world might appear to have been designed, but that raises the question: who designed the designer? Dawkins believes that natural selection gives the solution to the question 'Where do we come from?'. As an atheist, he argues that evolution needs no help from God.

'The illusion of design in the living world is explained with far greater economy . . . by Darwinian natural selection.'

Richard Dawkins



Richard Dawkins argues that evolution is the best explanation of how life has developed on Earth.

Tasks

- 1 Summarise what is meant by 'intelligent design'.
- 2 Outline the main argument (The Watch) offered by William Paley.
- 3 Give two examples which suggest that the world appears to be designed. Include things which show order in the world, such as the seasons.
- 4 Richard Dawkins says that the appearance of design is an illusion. What does he mean by this?
- 5 Do you agree with William Paley or Richard Dawkins? Explain the reason for your opinion.

► Science and religion

Science and religion are opposed to each other

Evangelical Christians believe that where science seems to contradict the Bible, science must be at fault. God has revealed his truth through scripture, for all time.

'The Bible has stood the test of time because it is divinely inspired by Almighty God, written in ink that cannot be erased by any man, religion or belief system.'

Billy Graham (Evangelist)

Many Muslims reject evolution. They refer to passages from the Qur'an which, if taken literally, imply the instant creation of humans as we are today.

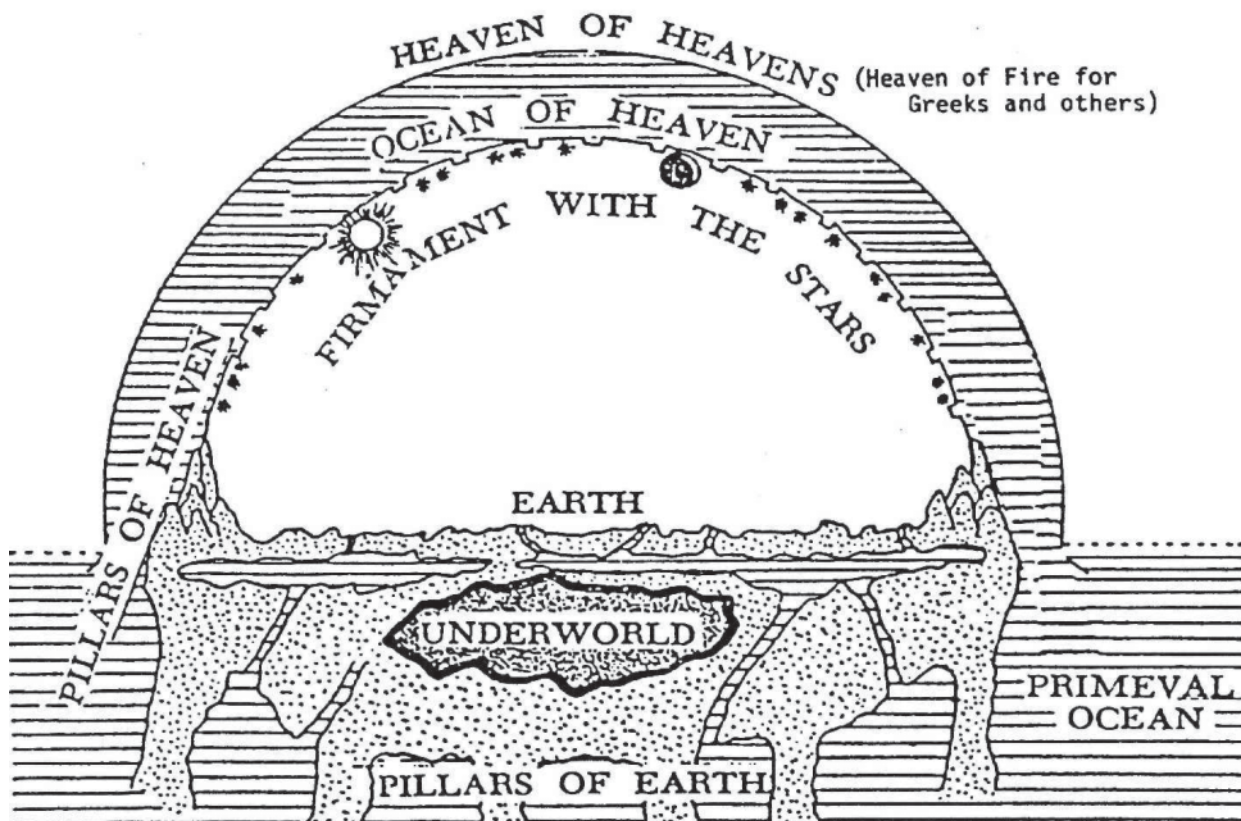
Atheist scientists believe that science gives us an accurate picture of the world and that religion tells us nothing. The world may appear to have been designed, but this is an illusion.

Evolution is the 'only known theory that could ... solve the mystery of our existence.'

Richard Dawkins

Tasks

- 1 What is the key difference between science and religion when thinking about creation?
- 2 Is it possible for Christians to believe in both the biblical creation story and the theory of evolution?
- 3 (a) Analyse the results from 'Life in twenty-first-century Britain'. Explain what the results tell us about modern ideas of creation.
(b) Why might some people find these results surprising?



An ancient Hebrew view of the world: an attempt to picture the flat earth and dome-like heavens above, as described by the Genesis creation stories.

Science and religion complement each other

Many religious people say there is no conflict between religion and science. Science tells us **how** the world was made and religion tells us **why**.

'The account of the creation is not to be taken literally.'

Maimonides

'The more I study science, the more I believe in God.'

Albert Einstein

'Genesis is not there to give short technical answers about how the universe began. It gives us the big answer that things exist because of God's will.'

Professor John Polkinghorne

The Qur'an refers to God as Al Khaliq (The Creator) and Al Bari (The Evolver). Therefore, many Muslims see no contradictions between creation and evolution. There is a strong tradition within Judaism which accepts science and religion.

Life in twenty-first-century Britain

In a survey of 2060 adults in Great Britain (carried out by Comres in 2008), people were told:

'Atheistic evolution is the idea that evolution makes belief in God unnecessary and absurd.'

And then asked:

'In your opinion, is atheistic evolution ...'

The results are shown in the table.

	%
Definitely true	13
Probably true	21
Probably untrue	27
Definitely untrue	30
Don't know	9

Conclusion: only 42 per cent of British people accept the idea of atheistic evolution.

► Stewardship and the relationship between humans and animals

What is stewardship?

Stewardship means caring for the planet and managing its resources. A steward is like a trustee or a caretaker; they are responsible for looking after someone's property while that person is away. Many believers say that God has given humans the special duty to care for the world in his place, as his precious possession.

'Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed.'

Mahatma Gandhi



Stewardship means caring for the planet.

Key Concept



Environmental sustainability Ensuring that the demands placed on natural resources can be met without reducing capacity to allow all people and other species of animals, as well as plant life, to live well, now and in the future.

Responsibility humans have a responsibility to care for the planet.

Global citizenship the idea that we should see ourselves as part of a world community. We should view the whole world as our home, not just the town where we live or our country of birth. We have a responsibility to care for the Amazonian rainforests and for global climate change as much as for pollution in our own local communities.

Christian attitudes to stewardship



Christians believe that life is a gift from God and that God has given humans the role of stewards in the world. Genesis 1:26 teaches that God made men and women in his own image, meaning that humans have a soul which is unique. Genesis 2:7 says that God formed Adam from the dust and breathed his divine life into him. Both these passages imply that humans were created with a special status above the rest of nature. However, this leads to a disagreement among Christians about how we should treat the environment.

'You have made them (humans) a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet.'

Psalm 8:5–6

Dominion: to rule over nature

Evangelical Christians tend to take the Bible literally, so, when it says, in Genesis 1:28, that God created humans to 'rule over' nature, they believe that this gives us the right to utilise the world's natural resources. In other words they believe they have 'dominion' over nature.

Stewardship: to live in harmony with nature

More Liberal Christians, however, argue that humans should be stewards of the earth, rather than exploiters. Genesis 2:15 speaks of God placing Adam in the Garden of Eden to 'cultivate and care for it'.

They say that humans have a **responsibility** towards the environment, looking after the planet's precious resources. God has entrusted us to live as stewards and we should be responsible **global citizens**, using the earth's resources in a sustainable manner.

Some 'Green Christians' are environmental activists who promote awareness and action at church, community and national levels.

What did Jesus mean when he taught his followers to 'love your neighbour' (Matthew 5:43)? Some Christians argue that in this statement Jesus is referring to our fellow humans and it is therefore acceptable to kill animals and eat their meat, since they are not our equals. Other more liberal believers would say that when interpreting this passage today it should teach us that we need to have respect for all living beings.



■ When Christchurch Cathedral in New Zealand was destroyed by an earthquake in 2011, Christians decided to make an environmental statement, building a new cathedral from cardboard (a sustainable resource)!

Muslim attitudes to stewardship



Islam teaches that animals must be respected, but, unlike human beings, they are not uniquely sacred. Muslims, like Christians, believe that God is the all-powerful creator of all life and that humans have been created with particular responsibilities. We are His trustees (**khalifahs**), appointed to care for the world and rule it as God would wish. It is not ours to waste or spoil; it must be safeguarded for future generations.

Islam teaches that there is a pattern and balance in the universe, known as fitrah. The survival and continuation of the planet relies on this balance being maintained. It is the role of humans, as khalifahs, to work to maintain this fitrah (balance) by being aware of the need to use the earth's resources fairly. Many Muslims say that this means that they should act as global citizens, living sustainable lifestyles.

Others argue that the reason Muslims should treat the earth with care is because we will be judged by God on the way they have looked after the natural world.

'The earth is green and beautiful. God has appointed you his stewards over it.'

Hadith

Muhammad said animals must be treated with care and he told a story about how, on a very hot day, a prostitute took water from a well to give water to a dog. He pronounced that, for this act of kindness, all her sins would be forgiven by God.

'And it is He who has made you successors upon the earth and has raised some of you above others in degrees [of rank] that He may try you through what He has given you.'

Qur'an 6:165

'So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fitrah of God upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of God. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know.'

Qur'an 30:30



Jewish attitudes to stewardship

Jewish leaders today teach that human beings must behave as responsible global citizens, acting as the stewards of God's creation. There are a number of teachings about how to care for the earth, some originating in the Tenakh, others from the Talmud or from Jewish traditions. Genesis 1 describes how God gave humans control over nature:

'Rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air and everything living that moves on the earth.'

Genesis 1:28

'It is our Jewish responsibility to put the defence of the whole of nature at the very centre of our concern.'

Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg

Kosher food laws say that it is acceptable to eat certain types of animals, including sheep and cows. However, the animal must be slaughtered according to strict rules laid down by Jewish religious traditions. It must be carried out by a certified person and the animal's throat must be cut with a swift action, using a special knife with a sharp blade.

Bal tashchit referred to in the Torah. Literally, it means 'do not destroy'.

Tikkun olam means 'repair the world'. Jewish people believe it is important to work to make the world a better place for everyone.

Gemilut hasadim means making 'acts of loving kindness'. It emphasises the need to be charitable, caring for others and for the world.

Humans must treat the environment with respect, because the earth is God's possession and we are the temporary caretakers; stewardship is both a gift and a duty.

The annual festival of **Tu B'Shevat** (New Year for Trees) is a powerful reminder that humans must learn to live environmentally sustainable lives. Tu B'Shevat comes at the beginning of spring and Jewish people in Israel and around the world mark the event by planting trees wherever they can. They also celebrate the day by eating fruit, especially from varieties that are mentioned in the Torah: grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates.

The Jewish scriptures do not have very much to say about the rights of animals, but they make it very clear that animals are an important part of God's creation. Today most Jewish people are happy to eat meat, provided it is killed according to **kosher** food laws. Others are vegetarians, believing that this is the way God created us to be, living in harmony with animals as Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden.

One of the great Jewish thinkers is Maimonides who lived in the twelfth century. He taught that animals must be respected for themselves; they were not created by God just for the benefit of humans. The Torah teaches that, although humans have been given dominion over animals, this does not give us the right to exploit and harm them.

The Torah does not say much about how to treat the environment, but there is a passage in Deuteronomy 20:19 which says:

'When you lay siege to a city . . . do not destroy its trees by putting an axe to them.'

This teaching is known as **bal tashchit**. Jewish people see it as an instruction to use the earth's resources wisely and not to waste or exploit them for short-term gain.

In Jewish tradition there is a strong emphasis on the importance of caring for others. The phrase **tikkun olam** is an instruction to 'repair the world'. It encourages Jewish people to work to conserve the earth's resources through sensible use and recycling. In Judaism it is a mitzvah (duty) for individuals to be generous, making **gemilut hasadim** (acts of loving kindness) towards others. Caring for the environment might mean going out of your way not to be wasteful or being prepared to pay more for ethical products.



'Tend well to the earth, for there will be no one to make it right after you.'

Talmud

There is a story in the Talmud which serves as a reminder to Jewish people about the need to safeguard the environment for future generations. It tells of a character called **Honi** the circle-drawer, who lived in the first century BCE. On one occasion, Honi was travelling along a road when he met a man planting a carob tree. He asked the man how long it takes for a carob tree to bear fruit. The man replied: 'Seventy years'. Honi asked the man if he was certain that he would still be alive in 70 years' time and the man replied: 'I found already grown carob trees in the world; as my forefathers planted those for me so I too plant these for my children.'

Are humans most sacred?

One of the physicists who have made the biggest contributions to the field of cosmology for over half a century is Stephen Hawking. Hawking's story is all the more remarkable because he has been confined to a wheelchair for much of his adult life, suffering from motor neurone disease that is slowly paralyzing him. For many years now he has only been able to speak with the aid of a computerized voice synthesizer. In the late 1960s his ground-breaking research showed that, at the birth of the universe, the cosmos must have emerged from a singularity. His studies demonstrated that the universe may look as if it is static, but it is actually expanding at an astonishing rate and that this expansion can be traced back to an initial event: the Big Bang.

Humanist attitudes to stewardship

Humanists try to base their thinking on reasoning and evidence, rejecting ideas that rely on belief in a supernatural being (God). Most humanists agree with the ideas of stewardship; they say that we have a responsibility to work for a more sustainable world, causing as little harm to the environment as possible. However, they believe this because they say it makes sense, not because God has placed us here for that purpose.

Tasks

- 1 Copy and complete the table below, adding three more points for each column.

Inheriting the earth	Borrowing the earth
You own it.	It still belongs to someone else.

- 2 Using some of the points from your table, explain the key difference between 'inheriting' the earth and 'borrowing' it.
- 3 Look at the Amish saying below. How might it affect the way people treat the earth?

'We didn't inherit the land from our fathers, we are borrowing it from our children.'

Amish saying

- 4 What is environmental sustainability? Support your answer by giving three different examples.

End of section review

Knowledge check

- 1 What does the word 'stewardship' mean?
- 2 In your own words, explain the difference between evolution and creation.
- 3 Explain ideas about creationism in two different religions or religious traditions.
- 4 Explain what Richard Dawkins means by the 'illusion of design'.

Skills Link

- 1 Why might there be differences of belief about creation within the same religion?
- 2 'Humans should be free to treat the world in any way they want.' Discuss this statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. [You must refer to religious and non-religious beliefs, such as those held by humanists and atheists, in your answer.]

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Environmental sustainability
- Evolution

Key teachings about:

- the origin of the world
- stewardship and environmental responsibility
- dominion
- sustainability
- global citizenship

The Big Question

'Life must have come about by itself.'

Your task

Respond to the statement above, showing that you have considered more than one point of view. Give reasoned judgements on the validity and strength of these views.

Task

For both of the religions (or denominations) you are studying, explain in detail religious teachings about **the origins of the universe**.

Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Christianity and a second one for your other chosen religion or denomination. Ensure you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Christians such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/Because of this they Their beliefs do/do not differ because

■ The origin and value of human life

► What is sanctity of life?

Who owns my body? Am I special? Are we simply the sum of the chemicals and minerals that make up our bodies or do we have greater worth than that? Whose life is it anyway?



Key Concept



Sanctity of life The belief that life is precious, or sacred. For many religious believers, only human life holds this special status.

Medical ethics the process of deciding what is good and acceptable in medicine.

Most people, whether they hold a religious belief or not, would accept that human life is special and worthy of being preserved. For religious believers, life is special because it comes ultimately from God. Life is a gift and is unique and priceless. For those without a religious faith, life is no less precious, but its importance does not hail from God. Life is priceless because it is the only life we have.

This belief leads us to go to extraordinary lengths to protect and preserve human life. It also has a huge impact on various **medical ethics** issues, especially those which relate to life-creating or life-ending procedures.

Task

For both of the religions [or denominations] you are studying, explain in detail religious teachings about **sanctity of life**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Christianity. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Christians such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/ Because of this they Beliefs do/do not differ because

► What makes us human?

Ingredients for human beings:



Seven bars of soap



Lime – to whitewash a chicken coop



Phosphorous – for 2,200 match heads



Magnesium – a small dose



Iron – for a medium-sized nail



Potassium – to explode a small toy cannon



Sugar – to fill a sugar sifter



Water – five buckets



Sulphur – a pinch

► Religious teachings about the sanctity of life

The sacred texts of Christianity, Islam and Judaism all emphasise the **sanctity of human life**.

What is missing?

The nine images above show the physical elements that make up human beings. What do you think is missing?

Christian attitudes to the sanctity of life



Christians believe that life is created by God, protected by God and valued by God. God is interested and involved in each human's life. God has created each individual person, and made them unique in their own right, just as he made Adam and Eve. Genesis 1:27 states that God created humankind in his own image. For literalist Christians this means that every human being who has ever walked the earth bears God's image. It is for this reason that all Christians, irrespective of denomination, believe that life is sacred and is a gift from God.



Because of the belief in the sanctity of life, many Christians also accept that only God should take life away. Quaker Christians oppose the death penalty and fighting in wars because of the belief that each person contains a reflection of the image of God, which makes every human sacred. This is clearly shown in the Bible:

'Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?'

1 Corinthians 3:16

Similarly, only God should choose when life begins. Catholics hold strictly to this belief, and as such disagree in practice with artificial methods of contraception and with in vitro fertilisation (when an embryo is created outside of the human body in a laboratory using sperm and an egg).

Jesus also showed through his teachings and practice that *all* life should be valued. The way in which he tended to the leper, visited the sick and spoke to the Samaritan woman demonstrated that all lives are worthy of respect and compassion because all life is descended from God (and therefore sacred).

'God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning – the sixth day.'

Genesis 1:31

'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.'

Jeremiah 1:5

Muslim attitudes to the sanctity of life



Muslims believe that all life is created by God, and only he has the right to take it away. This teaching applies to all creations of God and murder is explicitly forbidden in the Qur'an:

'And do not kill the soul which God has forbidden [to be killed] except by [legal] right.'

Qur'an 6:151

Every soul has been created by God. God has a plan for each life, written before each person is 'planted as a seed in your mothers' womb'.

No one has the right to take their own or anyone else's life. This is discussed in the Qur'an:

'Because of that, We decreed upon the children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land – it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And Our messengers had certainly come to them with clear proofs. Then indeed many of them, [even] after that throughout the land, were transgressors.'

Qur'an 5:32



This essentially means that the killing of just one soul carries the sin of killing all of humanity. Those who commit such crimes will face a severe punishment by God on the Day of Judgement.

'Say, "Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited to you. [He commands] that you not associate anything with Him, and to parents, good treatment, and do not kill your children out of poverty; We will provide for you and them. And do not approach immoralities – what is apparent of them and what is concealed. And do not kill the soul which God has forbidden [to be killed] except by [legal] right. This has He instructed you that you may use reason."

Qur'an 6:151

Jewish attitudes to the sanctity of life



Life is sacred and a gift from God. All humans are important. Their lives are precious and cannot be thrown away. Murder is forbidden for both Jews and non-Jews.

Humans are created in God's image and are therefore important. The Talmud [Sanhedrin 37a] explains that Adam was created to teach us the significance, importance and sanctity of each individual:

'Anyone who destroys a human life is considered as if he had destroyed an entire world, and anyone who preserves a human life is considered to have preserved an entire world.'

Pikuach Nefesh is the principle in Jewish law that the preservation of human life overrides virtually any other religious consideration. This means that if a person's life is in danger, other mitzvot (duties) from the Torah become irrelevant. Human life is so precious that most other laws should be put aside to enable it to be protected and preserved, for example the laws of Shabbat or other Jewish holidays are to be suspended for the purposes of Pikuach Nefesh.

The Talmud discusses a number of cases as examples in which mitzvot can be disregarded for the sake of saving a human life.

Humanist attitudes to the sanctity of life



Humanists see a special value in human life. Because it is an atheistic tradition, humanism do not believe that the value of life comes from God.

Humanists do not believe that people have souls, or that there is an afterlife in heaven, hell or purgatory, or that there is a God who judges where people go in an afterlife. They believe that we only have this life, and that it ends forever when we die. Life therefore has special importance because it is our only life.

As humanists believe that one of the central purposes of life is to make ourselves and others around us as happy as possible, life is imbued with importance because it is our opportunity to benefit others through compassion and kindness. As such, life is not seen as sacred but is worthy of the highest respect.

► The quality of life

Key Concept



Quality of life The extent to which life is meaningful and pleasurable.

Many people believe that the quality of our life is more important than whether it is special or sacred. If our life is relatively free from pain and anxiety and if we live with freedom and dignity, then we have what is considered a good **quality of life**. If the degree of pain and suffering that we endure exceeds the pleasure that we gain from other areas of our life, then we would be considered to have a poor quality of life.

How do we measure quality?

Assessing the extent to which a life has quality is a difficult philosophical problem. One person can no more appreciate how another experiences and tolerates pain than they can guess how much pleasure they might get from eating a bar of chocolate. As such, measuring the quality of a person's life is incredibly difficult.

Quality of life indicators are used by governments across the world. They look broadly at material living conditions, health and education provision, leisure and social interactions, as well as economic factors and the extent to which human rights are granted. Doctors and clinicians also have tools to measure the quality of life of their patients, looking at levels of pain, the extent of disability, the ability to feed and toilet oneself, among other indicators. Most doctors, however, understand that there are real limits to how accurate these measurements can be. They similarly appreciate that there are genuine ethical problems with trying to evaluate quality of life.

If a person's life has insufficient quality, some would argue that they should have the right to die. Some would also say that attempts to treat a person's illness should be weighed against the extent to which they are going to live a life free from pain and suffering afterwards.

Tasks

- 1 In your own words, explain what is meant by sanctity of life. Aim to include the following terms: sacred, priceless, value, God.
- 2 In a short paragraph, explain the differences between quality and sanctity of life.
- 3 In a mind map, identify six different ways in which quality of life can be measured (for example, material living conditions, etc).
- 4 What is the difference between a religious believers' ideas on why life is special and those of an atheist, for example a humanist?

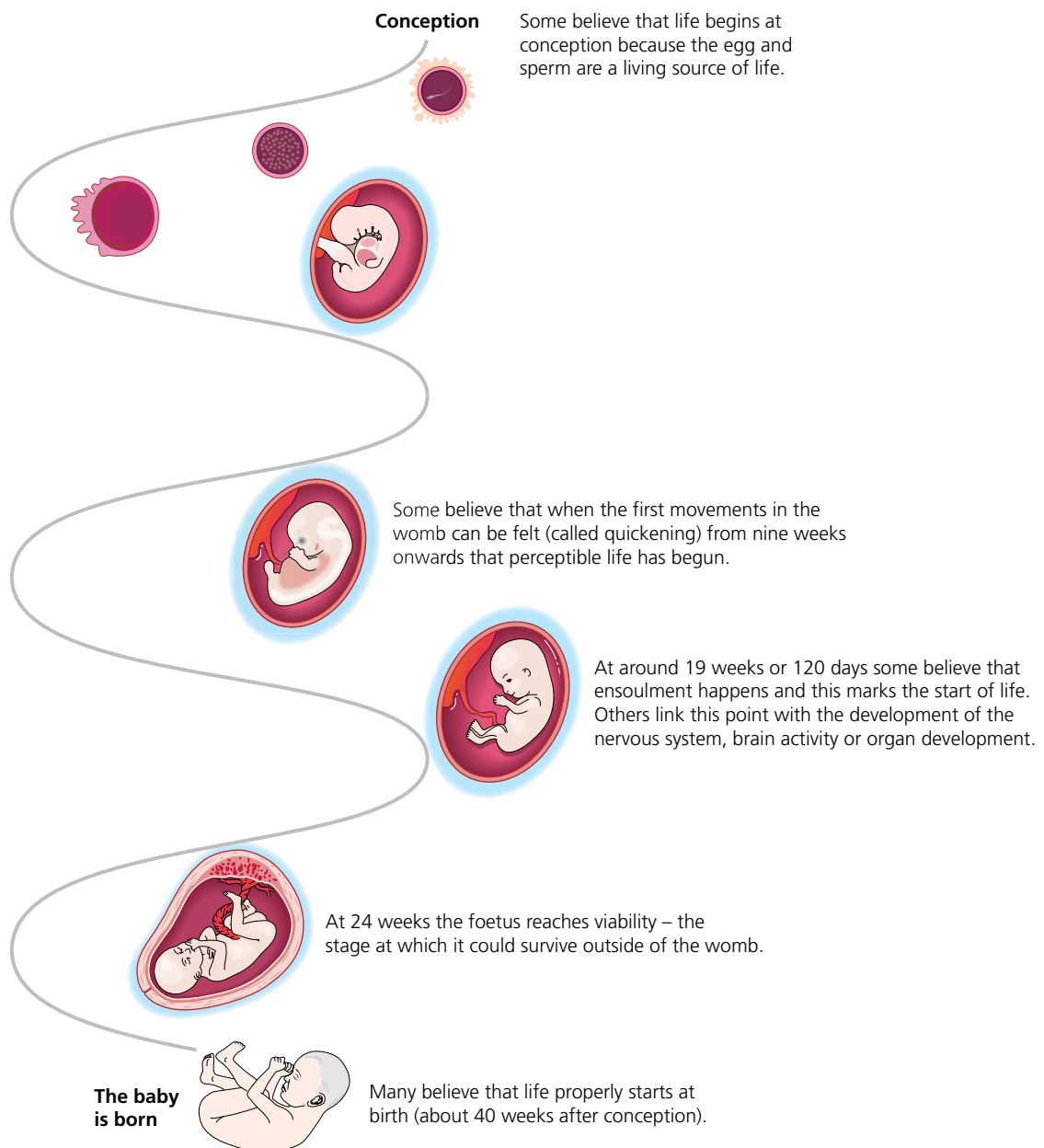
Skills Link

Explain the teachings about why life is sacred from one religious tradition.

► When does life begin?

Although it seems obvious to state that life begins at birth and ends at death, there are real questions as to when a 'person' is first created. When does a person actually become a person?

Some would argue that a person 'begins' when they are first aware of their own existence; others when independent life is possible. Some would claim that from the point a foetus can feel pain, they are a person in their own right. Many religious believers would assert that from the moment of conception, a life and therefore a person has been created. There are no definitive or clear answers to this question, and any answers offered are affected by what we think being a 'person' is all about.



► The great abortion debate

Key Concept



Abortion When a pregnancy is ended so that it does not result in the birth of a child.

The ethics of **abortion** have been widely debated since it was first legalised in Britain in 1967. Those against abortion claim that it is simply immoral to kill unborn babies, irrespective of the circumstances of the mother. Others argue that it is the quality of life that matters, and that sometimes in modern society procedures like abortion are necessary. If a baby is going to be born severely disabled or with a terminal or life-limiting condition, if the mother is going to suffer mentally or physically as the result of the pregnancy, or even if the pregnancy was the result of rape, some people feel that it is kinder to permit an abortion so that quality of life is maintained. For reasons such as these, abortion has become a massively controversial issue.

- ‘Pro-life’ is a term used to talk about people who believe that abortion is always wrong and that *every* human being has a right to life (even tiny embryos).
- ‘Pro-choice’ is a term used to talk about people who believe that every woman should be able to choose what happens to her body. That right includes choosing whether or not to continue with a pregnancy and have a baby. This does not mean that a pro-choice advocate is necessarily in favour of abortion absolutely – there may well be some situations in which they would morally disagree with abortion. Rather, it means that they support a woman’s right to choose for herself.

The rights of the unborn child

Many people (religious and not religious) who oppose abortion argue that the unborn child has rights – most specifically a right to life. The law, however, is unclear about the rights of the unborn child, and in practice their rights are not distinguishable from those of the mother. In December 2014, as part of a court case not related to abortion, the Court of Appeal ruled that an unborn child ‘was not a person’.

‘It takes two to create a human life, but only one to end it.’

What is your opinion on the fact that fathers have no rights when it comes to the abortion decision?

Life in twenty-first-century Britain

Abortion is legal in Britain before 24 weeks of pregnancy. Two doctors must consent to the procedure, and decide whether there will be a risk to the mother’s physical or mental health if the pregnancy were to continue. In very rare cases, such as severe foetal abnormality or grave risk to the life of the mother, an abortion can be performed after 24 weeks.

It is estimated that one in three women will, at some point in their life, have an abortion. At the moment, the father of the foetus has no legal rights – even if the couple are married.

► Religious teachings about abortion

Christian attitudes to abortion



There is no single view on abortion in Christianity. Views differ due to the different priority given to concerns over of the sanctity of life and the teaching of Jesus to act with compassion.

Catholics

Catholics and other orthodox denominations agree that abortion is forbidden in all circumstances as life is sacred and God given. From the moment of conception a new and unique life begins. This is not a potential life, but rather a human being with potential. Abortion is therefore murder and against the Ten Commandments. Catholics believe that the foetus has a right to live and develop, and that terminating this life is a great moral evil. The Catholic Church condemned abortion as early as the second century CE. The Didache, written in the second century, states:

'You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish'

The Church of England

The Church of England has a slightly different view, as represented in this resolution from its governing body:

'The Church of England combines strong opposition to abortion with a recognition that there can be – strictly limited – conditions under which it may be morally preferable to any available alternative.'

General Synod

They do hold that all life is precious as it is made by God. Abortion is not allowed for social reasons. However, if the mother's life is in danger, abortion is permitted but not encouraged.

Similarly, for 'quality of life' reasons and out of compassion, abortion is permitted if the female has been raped. Taking all of this into consideration, they also believe that the law in Britain has been interpreted too liberally and that this has resulted in the performance of an excessive number of abortions.

Muslim attitudes to abortion



The Qur'an does not explicitly refer to abortion but offers guidance on related matters. Muslims believe that God creates life and only he can end it (sanctity of life). Abortion for purely economic reasons is forbidden in the Qur'an:

'do not kill your children out of poverty; We will provide for you and them.'

Qur'an 6:151

While many Muslims believe that abortion is wrong and haram (forbidden) some also accept that there are situations in which an abortion can be permitted. Many will allow abortion if the mother's life is in danger or if the child is likely to be seriously deformed or diseased. However, such decisions should not be entered into lightly. The taking of the life of a child is a sin, and on the Day of Judgement a child will have the right to ask why it was killed.

There exists real debate about the acceptability of abortion and the conditions under which it should be permitted. Some schools of Muslim law permit abortion in the first 16 weeks of pregnancy, while others only permit it in the first seven weeks. These differing interpretations exist because each sets a different 'point' at which the embryo or foetus becomes a person. Even those scholars who permit early abortion in certain cases still regard abortion as wrong, but do not regard it as a punishable wrong. They would argue that the more advanced the pregnancy, the greater the wrong.

The mother's rights are greater than the child's until 120 days after conception, which is when ensoulment happens (the foetus gets its soul). Islam allows abortion to save the life of the mother because it sees this as the 'lesser of two evils' and there is a general principle in Shari'ah (Muslim law) of choosing the lesser of two evils.

Situation ethics judging the rightness or wrongness of an act on a case-by-case basis.

Jewish attitudes to abortion



Judaism as a whole does not forbid abortion, but it does not permit abortion on demand. Abortion is only permitted for serious reasons. Every case is expected to be considered on its own merits and the decision should be taken only after consultation with a rabbi. The unborn foetus is not considered a 'person' in Jewish law until it has been born, and the principle of *Pikuach Nefesh* (see page 297) allows for the life of the mother to be saved. There are, however, differing beliefs among Jews as to when and whether abortion is permissible.

Abortion is largely opposed by Orthodox Jews. This is because life is God's greatest gift, and it should be preserved at all costs. God is the creator, and he alone can take life. Destroying a life is therefore a heinous crime.

Reform and liberal Jews believe that abortion is permitted in some circumstances, such as if the mother's life is at risk. In such circumstances (where allowing the pregnancy to continue would kill the mother) Judaism insists that the foetus must be aborted, since the mother's life is more important than that of the foetus.

Some Jews accept abortion in cases of rape or, incest, or if the health of the mother is generally poor.

'They who have been born are destined to die. They that are dead are destined to be made alive. They who live are destined to be judged, that men may know and make known and understand that He is God, He is the maker, He is the creator, He is the discernor, He is the judge, He is the witness, He is the complainant, and it is He who will in the future judge, blessed be He, in whose presence is neither guile nor forgetfulness nor respect of persons nor taking of bribes; for all is His. And know that everything is according to the reckoning. And let not your evil nature assure you that the grave will be your refuge: for despite yourself you were fashioned, and despite yourself you were born, and despite yourself you live, and despite yourself you die, and despite yourself shall you be destined to give account and reckoning before the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.'

Ethics of the Fathers 4:29

Humanist attitudes to abortion



In considering abortion, a humanist would consider the evidence, the probable consequences, and the rights and wishes of everyone involved. They would do this with the aim of trying to find the kindest course of action or the one that would do the least harm. Because of this '**situation ethics**' approach, there is not one single humanist view on abortion, but humanists tend to take on a liberal, pro-choice stance. Humanists value happiness and personal choice, and many actively campaigned for legalised abortion in the 1960s. As life is not sacred, the debate hinges on when one thinks human life begins, and a foetus does not become a person, with its own feelings and rights, until well after conception. As humanists take happiness and suffering as foremost moral considerations, quality of life will often outweigh the preservation of life at all costs. They believe that abortion is often a morally acceptable choice to make. It is, however, a personal choice which should be made in an informed fashion which considers both the long- and short-term effects.

► Abortion – case studies

Savita Halappanavar

Savita Halappanavar was a 31-year-old dentist, recently married and experiencing her first pregnancy. In October 2012, Savita was admitted to Galway Hospital in the Republic of Ireland suffering from the early stages of a miscarriage. Both her and her husband requested a termination, as it was clear that the pregnancy was ending and she was in great pain. The hospital refused, arguing that as a faint foetal heartbeat had been detected a termination was impossible. Ireland is a Catholic country where abortion is illegal. Savita's health rapidly deteriorated, and she died of septicaemia and multi-organ failure days later.

An autopsy reported that her death was the direct result of her miscarriage, and her husband believes that an abortion would have saved her life.



■ Savita Halappanavar died after suffering a miscarriage

Gianna Jessen

Gianna was born weighing 2 lbs and with cerebral palsy. She had survived an abortion in the final three months of her 17-year-old mother's pregnancy. Gianna was adopted at the age of four and learnt the truth of her traumatic birth (which resulted in her cerebral palsy) from her adoptive mother when she was 12. She is now an anti-abortion and disability rights protestor. Although she has forgiven her birth mother for making a choice that has left her disabled for life, she questions 'if abortion is about a women's rights, then what are my rights?'



■ Gianna Jessen survived an attempted abortion

Tasks

- 1 Construct a timeline of the different stages of pregnancy. Identify each key development point (for example, when the foetus can survive on its own) and the points at which different people believe that the foetus is a person (for example at 120 days when ensoulment happens).
- 2 Briefly explain when you believe life begins and mark it on your timeline. Give a clear reason or justification for your belief.
- 3 Define what is meant by 'pro-life' and 'pro-choice'.
- 4 What are the legal restrictions to abortion in twenty-first-century Britain?
- 5 Draw a table with two columns – one for each of the religions that you are choosing to study. For each, summarise the religious attitudes to abortion as bullet points. Remember to mention where there are differences of belief *within* each religion.

► Euthanasia

Key Concept



Euthanasia From Greek, *eu* 'good' + *thanatos* 'death'. Sometimes referred to as 'mercy killing'. The act of killing or permitting the death of a person who is suffering from a serious illness.

Also known as mercy killing or assisted suicide, **euthanasia** comes from the Greek word for 'quiet death'. It is usually when a peaceful and pain-free end is brought to a person's life.

There are technically four different types of euthanasia.

- Voluntary euthanasia (or assisted suicide as it is known in law) is when a person explicitly asks for help to die. Often this would be due to a life-limiting or terminal illness.
- Active euthanasia is when a person takes a specific course of action to end their own life, for example by taking an overdose.
- Passive euthanasia is when life-sustaining treatment is removed, for example a feeding tube or respirator. Often this would be because it is believed that the patient would have wished for a 'dignified death' or if there is no hope of recovery.
- Involuntary euthanasia is where death is forced upon a person, for example during ethnic cleansing or the death penalty.

The issue of euthanasia calls into question many different religious, philosophical and ethical issues; such as whether we have the right to end our own lives.

Why might people want to end their own life?

People suffering from incurable chronic degenerative diseases (illnesses that steadily grow worse over time for which there are no known cures) like motor neurone disease might choose to end their own lives before their illness reaches its final stages and they are unable to communicate with others. Some people, for example those suffering from terminal cancer, want to choose to end their lives before the most painful and life-limiting phase of their illness sets in. For others, living with constant and unmanageable pain (maybe linked to an injury, disability or side-effect from previous illnesses) is reason enough to consider seeking euthanasia.



■ Injections can provide a relatively painless way of dying

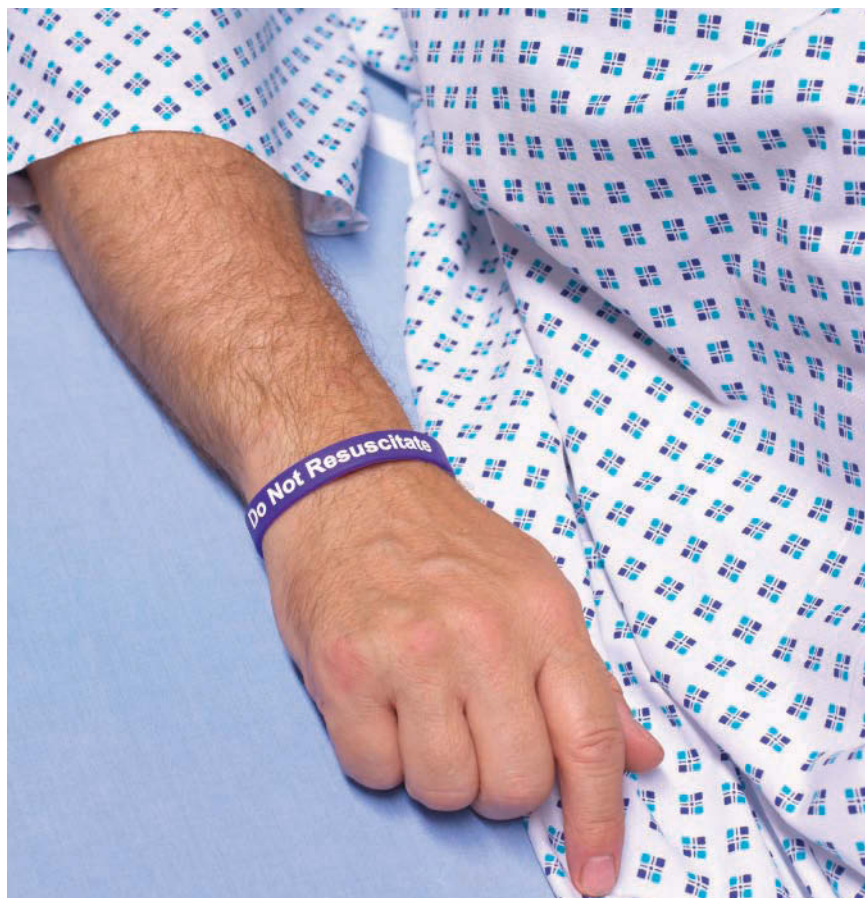
Peter Singer is an atheist philosopher and utilitarian. He argues that euthanasia is morally acceptable and that it should be legalised with proper safeguards put in place to protect vulnerable people. He believes that not legalising euthanasia harms more than it protects, and that legalising euthanasia would benefit more people than it would harm.

Singer believes that the Quality of Life ethic is more important and relevant in the modern world than the traditional (religious) Sanctity of Life belief. He argues that even though all human life has value, it is not all of equal value. People must possess the qualities of being a person (what Singer calls 'personhood') to count as being fully alive and he believes that if a person has no real ability to think, experience life or relate to others, then their life has limited value and euthanasia in these circumstances is acceptable. For example, if a person is brain dead, unconscious or in a 'persistent vegetative state', their life has no real value and non-voluntary (or passive) euthanasia should be permitted.

Singer also believes that a person who is fully conscious and rational has the freedom to choose whether or not they want to live, and their desire to die should be respected. This means that if a person who suffers "an irreversible condition causing protracted physical or mental suffering" chooses to waive the right to life, they should be permitted to end their life or be assisted in ending their life.

Living wills

A living will is a legal document. It outlines for medical professionals and next of kin (close relatives) what a person wants to happen if they find themselves critically or terminally ill. It normally instructs doctors and other medical professionals not to resuscitate (revive once the heart has stopped) or intubate (insert a breathing tube) or use artificial means to keep a person alive. Sometimes living wills are very detailed, and specify exactly what point in a person's illness to stop life-preserving or life-saving treatment. Sometimes this is for religious reasons; sometimes it is for 'quality of life' considerations. A DNR, or Do Not Resuscitate order, is a type of living will.



Do not resuscitate wrist bands are used to show medical professionals that a patient does not want medical treatments to be used to revive them.

Life in twenty-first-century Britain

Euthanasia is currently illegal in the UK.

Depending on the circumstances, euthanasia is regarded as either manslaughter or murder and is punishable by law, with a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

Assisted suicide (where for example you help to procure drugs for someone, knowing that they intend to commit suicide) is illegal under the terms of the Suicide Act (1961) and is punishable by up to 14 years' imprisonment.

Attempting to kill yourself is not a criminal act in itself.

In reality, the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) has to decide whether taking someone to court for assisting suicide is 'in the public interest'. In 2010 the DPP said it was unlikely that someone who helped someone else to commit suicide would be prosecuted if:

- the victim had reached a voluntary, clear, settled and informed decision to commit suicide
- the suspect was wholly motivated by compassion.

► The 'right to die' debate – For

Free will

Daniel James was paralysed in a rugby accident at the age of 22. He was in constant pain, had no movement in any limbs, and felt his body was a prison. He decided to go to the Dignitas clinic in Switzerland to end his life. He was assisted by his parents. Despite being investigated they were not charged for helping him. The Crown Prosecution Service has now said that families who help relatives die in this way are unlikely to be prosecuted.



Campaigners supporting the 'right to die'

For many people with chronic degenerative diseases, they want to control when and how they die. For them it is not just a matter of free will but rather a matter of maintaining human dignity. Dr Anne Turner, who suffered from a fatal degenerative nerve disease, decided to end her own life before she reached a point when she could not walk, feed, dress or speak for herself.

Those who believe in free will think it is ethically wrong to keep someone with no hope of recovery on expensive life-support treatment.



Baby RB

In November 2009, the father of a severely disabled baby boy, known as Baby RB, went to court to fight the hospital's decision to turn off his son's life-support machine. At 13 months old, Baby RB was incapable of moving his limbs, breathing or swallowing on his own. He had a severe and incurable neuromuscular disorder and had been on a respirator since an hour after his birth. His mother supported the hospital's decision, as she felt that her son had no quality of life.

The father eventually agreed with the hospital's doctors and both parents were present when Baby RB's life support was turned off.

Stephen Hawking

In 2013, Stephen Hawking offered his public support to the argument for assisted dying, saying: 'We don't let animals suffer, so why humans?' He said that he would consider euthanasia if he reached a point where he felt he had nothing left to offer or was a burden to others.



■ Stephen Hawking is a supporter of assisted dying

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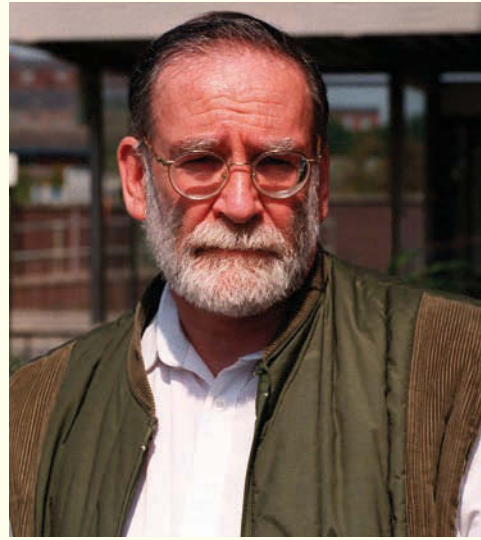
General human dignity
If found
Please call
077 3858 1664

► The 'right to die' debate – Against

Harold Shipman (1946–2004) was a British doctor and one of the most prolific serial killers in recorded history. On 31 January 2000, a jury found Shipman guilty of 15 murders. He was sentenced to life imprisonment and the judge recommended that he never be released.

After his trial, the Shipman Inquiry began. Lasting almost two years, it was an investigation into all deaths certified by Shipman. About 80 per cent of his victims were women. His youngest victim was a 41-year-old man. They died as the result of being given lethal injections of morphine. Much of Britain's legal structure concerning health care and medicine was reviewed and modified as a direct and indirect result of Shipman's crimes. Shipman is the only British doctor to have been found guilty of murdering his patients.

Legalising doctor-assisted euthanasia would make it easier for people like Shipman to commit horrific crimes.



■ Harold Shipman was convicted of murder in 2000



If euthanasia is legalised, the stimulus or drive to research into terminal illnesses lessens.



It's murder



All life is special and worthy of protection.

The slippery-slope argument

The slippery-slope argument claims that the acceptance of certain practices, such as physician-assisted suicide or voluntary euthanasia, will invariably lead to the acceptance or practice of concepts which are currently deemed unacceptable, such as involuntary euthanasia. In order to prevent these undesirable practices from occurring, we need to resist taking the first step.



Legalising euthanasia could lead to those in the latter stages of life feeling that they are a burden or, even worse, feeling obliged to consider ending their life.



Hospices provide a real alternative to those feeling unable to deal with the symptoms of terminal illnesses.

Hospices

Hospice a place where people with terminal illnesses can go to die with dignity. A hospice focuses on relieving the symptoms and pain of a terminal illness. Unlike a hospital, a hospice does not try to treat an illness or cure a patient. Hospices also offer a type of pastoral care, for both the patient and their family, not available in a standard hospital.

Palliative care care that focuses on relieving pain and suffering.

In 1967, St Christopher's was opened in Sydenham, London. It was the first **hospice** in Britain and was opened by Dame Cicely Saunders. Her aim was to provide physical, spiritual, emotional and psychological support to those in the final period of their illnesses/lives. She wanted to offer care that considered *all* elements of a patient's needs rather than simply treating the physical symptoms of a patient. The Hospice Movement, as it has since become known, was born.

Hospices and religion

Although hospices are not specifically religious places, Dame Cicely did acknowledge that her Christian beliefs were the main motivation for her work. Similarly, many hospices are supported or sponsored by religious institutions. They fulfil the Christian desire to support the suffering of both patients and family in the final moments of life, as well enabling believers to preserve the sanctity of life rather than resorting to euthanasia.

Many people believe that hospices provide a real alternative to euthanasia. They allow people to die with their dignity intact in a loving, caring environment, surrounded by family if desired. Patients need not feel a burden and can still benefit from a quality of life as pain relief is **palliative** and focused on managing symptoms while maintaining consciousness.

'We should concern ourselves with the quality of life as well as its length.'

Dame Cicely Saunders

Life in twenty-first-century Britain

There are currently over 260 inpatient hospices in Britain.

Some are dedicated entirely to the care of children and infants, and offer invaluable support to both patient and family – providing respite care and end-of-life palliative treatment. Others focus purely on adult end-of-life care, with some specialising in specific diseases such as cancer.

The myth that people only go into hospices to die is slowly being dispelled, as more and more patients are admitted for short periods of time (between 12 and 14 days is the average stay) to help manage pain and relieve other symptoms of their illness.

Upwards of 4 per cent of deaths occur in a hospice setting, with many more patients and their families benefiting from time spent in a hospice before their death.



■ A Katharine House Hospice

► Religious teachings about euthanasia

Christian attitudes to euthanasia



Most Christians agree that euthanasia is not acceptable because:

- All life is sacred (sanctity of life) and taking any life is wrong.
- Those who assist are involved in murder, which is against the Ten Commandments.
- Life is a gift from God and therefore is precious.
- Suffering can have a purpose and should be endured, as God will not give us more suffering than we are truly able to cope with.
- Hospices also offer an alternative where care and support can be given to the patient.

This allows patients to die with dignity while their pain is managed.

Some Liberal Christians believe that it is acceptable to turn off life-support if there is medical evidence that a person is brain-dead. This is because they believe that the person has already died, and that the machine is just performing bodily functions. They would also consider withholding treatment which prolongs a painful illness as they follow Jesus' teaching of acting in the most loving and compassionate way towards another person.

Muslim attitudes to euthanasia



All life is made by God (sanctity of life) so taking any life is wrong. Only God can decide when a person dies. Suffering has a purpose and is part of God's plan for you.'

It is important to show compassion to those who are in pain or are suffering. When this happens there should be no

need for euthanasia. No matter what state the body is in, the soul is still perfect and that is what matters to God.

Muslim lawyers have recently agreed that it is acceptable for a person who is in a coma, being kept alive by machines and who has no hope of recovery to have the machines turned off. This is because their life has already ended and the machine is of no real use as treatment.

Jewish attitudes to euthanasia



Jews are largely opposed to euthanasia. Active euthanasia is seen as murder. All life is precious and a gift from God – it is not ours to throw away. Only the Creator can decide when life should end. Every moment of human life is considered equal in value to many years of life.

Medicine which relieves pain can be administered even if it hastens death as a side-effect. Crucially, the purpose

or intention here cannot be to kill, but to relieve pain. Similarly, Jews can pray to end a person's pain and suffering, but it is wrong to shorten a person's life (even if it would naturally end very soon).

Some Jews believe that a life-support machine can be turned off if the patient has no chance of recovery. There is also a belief that doctors should not make a person suffer more by artificially extending their life.

Humanist attitudes to euthanasia



Humanists have supported attempts to legalise assisted dying, assisted suicide and voluntary euthanasia across the UK. They believe that assistance should not be limited to terminally ill people alone and want to see reform of the law that considers the needs of other people who are

'permanently and incurably suffering', for example people who are paralysed.

Humanists uphold the right to life but don't believe that life should be prolonged in the face of pointless suffering. Being able to die, with dignity, in a manner of our choosing must be understood to be a fundamental human right.

► End of section review

Knowledge check

- 1 What is a hospice? How does it differ from a hospital?
- 2 Create a Venn diagram to compare sanctity and quality of life.
- 3 Explain three different reasons why Christians would disagree with euthanasia. After you have stated each belief, extend your explanation with a connective, such as 'This means that ...' or 'This is because ...' or 'This comes from the teaching ...'.

Skills Link

- 1 What is meant by 'sanctity of life'?

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Abortion
- Euthanasia
- Sanctity of life
- Quality of life

Key teachings about:

- the sanctity of life
- abortion
- euthanasia

The Big Question

'Everyone should have the right to die.'

Your task

Respond to the statement above, showing that you have considered more than one point of view. Give reasoned judgements on the validity and strength of these views.

Task

For both of the religions (or denominations) you are studying, explain in detail religious teachings about **euthanasia**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Christianity. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Christians such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/Because of this they

Beliefs do/do not differ because

■ Beliefs about death and the afterlife

▶ The soul

Key Concept



Soul The spiritual aspect of a being; that which connects someone to God. The soul is often regarded as non-physical and as living on after physical death, in an afterlife.

Belief in the existence of a **soul** is a central feature of many religious and philosophical traditions. According to Christianity, Islam and Judaism, only human beings have immortal souls, other species do not. Humanists deny the existence of a soul.

There are two distinct views about the soul and its relationship with our physical body:

- ▶ **Dualism** is the belief that we are made of two separate parts: a physical body and a spiritual soul. Dualists believe that our soul (or spirit) lives in our physical body. This soul is the true, inner part of us and it will live on after our material body dies.
- ▶ **Materialism** is the view that nothing else exists apart from matter. All we have, as human beings, is a physical body; there is no soul or spirit.

Ensoulment the moment when the human soul is said to enter the baby's body (usually thought to happen in the womb, at an early point in the pregnancy).

Christian attitudes to death and the afterlife



Christians believe that the soul is the inner part of our being, and the body is the home of the soul. It is the soul which gives us our sense of 'aliveness'; it forms our personality and individuality. Genesis 2:7 says that, after God had formed the body of Adam, the first human being, from the dust of the earth, he breathed life (soul) into him. In the same way, God creates a soul in each one of us. It is through our soul that we can connect to God. **Ensoulment** is the moment when the soul is believed to enter the body. St Thomas Aquinas taught that this happens while the foetus is developing in the womb.

Some Christians are dualists. They believe that we are made from two distinctive parts: body and soul. They say that the soul is the true, inner part of us; it is eternal and will continue to live on, even after the death of our material body. It is our soul that will rise to everlasting life in heaven.

Other Christians are non-dualists. They say that the body and soul are one and they cannot be separated. They agree that we have a soul, but believe it is an integral part of us, which is indistinguishable from the body. After death the soul is temporarily apart from the body, but body and soul will be reunited on Judgement Day. At the resurrection we will rise bodily from the dead, just as Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven as a physical being.

The philosopher Gilbert Ryle used the phrase the 'ghost in the machine'. This refers to the idea that humans may think they have a soul, but in reality there is nothing there.

Humanist attitudes to death and the afterlife

H

Humanists are materialists, so they dismiss any suggestion that we have a soul. They believe in a scientific description of human life and they reject beliefs about our spiritual existence. We are physical beings who will decompose when we die. No eternal, supernatural part of us will live on.

Muslim attitudes to death and the afterlife



Islam teaches that, as humans, we have both physical and non-physical aspects. The soul is an invisible part of an individual's existence which is 'pure' at birth. According to the Qur'an, God made Adam from the 'earth', so we have a physical body. We are also blessed with a soul (ruh); this is the non-physical part of our being which makes us a real person.

The Qur'an teaches that humans are created when God 'breathes' a soul into them. In the Hadith there is a passage that says that this ensoulment happens in the womb at 120 days after conception.

Islam teaches that when a child is born, its soul is imprinted with a belief in God. This natural belief in God is called **fitrah**. For Muslims, the idea of fitrah describes our human nature: we are born in a state of purity, with an inbuilt, natural instinct to submit to God and live by his laws. So, according to Islam, this means that the true nature of our soul is for us to grow up as a Muslim and submit our lives to God.

'Every new-born child is born in a state of "fitrah" (purity).'

M. Hanif

Fitrah the natural instinct all humans have, from birth, to know and worship God.

Jewish attitudes to death and the afterlife



In the Jewish tradition, the soul is a divine energy in each person, a fragment of God within each human being. Body and soul are different aspects of a person, but they cannot be separated. For Jews, the breath is often a symbol of the soul (or spirit) within.

In Judaism, the soul is the 'I' which inhabits our body. A being without a soul would be like a candle without a flame or a food without any flavour. The soul gives the body life, personality, emotions and identity.

The soul is the spark of godliness in each one of us. It is the expression of God's desire for each of us to be an individual, unique being. It is more than the engine of life, because it is the *why* of our existence: the soul embodies the meaning and purpose of our lives.

Are humans born sinners? How do we get to heaven?

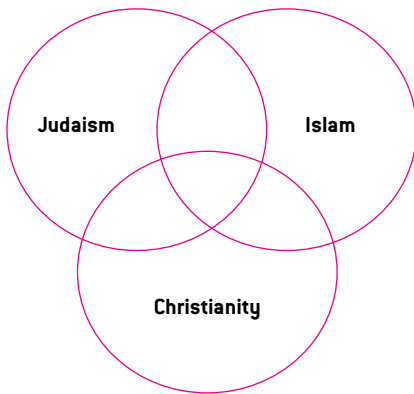
Traditionally Christianity has taught that as human beings we are born with a sinful nature. This is called 'original sin'. Because Adam and Eve sinned by eating the fruit in the Garden of Eden, all generations to follow will inherit this sin. For humans to get to heaven, we must be reconciled with God; we need to be 'saved' and forgiven. This can only happen through believing that Jesus died on the cross to cleanse us from our sins. Liberal Christians do not accept the concept of 'original sin'. They argue that we need to take responsibility for our own 'sin'. It is nothing to do with a mythical Adam!

Islam teaches that each human soul is created pure, ready to worship God; this is called fitrah. If we faithfully follow Shari'ah law, we will be rewarded with paradise in the afterlife.

Judaism (like Islam) teaches that humans are born with a pure and untainted soul. Humans commit sins because they are not perfect, not, as Christianity teaches, because we were born as sinners. Those who have lived a moral life will be rewarded with paradise.

Tasks

- 1 Create a mind map for the concept of 'soul'. Include religious and non-religious ideas and beliefs.
- 2 (a) Explain what is meant by 'dualism'.
(b) How is dualism different to materialism?
- 3 Reproduce the Venn diagram below and use it to write down the key ideas about the soul within Islam, Christianity and Judaism.



The Reunion of the Soul and the Body by William Blake

► What happens when we die?

Key Concept



Afterlife Life after death; the belief that existence continues after physical death.

There are three main types of belief about what happens after death:

- 1 **Atheists and humanists** believe that nothing survives death. They are certain that humans do not have a soul; we are just physical, material beings, so when we die that is the end. Nothing exists beyond the grave – the chemicals of our bodies are recycled into the environment.
- 2 **Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs** share a belief that life is a cycle of birth, death and rebirth (samsara), with the form of our next life being determined by our karma (good or bad actions). The aim of every living being is to escape from the cycle of samsara by gaining enlightenment. However, most of us will be reborn again and again countless times on the way. Hindus and Sikhs believe in reincarnation or the transmigration of the soul, where, at death, the soul passes into a new body. Buddhists believe in rebirth; after death the mental energy of our previous life will be transmitted into a new body.
- 3 **Jews, Christians and Muslims** believe that, as humans, we only live one earthly existence, followed by eternal life in the world to come. Many traditional believers hold that after death we will rise from the dead to be judged by God, with those who God deems worthy (good) being raised to eternal life. There is less agreement amongst Jewish, Christian and Muslim believers about the existence of hell.



The story of Jesus and the empty tomb gives Christians the confidence to believe that, after death, God will raise the dead to eternal life

Concepts of heaven and hell: Are they real places?

A simple view of heaven pictures it located in the clouds, where angels drift around and God sits on a golden throne. It is a 'place' where the souls of people go to be rewarded for living a good life. However, we know enough about the universe today to be certain that heaven is not a place just above the earth. For this reason, many religious people say that the concept of heaven is better understood as a metaphor representing the peace and harmony to be found when we are in a relationship with God.

Is hell really a fiery place of everlasting torment, deep beneath the earth? Could the concept of hell be a description of a state of mind when someone is full of hatred, anger and resentment, rejecting all kindness and love and cut off from God/goodness?

Tasks

- 1 Reproduce the table below. Complete it by outlining the belief about the afterlife for each group of religious traditions; then summarise each in three words.

Tradition	Belief	Summarised in 3 words
Atheists and humanists		Nothing survives death
Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists		
Jews, Christians and Muslims		

- 2 Read this quotation from John's Gospel and study the comments about it.

At the time of Jesus many Jewish people believed that God would raise people from the dead on the Day of Judgement.

Jesus is teaching that anyone who believes in him will live again after death. But in what form? Will people live as eternal spirits, or will they have a resurrected 'body' like Jesus?

Martha answered, 'I know he (Lazarus) will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.' Jesus said to her. 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?' 'Yes, Lord,' she replied, 'I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.' John 11:24–27

By claiming to be the 'resurrection' and the 'life' Jesus is saying that he is the source of both: there can be no life after death without him.

Most Christians hold the view that only those that 'believe in' Jesus will be given the gift of eternal life.

The 'Messiah' is the special, chosen one who the Jews believed God would send to save the world.

- 3 Explain what Christians can learn about life after death from this quote.

► Religious beliefs about judgement, heaven and hell

Christian attitudes to judgement, heaven and hell



Christians believe in resurrection and eternal life; death is not the end, but a gateway to a perfect existence. Some Christians say that heaven is our true home and our lives here on earth are the testing ground for life in eternity. Christians believe that just as Jesus rose again after death, so will we. The Bible teaches that God is the Divine Judge and on Judgement Day he will decide who will be rewarded with eternal life in paradise and who will be punished. Those who believe in Jesus and have lived a good life will be taken to heaven. Those who have rejected God's love and caused harm to others will be sent to hell.

Some Christians are dualists. They believe that at the moment of death our soul separates and leaves the body. The body will decay while the immortal soul is united with God in heaven.

Other Christians (for example, Evangelicals) say that after death we will experience a 'bodily resurrection', like Jesus, who came back to life in physical form. In his letter to the Corinthians, St Paul says that, after our deaths, we will be raised as spiritual bodies, not just disembodied souls.

'So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.'

1 Corinthians 15:42–44

What does St Paul mean when he talks about a 'spiritual body'? Probably the closest we can get to understanding this idea is to picture an angel. Angels are thought to be physical, but they are also spiritual and immortal. They can be seen, but they are not of this world. Is St Paul saying that we will exist for eternity like angels?

Read the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (see p189). Explain what this story teaches Christians about how Jesus' followers should live their lives.

One question which troubles many Christians is: How can a loving God condemn people to hell? Some reply that it is not God, but us, as individuals, who send ourselves to hell.

Heaven and hell

Christians believe that to be in heaven is to be in God's presence, existing in a state of pure beauty and kindness. To be in hell is to be in constant torment, cut off from all that is good and loving.

Many Evangelical Christians refer to heaven and hell as if they are real places where humans will spend eternity. Liberal Christians say these ideas are symbolic. They remind us that there are consequences to our thoughts and actions.

Akhirah the Islamic term for the afterlife. There are many references to it, and warnings about it, in the Qur'an.

Barzakh a place of waiting, after death, before Judgement Day comes.

Muslim attitudes to judgement, heaven and hell



For Muslims, this world is not all that there is. Our human existence will continue after death; our earthly life is just a preparation for the eternal life to come (**akhirah**).

Muslims believe that at the end of the world there will be a Day of Judgement. Only God knows when the Day of Judgement will come. Muslims believe that, for those who die before that day, the archangel of death, Azrail, will come to take their souls to await the day. They will be kept in a state of **barzakh** (waiting) until the archangel Israfil blows his trumpet to announce the resurrection of all from the dead.

Islam teaches that on the Day of Judgement the dead will be raised from their graves and all people will stand before God to be sentenced according to the way they have lived their lives. A book, which represents everything an individual has done, is presented to each of them. If the person's good deeds outweigh the bad, then they will receive the book in their right hand and pass into heaven. If it is placed into their left hand, they will be among the damned.

The coming of the Mahdi

Muslims believe that the Mahdi (the 'guided one') will come on the Day of Judgement. He is the long-awaited saviour who will come to rescue the world. Sunnis believe that he will appear in the End Times, with Isa (Jesus). Shi'as too are awaiting the Mahdi, but they believe his identity will be revealed as the Hidden (or 12th) Imam (see page 228).

'And everything they did is in written records.'

Qur'an 54:52

'Fear God and know that God sees well what you do.'

Qur'an 2:233

'And the evil consequences of what they did will appear to them, and they will be enveloped by what they used to ridicule.'

Qur'an 46:33

Heaven and hell

Most Muslims understand accounts of the afterlife in a very literal way. In the Qur'an, heaven (Janna) and hell (Jahannan) are described in very physical terms. Heaven is a garden of contentment, full of flowers, fruits and fountains. Hell is a state of torment and terror, where the damned are separated from God; they face boiling water, scorching fire and black smoke. There are some Muslims who do interpret these descriptions symbolically.

'Every soul will taste death.'

Qur'an 3:185

Jewish attitudes to judgement, heaven and hell



Judaism teaches that the body and the soul are one; they are inseparable. The soul has no existence without the body. When Adam was created it says that God 'breathed into his nostrils the soul of life', (Genesis 2:7). Jews see this 'soul' as the 'aliveness' of a person. It is a metaphor for what makes us living beings; it is not a separate thing that has a life of its own without the body.

Early Judaism

The Jewish scriptures say almost nothing about the afterlife: there is no reference to figures like Adam, Abraham, Moses and David living on after death. It was accepted that when they died, although they would live on in the memories of generations to come, their body and soul passed away forever. If there was any understanding of an afterlife it was that the dead were transported to Sheol, a shadowy, dreary underworld existence, but this was not a common idea.

Present-day Judaism

More recently Jewish thinking has come to accept the idea of an afterlife (**Olam Ha-Ba**). Today, Judaism tends to teach that at death there will be a temporary separation of body and soul, but they will be reunited on the Day of Judgement.

Many Orthodox Jews nowadays believe in some form of resurrection, believing that people will be raised to eternal life in a bodily resurrection at the end of time. Righteous people will be rewarded with eternal life in paradise, while the wicked will be sent to a place of punishment. Many Jewish people believe that this judgement and resurrection will take place after the coming of the **Messiah** (Mashiach).

Olam Ha-Ba the afterlife. It means 'the world to come'.

Messiah (Mashiach) the one who will be anointed as king to rule in the world to come.

Humanist attitudes to judgement, heaven and hell



Humanists believe that, as far as we know, we are unlike any other creatures in that we are able to reflect on our own lives. One of the questions which has concerned humans since the dawn of time is what happens after death. The humanist answer is: nothing; we only live once and there is no second chance. There is no soul or immortal consciousness, no cosmic judge, divine

paradise or fiery hell. Because of this we should make the most of our existence while we can, living moral lives, not because God will judge us, but because it shows compassion for others and respect for ourselves.

Most humanists are materialists; they believe that we are nothing more than matter. There is no spiritual or supernatural aspect to life.

Task



For both of the religions (or denominations) you are studying, explain in detail religious teachings about **the afterlife**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Christianity. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote

This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Christians such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/Because of this they

Their beliefs do/do not differ because

▶ How do funeral rites reflect people's beliefs about the afterlife?

Rite A ritual or solemn ceremony.

When someone dies it is common to mark their death and celebrate their life in some sort of ceremony. Different religions have their own specific rituals and practices. This section gives details of religious and non-religious funeral **rites**, explaining how these ceremonies reflect beliefs about the afterlife.

Christian funeral rites and their meaning



When someone is close to death, if it is possible, a priest is called to say the last rites. Prayers are said for the dying person and they can ask God for forgiveness of their sins. The last rites is a Catholic practice, which might also involve the priest giving Holy Communion.

- **Meaning:** This helps to ease the dying person into the afterlife, enabling them to die at peace, having asked for God's forgiveness.

The funeral itself is usually held in a church. The coffin is carried to the front of the church and a service is held in honour of the dead person: flowers are displayed, prayers said and candles may be lit. The minister reads the words of Jesus:

'I am the resurrection and the life.'

John 11:25

- **Meaning:** The candles represent Jesus as the 'light of the world', because he guides a path into heaven. The passage 'I am the resurrection' reminds the congregation that those who believe in

Jesus will be resurrected, to spend eternity with God.

Psalm 23, 'The Lord is my shepherd', is often read at funerals. It says that even when I am 'in the valley of the shadow of death', God is still by my side. Catholics may hold a mass (communion service) with bread and wine at a funeral.

- **Meaning:** We are not forgotten by God; he will comfort those who mourn and accompany those who have died.

After this the person is buried, with the words 'ashes to ashes, dust to dust'. Today, many Christians prefer to be cremated, but traditionally the dead had to be buried.

- **Meaning:** Christianity used to teach that the bones of the dead must be left intact, so that on the Day of Judgement they could reform, rising to bodily resurrection with God in heaven. Some Christians today believe that only the soul goes to heaven, so it is acceptable to cremate the body.

Jewish funeral rites and their meaning



As they are dying, Jews try to say the Shema prayer: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.'

- **Meaning:** This shows their deeply held belief in one God.

When someone dies, arrangements must be made for burial as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours of death. The body will be washed and dressed in a simple white shroud (tachrichim). Men may also be wrapped in their prayer shawl (tallit), which is sometimes cut. The body will then be placed in a simple coffin.

- **Meaning:** Being washed and dressed in a simple white shroud and placed in a simple coffin is to show that the rich and poor are alike in death.

Before the burial takes place the mourners make a tear in their clothes. This is called a keriah.

- **Meaning:** The prayer shawl fringes are cut off to show that now they are dead they are now free of any religious laws. Tearing their clothes represents the grief felt by close family and friends.

Orthodox Judaism does not permit cremation, but some progressive Jews allow it. After the burial a blessing is said: 'May God comfort you among all the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.'

For the next seven days the family observes shiva, when they stay at home and a candle is kept burning. Kaddish is said three times a day. All the mirrors in the house are covered, people sit on low stools and do not shave or cut their hair.



Mourning continues for 30 days after the burial and mourners do not go out for pleasure. This is called 'Sheloshim'.

The dead person is remembered each year, on the anniversary of their death, by the lighting of a candle and reciting the Kaddish.

- **Meaning:** These rituals and prayers are to show respect to God and to the dead person and to help to keep them in the memories of their loved ones.



■ Jewish burial ritual

Muslim funeral rites and their meaning



When a Muslim is close to death they try to repeat the final words of Prophet Muhammad: 'God, help me through the hardship and agony of death'. Those around the person will respond: 'To God we belong and to God we return'.

The **Kalimah** (often referred to as the shahadah) is whispered into their ears, just as these words were whispered into their ears as a new-born baby.

- **Meaning:** This emphasises the belief that, at death, we are returning to our creator (God).

If possible, funerals take place within 24 hours of death. The dead person's body is washed: this is called ghusl. The body is then wrapped in a white shroud. In Britain it will be put into a coffin, but in some Islamic countries Muslims prefer to be buried without one.

- **Meaning:** The simple white shroud represents purity and equality: all are equal before God in death.

Muslims do not approve of cremation. Bodies are buried facing Makkah.

- **Meaning:** Muslims believe that the body must remain intact, facing the Holy City. This will allow the person to be resurrected on the Day of Judgement.

At the graveside they recite the first chapter (Surah) of the Qur'an, (the al-Fatihah):

'In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Praise be to God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds ...'

When the body has been lowered into the grave, the following words are spoken:

'From the earth We created you. And into it We shall cause you to return and from it We shall bring you forth once more.'

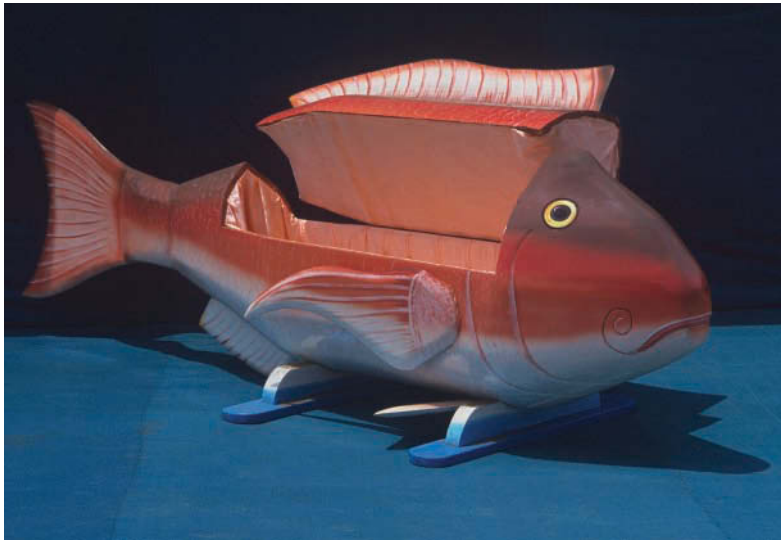
Qur'an 20:55

- **Meaning:** These prayers emphasise the greatness of God and the belief that he will bring people back to life.

Muslims do not usually have gravestones, but the site of the grave is often raised in a mound, above the level of the ground.

- **Meaning:** everyone is equal in death.

Kalimah (shahadah) the statement: 'There is no god but God, and Muhammad is his prophet'.



Unusual coffins, designed to show something special about the life of the person who has died



Green burials are becoming more common in the UK. A growing number of people are choosing to have woodland burials

Non-religious funeral services

Many people today are uncomfortable with religious ceremonies and, as a result, non-religious funeral services are becoming increasingly popular. Many people want a more informal, personal ceremony, where they can choose the songs and readings and where there is no mention of God.

At a humanist funeral those present will remember the life of the person who has died, reflecting on their contribution to the world and to others. It may include:

- ▶ music
- ▶ a non-religious reflection on death
- ▶ readings of poetry
- ▶ reminiscences about the person
- ▶ a eulogy (a description of why they were special)
- ▶ lighting candles
- ▶ moments of quiet reflection.

The service will be led by a humanist celebrant.

- ▶ **Meaning:** The service will try to show respect for the dead person without suggesting that they are going to a better place. They will be remembered for their special, unique qualities, the life they led and the achievements they made.

Tasks

- 1 Copy and complete the table below, identifying the key rites during a Christian funeral and their symbolism or meaning.

Funeral Rite	Symbolism/Meaning

- 2 Explain the key benefits of a funeral for both the living and dead. Where possible provide specific examples from the religious traditions or denominations you are studying.

End of section review

Knowledge check

- 1 Write a short paragraph (roughly three sentences) to explain what is meant by the soul.
- 2 Why might there be differences of belief about the afterlife within one religion?
- 3 Explain how a funeral reflects religious beliefs about the afterlife.

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Afterlife
- Soul

Key teachings about:

- the afterlife
- judgement

Key practices:

- Religious and non-religious attitudes towards funerals

Skills Link

- 1 From two different religions or two religious traditions, explain beliefs about life after death.

The Big Question

'Death is the end.'

Your task

Respond to the statement above, showing that you have considered more than one point of view. Give reasoned judgements on the validity and strength of these views.

Task

For both of the religions (or denominations) that you are studying, you need to explain in detail religious teachings about **life after death**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Christianity and a second one for your other chosen religion or denomination. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Christians such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/Because of this they

Their beliefs do/do not differ because

► Exam focus

Issues of life and death

(a) questions

Tim has answered an (a) type of question. Look at the grade descriptors on page vii. How many marks would you give. Why?

(a) What is meant by 'sanctity of life'?

This means when life is considered sacred e.g. euthanasia.

(d) questions

For (d) type questions in the life and death unit responses must include reference to non-religious beliefs. Look at the question below:

(d) 'It is a woman's right to choose abortion.'

Discuss the statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. (15)

(You must refer to religious and non-religious beliefs, such as those held by humanists and atheists, in your answer.)

Sammy has considered a number of points he can make.

He wants to include two from different religious traditions but also needs to identify religious teachings or a sacred text for each. Look back through the chapter; which religious teachings would you use? Which non-religious teachings would you use and what evidence might you give?

- There are no hard and fast rules. All medical situations depend upon the context (a relative/situationist approach).
- Application of the principle of utilitarianism.
- Many religions believe days are fixed and a part of God's plan.
- Life is too sacred to be placed in the hands of human beings (sanctity of life).
- Since life is created by God it must be revered from the moment of conception.
- Up to four months after conception, ensoulment has not taken place.
- The importance of Pikuach Nefesh.
- Peter Singer's ideas that human beings have no special right to life just because they are humans (speciesism).
- Circumstances should be taken into account: rape, poverty, disability, situation of the mother and/or father etc. when considering abortion – quality of life is paramount.