

THEME A: Christian teachings about human sexuality

Human sexuality refers to the way people express themselves as sexual beings. People begin to have sexual feelings at puberty. This is a natural part of human biology that usually leads to intercourse with the opposite sex and reproduction (having children)

A **heterosexual** relationship is a sexual relationship with a member of the opposite sex; that is between a man and a woman. A **homosexual** relationship is a sexual relationship with a member of the same sex, either between a man and a man or a woman and a woman.

Contemporary British attitudes

Since sexuality is such a powerful human force that it can result in a new life, the Christian Church teaches that the only valid place for a sexual relationship is within marriage.

In the past, the Church was more powerful and the majority of society accepted this viewpoint. However, times have changed. Contraception and legal abortion have reduced the fear or risk of pregnancy. Today, sex before marriage, multiple sexual partners, children outside of marriage, affairs (adultery), or open homosexual relationships are far more common. In Britain, homosexual relationships are now legal and homosexual couples can now marry or convert civil partnerships into marriage if they wish. These changes to the law broadly reflect contemporary British attitudes to sexuality.

The age of consent

In the UK, the 'age of consent' for anyone to have sex is 16-years old, which means you are legally old enough to freely agree to have sex. The law tries to protect anyone under 16 from exploitation and abuse. Children under 13 are protected by additional specific laws to prevent abuse. Some people think that as long as people freely consent and are over 16, any kind of sexual behaviour is acceptable. But most people whether religious or non-religious, would consider infidelity (unfaithfulness) to be wrong.

Christian attitudes towards human sexuality

Many Christians see heterosexual relationships as part of God's plan for humans. Genesis says that a man and woman should be united together and 'increase in number' (Genesis 1:28 and 2:24). This is why many Christians are opposed to sex outside marriage, and some are strongly against homosexual relationships and artificial contraception. Other Christians believe that the most loving thing to do would be to adapt their teachings to fit a changing world.

Christians, like many other people, have different opinions about homosexuality. Those who oppose it may base their view on Leviticus 18:22 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, where it is written that sexual relationships between two men are forbidden.

The precise meaning of these passages is contested among Christians.

The Bible includes no specific detail regarding homosexual relationships between women, and there is nothing in the Bible that prohibits homosexual relationships that do not involve penetrative sex. The Catholic Church teaches that homosexual people are not sinful because of their homosexuality, but that they should remain chaste (not have sex) to avoid sinful acts. The Church of England welcomes homosexual Christians who live in faithful, committed relationships, but it does not all them to marry in church. Some Christians think Bible texts need to be interpreted in the context of a modern society, and therefore consider loving, faithful homosexual relationships to be just as holy as heterosexual relationships. This view contrasts with Islam, for example, which considers all homosexual relationships to be against God's natural law.

1885	Sexual acts between homosexuals are made illegal
1967	Homosexual acts were declared legal for people over 21, excepts in the armed forces
1994	Age of consent for homosexual acts is reduced to 18
2000	Homosexuals are allowed to serve in the armed forces
2001	Age of consent for homosexual acts is reduced to 16
2004	Civil partnerships are recognised in law
2013	Same-sex marriage is recognised in law

1. What is a heterosexual relationship
2. What is a homosexual relationship
3. What is the age of consent in the UK?
4. In which year was it made legal to perform a homosexual act?
5. Explain three different Christian views on homosexuality.
6. What Bible teachings might a Christian use to support a negative view of homosexuality?

Ext: Why do you think Christians believe what they do about homosexuality? Include dates in your answer

Sexual Relationships before and outside of marriage

Sex before marriage

In the past sex before marriage was considered shocking, particularly for a woman. This is still true in many cultures around the world, where a woman who has sex before marriage may be asked to leave her home for bringing disgrace to her family. In the last 50 years or so attitudes have changed in British society. Sex before marriage is now widely accepted. Many films, television programmes, books and magazines reflect the common belief that it is usual for couples who are dating to have sex.

Many Christians believe sex expresses a deep, loving, lifelong union that first requires the commitment of marriage. They believe it is important to be sexually pure (chaste) before marriage because having sex is part of a loving, trusting relationship that should be developed within a marriage; it should not just be a casual, temporary pleasure. Christians believe that it is wrong to use people for sex, and irresponsible to spread sexually transmitted infections or risk pregnancy. In the Bible, Paul urged sexual restraint:

“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.” (1 Corinthians 6:18-19)

Although the Anglican and Catholic churches teach that unmarried people should not have sex, some Christians accept that for some people sex before marriage is a valid expression of their love for each other. This more liberal Christian attitude provides a contrast to some other religions, for example Islam, that teaches that sex before marriage is wrong.

Sex outside marriage

All religions place a high value on faithfulness in marriage. Adultery means having a sexual relationship with someone who is not your spouse. Many non-religious people agree with Christians that sex outside marriage is wrong because it involves secrecy, lies, and a betrayal of trust. It can affect children and cause pain to all concerned. Adultery breaks the promises Christian couples make before God during their wedding, to forsake all others and be faithful to each other as long as they both shall live. It threatens the stable relationship needed between parents for their children’s security. The Bible commandment is clear: “You shall not commit adultery.” (Exodus 20:14) Jesus taught that lust, which could lead to adultery, is also wrong: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matthew 5:27-8)

Jesus forgave a woman who was caught in adultery, but ordered her to ‘go now and leave your life of sin.’ (John 8:1-11). For Christians, marriage is an unbreakable bond that demands total faithfulness.

1. What is the difference between sex before marriage and sex outside marriage?
2. How have attitudes to sex changed in the last fifty years?
3. What does 1 Corinthians 6: 18-19 say?
4. What is the difference between the Anglican and Catholic view on sex before marriage?
5. What is adultery?
6. Why do Christians feel the way they do about adultery?
7. What did Jesus do about a woman caught in adultery?
8. What does Matthew 5:27-8 teach? Do you agree?

Extension: Explain two Christian teachings on sex outside of marriage.

Explain Christian beliefs about sexual relationships outside of marriage (adultery).
Discuss the difference between sex before and sex outside marriage.



“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins

“Every sexual act
“You shall not commit adultery”

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already

Contraception and Family Planning

What is contraception?

Contraception is a way of preventing pregnancy when a couple have sex. Christian attitudes vary towards different methods of contraception depending on how they work.

Contemporary British attitudes towards family planning

In modern Britain there is widespread acceptance of the use of contraception in family planning. Many people think it is more responsible to prevent unwanted pregnancies, both from a personal point of view and also because of concerns about global over-population. Many religious people think that using some forms of contraception is acceptable.

Christian attitudes towards family planning

All Christian Churches agree that having children is God's greatest gift to the married couple. Christian couples are called by God to be responsible parents, fully committed to their children's nurture and guidance. It is God's will that children are born within marriage but all Christian churches accept that there are some situations when it may be acceptable to avoid bringing children into the world. The reasons may be economic, environmental, physical or psychological.

However, Christian Churches do not all agree on the methods couples should use to limit their families or to time the births of their children.

The Catholic and Orthodox Churches teach that artificial contraception goes against natural law (the moral principles that are part of human nature). God's purpose for marriage is to have a family. The Catholic Church believes that sex is for making new life as well as expressing love and that these two purposes should not be separated.

The Catholic Church teaches that using artificial contraception is sinful because the couple are not being open to new life and so are preventing God's plan. Its use could encourage selfishness or infidelity. The Catholic Church is not against family planning, but thinks that parents should use the rhythm method to space the births of their children. Many people disagree with this teaching because they think natural methods can be less reliable and they see no reason not to use methods developed by medical science, as long as they do not cause an abortion. Furthermore, the population explosion and spread of AIDS present new challenges to this teaching.

Many other Christians, as well as Muslims and Jews, will naturally want to have a family, but do not want every sexual act to potentially lead to conceiving a child. Anglicans and Nonconformist Christians accept that people should only have as many children as they are able to care for. It would be unfair to bring a baby into a life of deprivation. They allow contraception to enable couples to develop their relationship before having children, or to space out pregnancies to avoid harming the mother's health. The Church of England approved the use of contraception in 1930 in the Lambeth Conference (see right)

Many Christians do not agree that some forms of contraception should not be used because the egg may already be fertilised and therefore conception has taken place. The coil and the morning after pill prevent the egg from developing, which some people see as causing an abortion. Christians, and many other religious people who believe in the protection of human life from the moment of conception are opposed to these methods.

1. What is contraception?
2. Name three methods of contraception and what they do.
3. Explain contemporary British attitudes towards family planning
4. Explain reasons why someone might not want to have a child.
5. Explain The Catholic view towards family planning
6. Explain the Orthodox view towards family planning
7. Explain the view of other Christians, Jews and Muslims
8. Explain why some Christians will not accept the use of the coil/morning after pill.
9. What does the Lambeth Council say?
10. What does Humanae Vitae say?

Methods of contraception:

- The pill, or injection which contain a hormone that stops the woman from producing an egg.
- The diaphragm, or condom, which stop the sperm meeting the egg – the condom also prevents the spread of most sexually transmitted infections
- Spermicidal jellies or creams, which kill sperm directly
- The coil (intrauterine device) and the 'morning after' pill, which stop a fertilised egg from implanting in the womb – some consider these a form of abortion
- Sterilisation (a surgical operation) of either the man or the woman, which is a permanent way of preventing pregnancy
- Natural methods involve only having sex at certain times of the month in order to reduce the chance of pregnancy. For example, with the rhythm method, the woman records the length of her menstrual cycles in order to determine when she should have sex.

"Every sexual act should have the possibility of creating new life"
Humanae Vitae, 1968

"The conference agrees that other methods may be used, provided that this is done in the light of Christian principles"
Lambeth Conference, 1930

Religious teachings about marriage

Marriage

People marry to share their lives with the person they love. Marriage is a legal contract that brings security as it protects the rights of each partner, provides various legal and financial benefits and is a serious, lifelong public commitment.

The nature of marriage has recently been keenly debated in the UK. Marriage used to be defined as the legal union of a man and a woman. In 2004, same-sex couples were allowed to register their union in a civil partnership that gave them the same legal rights as married couples. But many same sex couples that having separate civil partnerships seemed to imply that homosexual relationships were not as valid as heterosexual ones. Same-sex marriage became legal in England, Wales and Scotland in 2014, and in Ireland in 2015. Many Christians were opposed to this, not because they were against equal rights but because it seemed to be changing the nature of marriage. Marriage was being redefined to mean simply a committed relationship between adults, whereas many Christians consider it to be a unique relationship between a man and a woman that involves their ability to create new life in the form of children. The law does protect Churches that oppose homosexual marriages and they are not forced to perform same sex marriages against their beliefs.

The purpose of marriage for Christians

Marriage was one of God's gifts at creation. It is natural for a man and woman to leave their parents and become 'one flesh' through which they bring new life into the world.

Some Christians believe that marriage is a sacrament, a lifelong union blessed by God, which reflects that sacrificial love of Jesus, and a covenant (agreement) before God in which the couple promises to live faithfully together until death.

The couple's physical intimacy expresses their love. They share companionship through good times and bad, and try to bring up their children in the way that God wants. Marriage is a spiritual bond of trust that reflects the love of God. The couple should love each other 'as Christ loved the Church' (Ephesians 5:25)

For Christians, the purpose of marriage is to provide a stable, secure environment for family life. It is the proper place to enjoy a sexual relationship, bring up children within a religious faith and provide lifelong support and companionship for a partner.

Cohabitation

Sometimes the cost of marriage prevents people from marrying immediately. In contemporary British society many couples live together without being married. This is called cohabitation. Some want to see if their relationship is going to work, and then may decide to marry if they are starting a family. Others never marry, but live and raise their children together in a loving partnership.

Christians who are opposed to sex before marriage believe cohabitation is sinful. The Orthodox Church, for example, is opposed to any recognition of a sexual relationship outside of a Christian marriage. The Catholic Church agrees: "The sexual act must take place exclusively within marriage. Outside the marriage it always constitutes a grave sin" (Catechism 2390).

Many Anglican and Protestant Christians accept that although marriage is best, people may live together in a faithful, loving, committed way without being married.

1. Why do people get married?
2. What is a civil partnership?
3. When were same sex couples allowed to have a civil partnership?
4. Why did homosexual couples not accept civil partnerships?
5. When were homosexual couples granted the right to get married?
6. What is the purpose of marriage for Christians?
7. What does Ephesians 5:25 say?
8. Give two reasons that a couple may decide to cohabit.
9. What do Catholics and Orthodox Christians believe?
10. What do Anglican and Protestant Christians believe?

Ext. Do you think that people should wait until they are married to live together and have sex? Explain which Church you agree with and why.

"That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife and they become one flesh."

Genesis 2:24

"God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the Earth and subdue it..."

Genesis 1:28

"The Church sees marriage between a man and a woman as central to the stability and health of human society."

House of Bishops of the General Synod of the Church of England

I, N, take you, N, to be my wife [or husband] to have and to hold from this day forward; for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in helth, to love and to cherish, till death do us part; according to God's holy law. IN the presence of God I make this vow.

The marriage vows from an Anglican wedding service



Christian divorce and re-marriage

Reasons for divorce

There are many different reasons why a marriage can fail. One of the most common causes of divorce is adultery. People can also change, grow apart and fall out of love. One partner may become ill, disabled or become addicted to alcohol, drugs or gambling. Work and money pressures can wear people down. A couple's inability to have children may put a strain on their marriage. Domestic violence or abuse can cause the complete breakdown of a relationship.

In 2012, the number of divorces in England and Wales increased by **0.5%** to 118,140 compared with 117,558 in 2011. The number of divorces declined between 2003 and 2009 from **153,065 to 113,949** followed by a **4.9%** increase in 2010

Religious and non-religious attitudes about divorce

In the Bible, Jesus taught that anyone who divorced and remarried was committing adultery. "He answered, 'Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.' (Mark 10:11-12)

It is worth noting that Matthew 5:32 adds 'if a man divorces his wife for any cause other than unchastity (unfaithfulness) he involves her in adultery.'

The Church helps divorced people but also seeks to keep marriage sacred. Christians believe that vows made to each other in God's presence should be kept.

The Catholic Church teaches that a civil divorce cannot dissolve a marriage between two baptised people. Catholics can separate but they cannot marry someone else in a Catholic church while their partner is still alive. For Catholics, marriage is a sacrament that is permanent, exclusive and lifelong, and the couple make vows before God that can never be broken. However, Catholics can obtain an annulment under certain circumstances ie. if it was shown to never have been a true marriage. Catholics whose marriage has been annulled are free to marry in church.

Other Christians think that although marriage is for life, sometimes divorce is the lesser of two evils. Divorced Anglicans can marry someone else in church with the bishop's permission, as long as the priest in that church is willing to perform the marriage ceremony. Priests who are uncomfortable with this may instead offer a blessing after a civil ceremony.

Other Protestant Churches, for example the Methodist or United Reformed Church, accept civil divorce and allow re-marriage in church as long as the couple take the vows seriously. They think that the Church should reflect the forgiveness of God and allow people who have made mistakes the opportunity to find happiness in a second marriage.

The Eastern Orthodox Church grants divorces and remarries couple, but usually not more than twice.

Christian responses to couples who are having problems in their marriage

Christian clergy offer support to couples who are having problems in their marriage, through counselling, prayer and the sacraments. They may refer couples to outside agencies, such as 'Relate' and 'Accord', that provide counselling and advice. They believe that Christians should try to bring forgiveness and reconciliation back to marriages that have broken down. Often other Christians in the local church or community will support the couple through a difficult time.

1. How many marriages is it estimated ended in divorce in 2012?
2. How do Christian Churches try to prevent divorce?
3. What does Mark 10:11-12 teach about divorce?
4. What does Matthew 5:32 add to this?
5. What does the Catholic Church teach about civil divorce?
6. What do other Christians think?
7. What is the view of Methodist or United Reformed Churches?
8. How does the Eastern Orthodox Church respond to those whose marriages have broken down?
9. Which agencies might a married couple be sent to for counselling and advice?
10. What do they hope to achieve by doing this?



Religious Teachings about the nature of families

The Nature of Families

Family life has changed over the years but the family is still considered the best environment for bringing up children and keeping society stable. The basic unit of mother, father and children (a nuclear family) is still most common in the West, although in the UK approximately 25% of children now live in single-parent families. There are more 'stepfamilies', where divorced people with children marry new partners with children of their own. Same sex couples may have children from previous relationships, legally adopt children, conceive through in vitro fertilisation (IVF), or use surrogates.

In the past, families were larger, and often included grandparents and other relatives (an extended family) living together. For many non-Western cultures, the extended family is still very common.

The role of parents

Good parents love, care for and raise their children to know right from wrong. Religious parents are generally expected to raise their children within their faith.

The Catholic Church describes parenting like this:

"Here one learns endurance and the joy of work [...] love, generous – and even repeated – forgiveness and above divine worship in prayer and the offering of one's life." (Catechism 1657)

Christian parents want their children to grow up with values such respect for all life, generosity, compassion, loyalty and the ability to form loving relationships. They want them to be able to think for themselves and to have self-discipline, listen to others and be tolerant of others' views while at the same time remaining true to themselves.

Christian teachings about the nature of families

Christians are commanded to love one another. They believe the way they relate to one another is important to God. Since, for Christians, love is at the heart of all relationships, they place a very high value on family life because it is in a family that a child learns to love.

In Biblical times many people lived in extended families or 'households'. The entire family group looked after the children and provided for everyone's welfare, old and young alike. The extended passed on the religion, customs and traditions of the society to the next generation. The commandment to 'Honour your father and your mother' (Exodus 20:12), particularly when parents are elderly and need support, is an important Christian belief today.

There are examples in the Bible of people who practiced **polygamy** (having more than one wife at the same time), and there was a law that protected inheritance rights of the firstborn child (Deuteronomy 21:15-16). However, Christians believe the ideal marriage of one man and one woman for life was created at the beginning. Paul makes it clear that each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband to avoid sexual immorality.

Some traditional Christians disapprove of same-sex parents because they feel the ideal is for children to grow up with a male and female role model as parents. Other Christians say that it is more important for children to be in a secure and loving home.

9. What is a nuclear family?
10. What is a single-parent family? What percentage of children live under these circumstances?
11. What is a stepfamily?
12. How would same-sex couples start a family?
13. How are religious parents expected to raise their children?
14. Briefly explain the Catholic Church's position on family life as expressed in Catechism 1657.
15. How would Christian parents want their children to grow up?
16. What is at the heart of all relationships for Christians?
17. What does Exodus 20:12 say?
18. What does Deuteronomy 21:15-16 argue?
19. Explain two different Christian views on same-sex parents.

Ext: Explain a Christian's viewpoint on a single parent family or a stepfamily.

Explain different religious beliefs about the nature of family.
Discuss the different types of family

Christian beliefs about gender equality

Gender Equality

Gender equality means that men and women should be given the same rights and opportunities as each other. Many people in Britain today agree with the idea of gender equality, but there are many examples where it does not happen. Something that prevents it is gender prejudice, which is often based on sexual stereotyping. An example of this is the idea that women are more naturally caring or are the weaker sex, so they should look after the home while men go out to work. Sexual stereotyping can lead to gender discrimination, perhaps by not giving a man a job looking after young children or not employing a woman on a building site.

The roles of men and women

In the past, men had positions of power in society and more rights for women. For example, women were not allowed to vote or divorce their husbands and had to do almost entirely what their fathers or husbands wanted. The Sex Discrimination Act (1975) made gender discrimination illegal in the UK. Despite this, it still occurs. For example:

- On average women are paid less than men; some are paid less than men doing the same jobs.
- Women make up roughly half of the workforce, but men hold a higher proportion of senior positions.

In a family, the mother brings new life into the world and will usually be the baby's prime carer. The father may help and support his wife but there is no doubt the mother's important role at this time. Just because roles are different does not necessarily mean they are unequal. Each family decides who will care for children and who will go out to work; often this depends on financial considerations and whether there is help from their extended family. It may also depend on the different skills of the parents.

Christian beliefs and responses

Christians believe that all people have been created as equals in the image of God. The command to love one's neighbour means discrimination is wrong. Jesus treated women with respect, welcomed them as disciples and showed in the story of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38) that they were capable of things other than domestic tasks. Paul emphasised this in Galatians 3:28.

Some traditional Christians believe that men are the head of the family and that women should mainly stay at home and care for children. This may stem from a literal interpretation of Bible texts that reflect the position of women at the time they were written. For example, in Genesis 3:16 God punishes Eve for her disobedience, saying:

"with painful labour you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you" (Genesis 3:16)

Most Christians today see marriage as an equal partnership where the different gifts of each person, male and female, strengthen the family life.

1. What is gender equality?
2. What is the view of many people in Britain?
3. Which act made gender discrimination illegal and when was it?
4. How can we tell that gender discrimination still happens?
5. Who is seen as the baby's prime carer?
6. Which women did Jesus welcome as disciples and in where can this be found in the Bible?
7. Where does Paul emphasise this?
8. What does Genesis 3:16 argue and what opinion does this enforce?
9. How do most Christians see marriage in relation to gender equality?

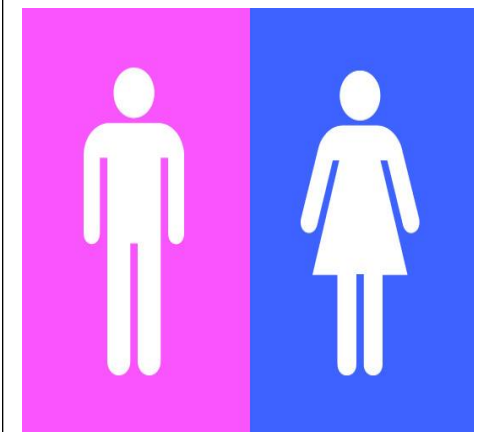
Extension: Read the letter below, explain a) why this woman might be frustrated at being asked a question like this and b) Why a Christian would disagree with this question being asked.

The following letter to a careers expert appeared in the Guardian:

"I recently had an interview at a well-respected firm. I was interviewed by two men (I am female). I was asked by one of them how I would cope with the work bearing in mind I have two children. I was stunned to be asked this in 2015, and while I wanted to challenge them by asking whether they were putting the same question to male candidates, I answered 'Fine, obviously, or I would not have applied for this position and have worked since my children were small'"

"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"

Galatians 3:28



THEME B: The origins of the universe in Christianity

The creation of the universe

Have you ever been amazed at how many stars can be seen on a cloudless night? The size of the universe is astonishing. Our galaxy, the Milky Way, is about 100,000 light years in diameter. It would take roughly 2.5 million years to travel to the next galaxy, if travelling at the speed of light. The currently observable universe is about 93 billion light years in diameter and contains more than 100 billion galaxies. Does the universe go on forever? We do not know the answer. How did the universe come into being? Was there a time when nothing existed? How did nothing become something?

Christians believe that the universe didn't just make itself, but that it was designed and made by God. They believe that God created all things that exist *ex nihilo* – a Latin term that means 'out of nothing'.

Genesis 1:1-2:3 gives one of the accounts in the Bible of how God created the universe. In the story, God created the heavens and the earth in six days and then rested on the seventh (see information on the right hand side).

Did this really happen?

Some Christians believe that the creation stories describe exactly how the universe was created. Fundamentalists believe that every word in the Bible has been inspired by God and it therefore correct. Some believe that everything was created in six days, but others interpret 'day' as representing a longer period of time. The Hebrew word 'Yom' has different meanings. It could, for example, mean twelve hours of daylight, or a long, indefinite period of time.

In contrast, liberals regard these accounts as more like parables or symbolic accounts, where the main message is that God brought into being the universe and all that is in it. These Christians might look to science to help them understand how God did this.

The Big Bang theory

The Big Bang theory is currently the leading scientific explanation for how the universe began. It suggests that the universe started with an indescribably small, hot, dense something – a singularity, which expanded over the next 13.8 billion years or so to become the cosmos that we know today. As the universe continued to cool, the matter that had been flung in all directions became stars grouped into galaxies. Because current instruments do not allow astronomers to peer back at the universe's birth, much of what we understand about the Big Bang theory comes from mathematical theory and models.

Is the study of the origin of the universe an area where science and theology meet or disagree? Was creation a supernatural event that took place outside the natural world? Is there a master architect out there? Most scientists believe that the universe had a beginning. Was God the 'first cause'? Is there a conflict between Genesis 1 and the Big Bang? Yes, if you believe God created everything in six days, but not necessarily if each day stands for a long period of time. The Big Bang could have been God's way of forming the universe.

1. How big is the Milky Way and how long would it take to travel to the next galaxy at the speed of light?
2. How big is the universe? What do we mean when we say 'observable universe'?
3. What does *ex nihilo* mean?
4. What does Genesis 1:1-2:3 teach?
5. What are possible meanings for the word 'Yom'?
6. Explain two different Christian views about the creation of the universe.
7. What is the Big Bang theory?
8. What is believed to have happened when the Big Bang took place?
9. How might a Christian be able to accept the Big Bang without it affecting their belief that God created the universe?
10. What does Genesis 1:1 teach?

Ext: What do you believe about the creation of the universe? Explain your reasons.

Day 1: God said 'Let there be light.' He called the 'light' day and the darkness night.

Day 2: God made the sky

Day 3: God formed the seas and the land, covering the land with vegetation and plants.

Day 4: God created the lights in the sky, the sun, moon and stars.

Day 5: God made fish and other animals in the seas, and birds in the air.

Day 6: God finished by creating all of the animals on the land, and by making humans. He made humans in his own image.

Day 7: God rested on the seventh day and made it holy, He was very pleased with his creation because it was good.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the Earth.
(Genesis 1:1)



The value of the world for Christians

How valuable is the world?

Add up the value of all the gold, diamonds, precious stones, natural resources, food produced by agriculture and industrial output in the world and it would be a mammoth total. But is that alone the value of the world? No, of course not. We cannot put a price on its value as it is our home, and provides and sustains life. As far as we know, nowhere else in our solar system can sustain life like planet Earth. Christians regard the world as a priceless gift from God, loaned to humans as a result of his love.

The world has the 'wow' factor

The view from a high mountain, the Grand Canyon, Niagara Falls, the beauty of dew glistening on a cobweb, the detail of snowflakes seen under a microscope, and the vastness of space are all examples of the awesomeness of creation. Such beauty gives a sense of amazement, awe and wonder.

The world is complex and fascinating. Caterpillars turning into butterflies, black and white cows eating green grass to produce white milk, and trees bursting into life in springtime are just a few examples of the mystery and wonder of life. How could it all happen? Christians believe that God is responsible.

Stewardship

Imagine generously allowing a friend to live for free in a house that belongs to you. The one condition is that they look after it because it is unique and irreplaceable. However, they damage and then destroy it. This would be extremely upsetting.

Christians believe that God has given humans the privilege of living on planet Earth but with the responsibility of looking after it and preventing it from being ruined. There is only one planet Earth and it cannot be replaced. This special responsibility to protect and care for the Earth is known as **stewardship**. In the story in Genesis 2, Adam, the first man, was given the task of looking after the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15).

As stewards of the natural world, Christians believe that people have been appointed by God to respect and manage the world, working with nature to preserve what God has given. In return we are able to use what is provided in a sustainable way for our survival. Many Christians believe that they will be accountable to God concerning how well they looked after the Earth.

Dominion

In order to manage the Earth, Christians teach that humans were given the power and authority to rule over the world. This is known as having dominion.

A minority of Christians have interpreted 'subduing the world' as meaning that people can do what they like with it and everything in it because they are in charge. The majority, however, believe that humans have been entrusted to be caretakers (stewards) of God's world. They cannot do what they like to benefit themselves if this damages something that God has made.

1. What do Christians regard the Earth as?
2. Why would it be upsetting if you let someone stay at your house for free and they broke everything?
3. How does this compare to God letting humans live on Earth (for Christians)?
4. What is stewardship?
5. Who was given the responsibility of looking after the Garden of Eden?
6. What does it mean to say that 'many Christians believe that they will be accountable'?
7. What does Psalm 8: 3-4 mean?
8. What is dominion?
9. What do a minority of Christians believe about 'subduing the world'?
10. What does Romans 1:20 teach?

Ext: Do you think that humans are responsible for looking after the Earth or that they should be able to use the Earth however they want?

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? – Psalm 8:3-4

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse – Romans 1:20

God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number: fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves in the ground –



The use and abuse of the environment

The Genesis 1 creation story repeats several times 'and God saw that it was good'. This indicates that creation does not exist just for what humans can get out of it, but has unique value in God's eyes. God gave permission for people to rule over His creation in a way that sustains and protects the environment (Genesis 2:15 and Psalm 8:6). Natural resources have been provided for people to use but not abuse or future generations will suffer. As the world's population increases, demand for natural resources is getting greater, so is becoming increasingly important to encourage sustainable development. Non-renewable resources are running out, and new methods of obtaining gas for energy (such as fracking) are causing a lot of controversy.

Use of resources

Worldwide over 90 million barrels of oil are used a day. That is roughly 14,310,000,000 litres a day. The USA and China use the most oil. The Institute of Mechanical Engineers reports that we have enough oil left from about 40 years at the current rate of consumption. Once it's used, it's gone forever.

The problem of deforestation is also a serious one. Forests (including tropical rainforests) are fast being cut down to make the land available for other uses and to provide timber. Around 7.3 million hectares of forest, roughly the size of the country of Panama, are lost each year. It has been reported that, in 2015, trees covering an area more than seven times the size of New York City were cleared from the Amazon rainforest in Brazil.

Many other non-renewable resources are also being used up very quickly, and once they are gone the whole world may have to adapt quite drastically in order to live without them.

Renewable energy sources

Scientists are developing alternatives to fossil fuels that allow us to generate electricity through wind, wave power and the sun. However, wind turbines only generate power when the wind blows and some people believe that they spoil the landscape. Wave power needs more research and is currently very expensive, and solar power is only generated if the climactic conditions are right. While renewable energy sources can theoretically give us unlimited energy, in practice there are currently a number of problems with them, which is why conserving energy is so important both to Christians and non-Christians alike.

Reduce, reuse, recycle

How can Christians help the planet? Christians believe that they should avoid waste, conserve energy and reduce the demand for natural resources. Here are a few ways that this can be done:

- walking, cycling or using public transport instead of the car
- selecting products that don't have a lot of packaging
- turning off lights that are not being used
- reusing bags when shopping
- donating second-hand clothes, toys and furniture to charity shops
- recycling waste.

1. What does the Genesis 1 creation story repeat several times?
2. What does this indicate about creation?
3. How many barrels of oil are used each day, and how many litres is this?
4. How many trees are reported to have been chopped down?
5. Name three renewable energy sources
6. Name the problems attached to these energy sources
7. What problems are associated with non-renewable energy resources?
8. Explain three ways that Christians can help the planet and why they help the planet.
9. Explain what was discussed at the Assisi and Ohito meetings.
10. Explain how Leviticus 25:23 supported these meetings.

Ext: Does it matter whether you believe that God created the earth when considering whether you should reduce, reuse and recycle? Explain why.

The Assisi and Ohito meetings

Leaders of five different world religions were brought together in 1986 by the World Wildlife Fund, to celebrate its 25th anniversary. They met in Assisi (in Italy) to discuss how their faiths could and should help to care for the environment. Another meeting, in Ohito (Japan) in 1995 brought together religious leaders and environmental scientists.

At these meetings Christians said that being in charge of creation does not give people the right to abuse, spoil, waste or destroy what God has made, as humans are only the tenants of God's world (Leviticus 25:23). Thoughtless exploitation should be opposed.



Pollution for Christians

What are the main types of pollution?

Pollution puts the health of humans, animals and plants at risk. However, despite laws to limit pollutants and attempts to clean up the environment, pollution continues to be a problem as technology advances and the world's pollution grows. There are many forms of pollution, of which a few include:

- Air pollution – caused mainly by fumes from factories and vehicles. Long term exposure can lead to asthma attacks, lung cancer and other diseases. It also causes global warming, climate change and acid rain.
- Land pollution – caused by the ineffective disposal of waste. When chemicals enter the earth this can poison wildlife, make farming less efficient and result in contaminated food.
- Water pollution – caused by dumping waste into the sea. It can have a devastating effect on marine life. The Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010, for example, released over 750 million litres of oil into the sea and killed thousands of birds and marine animals.

What do Christians believe?

Christians believe the world is on loan to humans, who have been given the responsibility by God to look after it (Genesis 1:28). The parable of the talents/bags of gold (Matthew 25) warns that when God returns he will judge how responsible people have been. Polluting the planet is not good stewardship, as God's creation is being abused. Pollution also harms people, so it is not 'loving one's neighbour' or considering future generations. Christians, out of respect for God's creation, believe they must help to protect the natural world from being harmed by pollution.

1. What are the main types of pollution?
2. What problems are associated with these types of pollution?
3. What happened in the Deepwater Horizon spill?
4. What does Genesis 1:28 teach?
5. What does the parable of the talents teach?
6. How does pollution link to loving one's neighbour?
7. What did the residents of Molton in Devon do?
8. What does Psalm 24:1 teach?
9. What did the Christian statement in the Assisi Declarations on Nature say?
10. What was the name of the letter by Pope Francis regarding climate change?

Ext: Read "Pope Francis challenges the world to help reduce pollution" and explain what he asked his bishops to do – and explain why you think he did this.

Pope Francis challenges the world to help reduce pollution

In an open letter about the need for all humans to care for the world, Pope Francis called on everyone to act to protect the environment. In a letter to his bishops, titled 'On the Care of Our Common Home', he set out the need to tackle the challenges of pollution, climate change and poverty. This letter describes how 'the earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth'. It stresses the importance of tackling pollution and waste, and not just throwing things away when they could be recycled.

Pope Francis says human life is grounded in our relationship with God, with our neighbours and the created world. He urges families, the media, schools and churches to help encourage a change in behaviour, and speaks of St Francis of Assisi as a role model for a 'more passionate concern for the protection of our world'. He encourages the transition from using fossil fuels to clean renewable energy

Christians working together

Christians in Britain sometimes arrange events to help to tidy up their communities. For example, a group of Christians from South Molton in Devon organised a day to help clean up their town.

This was done in collaboration with Hope – a Christian organisation that encourages churches to interact with their local communities. Those taking part were divided into groups and given various tasks to do, such as leaning the town signs or litter-picking in the central park.

**"The earth is the LORD'S, and everything in it"
Psalm 24:1**

**"Every human act of irresponsibility towards creatures is an abomination"
Christian statement in the Assisi Declarations on Nature**

The use and abuse of animals

Christians and animals

Christians believe that animals were created by God for humans to use and care for. Many believe God values animals but humans are more important because they were created in the image of God, and have souls. The story of Noah and the flood shows this. God commanded Noah to take animals into the ark so they would be safe:

“Take with you seven of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and one pair of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, and also seven pairs of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth.” (Genesis 7:2-3)

However, after the flood Noah is given permission to eat meat:

“Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you.” (Genesis 9:3)

The Bible teaches that animals are to be treated kindly, for example:

“Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.” (Deuteronomy 25:4)

“The righteous care for the needs of their animals...” (Proverbs 12:10)

Animals are used by humans as pets, for transport and work, for food, sport, experimentation and entertainment.

Animal experimentation

Scientists test new products, such as medicines, cosmetics and additives used in processed foods, on animals to check that they are safe for humans to use. Normally, if it is safe to use with chimpanzees, dogs or rabbits, it is likely to be safe for humans. But this is not always the case. For example, Ryan Wilson in 2006 was a volunteer in a drugs trial. The drug had previously been tested on animals and there were no ill effects, But Ryan Wilson reacted so badly that he was in a coma for two weeks, lost all his toes and the tips of some of his fingers.

Testing cosmetics on animals was banned in the UK in 1998 and most Christians support this ban. Other types of animal testing have been reduced as scientists have developed alternative methods using computers or cell culture (cells that are grown artificially). Most animal experiments that still occur are on mice or rats that are specially bred for that purpose.

In modern societies Christians generally support limited animal testing, providing there is no other safe way to develop medicines and it is carried out as carefully as possible. Christians believe that all human life is sacred and should be treated with respect; using animals to develop new drugs may benefit millions of people and save many lives.

In contrast to Christianity, Hinduism teaches that all living creatures have souls, not just humans, and all deserve to be protected. While the Hindu parents of a child may wish to benefit from animal research, this has to be balanced with the belief that some animals might contain the souls of ancestors. Many Hindus believe the cow to be a sacred animal, so no experiments would be permitted on a cow.

Should Christians eat meat?

According to Romans 14:2-3, Christians have the choice to be meat-eaters, vegetarians or vegans. They should also be sensitive to the beliefs of others about what they wish to eat.

Most Christians eat meat, as do around 90% of people in the UK. Meat is a good source of protein, vitamins and minerals and the Bible does not teach that it is wrong to eat animals.

Those who decide to be vegetarians or vegans usually do so because they are against killing animals, as they believe that animals should not be harmed. Others object to the animal cruelty that can occur in large factory farms. Others argue that if the land used to raise cattle for meat was used instead to grow vegetables, much more food could be produced. A vegan goes a step further and refuses to use any animal product, including milk, cheese, eggs, fur and leather

1. What do Christians believe about animals?
2. What does the story of Noah and the flood show?
3. What is Noah given permission to do after the flood? Which Bible verse confirms this?
4. Who is Ryan Wilson? Explain what happened to him
5. What do most Christians believe about testing on animals?
6. Why might people support limited animal testing?
7. What do Christians believe about this?
8. What does Romans 14:2-3 allow Christians to be?
9. Are the majority of Christians meat eaters, vegetarians or vegans? Support your answer with a statistic.
10. What does Luke 12:6 teach?

Ext: “Christians should not eat meat” Briefly evaluate this view showing an argument on both sides and a conclusion.

The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. (Romans 14:3)

Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God (Luke 12:6)



The origins of human life

Adam and Eve

In the story in Genesis 1, God created male and female humans on the final day of creation.

“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27)

The story of Genesis 2 gives a different account of the creation of human beings.

According to Genesis 2, Adam was formed by God from the soil and God breathed life into him. Adam was given the task of looking after a wonderful garden called Eden and was given the instruction not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Then God created the animals and birds and finally a helper for Adam. While Adam was sleeping, God took one of his ribs and formed Eve, the first woman. The intention was that they would live in a close relationship with God.

Some Christians believe that this story is literally true and that the whole human race is descended from Adam and Eve. Other Christians would say that it is not meant to be a scientific account but is designed to show that humans are very special to God, created by him in his own image. Being in the image of God does not mean being physically the same of God. It means that humans have a spiritual nature like God, unlike the rest of creation, so are able to relate to God in a special way. People have a moral goodness within them which is like their creator.

What does science say?

In 1859, the scientist Charles Darwin published a book called *‘The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection’*. In it he explained the theory of evolution. He suggested that, as the Earth cooled, conditions became right for the beginning of life. Single-celled creatures appeared in the sea which, over a long period of time, evolved (changed) into other species. Some became able to survive on land as well as sea. Some gradually developed the ability to fly.

Individuals from the same species can be quite different from one another because of the genes they inherit from their ancestors. Some individuals have certain genes that increase their chance of survival. This means that they are more likely to breed successfully and pass their favourable genes on to their offspring. Darwin explained this process as the ‘survival of the fittest’. According to the theory of evolution, humans evolved over millions of years from other animals on land. Scientists have discovered bones from several different extinct species, which they claim are possible ancestors of the human race. Humans are thought to have started evolution about 2.5 million years ago, and developed into humans with the same anatomy to us about 200,000 years ago.

What do Christians believe?

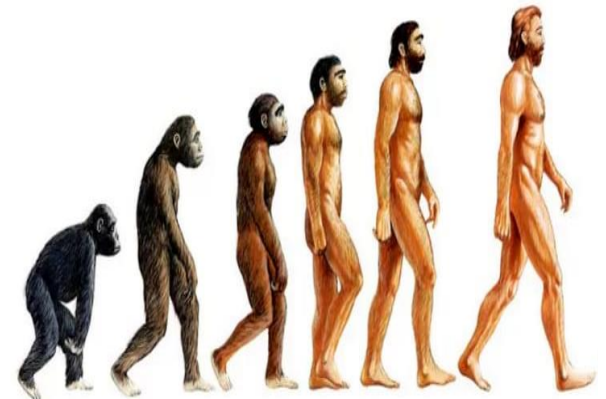
Generally most atheists accept the theory of evolution because they think it best explains how life has developed on earth. Unlike Christians they do not need to worry about what the theory implies about God’s role in creation, and think that Charles Darwin was right to point out that life adapts and changes to survive in new challenging environments.

Fundamentalist Christians believe that the origin of human life was exactly as recorded in Genesis, with God creating each species separately. While some accept that adaptation can occur within a species, they do not believe there is enough evidence to prove that creatures evolve (i.e. change from one species to another).

Some Christians believe in God as the creator but also accept the theory of evolution. They believe the Bible is concerned with the ‘why’ it happened while scientists are concerned with ‘how’ it happened because God designed and created the beginnings of life and set everything in motion to develop over the course of history. They believe that evolution is the way God designed life to advance and evolve.

1. What happens in Genesis 1?
2. How does Genesis 2 differ from this?
3. What did Adam and Eve do that they shouldn’t have?
4. What did God do about this?
5. Who is Charles Darwin?
6. What did Charles Darwin’s theory explain?
7. How old are you likely to think the humanity is if Darwin’s theory is what you believe?
8. What do most atheists believe? How can they justify this belief?
9. What do fundamentalist Christians believe?
10. How might Christians be able to accept both evolution and the idea that God created humanity?

Ext: Which group of Christians do you agree with most? Explain why.



Abortion

What is abortion?

Abortion is the removal of a foetus from the womb to end a pregnancy before the child is born. This happens naturally when a woman has a miscarriage, but abortion usually refers to the deliberate termination of a pregnancy through a medical procedure. The number of legal abortions carried out by doctors in England and Wales in 2014 was 184,571.

The legal position

Before 1967 abortion was illegal in the UK. Under the 1990 Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, abortion is currently allowed up to the 24th week in a licensed clinic if two doctors agree that one of the following conditions applies:

- the woman's life is in danger if the pregnancy continues
- there is a risk to the woman's physical or mental health
- there is a significant risk that the baby will be born with severe physical or mental disabilities
- an additional child may affect the physical or mental health of existing children in the family.

There is no time limit if the mother's life is in danger or if the foetus is severely deformed.

"As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, gentleness and patience"
Colossians 3:12

Christian views on abortion

Christians believe in the sanctity of life and that humans are made in the image of God. Life is sacred, precious and a God-given blessing. The Bible states that before birth, God has given each person a purpose in life.

Within Christianity there are some contrasting beliefs towards abortion. The Catholic Church and many evangelical Christians believe that life starts at conception. Abortion is therefore wrong and should not happen, except perhaps to save the woman's life. This is also the belief of Hinduism, which strongly opposes abortion.

Other Christian denominations oppose abortion but believe that it is acceptable in some circumstances, for example if the pregnancy is the result of rape or if the child would be severely disabled. The Church of England and Methodist churches believe that sometimes it is the lesser of two evils and the kindest thing to do, for example if the quality of life of the baby looks as though it will be extremely poor.

In some countries in South and East Asia, where there is a preference for sons, there is a practice known as sex-selective abortion.

Although this practice may occur among religious communities it is important to know that it is a cultural and not religious practice, and authorities in Sikhism, Hinduism and Islam officially condemn it.

Arguments for and against abortion

Pro-choice groups, such as Abortion Rights, agree with legalised abortion because they argue that the woman's life comes first. She carries the baby, goes through childbirth and looks after the child and so should have the right to choose whether she continues the pregnancy. Her life is affected and if there is a danger that she might be harmed mentally or physically, then an abortion should be allowed.

Pro-choice groups believe that human life does not really start until birth, or at the earliest at viability (the time a foetus can survive outside the womb), so the mother's life is more valuable. They believe it is cruel to bring a severely physically or mentally disabled child into the world.

Pro-life groups, such as the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC), argue that life begins at conception because all the DNA is present to create a unique individual, so abortion is a form of murder and therefore wrong (Exodus 20:13). The unborn child needs to be protected as stated in the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

Pro-life groups believe that disabled people can enjoy a good quality of life, and that unwanted children can be adopted by those who are unable to have children of their own. They remind people that often those who have an abortion suffer depression and guilt as a result.

1. Define the term 'abortion'
2. How many legal abortions were carried out in the UK in England and Wales in 2014?
3. What conditions allow an abortion to take place?
4. What do Catholic and evangelical Christians believe about abortion?
5. What do the Church of England and Methodist churches believe about abortion?
6. What policy exists in South and East Asia that encourages abortion?
7. What religions have said that the above practice is not acceptable?
8. Name a pro-choice group and explain their beliefs
9. Name a pro-life group and explain their beliefs
10. Explain why the teachings in Jeremiah apply to abortion.

Ext: Explain your view about abortion. Why do you think this?

"For you created my inmost being'you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made"
(Psalm 139:13-14)

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart."
Jeremiah 1:5 (also see Galatians 1:15)



Euthanasia

What is euthanasia?

The word euthanasia comes from two Greek words: *eu* meaning 'good' and *Thanatos* meaning 'death', so euthanasia means 'a good or gentle death'. The intention is to end the life of someone who is in pain or has poor quality of life due to a serious illness.

Types of euthanasia

- **Voluntary euthanasia** is when a person asks a doctor to end their life as they do not wish to live anymore. This is their own choice.

- **Non-voluntary euthanasia** is when the person is too ill to request to die, for example because they are in a coma, but a doctor will end their life for them because it is thought to do so would be in the best interests of the person.

- **Involuntary euthanasia** is when the person is able to provide consent but does not, either because they do not want to or because they are not asked, but their life is ended anyway.

Forms of euthanasia

- **Active euthanasia** is when active steps are taken to end someone's life, for example giving them a lethal injection.

- **Passive euthanasia** is when doctors stop providing treatment or do something that is intended to quicken the natural process of dying. For example, when a person is not resuscitated after a heart attack.

The right to die

In September 2015, the British Parliament rejected plans for a 'right to die' law in England and Wales. 118 MPs were in favour and 330 against allowing some terminally ill adults to end their lives with medical supervision. The vote followed a passionate debate; some argued that a 'dignified and powerful death' should be allowed. Sarah Wootton, the chief executive of Dignity in Dying, called the result an 'outrage' as she claimed MPs had gone against public opinion. Dr Peter Saunders, campaign director of Care Not Killing, was delighted with the outcome, saying that it was necessary to protect the depressed, disabled, elderly and sick.

Christian beliefs

Many Christians believe that taking a life is interfering with God's plan. They think it is comparable to murder and open to abuse. For example, if euthanasia was legalised, it could potentially lead to those who are very old feeling pressure to ask for euthanasia in order to not burden their families. Most Christians believe that euthanasia is against the sanctity of life, and only God has the right to take life away.

Modern drugs and hospice care provide the dying with a chance to end their lives with dignity and without pain. Where suffering is unavoidable, some Christians say that this can bring people nearer to God and can help them to understand the suffering of Jesus.

Some Christians do support euthanasia and believe that the drugs that are used to end a suffering person's life are God-given, and should be used if it is the most living thing to do. They believe that God has given people free will so they should be able to choose when to end their lives. This contrasts with the beliefs of Islam, which strictly forbid euthanasia in any form.

1. What does the term 'euthanasia' mean and where does it originate from?
2. What is voluntary euthanasia?
3. What is non-voluntary euthanasia?
4. What is involuntary euthanasia?
5. What is active euthanasia?
6. What is passive euthanasia?
7. What happened in parliament in September 2015?
8. What do most Christians believe about euthanasia?
9. What do some Christians believe about euthanasia?
10. How do 'Dignity in Dying' and 'Care Not Killing' differ in their views on euthanasia?

Ext: Read the information about Tony Bland, do you think that euthanasia happened here?

Tony Bland

At 18 years old, Tony Bland went to see his favourite football team, Liverpool FC play at Sheffield's Hillsborough football stadium in 1989. Overcrowding and a rush of fans into the stadium led to a crush that resulted in 94 deaths. Tony's ribs were crushed and his lungs were punctured. This interrupted the supply of oxygen to his brain and resulted in irreversible damage, which left him in a persistent vegetative state. Although there was no hope of recovery he was kept alive with foods and fluids that were fed through tubes. The hospital, with his parents' support, petitioned the court for permission to allow him to die. In 1993, the consent was obtained and doctors withdrew the food and fluids that were keeping him alive. This was the first time in the UK that this action was permitted legally. The law did not recognise the removal of Tony Bland's feeding tubes as passive euthanasia. Some critics believe that this was in face 'euthanasia through the back door'

"You shall not murder"
(Exodus 20:13)

"Blessed are the merciful" (Matthew 5:7)
... all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.
(Psalm 139:16)



Death and the afterlife

Is death the end?

Generally atheists believe that at death one ceases to exist. They do not believe that there is an afterlife and do not believe that people have souls.

Christians believe that death is not the end and that God judges whether a person will spend eternity in heaven or in hell. The Catholic Church believes in purgatory, where souls undergo purification in order to achieve the holiness necessary to approach God and enter heaven. Some Christians believe in immediate judgement and the transition to heaven or hell; others believe that they will wait until the Day of Judgement and the return of Jesus. Some Christians believe that they will be in heaven with their physical bodies, but others believe that it is their souls that live on for eternity. Christians point to the resurrection of Jesus as evidence of an afterlife (John 11:25). The Apostle's Creed reads "I believe in the resurrection of the body".

What is heaven like?

Christians believe that heaven is indescribably wonderful and is where God resides. Revelation 4:2-6 describes John's version of the throne room of God where he sees everyone worshipping God. Revelation 21:4 says that God will 'wipe every tear from their eyes'. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away'.

What is hell like?

The Bible says that hell was originally designed for Satan and his demons: 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.' (Matthew 25:41). It is also described as a place of punishment for the unrighteous: 'throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth'. (Matthew 13:50). Revelation describes hell as a place of torment: 'the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night' (Revelation 14:11). There are different Christian interpretations of these descriptions. Some take them as literally true. Many think that they symbolise the frustration of not being able to be in the presence of God. Hell is portrayed as something to be avoided.

Eternity in heaven

Christianity teaches that seeking an eternity in heaven is more important than any other ambition: 'What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?' (Mark 8:36). How is it possible to get to heaven? Christians believe that God is holy, and the relationship between himself and his people is broken by sin. To overcome this, God sent Jesus to die on a cross to conquer sin and death.

The price for salvation was paid by Jesus' death, so that those who put their faith and trust in him might be forgiven and have eternal life in heaven. Christians believe that heaven is not gained simply by being a good person, but is a free gift to those who believe and put their trust in Jesus (see Romans 10:9-10). Many Christians believe that following Jesus still means living a life of doing good and avoiding sin (Colossians 3:5-8), but salvation does not have to be earned.

1. What do atheists believe about death?
2. Explain three different Christian beliefs about life after death.
3. What does John 11:25 teach in your own words?
4. What do Revelations 4:2-6 and 21:4 teach in your own words?
5. What does Matthew 25:41 teach in your own words?
6. How do the revelations explain hell?
7. What does Matthew teach about hell?
8. What is more important to Christians, this life or the afterlife? Explain why.
9. What is taught in Romans 10:9-10?
10. How do many Christians interpret the teaching of Colossians 3:5-8?

Ext: Read the story of Ian McCormack – do you believe his story? Explain.

Ian McCormack

New Zealander Ian McCormack went on a world trip in 1980. In Mauritius he went night diving and was stung by a deadly Sea Wasp Box jellyfish. Although he hadn't believed in God, he had been taught the Lord's Prayer by his mother and in desperation he prayed it as he was taken to hospital, paralysed and dying. Doctors could not save him, he was declared dead and put in the morgue. Ian claims he woke up in hell and was terrified at what he saw but then God lifted him up into heaven. There Jesus gave him the choice of either entering heaven or returning to tell others there is an afterlife. He chose to return and woke up in the morgue. He has become a Christian preacher travelling the world to tell people his story.



THEME E: Crime and Punishment Introduction

What are 'crime' and 'punishment'

A crime is any action which is against the law that has been put in place by the rulers of any state. In the UK, the government must get approval of Parliament before any new crimes are written into law. The police arrest people who are suspected of having broken the law by committing crimes. If after questioning the police are confident they have got the right person, they charge them with having committed the offence.

Once charged with a serious crime in the UK, suspected offenders face a hearing in front of a local magistrate before a judge and jury of 12 people, selected at random. Less serious cases are dealt with by a magistrate's court, while some more minor crimes result in the police giving the offender an official caution if they admit they are guilty.

Offenders who are found guilty by a court face a legal punishment.

Most serious offences such as murder and rape carry a life sentence in prison, although this rarely means offenders spend the rest of their lives in prison. Less serious offences are punished with a shorter spell in prison, or with a non-custodial sentence such as community service or a fine. If a court decides that the person has committed no crime, they are released without any punishment. Under no circumstances can a court impose a sentence intended to cause physical harm (corporal punishment) or death (capital punishment). However, in some countries such as China, parts of the USA, and Saudi Arabia, the death penalty is permitted.

In no instance is an individual victim of a crime allowed to punish the offender. Such action is against the law and punishable by the law.

Civil law is different from criminal law. Civil law concerns disputes between private individuals or groups. This includes such matters as the settlement of a divorce, disputes between landlords and tenants and disputed wills. Cases are usually dealt with in a small claims court although in more serious cases, the case will be heard in Crown Court.

Good and evil intentions and actions

The teachings of the Bible warn against having any evil or wrong thoughts and intentions:

"You have heard it was said to the people long ago 'You shall not murder', and anyone who murders will be subject to judgement" (Matthew 5:21-22).

Many people would say that any action includes that which is good but not specified in the law, such as generosity and love. There is no law that dictates supporting charities, but offering support in some way to a good cause is usually considered to be a good thing. Likewise, many Christians believe that even though actions such as adultery are legal, they are still wrong. Actions encouraged or required by genuine religious faiths are considered to be good.

Evil actions are those which cause suffering, injury or possibly death. These include murder, causing a terrorist explosion and child abuse, which are illegal. Some actions could be considered evil even though they are not against the law.

In a religious sense, evil can be linked with the devil (Satan) who is the source of all that is considered evil. However, when Christians speak about evil criminal actions, they usually mean that the offence is profoundly immoral and wicked rather than directly linked to the devil. Christianity generally considers crimes involving violence against people as sinful and against God.

1. What is crime?
2. What is punishment?
3. How does the legal system convict criminals in the UK?
4. What is corporal punishment?
5. What is capital punishment?
6. What is the difference between civil law and criminal law?
7. What does Matthew 5:21-22 teach?
8. What could be considered sinful without being illegal?
9. Who is the source of all evil?
10. How does Christianity consider crimes involving violence?

Ext: Read the Christian response. Do you think it is right to say that there is no such thing as an evil person? Explain your view.

A Christian response

Many Christians would claim that there is no such thing as an evil person. Human beings are not perfect and make mistakes. However, the belief in original sin derived from the disobedience of Adam and Eve means that all humans have a tendency to do things that are evil even though they are not evil themselves. If God created people to be good, they are unlikely to do something unspeakably awful unless there was a specific reason, for example psychological illness. If this is the case, they should receive treatment for their illness while being punished for their actions.



Reasons for Crime

Reason	Explanation
Poverty	It is a fact that in the UK, some people live in poverty and cannot afford the necessities of life. Welfare payments should cover living expenses but sometimes, for whatever reason, they do not. This can lead some people to steal food and essentials that they cannot afford to buy. Even though this may seem to be a good reason, it is still against the law and people will be arrested for stealing. While Christians condemn stealing they are keen to make sure that nobody is so poor that they use poverty as an excuse for stealing. In June 2015, Pope Francis said "Focusing on poverty and sacrificing for the poor are the heart of the gospel. If Christians don't dig deep and generously open up their wallets, they do not have genuine faith"
Upbringing	Growing up in a household where crime is a way of life may encourage a young person to follow the example of people they live with a drift into crime themselves. Even their parents may encourage them to commit crimes. Once they have been drawn into a life of crime, it is difficult for them to stop, even though they know what they are doing is wrong.
Mental Illness	Some people suffer from a mental illness that causes them to commit crimes. Kleptomania is a mental condition that makes some people steal. Anger management problems may lead to assault or murder. In cases involving serious crimes and mental illness, the offender may be viewed as unfit to stand trial. They are likely to be sentenced to be kept in a secure unit where they receive the treatment they need, even though they have not had an actual trial. Their legal representatives will work with the court authorities to ensure that justice is done.
Addiction	The nature of addiction to drugs means that the human body cannot cope without them. Addicts may resort to stealing in order to purchase the drugs their body needs. The drug that causes more crime than any other is alcohol. People who have drunk too much alcohol lose control of their thoughts and actions to such an extent that they may commit acts of violence and get into fights. If they drive while under the influence of alcohol, they are more likely to cause an accident than if sober. Most denominations of Christianity do not forbid drinking alcohol, but for Catholics, drunkenness is a sin, and no denomination encourages excessive drinking.
Greed	In the UK personal possessions and wealth are seen as signs of status. Greed can lead to crime, especially theft or fraud. In the Ten Commandments, Christians are taught not to covet, which means that they should not be jealous of what someone else has, and envy is one of the seven deadly sins.
Hate	Hatred is a negative feeling or reactions. It can lead to violence or aggression towards whoever or whatever the offender hates.
Opposition to an unjust law	According to lawmakers, any breach of the law is wrong, however there are occasions where people have deliberately broken laws they consider to be unjust. In the USA in 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested for breaking segregation laws by refusing to give up her seat in the bus to a white person. This act of defiance became an important symbol of the Civil Rights Movement that eventually changed unjust laws about the treatment of African Americans.

“There is no acceptable reason for crime” Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)

In your answer, you should:

- should give reasoned arguments in support of this statement
- should give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- should refer to religious arguments
- may refer to non-religious arguments
- should reach a justified conclusion.



Three aims of punishment

	Explanation
Retribution	<p>Retribution is the least positive of the three aims of punishment. It means to get your own back. In other words, retribution means that society, on behalf of the victim, is getting its own back on the offender. An early form of retribution, introduced in the Old Testament, is the <i>lex talionis</i> (the law of retaliation). Put simply, this means that criminals should receive the same injuries and damage that they cause their victim. In cases of murder, this meant that the murderer was executed to match the fate of the victim. "If there is bloodshed... eye for eye, tooth for tooth"</p> <p>Christians do not take this teaching literally, but interpret it to mean that an offender should receive a punishment severe enough to match the seriousness of their crime. Once this principle is established, Christians prefer to focus on different aims of punishment.</p>
Deterrence	<p>Many believe that if offenders are seen to be punished for wrongdoing, and in some cases punished severely, the threat of similar punishment might put off others from committing crimes. This is called deterrence. For example, the threat of a ban from driving may deter people from driving under the influence of alcohol. The offender themselves might be deterred from reoffending if they do not like the punishment they receive.</p> <p>Years ago in Britain, people were punished in public, for example with public floggings and executions, in order to deter others. Making such an example of offenders in an effort to persuade others to follow the law is not acceptable to many Christians today, who believe that every human being should be treated with respect, regardless of what they have done.</p>
Reformation	<p>Reformation is the aim of punishment that most Christians prefer because it seeks to help offenders by working with them to help them to understand that their behaviour is harming society. It is hoped that offenders will change their attitudes and become responsible, law-abiding members of the community. In order for this to work, the offender needs to realise that their behaviour is wrong before they can hope to be reformed. This may involve group therapy sessions, individual counselling and treatment (if required), meeting their victims so they realise the harm they may have caused or working in the community (community service).</p> <p>Christians who favour reform rather than retribution take their inspiration from the teaching of the Bible.</p> <p>This encourages Christians not to seek revenge, but instead to set an example by showing compassion. A more positive response to an offender is to work with them to help them turn their life around by helping them understand the effect of their actions on others. However, this is not a replacement for punishment, it should be done at the same time.</p>

1. What are the three aims of punishment?
2. What is retribution?
3. Why is retribution the least positive of the three?
4. What is lex talionis?
5. What is deterrence?
6. How were people punished in the UK years ago?
7. What is reformation?
8. Why is reformation favoured by Christians?
9. What types of reformation are there?
10. What does reformation encourage Christians not to do?

Ext: Reformation is the best type of punishment for a Christian – evaluate this view (12)

Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay" says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." (Romans 12:19-21)



Reformation is the best type of punishment for a Christian – evaluate this view (12)

Agree	Point 2
Some Christians such as may agree with this statement and believe that reformation is the best type of punishment because...	Some Christians such as may disagree with this statement and believe that deterrence is the best type of punishment because...
Other Christians such as may disagree and believe that reformation is the best type of punishment because...	Other Christians such as may disagree with this statement and believe that retribution is the best type of punishment because...
Reference to sacred writing:	Reference to sacred writing:
In conclusion, I think...	

Christian attitudes to suffering

	Explanation
Christian attitudes to suffering	<p>For many people, suffering is an unfortunate part of living. Suffering is the state of undergoing pain, distress, or hardship It may be caused by something natural, such as an illness, or it may be due to how people have behaved or how somebody else has behaved. Whatever the cause, Christians believe they should try to help others who are suffering. The Bible even talks about how good can come out of suffering:</p> <p>“We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.” (Romans 5:3-4) This was written by Paul who suffered at the hands of the Roman authorities several times ager he had become a Christian.</p> <p>Christians feel that they should follow the example of Jesus, who helped many whom he saw were suffering, and who taught that those who believe in God should help those who suffer. Helen Keller (1880-1968), a Christian writer and activist who became deaf and blind when she was only 19 months old, summed up the Christian responsibility to help those who are suffering: “We are never really happy until we try to brighten the lives of others” (Helen Keller, My New Speech, (undated))</p> <p>Many people question why a loving God, who cares about his people, allows them to suffer. However, it would be wrong to blame God for factions such as those of the Charlestone gunman. Christians believe that God gave humanity the free will (ability to make choices) to behave as they choose. If they choose to follow the example and teaching of Jesus and stay close to God, they will want to make good choices which do not harm others. However, there are legal consequences, including legal punishments imposed by courts, when people choose to behave in a way that harms other people and is not pleasing to God. The teachings of Jesus give guidance to help Christians to use their free will responsibly.</p>
Charleston church shooting	<p>In June 2015, at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, USA, a gunman killed nine people, including the senior pastor on the church, while they attended Bible study. Dylann Roof, a 21 year old white man, was captured by the police and confessed that he committed the murder in the hope of igniting a race war.</p> <p>The murders caused suffering to the friends and families of the victims, as well as the people from the local community. However, when relatives of the victims faced Dylann Roof in a court hearing, they told him that they forgave him. Nadine Collier, whose mother was murdered, told Roof in court, ‘You hurt me, you hurt a lot of people, but God forgives you, and I forgive you.’</p>
Christian attitudes to causing suffering to others	<p>Christians are generally opposed to causing others to suffer. Jesus taught that humans should love each other and care for those in trouble. He even spoke out against using violence in self-defence because of the further suffering that retaliation may cause.</p> <p>However, as no human is perfect, it is inevitable that Christians may be the cause of suffering, often by accident or because their minds are troubled for some reason. Having caused suffering, it is important that Christians are honest to themselves, to other people and to God, and work to repair the damage they have caused. This way, relationships can be restored.</p>

1. What might be possible causes of suffering?
2. How does Romans 5:3-4 explain how good can come from suffering
3. What happened to Paul for being a Christian?
4. Who is Helen Keller and what did she do?
5. What happened at the Charleston church shooting?
6. What happened at the trial of Dylann Roof?
7. What is free will?
8. Why are Christians generally opposed to causing others to suffer?
9. What did Jesus say in 22:50-51 to support this view?
10. What is it important that Christians do if they have caused suffering?

Ext: Explain two ways in which Christians may respond to suffering – refer to Christian teaching in your response. (5 marks)

50 And one of them (the disciples) struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear.

51 But Jesus answered, “No more of this!” And he touched the man’s ear and healed him.

Luke 22:50-51



Types of punishment

Punishment	In UK law, there are many ways that criminals can be legally punished and several ways they cannot. How severe the punishment is depends on the seriousness of the crime. It can range from a long-term stay in prison for a serious crime, to payment of a fine for a lesser one. Reformation is considered to be an important criterion used in deciding punishment, because in the long term, if a criminal is reformed through punishment, both the individual and society benefit.
Prison	Prison is reserved for those who have committed a serious crime. Their punishment of imprisonment is loss of liberty. Prisoners have no choice to live as ordinary people do, are locked in cells for much of the day, are fed at set times and have to do manual work for little money. While most Christians agree that prison should be used for serious crimes, many strongly support trying to support prisoners while in prison and are keen to see education and training facilities used as well.
Corporal punishment	Corporal punishment means to punish an offender by causing them physical pain. This could be by whipping them, or hitting them repeatedly with a cane. Many consider this a breach of the Human Rights legislation that the UK supports. It is illegal in the UK but allowed in some other parts of the world. For example some Muslim countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia allow caning as punishment for offenses such as gambling and sexual promiscuity. Corporal punishment was permitted in schools in the UK until it was made illegal in 1987 in government funded schools and in 1999 in all other schools in England and Wales. By 2003, it had also been banned completely in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Imposing physical pain on any person, no matter what they have done, is completely unacceptable for most Christians, although in 2005 a group of head teachers in private Christian schools unsuccessfully challenged the ban of corporal punishment in schools. Christians do not disagree with discipline. They see a positive need for it, as the quotation from Proverbs shows. However, they many question the method used since Jesus' teachings on love and caring for people rule out physical punishment. Christians focus on positive sanctions that help offenders realise the error of their ways and reform. Jesus always treated people with respect, and Christians believe they should follow his example.
Community Service	Some crimes are punishable by community service. This may include offences such as vandalism, benefit fraud or minor assaults. Community service offers offenders a chance to make up for what they have done and receive help in reforming their behaviour. Because the aims of community service are positive and offer the chance to reform, Christians are in general agreement that it is a suitable punishment for fairly minor offences. Community payback is one part of a community sentence. This involves doing between 40 hours and 300 hours of unpaid work in the community such as removing graffiti, clearing wasteland or decorating public places or buildings. While working, those who are doing community payback wear a high visibility orange vest so everybody knows they have been convicted of an offence.

1. What depends on the seriousness of a crime?
2. What different types of punishment are there?
3. Why might prison be used?
4. What is the Christian view of prison?
5. Give two examples of corporal punishment
6. What is the contemporary British view of corporal punishment?
7. Where is corporal punishment still acceptable?
8. What happened to corporal punishment in British schools?
9. What is the Christian view of community service?
10. What is community service and what is the Christian view on this?

Ext: Explain two contrasting types of punishment. (4)

Explain Christian attitudes towards punishment.

Refer to sacred texts in your answer. (5)

He who spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them. (Proverbs 13:24)



Forgiveness

Forgiveness Forgiveness is a core belief in Christianity and one that Jesus emphasised in his teachings. Individual Christians are expected to forgive others, regardless of what they have done, and Christians believe that in turn, God will forgive them. The Lord's Prayer includes the line: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." (The Lord's Prayer)

However, many Christians would argue that forgiveness is not a replacement for punishment. It is possible to both forgive somebody who has committed murder and to believe that justice is done when they are sentenced to a long period of imprisonment. However, the intention of the imprisonment should be to reform the murderer so that they will not re-offend when released. During his ministry, Jesus was asked by Peter, one of his disciples: "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'" (Matthew 18:21-22)

The Church interprets seventy seven as an unlimited amount. Therefore, there is no maximum number of times a person should be forgiven. Christians believe that just as there is no limit on the amount of love that a God shows them and they should show to others, so there can be no limit on forgiveness.

Even when Jesus was crucified, he said to those crucifying him:
 "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34)

Christians believe that in their lives, they should follow the example of Jesus, and this includes forgiving those who do wrong things. In Judaism, those who have wronged others should show remorse to their victims and honestly and directly ask for their forgiveness before they can expect to be forgiven by their victims and by God. Christians don't believe this is a necessary part of forgiveness, but they do believe that forgiveness is easier if the offender shows a serious intention to repent and change their ways so they can start afresh. This is why many Christians believe that reformation should be the primary aim of punishment.

Nobody would pretend that it is easy to forgive people who have wronged you. However, people like Maureen Greaves show that it is possible to achieve.

Maureen Greaves On Christmas Eve 2012, 68 year old retired social worker Alan Greaves was on his way to St Saviour's Church in Sheffield to play the organ at the Christmas Midnight Mass. Tragically, two local men made an unprovoked and brutal attack on him and left him for dead. Three days later, Alan died in hospital from his severe head injuries. His wife, family and friends were understandably heartbroken.

As Alan's wife, Maureen, sat at his bedside on Christmas Day she remembers that she started to pray. Her thoughts then turned to the person, as then unknown, who had attacked Alan. "And I thought Alan would forgive them. It's Christmas Day, I didn't want to carry the anger, all that destructive anger, in my life... I'm not saying I don't want justice for Alan, I did. But I had to carry myself in a way that would help my children... We're all the same, not perfect"

1. What are individual Christians expected to do?
2. What does the Lord's Prayer say about forgiveness?
3. Would Christians argue that forgiveness is not a replacement for punishment? Explain.
4. What did Jesus say in response to Peter?
5. What do Christians take this to mean?
6. What did Jesus say when he was being crucified?
7. How does Judaism handle forgiveness?
8. What do Christians believe is helpful when trying to forgive someone?
9. What happened to Alan Greaves?
10. How did his wife, Maureen, react?

Ext: Explain Christian attitudes to forgiveness. Refer to sacred texts in your answer (5 marks)

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (Colossians 3:13)



Capital Punishment

Why use such an extreme punishment?

The crimes are seen as so bad that no other punishment would be suitable. People who commit such horrific acts must face the most severe punishment, so that justice is seen to be done and others are deterred from committing these crimes. It is the principle of 'an eye for an eye' and is seen as the law of equality of retribution in Islam. A murderer shows no respect for human life, so the state shows no respect for the murderer's life.

In 1977, the USA allowed individual states to choose whether they wished to use capital punishment. Currently, 32 states have re-adopted the death penalty. Texas is responsible for over one third of all executions that take place. To date there have been over 1,360 executions in the USA since 1976. Right now there are over 3,000 people awaiting execution in America's death row cells. Amnesty International has said that the USA is savage, barbaric, cruel, prejudiced and uncivilised. This is because the USA has executed: people who offended as a child; people who have mental illnesses; black people sentenced by all-white juries and many other seemingly unfair cases. If this is what can be said about what is considered the most democratic country in the world, what might be the situation in other countries?

Facts and Figures

- 140 countries have abolished the death penalty in law or practice
- 58 countries retain and use the death penalty
- This century 88% of all known executions have taken place in China, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the USA.
- Between 1976 and 2003 the USA executed 22 people who were under the age of 18 at the time the crime was committed – more than half of those executed worldwide.
- In March 2005, the USA abolished child executions, affecting over 70 juvenile offenders on death row in twelve states.
- In the USA, since 1973, over 130 prisoners on death row have been released after their convictions were overturned.
- Methods of execution worldwide include (numbers in brackets indicate the number of executions by named method between 1976-2014): firing squad (3), hanging (3), lethal injection (1194), stoning (NA), beheading (NA), gas chamber (11), electric chair (158), crucifixion (Sudan only)

Amnesty International

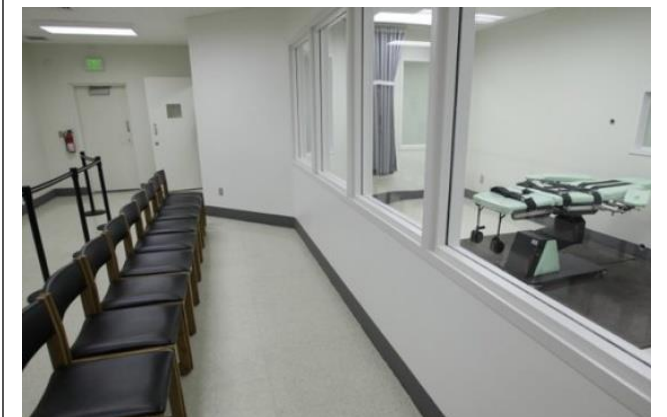
Amnesty International was founded in 1961 by Peter Benenson, a British lawyer. Today it is the world's biggest human rights organisation, informing the world about human rights abuses and campaigning for individual and political change. Amnesty disagrees completely with execution, seeing it as cruel, inhumane and degrading. In its reports about the death penalty in the USA, it has highlighted the degrading nature of the system, giving examples of prisoners being taken from intensive care to be executed, wiring up prisoners who were still awaiting last minute appeals, executing people who were clearly mentally ill, and a paraplegic being dragged to the electric chair.

1. Why might capital punishment be used?
2. Which principle is used to justify this?
3. How does Islam justify retribution in Islam?
4. What happened in the USA in 1977?
5. How many states have readopted the death penalty?
6. What did Amnesty International describe the USA as and why?
7. Where have 88% of all known executions taken place?
8. What was abolished in 2005?
9. What effect did this have?
10. Which is the most common method of execution in the USA?

Ext: Read about Amnesty International. Why do they campaign against the death penalty?

12 mark question: "The best punishment for a murderer is the death penalty" Evaluate this view.

Use the information on the back of the sheet to answer this question



Arguments for Capital Punishment:

- “An eye for an eye, life for a life” means that murderers should pay with their life.
- It is a deterrent, therefore it puts people off committing horrendous crimes.
- It brings justice for the victims and their families
- Life sentences do not mean life; murderers walk free on average after 16 years.
- It is a waste of resources housing criminals for their entire life.
- This is the only way to totally protect society from the worst murderer who it is believed cannot be reformed.
- The Principle of Utility states that an action is right if it brings happiness to the greatest number of people. Capital Punishment protects society at large and brings satisfaction to victim’s families, so could be argued to be right under this principle.

Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed

Genesis 9:6

"Whatever measure you deal out to others will be dealt back to you"

Matthew 7:2

"He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him surely die"

Matthew 15:4

Arguments against Capital Punishment:

- Retribution is uncivilised; two wrongs do not make a right. It is a contradiction to condemn murder and then execute (kill) a murderer)
- Most murders are done on the spur of the moment so capital punishment would not deter.
- Victims’ families still grieve; killing the murderers does not end the pain of loss.
- Legal systems can fail and innocent people can be executed
- All life is sacred and murderers should be given the chance to reform
- It is inhumane and degrading to put anyone through the mental torture of death row.

“Forgive your brother 70 x 7 times”

Matthew 12:30-31

“Pray for those who persecute you”

Sermon on the Mount

“Even when there is question of the execution of a condemned man, the State does not dispose of the individual's right to life.”

Pope Pius XII

THEME F: Human Rights and Social Justice

<p>What is social justice?</p>	<p>Social justice is about seeking to protect people’s civil liberties, rights and opportunities and taking care of the least advantaged members of society. There is lots of injustice in the world; some people are not allowed to express their opinions, have the relationships they chose or follow the religion they want.</p>
<p>Human Rights</p>	<p><u>Human Rights</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 1948 the United Nations adopted the Declaration of Human Rights which sets out the basic human rights that everyone should be entitled to regardless of nationality , language gender and status. In 30 articles the Declaration sets out minimum entitlement to freedom justice and peace. <p><u>Responsibilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human rights mean we have a responsibility to respect the rights of others. The right to freedom of speech could be abused by people who want to cause hatred or violence. It is the moral responsibility of everyone not to deliberately offend people and to listen the views of others.
<p>Religious views</p>	<p>All his ways are just” <i>(Deuteronomy 32:4)</i> “Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established” <i>(Romans 13:1)</i></p> <p><u>Christian Views</u></p> <p>The Bible teaches that God is a God of justice. It is full of teachings about the importance of social justice and the duty to care for others. The prophet Amos told the people of Israel that God was not pleased with the way they were oppressing the poor. He said ‘Let justice roll on like a river’ Martin Luther King used this quote in one of his famous speeches to show why Christians should respond to social injustice.</p> <p>Jesus said that the first commandment was to love God and the second one is to love your neighbour. St Paul says that ‘Love is the fulfilment of the law’ . There are many stories in the Bible which illustrate the importance that Jesus placed on helping others. E.g. the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats sais that those who help the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, the stranger, those without clothing and those in prison will be rewarded.</p>

11. What is social justice?
12. When did the UN adopt the Declaration of Human Rights?
13. What responsibilities come with Human Rights?
14. Why should Christians follow the Human Rights Act?
15. How do Christians respond to social justice?
16. Give one example of someone well known and what they did to ensure social justice?
17. Explain the Deuteronomy quote.
18. Explain the Romans quote.

Exam Questions:

3. Explain two contrasting beliefs responses to social injustice. (4 marks)

In your answer you must refer to one or more religious traditions.

4. Explain two religious beliefs about the value of people. (5 marks)

Refer to sacred writings or another source of religious belief and teaching in your answer.

Prejudice and Discrimination

Gender Discrimination	<p>There are examples in the Bible which seem to show gender discrimination. E.g. St Paul's letter to the Corinthians says that just as Christ is the head of the Church, so man is the head of a woman. St Paul says that women should cover their heads in Church. He also says that only men can lead worship.</p> <p>Some denominations do not allow women to have important positions. Catholic and Orthodox churches do not support women becoming priests for example. They would say that men and women are equal but that they have different roles.</p> <p>The Church of England does allow female priests but only since 1993. The first female bishop was ordained in 2014.</p> <p>Nonconformist churches have a long history of ordaining women with many saying that St Paul's words only apply to the community that he was writing too. That at the time people would have found it hard to treat women equally but that now women should expect the same opportunities.</p>
Sexuality	<p>Discrimination based on sexuality is called homophobia. In the Bible Eve was created as a partner for Adam and they were instructed to 'Go forth and multiply'. It also says that 'That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife and they will become one flesh'. Many Christians interpret this to mean that God intended for humans to have only same sex relationships.</p> <p>There are examples in the Bible of God destroying cities (Sodom and Gomorrah) because of the wickedness and homosexual activity of the inhabitants.</p> <p>Within Christianity there is a diversity of opinion. Some will say that gay relationships are totally wrong and against the teachings in the Bible. Others will welcome gay people into their congregations as long as they were celibate. Others accept people regardless of their sexuality and will bless same sex marriages.</p> <p>Other Christians would say that a central teaching of the Bible is to 'love your neighbour' and that 'love is a fulfilment of the law' and would argue that it is not our place to judge.</p>
Religious views	<p>"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor freeman, nor is there male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" <i>Galatians 3:28</i></p> <p>"Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak...for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the Church" (1 Corinthians 14:34-35)</p> <p>Equality</p> <p>Christians believe that humans are special and precious because we are made in the image of God. We might be born into different circumstances but we are all equally valuable and can have a relationship with God. It says in the Bible that God does not have favourites.</p>

19. Give one example where the Bible seems to show gender discrimination.
20. In the modern day, how do some denominations of Christianity appear to show gender discrimination?
21. How did the Church of England combat this discrimination?
22. How does Genesis show same sex relationship is within God's plan?
23. How may some Christians argue the Bible suggests homosexuality is acceptable?
24. Explain the Galatians quote.
25. Explain the Corinthians quote.
26. What do Christians say about equality?

Exam Questions:

'Religion should stay out of gender politics'

Evaluate this statement. In your answer you:

- **refer to Christian teaching**
 - **give reasoned arguments to support this statement**
 - **give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view**
 - **should reach a justified conclusion.**
- [12 marks]**

Disability and Race

Disability	<p>There are around 500 million disabled people around the world.</p> <p>The Equality Act of 2010 aims to protect people with disabilities from social injustice.</p> <p>Christians are opposed to discrimination against disabled people because it is not loving and 'love is a fulfilment of the law'. There are stories in the Bible of Jesus healing the sick. It says how he restored sight to the blind, made the lame walk, and even brought back the dead.</p> <p>Jesus responded to the sick and disabled with pity and compassion 'Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," he said. "Be healed!"'</p> <p>Jesus said 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full' which many would take to mean that Jesus wanted everyone to live full and meaningful lives.</p> <p>There are some passages in the Old Testament which say that 'No man who has any defect' can join the Priesthood.</p>
Race	<p>Racism is the belief that some races and ethnic groups are inferior to others. There have been many examples of racism in the past both from Christians and non-Christians.</p> <p>Racism is illegal in the UK and most Christians oppose racism in all its forms. Jesus clearly teaches about the obligation to love and states that 'love is a fulfilment of the law' so to act in an unloving way is not permitted.</p> <p>Some Christians have risked their lives to fight against racist ideas and racist governments. Martin Luther King led to the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 60s using peaceful protest to demonstrate against racist rules and regimes.</p> <p>Some Churches have acted in a racist manner in the past for example the Dutch Reformed support Apartheid which was racial segregation in South Africa. Apartheid denied the right to vote to black people as well as restricting access to education, housing, jobs and other public services. Archbishop Desmond Tutu was one of the leaders who campaigned for equal rights and the abolition of Apartheid which ended in 1994.</p>
Religious views	<p>Christians believe that all humans are created free and equal. Many would see it as their duty to stand up for people who are being oppressed or targeted because of their disability or race. Famous Christians like Martin Luther King have even lost their lives defending the right to free and equal treatment.</p> <p>"Love is a fulfilment of the law" <i>Romans 13:10</i></p>

27. How many disabled people are there around the world?
28. What is the main aim of the Equality Act 2010?
29. Why do Christians oppose the discrimination of disabled people?
30. How can the passage in the Old Testament be seen as discriminatory towards disabled people?
31. How can the teachings of Christ show he is against racism?
32. How have Christians fought against racist ideals or governments?
33. What is apartheid?
34. Who campaigned for equal rights in South Africa?

Exam Questions:

Explain two contrasting examples of discrimination. (4 marks)

In your answer you must refer to one or more religious traditions.

Explain two religious beliefs protecting the equality of all people. (5 marks)

Refer to sacred writings or another source of religious belief and teaching in your answer.

Religious Freedom

Declaration of Human Rights	<p>“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This included the right to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in a community with others and in public or private to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship or observance.”</p> <p><i>(Universal Declaration of Human Rights)</i></p>
Facts	<p>Christianity is the official state religion in Britain today and the Anglican (Church of England) in the established Church in England. No one can be forced to join the church and the government protects freedom of religious expression meaning that everyone has the right to choose and practice which ever religion they want providing their do not preach hatred and intolerance.</p> <p>The UK has not always protected the right to follow a religions and in the past there have been fines for people who didn't attend church. People have been forced to convert from Catholicism to Church of England and back again. In Northern Ireland there has been tension and conflict as a result of this</p>
Religious views	<p><u>Christian Views</u></p> <p>Christianity teaches harmony and tolerance. Jesus should respect and tolerance of different groups of people. There is sometimes conflict between different groups of Christianity but this goes against Christian teaching which say ‘Be humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love’. The Bible also teaches ‘If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone’.</p>

Exam Questions:

Explain two contrasting beliefs about religious freedom. (4 marks)

In your answer you must refer to one or more religious traditions.

Explain two religious beliefs about expressing your religious identity. (5 marks)

Refer to sacred writings or another source of religious belief and teaching in your answer.

‘Religious freedom is a fundamental right’

Evaluate this statement. In your answer you:

- refer to Christian teaching
- give reasoned arguments to support this statement
- give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view

should reach a justified conclusion.

[12 marks]

Wealth

Old Testament	<p>The Old Testament teaches that wealth is a blessing from God as a reward for faithfulness. God promised Israel that if they followed him then they would be blessed. There are examples of extremely rich people in the Old Testament for example King Solomon. King David also acknowledged that wealth comes from God when he says 'Wealth and honour have come from you'. Deuteronomy also makes it clear that there was a responsibility to remember that it was God who had blessed them.</p> <p>People would thank God by giving a 'tithe' which was a tenth of their income to the church as an offering. In the Old Testament it says that this includes any crops that a person produces. Today some Christians may give 10% of their income to the church.</p> <p>'The Lord will grant you abundant prosperity' <i>Deuteronomy 28:11</i></p>
New Testament	<p>The New Testament focusses on the dangers associated with wealth, greed and selfishness. People can become so involved with money that they forget to love God and heir neighbour. There is a story in the Bible when Jesus tells a rich young man to sell everything he has, give it to the poor and that his reward will be treasure in heaven. The man refuses to do this and Jesus says that it is very difficult for rich people to enter heaven. This doesn't mean that it is wrong to be wealthy but that if we focus on money then we are likely to ignore God and be focussed on the wrong things in our lives. Jesus said 'No one can serve two masters...You cannot serve both God and money'. Instead Christians are told that they should 'seek first his kingdom and his righteousness'</p> <p>'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven' Mark 10:25</p>

Exam Questions:

'Money just leads to greed'

Evaluate this statement. In your answer you:

- **refer to Christian teaching**
 - **give reasoned arguments to support this statement**
 - **give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view**
 - **should reach a justified conclusion.**
- [12 marks]**

Exploitation of the Poor

<p>People Trafficking</p>	<p>Human trafficking involves recruitment, harbouring or transporting people into a situation of exploitation through the use of violence, deception or coercion and forced to work against their will. In other words, trafficking is a process of enslaving people, coercing them into a situation with no way out, and exploiting them. People can be trafficked for many different forms of exploitation such as forced prostitution, forced labor, forced begging, forced criminality, domestic servitude, forced marriage, and forced organ removal.</p> <p>Contrary to a common misconception, people don't necessarily have to be transported across borders for trafficking to take place. In fact, transporting or moving the victim doesn't necessarily define trafficking. When children are trafficked, no violence or coercion needs to be involved. Simply bringing them into exploitative conditions constitutes trafficking. Trafficking for sexual exploitation gets much attention. However, the majority of people are trafficked into labour exploitation. Many people who fall victim of trafficking want to escape poverty, improve their lives, and support their families. Often they get an offer of a well-paid job abroad or in another region. Often they borrow money from their traffickers in advance to pay for arranging the job, travel and accommodation. When they arrive they find that the work they applied for does not exist, or the conditions are completely different. But it's too late, their documents are often taken away and they are forced to work until their debt is paid off.</p>
<p>Fair Pay</p>	<p>Some farmers in less economically developed countries do not receive a fair price for the goods they produce, e.g. coffee. If something happens to the crop because of poor weather, the profits of the retailer do not suffer as the price we pay for coffee can increase, but the farmer's profits do not. The farmer receives a small cut of the price it is sold for in the UK because the price also covers harvesting, exporting, shipping and retailing. This means the consumers in countries like the UK are exploiting the poor in countries where they are less economically developed.</p> <p>In the UK there is a National Living Wage (£7.50 an hour) which aims to ensure that all people aged 25 and over are paid a fair amount of money for the job they are doing and can live a comfortable life. However, not all people are paid this wage and there are still some individuals who are being paid well below the amount needed to pay for food, rent/mortgage/etc.</p>
<p>Loans</p>	<p>In the UK, those who have a poor credit history or a relatively small household income are not able to access cheap loans. Because of this, it means that people are often forced to borrow money through short term loan companies who charge massive interest rates (sometimes well over 1000%). Because the so called pay day loans are so costly, people who borrow through them are often not able to afford the repayments. If you don't repay the loans within the correct time frame, people can often lose their homes, money and possessions.</p> <p>'Do not exploit the poor because they are poor' Proverbs 22:22</p>

1. What is human trafficking?
2. Give examples of what happens to those who are trafficked.
3. What are the majority of people trafficked into?
4. What happens to people who have been trafficked abroad?
5. Give an example of unfair trade in LEDCs.
6. How did the UK attempt to combat unfair pay?
7. How are people with poor credit history exploited in the UK?
8. Explain the Proverbs quote.

Exam Questions:

Explain two contrasting beliefs about how the poor can be exploited. (4 marks)

In your answer you must refer to one or more religious traditions.

Explain two religious beliefs about ensuring justice for all. (5 marks)

Refer to sacred writings or another source of religious belief and teaching in your answer.