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RELIGIOUS STUDIES

EXAM BOARD: AQA Religious Studies A

COURSE CODE: 8062

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RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 1

Theme C: Existence of God and Revelation - Arguments for the Existence of God

Keywords	Definitions
Design Argument	The argument that God designed the universe, because everything is so intricately made in its detail that it could not have happened by chance
Theist	A person who believes in God
Atheist	A person who believes that there is no God
Agnostic	Someone who thinks there is not enough evidence for belief in God
First Cause Argument	Also called the Cosmological Argument; the argument that there has to be an uncaused cause that made everything else happen, otherwise there would be nothing now
Eternal	Without beginning or end
Creation	The act by which god brought the universe into being
Miracle	A seemingly impossible event, usually good, that cannot be explained by natural or scientific laws, and is thought to be the action of God
Proof	Evidence that supports the truth of something
Faith	A commitment to something that goes beyond proof and knowledge, especially used about God and religion
Evil	The opposite of good, a force or the personification of a negative power that is seen in many traditions as destructive and against God
Suffering	When people have to face and live with unpleasant events or conditions

The Design Argument

Theists believe in God and most agree that the universe and life was created for a purpose by God – the universe did not come about by accident or random chance. William Paley argued that if we found an intricate watch, we would believe that it had been created by a watchmaker instead of its parts coming together by chance. The universe is far more complicated than a watch and therefore must have had a creator – God. Isaac Newton believed that the design of our opposable thumbs was enough evidence of God's existence.

Thomas Aquinas said that only an intelligent being like God could keep the universe in regular order. F. R. Tennant argued that God designed the world so that everything was just right for human life. Some objections to the Design arguments are that (1) through evolution, species designed themselves over time, not God (2) there is a lot of suffering in the world; if God designed it then why would he have created evil? (3) the order in the universe is necessary to support life, so it merely gives the appearance of design.

The First Cause Argument

Some theists argue that: 1. Everything that exists must have a cause. 2. The universe exists, so it must too have a cause. 3. There had to be something eternal that was not caused. 4. The eternal first cause was God. 5. Therefore God exists. This argument for the existence of God is called the Cosmological Argument. Thomas Aquinas argued for the First Cause Argument. Objections to the First Cause Argument include (1) atheists say that the argument is contradictory – if everything has a cause, what caused God? (2) if God has always existed, then maybe the universe always has too and didn't have a creator? (3) the universe does not necessarily have a cause (4) the Big Bang was random, not caused by God (5) religious creation stories are just myths.

The Argument from Miracles

Theists argue that miracles have no scientific explanation and must be outside the laws of nature. Since only God is outside nature, then a miracle must be a working of God; therefore, God exists. Some objections are that (1) miracles are lucky coincidences (2) they may have scientific explanations (3) miracles may be mind over matter (4) some miracles are faked. David Hume argued that there is not enough evidence.

Arguments against the existence of God

(1) None of the arguments above prove that God exists (2) Some people argue that because science can explain things that people in the past could not understand, people no longer need to look to God for answers (3) We live in a world full of evil and suffering, and some argue that if God is all-loving, all-powerful and all-knowing, why doesn't he stop evil and suffering from existing? God does not stop evil, so he does not exist. Some theists respond to the problem of evil and suffering by arguing that evil is a result of free will, and that good and evil can have positive effects, for example the showing of compassion.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'In the beginning God created the heavens and earth'

'The heavens declare the glory of God'

'By the power of signs and miracles... I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ'

Exam questions

- Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about the Design argument for God's existence. (4 marks)
- Explain two religious beliefs about how creation proves the existence of God. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two religious beliefs about how God can allow evil and suffering. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two religious beliefs about miracles. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'If the universe has a beginning, it must have a creator who began it'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)
- 'The existence of evil and suffering proves that God does not exist'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)
- 'The First Cause argument proves that God exists'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'The design argument proves that God exists'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 2

Theme C: Existence of God and Revelation - Revelation

Keywords	Definitions
Ultimate reality	The supreme, final, fundamental power in all reality
The divine	God, gods or ultimate reality
Revelation	God showing himself to believers; this is the only way anybody can really know anything about God
Special revelation	God making himself known through direct personal experience or an unusual specific event
Vision	Seeing something, especially in a dream or trance, that shows something about the nature of God or the afterlife
Enlightenment	The gaining of true knowledge about God or self, usually through meditation and self-discipline; in Buddhist and Hindu traditions, gaining freedom from the cycle of rebirth
General Revelation	God making himself known through ordinary, common human experiences
Nature	The physical world including plants, animals and landscape; the environment or natural world
Scriptures	The sacred writings of a religion; for Christians these are the Old and the New Testament

Special revelation and enlightenment

Every religion accepts that there is an ultimate reality that is eternal and unchanging. Many religions call this ultimate reality 'God'. Although some people say that God cannot be known because he is beyond human understanding, many theists think it is possible to know what God is like through revelation – God showing himself to believers. There are two types of revelation: special revelation and general revelation. Firstly, special revelation is when people experience God directly in a particular event. It might be a dream, a vision, a prophecy, miracle, or hearing 'God's call', experienced either individually or with a group of people. Special revelations do not happen often and many religious people believe in God without experiencing any kind of special revelation. A vision is a form of special revelation that comes in

picture or image form. People who receive visions might see holy people, angels, or hear messages from God. A vision holds a deep meaning for the person who receives it. An example of a vision in the Bible is the story of St Paul on the road to Damascus. Enlightenment is another form of special revelation and is the gaining of true knowledge about God or self.

General Revelation

The second type of revelation is general revelation. Not everyone receives special revelation from God; many people come to know God through general revelation. This is when God makes himself known through common, ordinary human experiences. These experiences are available to everyone, but they do not convince everyone that God is real because they depend on a person's interpretation of them.

Nature is one form of general revelation and can be used as a way of understanding God. The beauty and order of the natural world, the power of storms and the sea, the wonder of a newborn baby, and the complexity of the human body lead many people to believe in God. By looking at the world around them, these people think that God is shown as creative, artistic, clever, powerful and awesome. Just as a painting gives an insight into the artist who painted it, so nature gives believers an insight into God.

Scripture can also be a way of understanding God. Religious scriptures tell what God is like, how God acted in the past and how God wants people to live. When Christians listen to the words of the Bible or read it for themselves, they hope to get a better understanding of the teachings of Christianity and to receive spiritual strength from God's words.

The value of revelation and enlightenment

Revelation is of great value to believers as it is one of the ways in which they come to know God. Revelation can provide theists with proof of God's existence, help start a religion, allow believers to have a relationship with God, and help people to live as God wishes. However, revelations may be difficult to prove because they are subjective, open to different interpretations and not open to scientific testing. Atheists argue that religions have conflicting revelations and therefore they cannot be real. Atheists also argue that a revelation, such as a vision, could be brought about by alcohol or drugs, or the person could be so desperate to have a revelation that it is just wishful thinking. It could also be a result of a physical or mental illness, or there is the possibility of the person making it up.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

The Ten Commandments (eg. Do not kill, do not steal)

Prince Siddhartha's Enlightenment

The story of St Paul on the road to Damascus

The Night of Power – Muhammad's Revelation

Exam questions

- Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about visions. (4 marks)
- Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about nature as general revelation. (4 marks)
- Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about scripture as a way of understanding the divine. (4 marks)
- Explain two religious beliefs about visions. Refer to scripture and sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'Visions are just illusions'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'There are too many different ideas of God for revelations to be true'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'Revelations cannot teach people anything about God'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'We should always believe it when someone says God spoke to them'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'As revelation is based on belief, it will always be subject to doubt'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'Those who claim to have special revelations are mistaken'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 3

Theme C: Existence of God and Revelation - Nature of God

Keywords	Definitions
Omnipotent	Almighty, having unlimited power; a quality of God
Omniscient	Knowing everything; a quality of God
Benevolent	All-loving, all-good; a quality of God
Immanent	The idea that God is present in and involved with life on earth and in the universe; a quality of God
Transcendent	The idea that God is beyond and outside life on earth and the universe; a quality of God
Personal nature (of God)	The idea that God is an individual or person with whom people are able to have a relationship or feel close
Impersonal nature (of God)	The idea that God has no 'human' characteristic, is unknowable and mysterious, more like an idea or force

Descriptions of God's nature

One thing that all the major religions (except Buddhism) agree on is that there is only one God who is creator, controller and maintainer of the universe. However, it is difficult to describe God completely using human language. God can be described in many ways.

God is seen as omnipotent, capable of doing anything, for example, creating the universe.

God is seen as omniscient, aware of everything that happens, past, present and future.

God is seen as benevolent (all-loving and all-good) in providing everything people need for survival on earth.

Religious thinkers use the words immanent, transcendent, personal and impersonal to describe different ideas about God:

An immanent God is present in the universe and involved with life on earth. People are able to experience God in their lives. God acts in history and influences events.

A transcendent God is beyond and outside life on earth and the universe. God is not limited by the world, time or space. God existed before the universe he created and therefore is separate from it. God does not act within the world or intervene in people's lives.

People who believe God is personal think of God as having human characteristics (like 'merciful' or 'compassionate'). They believe God loves and cares about every individual and that they can have a relationship with God through prayer.

An impersonal God is the opposite – God does not have human characteristics. God is more like a force or an idea beyond our understanding. This God is an absolute being, who is only understood in terms of itself.

Can God be immanent and transcendent, personal and impersonal?

The idea that God can be both immanent and transcendent or personal and impersonal is one which does not appear to make logical sense. How can God be beyond understanding, but also knowable? Many religious people believe that the two can fit together. They believe that they can experience God and have a personal relationship with him (immanent and personal) and at the same time believe that God is the eternal, unlimited creator of the universe (transcendent and impersonal). Some religions emphasise one description more than another, but others say that all these aspects of God's nature are true – even though they might seem contradictory. God is a mystery, beyond human understanding.

Christians believe that God's immanence is revealed in Jesus, who is God made man, and in the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Yet Christians also believe that God is transcendent and creator of the universe. Christians believe that God is immanent and not fully knowable, yet also personal – a loving Father who cares for his children.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'Before I formed you I knew you'

'Who knows your power?'

'The God of love'

'Where can I flee from his presence?'

'I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters'

'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth'

'There the angel of the lord appeared to him in flames and fire'

'And all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit'

Exam questions

- Explain two similar religious beliefs about God's characteristics. (4 marks)
- Explain two religious beliefs about the nature of the divine. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'God cannot be omniscient if people have free will'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 4

Theme F: Religion, human rights and social justice – Social justice and human rights

Keywords	Definitions
Social justice	Ensuring that society treats people fairly whether they are poor or wealthy and protects people's human rights
Human rights	The basic rights and freedoms to which all human beings should be entitled
Justice	Fairness
Responsibility	Having a duty to do something
Duty	Having an obligation to do something

What is social justice?

Life is not always fair. There are some things which are unfair which are beyond human control; there are other situations which we could call injustices and these occur when people increase or cause the unfairness upon others. Social justice is about seeking to protect people's civil liberties, rights and opportunities, and taking care of the least advantaged members of society. Injustices in the world today include the fact that in some countries many people are not free to express their opinion about the government or follow their religion of their choice; societies can suffer from a breakdown in law and order, terrorism, mass unemployment or a huge gap between rich and poor. Those who believe in social justice wish to see a world in which people are more equal, have human rights and are not struggling because of lack of money or facilities.

What are human rights?

In 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which sets out the basic human rights that everyone should be entitled to, regardless of their nationality, language, religion, gender or status. In 30 articles the Declaration sets out what should be the minimum rights for all human beings to enjoy freedom, justice and peace. These rights cannot be taken away from anyone. The UK passed the Human Rights Act (HRA) in

1998. It includes the rights contained in the European Convention of Human Rights, for example the right to life, liberty, security, privacy, marriage, family life, free elections, education, and a fair trial. It specifies that torture, slavery and forced labour are not allowed.

Responsibilities

Having rights also means that it is important to respect the rights of others. The right of freedom of speech could be abused by people who want to cause hatred or violence. There is the moral responsibility not to deliberately offend people and to listen to the views of others, even if those views are different from your own. If children have the right to be protected from cruelty, exploitation and neglect, they also have a responsibility not to bully or harm each other. If we expect to have a clean environment then we should not drop litter. This principle applies to all the human rights.

What do Christians say?

The Bible teaches that God is a God of justice: 'all his ways are just' (Deuteronomy 32:4), and 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, righteousness like a never-failing stream!' (Amos 5:24). Jesus said that the second most important commandment is to 'love your neighbor as yourself'. There are many stories that illustrate the need to help others, such as the Parable of the Good Samaritan and the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, in which Jesus says that those who help the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, the stranger, those without clothing or those in prison, help Jesus. The book of James says that Christians have a responsibility and duty to promote social justice, as 'faith without deeds is useless' (James 2:20). Many Christians have campaigned for social justice. In the nineteenth century, the anti-slavery campaigner, William Wilberforce, the prison reformer, Elizabeth Fry, and the politician, Lord Shaftesbury (who worked to improve factory conditions and to educate poor children), were all inspired by their faith to work to improve the lives of those less fortunate in society. In Britain most denominations have projects in the community to help the underprivileged.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'Love your neighbour as yourself'

The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

'Faith without deeds is useless'

'And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God'

'All his ways are just'

'Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!'

Exam questions

- Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about human rights. (4 marks)
- Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about justice. (4 marks)
- Explain two religious beliefs about social justice. Refer to scripture of sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two religious beliefs about the right use of wealth. Refer to scripture of sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'People focus too much on human rights and not enough on their responsibilities'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)
- 'Rights are more important than responsibilities'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'The most important human right is for everyone to be free'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 5

Theme F: Religion, human rights and social justice – Prejudice and discrimination

Keywords	Definitions
Equality	The state of being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities
Prejudice	Unfairly judging someone before the facts are known; holding biased opinions about an individual or group
Discrimination	Actions or behaviour that result from prejudice
Positive discrimination	Treating people more favourably because they have been discriminated against in the past or have disabilities
Heterosexual	To be sexually attracted to members of the opposite sex
Homosexual	To be sexually attracted to members of the same sex
Disability	A physical or mental impairment which has an adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities
Racism	Prejudice or discrimination directed towards a person or group of people based on race or ethnicity
Stereotype	An oversimplified image of a person or group of people.

Equality

Christians believe that people are special and precious, because, according to Genesis 1:27, they have been created in God's image. People are born into different circumstances but all are equally valuable and can have a relationship with God, 'For God does not show favouritism' (Romans 2:11). Jesus said 'Love your neighbour as yourself'. All these teachings encourage Christians to treat everyone as having equal value.

Gender prejudice and discrimination

Prejudice means holding biased opinions – often negative – about an individual or group of people. These opinions are often based on stereotypical ideas, rather than actual experience. Discrimination is behaviour or actions that result from prejudice. Paul's letter to the Corinthians appears to show gender

prejudice and discrimination against women. He states that women should wear a head covering in church and remain silent in church. In some Christian denominations women are not allowed to have positions of authority. Catholic and Orthodox churches do not support women becoming priests. They argue that men and women are equal but have different roles. In Britain in 1993 the Church of England allowed women to be ordained as priests and in 2014 a woman became a Bishop for the first time. Many other denominations have no problem with women holding positions of leadership and authority. Some of these Christians would argue that, despite what Paul said, and the fact that Jesus' disciples were all male, the Bible was written in an age of sexism and society has now changed.

Sexuality

In the Bible, heterosexual relationships are portrayed as natural and what God intended. Much more controversial are homosexual relationships. Within Christianity there is a diversity of opinion, from condemning homosexual acts as sinful to seeing homosexuality as morally acceptable. Traditionally, the Church has opposed homosexuality with some arguing that God made Adam and Eve male and female and that the prime purpose of sex is for procreation. Other Christians believe that it is not loving to condemn people for their sexual orientation; a central teaching of the Bible is to 'Love your neighbor as yourself'.

Disability

There are around 500 million disabled people worldwide. UK laws have been passed to protect those with disabilities from discrimination, including the Equality Act 2010. Christians oppose discrimination against disabled people because it does not show Christian love (agape). Jesus healed the sick and disabled and taught his followers to 'love your neighbor as yourself'. Therefore, many Christians support the provision of access ramps, lifts, disabled toilets and other facilities designed to make life easier for disabled people. Many support the use of positive discrimination.

Racism

Racists believe that people of some races are inferior to others. In Britain, Acts of Parliament have been passed to make racism illegal, including the Race Relations Act of 1976 and the Equality Act 2010. Most Christians today oppose racism in all its forms, and Desmond Tutu (South Africa) and Martin Luther King Jr (USA) are examples of Christians who have campaigned against racist beliefs and policies.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

- 'God created mankind in his own image'
- 'Love your neighbour as yourself'
- 'For God does not show favouritism'
- 'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus'
- 'Women should remain silent in the churches'

Exam questions

- Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about what role women should be allowed in worship. (4 marks)
- Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about homosexuality. (4 marks)
- Explain two similar religious beliefs in contemporary British society about racism. (4 marks)
- Explain two religious beliefs about equality. Refer to scripture of sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two religious beliefs about the status of women in religion. Refer to scripture of sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'Racism is the worst form of prejudice'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)
- 'Christian denominations who still oppose homosexuality and equality for women need to get up to date with modern Britain'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'Being discriminated against because of a disability is worse than sexism'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 6

Theme F: Religion, human rights and social justice – Religious freedom

Keywords	Definitions
Freedom of religion	The right to believe or practise whatever religion one chooses
Freedom of religious expression	The right to worship, preach and practise one's faith in whatever way one chooses
Human Rights	The basic rights and freedoms to which all human beings should be entitled
Evangelism	Spreading the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness.

Freedom of religion

Article 18 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights says: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance'. In Britain today, the official state religion is Christianity, and the Anglican Church is the official church in England. No one can be forced to join the Church. The government protects freedom of religious expression, which is the right of individuals to worship in whatever way they choose, or not at all, and laws forbid the persecution of members of other faiths or non-believers.

Believers are free to evangelise providing that they do not preach hatred and intolerance. This freedom of religion in the UK has not always been the case; throughout history people have been fined, imprisoned or killed for worshipping in ways or following particular denominations or religions not supported by the government or monarch. In some places differing religious views have led to conflict; for example conflicts between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, and Crusades organised by Christian Kings in the Middle Ages to recapture the city of Jerusalem from Muslim control. In the 20th and 21st centuries Christians have been persecuted by communist governments and by dictators, for example in North Korea, or in countries where Christians are the minority, for example in the Middle East and Pakistan.

Religious teachings on freedom of religion

Christian teaching encourages tolerance and harmony. When Christian denominations fight each other, they are not following what the Bible says. Ephesians 4:2 says, 'Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love'. Romans 12:18 says, 'If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone'. Romans 16:17 says 'Watch out for those who cause divisions... keep away from them'.

No religion teaches religious intolerance. Religious freedom is encouraged by religions for different reasons. Islam teaches that religious freedom is part of God's design, and freedom of belief is taught in the Qur'an. Christians believe that Jesus taught religious freedom. The freedom to believe and worship, in public or private, to change religion or not follow any religion is regarded by most Christians as a fundamental human right.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'Everyone has the right to freedom of... religion' – Article 18, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
'Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love'
'Watch out for those who cause divisions... keep away from them'
'If it is possible as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone'

Exam questions

- Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about freedom of religious expression. (4 marks)
- Explain two similar beliefs in contemporary British society about the right of freedom of belief. (4 marks)
- Explain two religious beliefs about freedom of religious belief. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'People should have the freedom to say whatever they want about religion'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)
- 'Freedom of religion and religious expression is not possible in the modern world'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'Rights are more important than responsibilities'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'Rights are more important than responsibilities'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 7

Theme F: Religion, human rights and social justice - Wealth

Keywords	Definitions
Wealth	An abundance of valuable possessions or money
Tithe	One tenth of annual produce or earnings
Poverty	Being without money, food or other basic needs of life (being poor)

What is the use of wealth?

Everyone needs money to pay the bills; without it, people get into debt and suffer the effects of poverty. Life can be enriched by having lots of money, and the Bible does not condemn wealth. However, Christians believe that the wealthy have a responsibility to not only use their money on themselves, but to also give their money away to the poor and to the church for its upkeep and mission. Christians believe that by sharing their wealth they are helping Jesus and showing love to others. The Bible has lots to say about wealth, both in the Old and New Testaments.

What does the Old Testament say about wealth?

In the Old Testament, God blessed people with wealth in response to their faithfulness to him; God promised that if Israel followed him and obeyed the law he gave Moses, he would bless them: 'The Lord will grant you abundant prosperity' (Deuteronomy 28:11). For example, King Solomon became an extremely rich king, and King David also acknowledged that wealth comes from God: 'Wealth and honour come from you; you are the ruler of all things' (1 Chronicles 29:12). People thanked God for what wealth they had by giving a tithe, which was a tenth (10%) of their earnings: 'Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your field produce each year' (Deuteronomy 14:22). Some Christians today still give 10% of their income to the Church.

What does the New Testament say about wealth?

The New Testament focuses on the dangers associated with wealth, greed and selfishness. People can become so involved with money that they forget to love God and forget to love their neighbor. Jesus told a rich young man to sell all he had, give it to the poor and follow him and he would have treasure in heaven. The young man was unwilling to do that and Jesus said to him 'it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God' (Mark 10:25). Jesus was not saying that it is wrong to be wealthy. However, striving for riches bring the danger of people ignoring God, neglecting their spiritual life and even committing crimes. Jesus also said, 'No one can serve two masters – you cannot serve both God and money' (Matthew 6:24). Money is important; but for Christians, God and others must come first. Christians believe that God's desire is for his followers to set their hearts on things above, not on things on the earth which are only temporary.

Wealthy Christians should also feel the need to give to the poor. Jesus told the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, in which the rich man ended up in hell because he had not helped the beggar, Lazarus, at the gate. The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats states that those who help the disadvantaged receive the reward of eternal life in heaven, whereas those who ignore the needy are thrown into 'the eternal fire'. Christians believe that by sharing they are helping Jesus and showing his love to others.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'Love your neighbour as yourself'

The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus

'No one can serve two masters – you cannot serve both God and money'

'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God'

'Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce'

Exam questions

- Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about the use of wealth. (4 marks)
- Explain two religious beliefs about giving to charity. Refer to scripture of sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two religious beliefs about the right use of wealth. Refer to scripture of sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'All religious believers must give to charities that help the poor'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)
- 'Christians should always help the poor'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'If you have wealth you have a responsibility to tackle the causes of poverty'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'It is always right to give to charity'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 8

Theme F: Religion, human rights and social justice - Poverty

Keywords	Definitions
Poverty	Being without money, food or other basic needs of life (being poor)
Relative poverty	A condition where household income is a certain percentage below average income for that country
Absolute poverty	A condition where household income is below a necessary level to maintain basic living standards (food, shelter, housing)
Exploitation	Misuse of power or money to get others to do things for little or unfair reward
Human trafficking	The illegal movement of people, typically for the purposes of forced labour or commercial sexual exploitation
Emergency Aid	Also known as short-term aid; help given to communities in a time of disaster or crisis, eg. Food during a famine, shelter after an earthquake
Long-term aid	Assistance given to a poor country over a long period of time that has a lasting effect
Standard of living	the degree of wealth and material comfort available to a person or community
Quality of life	the standard of health, comfort, and happiness experienced by an individual or group
LEDC	Less Economically Developed Country. A country with a low average income per family and with a low standard of living.
Justice	Fairness
Compassion	Concern for the sufferings of others

Poverty and its causes

Everyone shares the same basic needs. We all need food, water, clothing, shelter, and health care, education and employment to achieve a basic standard of living. Approximately 1 in 8 people on the planet do not have access to these basic needs and suffer from chronic hunger or lack adequate shelter or access to safe drinking water. Most of these people live in less economically developed countries (LEDCs). There are many causes of poverty. Many poor countries have borrowed money at a high rate of interest to help pay for basic necessities like health care and education, which has resulted in an ever-increasing debt.

Many countries may have been exploited by other countries for their wealth or natural resources. Some countries have had corrupt leaders that have taken money for themselves at the expense of the people. Many big multinational companies have their products made by people in LEDCs for very little pay. Other countries have been devastated by war or famine. In Britain, the main cause of poverty is unemployment. Lack of work leads people to living on benefits, relying on the state, and sometimes taking on debt in order to survive. Christians encourage the poor to attempt to break out of poverty if they are able to; although this is not possible for many people.

Exploitation of the poor

Often those in poverty are most vulnerable to exploitation, which is when power or money is misused to get people to do things for little or unfair reward. For example, many people in poverty can be paid very little for their work – because although this is unfair, those in poverty have no other source of income. Those who are poor can also be vulnerable targets of moneylenders; those in poverty may take out financial loans in desperation, but are then forced to pay back huge amounts of interest. Those in poverty are also vulnerable to human trafficking. In order to try and escape to a better life in a richer country, poor people may let people like smugglers to help them. However, criminal gangs may then force these migrants to work in poor conditions for little pay, or as prostitutes. These people are then threatened with being taken to the authorities, as they are illegal immigrants.

Giving money to the poor

There are times when people require immediate help with basic needs. Emergency aid can be needed after terrible disasters such as earthquakes or floods, and charities can often help by offering temporary shelter, supplies of food and water, and emergency healthcare services. However, this support is only usually short-term, and so charities will try to offer long-term aid to provide education, tools and skills to help people get out of poverty themselves. Christians are guided by the key concept of justice. They believe that people should be treated fairly, and that Christians should show compassion. One way in which Christians might act justly is to buy Fairtrade products which pay a fair amount to farmers who grow the products. In Britain, many Christians are also involved in supporting soup kitchens, food banks, and other charities that help those in need. 'Send a Cow' is an initiative that was started by British Christian dairy farmers, and involves people paying for cows to be sent to support communities in LEDCs.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'Drunken and gluttons become poor'

'Love your neighbour as yourself'

The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

'And what does the Lord require of you? To

act justly and to love mercy and to walk

humbly with your God'

Exam questions

- Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about the use of wealth. (4 marks)
- Explain two religious beliefs about giving to charity. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two religious beliefs about charging interest. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'All religious believers must give to charities that help the poor'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)
- 'Christians should always help the poor'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'A religious believer can only truly be righteous if they are poor'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'Those who live in poverty should help themselves to overcome their difficulties'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'The poor in the UK are just as deserving as the poor abroad'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'The poor will always be victims'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 9

Christianity: Beliefs and teachings: - Nature of God

Keywords	Definitions
Catholic	A branch of Christianity based in Rome and led by the Pope.
Creator	God is responsible for bringing the universe into existence.
Denomination	A distinct group within the Christian faith, with its own organisation and traditions.
God	The Supreme being.
Holy Spirit	The third person of the Trinity whom Christians believe is the inspiring presence of God in the world.
Immanence	The idea that God is present in physical reality.
Impersonal	God is not a person with a personality but more of an idea or a force.
Justice	Bringing about what is right and fair, according to the law, or making up for a wrong that has been committed.
Monotheistic	A religion that believes there is only one God.
Omnibenevolent	Defined as all-loving and referred to be a quality of God's nature.
Omnipotent	Defined as all-powerful and referred to be a quality of God's nature.
Orthodox	A branch of Christianity mainly, but not entirely, practised in Eastern Europe.
Personal	God is an entity that can communicate with humankind.
Protestant	A branch of Christianity. Originally Protestants were called by that name because they protested against some of the practices in Catholic church. There are many Protestant denominations but they agree on the central belief that the Bible is the only authority for Christians.
Son of God	A title used for Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, and denotes the special relationship between Jesus and God the Father.
Transcendent	The idea that God is beyond this universe in time and space.
Trinity	The belief that there are three persons in the One God: the father, Son and the Holy Spirit, but are also one being.

Christianity as a world faith

Christianity is founded on a belief that 2000 years ago Jesus died and rose from the dead. Christianity initially grew as early followers spread the teachings of the resurrected Jesus and the messages inspired by Jesus' disciples and the apostle Paul. In the fourth century, it became the official religion of the Roman Empire when the Emperor Constantine became a Christian.

In 1054 the faith split into Western Roman Christianity (Catholic Christianity), led by the Pope, and Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Both these groups exist today, although the Western Roman Church in England was split in the sixteenth century when King Henry VIII declared himself the head of the newly established Church of England. During this period, Christians in Western Europe were breaking away from the Roman Church and the Protestant branch of Christianity was forming. This is known as the reformation. Since then, the Protestant church has split further into groups called denominations such as Baptist and Pentecostal Churches.

Even though the three branches of Christianity have differences in beliefs, ways of worship and lifestyle, their belief in God is universal. Therefore, Christianity is a monotheistic religion.

God as omnipotent, loving and just

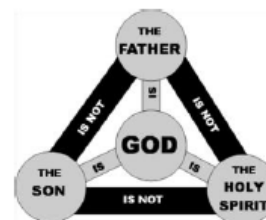
Christians believe God is all-powerful. He has unlimited power and can do anything as the Bible states 'Nothing is impossible with God'.

God is all-loving he loves humans so wants what is best for them. Guidelines are given for humanity to live the best lives they can. Christians should love each other treating everyone with care and respect.

God has unlimited power and authority with complete love and therefore gives justice in a fair way. Christians should try and bring about fairness in the world.

The Oneness of God and the Trinity

Christians believe that the Trinity is made up of God the Father, the creator of the world, the Son, the saviour who died to save the sins of humanity, and the Holy Spirit, the guide who was given to humanity after Jesus' sacrifice. Christians believe God is three in one. There are not three Gods, but different forms of the same thing.



Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'I am the Lord your God...you shall have no other gods before me'

'Nothing is impossible with God'

'In the beginning God created the heavens and earth'

'The God of love'

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that those who believe in him shall not perish but have eternal life'.

'In the name of the father, son and Holy spirit'- blessing said in church

'Our father'- Lord's Prayer

Exam questions

- Explain two ways in which belief in the Trinity influences Christians today. (4 marks)
- Explain two ways in which belief that God is omnipotent influences Christians today. (4 marks)
- Explain two Christian teachings about the Trinity. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two Christian teachings about the nature of God. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'The Trinity is the most important belief in Christianity'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)
- 'For a Christian, believing that God is all-powerful is not important'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)
- 'Christians believe in three gods, not one'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 10

Christianity: Beliefs and teachings - Creation

Keywords	Definitions
Creation	The act by which God brought the universe into being.
Creator	God is responsible for bringing the universe into existence.
Genesis	The first book of the Bible containing the stories about the creation of the world by God.
God	The Supreme being.
Gospel	The record of Christ's life and teaching in the New Testament. There are four gospels according to the Church.
Holy Spirit	The third person of the Trinity whom Christians believe is the inspiring presence of God in the world.
Immanence	The idea that God is present in physical reality.
Religious truth	Truth that is based on faith in God and his revelation. It is explaining God's plans, choices and work rather than historical and scientific facts.
Son of God	A title used for Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, and denotes the special relationship between Jesus and God the Father.
The Word	The term used at the beginning of John's gospel to refer to God the Son

Creation: Genesis 1:1-3

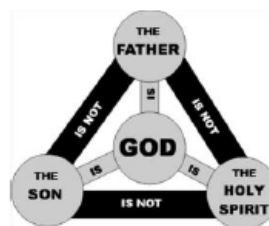
Christians believe that God created the earth and all living things. One story of the creation of the world is found in the first book of the Bible – Genesis - in Chapter 1. The story, as many Christians believe, may not be scientifically accurate but it contains religious truth, explaining that the process of creation was God's choice, and that God designed and caused it to happen. The story also explains how the world was created and how the earth was made fit for life, and finally how God created life including humans. This is believed to have happened in six periods of time (days) and on the seventh day God rested. According to the book of Genesis everything God created was 'good'. Not all Christians believe that God made the world in literary six days but the majority of them believe that God is the creator of the world and all life in it.

The role of the Spirit

According to the Genesis 1, in the beginning 'the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters'. It could be argued that even though God the Father is referred to as the creator, the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, was already active in the world. This also reinforces the idea of the oneness of God.

Creation: John 1:1-3

The Gospel of John was written about 600 years later than the Genesis creation story but it also refers to the beginning of the world. According to the Gospel of John, everything has happened through 'the Word'. The majority of Christians believe now that the Word refers to God the Son, who entered history as Jesus. God the Son was present in the creation process as well. This shows that the whole of the Trinity were involved and have existed since the beginning. Christians have used the concept of the Trinity to help them to understand the divine mystery of three persons in the oneness of God.



Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light.'

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made'

Exam questions

- Explain two ways in which beliefs about the creation of the world might influence Christians today. (4 marks)
- Explain two Christian teachings about creation. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'It does not matter if the Creation story is not true'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 11

Christianity: Beliefs and teachings- Jesus: God's incarnation, teachings and crucifixion

Keywords	Definitions
Bethlehem	A place (town) where Jesus was born according to the gospels.
Blasphemy	A religious offence which includes claiming to be God.
Christ	It comes from the Greek word Christos which means 'anointed one'. It is a translation of the Hebrew word mashiah (Messiah).
Gospel	The record of Christ's life and teaching in the New Testament. There are four gospels according to the Church.
Incarnation	Becoming flesh, taking a human form
Mary	Mother of Jesus
Resurrection	1. Rising from the dead; 2. Jesus rising from the dead on Easter day. An event recorded in all four gospels and the central belief of Christianity
Son of God	A title used for Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, and denotes the special relationship between Jesus and God the Father.
The Word	The term used at the beginning of John's gospel to refer to God the Son
Virgin Birth of Jesus	The belief in Christ's birth from a mother, Mary, who was a virgin.
Forgiveness from the cross	Jesus forgave the guards who crucified him the didn't recognize the significance of what was going on.
Gospel	The record of Christ's life and teaching in the New Testament. There are four gospels according to the Church.
Jerusalem	The city where Jesus was crucified.
Joseph of Arimathea	The member of the Jewish Council that took Jesus' dead body and buried it in the tomb.
Pontius Pilate	The Roman Governor that sentenced Jesus to death by crucifixion.
Crucifixion	The Roman method of execution by which criminals were fixed to a cross; specifically the execution and death of Jesus on Good Friday.

The incarnation

Christians believe that God incarnated himself into the person of Jesus. Apart from the gospels we don't know much about his life, teachings or the circumstances of his birth. He is often referred to as Jesus from Nazareth (the town in which he grew up) but there is little mention of Bethlehem, where he was born. For the majority of Christians, the belief that Jesus is God

in human form is more important than the details of his birth. According to the two gospels (Matthew and Luke) relating Jesus' birth, an angel explains that the conception of Jesus was no ordinary conception and the child (Jesus) would be no ordinary child. The gospels explain quite clearly that Mary, Jesus' mother did not conceive Jesus sexually. She was engaged to Joseph, who took him as his son, but he knew that he was not his natural father. Although many people question the virgin birth of Jesus because it is not a natural thing to happen for Christians it is a very important belief. It gives evidence for the belief of Christians that Jesus is incarnate – made flesh in human form, fully God yet fully human. Second Person of the Trinity and Jesus of Nazareth. Through the incarnation God showed himself as a human being.

Son of God

The Gospel of John does not give any reference to Jesus' birthday. John seems to identify Jesus as 'the Word', as God the Son – one of the three persons of the Trinity. For Christians this gives clear support to the belief that Jesus was God incarnate – in the flesh as a man. The belief that Jesus was fully God gives his words, actions and promises great authority. This belief makes it easier to accept Jesus' miracles and his resurrection. According to Mark's gospel, at the baptism of Jesus 'a voice from Heaven said 'You are my Son'. At first, Jesus warned his disciples that they should not use this term for him, possibly because his opponents would have him arrested for blasphemy. However later at his trial Jesus accepted this title when he was asked about it in a direct question.

Jesus' crucifixion

Christians believe that Jesus was sentenced to death by Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, and his death was to be by crucifixion. Crucifixion was a form of execution favoured by the Romans. It consisted of the victim being laid down onto a large wooden cross, attached to it using nails, rope or sometimes both, and then having the cross lifted upright. Once the cross was upright, the victim waited for death, usually because they weren't able to breathe. All of this happened in public. Jesus was crucified in similar way to others.

Even though Christians believe that Jesus was the Son of God, it does not mean that he was in some way spared the pain and horrors of his crucifixion. Apart from being fully God he was also fully human. One of the Roman soldiers in charge of the crucifixion acknowledged that Jesus had been a righteous man who had nothing to deserve being crucified and that he was the Son of God'.

The impact of the crucifixion for Christians today

There are several ways in which crucifixion affects Christians today. It gives them confidence that if they accept Jesus' sacrifice, sin can no longer destroy their lives because God forgives those who faithfully ask for forgiveness. Christians believe that suffering is part of life, just as it was part of Jesus' life. The Son of God, having experienced suffering, understands what the sufferer is going through.

Jesus is buried

The Roman guards made sure that Jesus was dead. Then a man called Joseph of Arimathea asked for the body of Jesus so he could bury it. As there was insufficient time to bury Jesus properly, because the Sabbath day of rest and religious observance was due to start, Joseph of Arimathea laid the body of Jesus in a cave-like tomb and rolled a large stone across to block the entrance.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: his mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit'

'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us'

'Again the high priest asked him, 'Are you the Son of Blessed One?' 'I am', said Jesus'

'You may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name'

'When Jesus was baptised, a voice from Heaven said 'You are my Son'

'Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' When he said this, he breathed his last'

'Surely this man was the Son of God'

'Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Exam questions

- Explain two ways in which learning about the incarnation might influence Christians today. (4 marks)
- Explain two ways in which learning about the crucifixion might influence Christians today. (4 marks)
- Explain two Christian teachings about the incarnation. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'It is easy to believe the story of the Virgin Birth'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'No one is to blame for the death of Jesus'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'Christians should be prepared to follow Jesus even to death'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 12

Christianity: Beliefs and teachings – Jesus: the resurrection and ascension

Keywords	Definitions
Ascension	The event, 40 days after the resurrection, when Jesus returned to God, the Father in heaven.
Heaven	A state of eternal happiness in the presence of God. The place of eternal peace ruled over by God.
Resurrection	1. Rising from the dead. 2. Jesus rising from the dead on Easter day. An event recorded in all four gospels and the central belief of Christianity.

The resurrection of Jesus

According to the accounts of Jesus' burial in the New Testament, he was placed in a tomb late on Friday afternoon. How long he remained there is unclear because early on the Sunday morning, after Shabbat had ended, some of Jesus' female followers went to the tomb to anoint the body and prepare it for proper burial. Although details vary between the four versions of the story, they all make it quite clear that the body of Jesus was nowhere to be found, a fact that was reported to the disciples. Each story mentions the women meeting a man or two men, who may have been angels, who told them that Jesus had risen from the dead and they should pass the word on to his followers. The belief that Jesus rose from the dead is known as the resurrection and is a key teaching in the Christian faith. For the next few weeks Jesus appeared to several people, including Mary Magdalene and the disciples.

The ascension of Jesus

Just as the resurrection is a matter of faith and interpretation, so is the ascension. There are other explanations but if Jesus had the special power of God to rise from the dead, it is equally possible that he had the same power to leave the earth physically and return to heaven. Only Mark's and Luke's gospels finish off their story by telling their readers that after meeting his disciples and asking them to carry on his good work, Jesus left them for the last time.

The significance of the resurrection and ascension for Christians today

Christians believe the resurrection shows the power of good over evil. Christians believe that by accepting Jesus, they also can be resurrected in some way. Therefore, they have no need to fear death. Jesus' resurrection assures Christians that God will forgive their sins if they follow the teachings of Christianity. By doing so, they will become closer to God in this life and beyond. For Christians the ascension shows that Jesus is with God. It paves the way for the coming of the Holy Spirit to provide comfort and guidance. Without the resurrection there would be no Christian faith.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'When he had led them out of the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up to heaven'

'He has risen, just as he said'

Exam questions

- Explain two ways in which learning about the ascension might influence Christians today. (4 marks)
- Explain two Christian teachings about the resurrection. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two Christian teachings about the ascension. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'Belief in the resurrection is the most important Christian belief'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'The ascension is just a made-up story to show Jesus was special'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'Jesus' resurrection is a lie'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 13

Christianity: Beliefs and teachings- The afterlife, sin and salvation

Keywords	Definitions
Afterlife	What Christians believe follows life on earth.
Grace	A quality of God which God shows to humans by providing love and support which they do not need to earn.
Heaven	A state of eternal happiness in the presence of God. The place of eternal peace ruled over by God.
Original sin	An Augustine Christian doctrine that says that everyone is born with a built-in urge to do bad things and to disobey God; an important doctrine of Catholic Church.
Resurrection	1, rising from the dead, 2, Jesus rising from the dead on Easter day. An event recorded in all four gospels and the central belief of Christianity.
Salvation	Saving the soul, deliverance from sin and admission to heaven brought about by Jesus.
Sin	1 Any action or thought that separates humans from God; 2, behaviour which is against God's laws and wishes or against principles of morality.

The idea of afterlife.

For thousands of years, people have believed that death is not the end and that there is new life after death. Ancient civilizations such as the Egyptians invested huge amounts of money in preparing for death and burial long before and individual had died. Many of the grave treasures buried with important people were put there for the dead person to use in the afterlife. There is evidence that bodies were buried respectfully with flowers, weapons and valued possessions. Christians may differ in their practices but the dead are treated with a similar respect, and life after death in some form is expected.

Resurrection

Many Christians believe that resurrection is a reality. However, there are different beliefs amongst Christians about what happens when the person who has died is resurrected. Some believe that a person's soul is resurrected very soon after death occurs. Others believe that sometime in the future, when Jesus will return to judge, the dead will be raised. The Catholic Church and some Orthodox Churches are quite clear that this resurrection will be a bodily one and that people will once again receive their old body but transformed into a glorified state in which suffering will not exist.

The importance of belief in afterlife for Christians today.

- Belief in life after death affects how they live their lives in a positive way.
- They feel presence of God in their lives and they are confident of the love that God shows towards them.
- They believe that by trusting in God their lives after death will remain in the presence of God.

The origins and meaning of Sin

Sin is any action and thought that separates humans from God. Sinful thoughts, such as anger, can lead to sinful actions such as assault or murder. Some sins are also illegal (e.g. rape) but some are not (e.g. adultery). Christians believe that although nobody is perfect, it is impossible not to sin. That belief is reinforced by the idea of original sin. It suggests that human beings are born with an in-built tendency to do wrong. This idea was introduced in the story of Adam and Eve who sinned against God by breaking an instruction from God. The result was separation from God and death. Many Christians believe that serpent that tempts Eve to eat forbidden fruit to represent Satan (the Devil).

Salvation

In Christian belief, salvation means to be saved from sin, and its consequences, and be granted eternal life with God. The main ideas about how salvation can come about are: Salvation through good works (through obeying God's law) and Salvation through grace (through faith in Jesus)

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

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

'He has risen, just as he said'

'Whoever lives by believing in me will never die'

Exam questions

- Explain two ways in which beliefs about salvation might influence Christians today. (4 marks)
- Explain two Christian teachings about salvation. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two Christian teachings about sin. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'How we live now is more important than belief in an afterlife'. Evaluate the statement.(12 marks)
- 'Belief in life after death makes no sense'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 14

Christianity: Practices - Worship

Keywords	Definitions
Informal worship	A type of non-liturgical worship, sometimes 'spontaneous' and charismatic.
Liturgical worship	A church service that follows a set structure or ritual.
Non-liturgical worship	A service that does not follow a set of texts or ritual.
Private worship	When a believer praises or honour God on his or her own.

Worship

Worship is the way Christians show their deep love, reverence and respect for God. Christians can worship alone or with others, in special building like a church, in people homes or any appropriate place. Worship may involve prayer, reading of the Bible, meditation, singing hymns, preaching, sharing food, pilgrimage, celebrating festivals, or using religious art, music or drama. People can worship any time but Christians' weekly public worship takes place on Sunday, the day of resurrection of Jesus.

Why worship?

Worship allows Christians to praise and thank God for his blessing, to ask for forgiveness of sin or to seek help for themselves or others who may be suffering. Worship helps deepen a Christians' relationship with God and gives them comfort and strength to live more truly Christian life.

The importance of liturgical worship:

- The people receive forgiveness from God through action of priest
- The people receive the living presence of Jesus in Holy Communion
- Bible readings teach the people history and faith across the Old and New Testament.
- The ritual has been passed down through generations, giving the sense of tradition.

The importance of non-liturgical worship

- The style of worship follows that some early Christians who met to hear about Jesus.
- Faith is expressed in variety ways.
- Christians can share personal interpretation of the Bible.
- People can take active part in church without formal training.
- The service may have an emotional impact.

Different form of worship.

Liturgical worship – a service that follow the same pattern each time. In liturgical worship a priest leads the congregation in formal prayers that have set responses. Bible passages are read out, particularly from the gospels. The priest may perform symbolic actions which have specific meaning. An example of liturgical worship is the celebration of the Eucharist for Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican Churches.

Non-liturgical worship - Non-liturgical and informal worship services do not have to have a set order or ritual. In Nonconformist churches, such as Methodist, Baptist and United Reformed Churches, those planning the service may choose an order to suit a theme. Nonconformist churches place an emphasis on the word of God in the Bible. These churches may also celebrate Holy Communion regularly but the service is usually focused on Bible readings. Informal worship may depend on people's spontaneous prayers or sharing of thoughts. Quakers' worship is mainly silent, but they also share thoughts, read the Bible, and pray. Community or house churches meet to eat together and share their faith. Some informal worship is 'Charismatic' (led by the Spirit) and may involve dancing, clapping, calling out and speaking in tongues.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.'

Exam questions

- Explain two contrasting ways a Christian might worship. (4 marks)
- Explain two ways in which Christians think worship is important. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'Private worship is more important than group worship'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

Keywords	Definitions
Prayer	Communication with God, either silently or through words of praise, thanksgiving or confession, or request for God's help or guidance.
The Lord's Prayer	The prayer taught to disciples by Jesus; also known as 'Our Father'.
Set prayers	Prayers that have been written down and said more than once by more than one person, for example the Lord's Prayer.
Informal prayers	A prayer that is made up by individuals using their own words
Nonconformist	An English Protestants who does not conform to the doctrines or practices of established Church of England

What is prayer?

Prayer is communicating with God in silence or aloud, with others or alone, using set prayers or informal prayer. People may pray in humble position, kneeling down, sometimes with hands pressed together. In Orthodox services people stand to pray, Nonconformists often sit, Anglicans may kneel, and other Christians raise their hands to invite the Holy Spirit. Catholics may use rosary, while Orthodox Christians use icons to aid prayer.

The significance of prayer

Private worship, for example prayer, helps Christians to build up a discipline which gives them strength to cope in times of trouble. Through prayer and meditation Christians find peace and sense of communion with God in their everyday life as followers of Jesus.

The Lord's Prayer

When Jesus was asked how to pray he answered with the Lord's Prayer.

'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen'

The importance of the Lord's Prayer

For individuals, The Lord's Prayer gives a pattern as to how to pray. It combines giving praise to God and asking for one's needs. It reminds Christians that they must forgive in order to be forgiven. It is believed that prayer is only effective if the person's relationships with others are right.

In Christian communities the Lord's Prayer reminds that God is the Father of the whole community, not just of the individual.

The prayer is used in many different services. It can bring a sense of unity and spiritual purpose in society at important times, e.g. services after a tragic event.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'Bless us, O Lord and these your gifts, which we are about to receive from your bounty. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.' - Catholic Grace before meals

The Lord's Prayer

Exam questions

- Explain two contrasting ways a Christian might pray. (4 marks)
- Explain two ways in which Christians pray. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'God already knows our needs, so praying is not needed'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 16

Christianity: Practices – Sacraments: Baptism, Holy Communion

Keywords	Definitions
Sacraments	Rites and rituals through which the believer receive a special gift of grace; for Catholics, Anglicans and many protestants, sacraments are 'outward signs' of 'inward grace'.
Baptism	The ritual through which people become members of the Church. Baptism involves the use of water as the symbol of the washing away of sin.
Protestant	A branch of Christianity, originally Protestants were called by the name because they protested against some of the practices of the Catholic Church; there are many protestant denomination but they agree that the Bible is the only authority for Christians.
Believer's baptism	Initiation to the Church, by immersion in water of people old enough to understand the ceremony/rite and willing to live a Christian life.
Infant baptism	The ritual through which babies and young children become members of the Church, where promises are taken on their behalf by adults; the infant is freed from sin and introduced to the saving love of God and the support of the Christian community.
Holy Communion	A service of thanksgiving in which the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus are celebrated using bread and wine; also called Eucharist, Mass, the Lord's Supper, the Breaking of Bread, the Divine Liturgy.
Eucharist	From a Greek word meaning thanksgiving; service of Holy Communion.

What are sacraments?

Sacraments are holy rituals that outwardly express an inner, spiritual experience. Catholic and Orthodox churches accept seven sacraments which they believe to have been initiated by Jesus. They are: baptism, confirmation, Holy Communion, marriage, Holy Orders, reconciliation, and the anointing of the sick. Many Protestant churches see baptism and Holy Communion the most important.

How do sacraments help Christians?

Sacraments help Christians to strengthen their relationship with God by making him part of their life. They are also important to the Christian community because they affirm that all Christians are part of the Body of Christ, the Church, with all its responsibilities.

Baptism

In baptism the person is formally acknowledged as a child of God and receives God's saving grace. When John the Baptist baptised Jesus in the Jordan River, Jesus' baptism set an example for his followers. There are two main types of baptism: infant baptism, accepted in Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican churches, and believer's baptism accepted in Baptist and Pentecostal churches.

Holy Communion

Holy Communion is the sacrament that uses bread and wine to celebrate the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and his resurrection from death. Christians interpret the meaning of Holy Communion in different ways. For Catholics, Orthodox, and some Anglicans, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ. For other Christians Holy Communion is the celebration of Jesus' words and actions during the Last Supper. Many Christians see Holy Communion both as an act of fellowship and with other Christians and as communion with God.

The impact of Holy Communion

- It is the centre of their religious life.
- Through Holy Communion Christians receive God's grace by joining in the great sacrifice of Jesus.
- It brings strength, unity and commitment to the Christian faith.
- It helps Christians to experience personally sacrificial love of Jesus.
- It reminds Christians that they all are equal as Holy Communion is a shared meal where everybody is equal.
- It encourages Christians to work for justice and equality for all.
- Money collected during the service supports different charitable projects, e.g. help developing countries.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes'

Exam questions

- Explain two contrasting ways a Christian might perform Baptism. (4 marks)
- Explain two contrasting ways a Christian might celebrate the Eucharist (4 marks).
- Explain two ways in which Christians think baptism is important. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'No child should be baptised.' Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'The most important sacrament is that of baptism'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'The Eucharist is the most important part of Christian living'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

Keywords	Definitions
Pilgrimage	A journey by a believer to a holy site for religious reasons

What is pilgrimage?

The believers make physical journey but it is also a spiritual journey towards God. The pilgrimage gives many opportunities for prayer and worship, and is itself an act of worship as believers show their devotion to God. Pilgrims may visit the Holy Land or Jerusalem where they are the places where Jesus lived. They may visit shrines connected with famous saints. Some Christians prefer to go to remote places to pray and reflect on their lives.

The role and importance of pilgrimage

Christians may go on pilgrimage to:

- Grow closer to God and strengthen their faith,
- Express their sorrow for sins and be forgiven
- Reflect on their lives, particularly when facing crisis or a big decision,
- Pray for something special or thank God for a blessing,
- Seek a cure for an illness,
- Help other pilgrims who are disabled
- Experience a holy place
- Meet others and share their faith

Lourdes

Lourdes in south-west France is a place of pilgrimage dedicated to Mary, mother of Jesus. In 1858 a young girl named Bernadette had visions of Mary who asked her to dig for a spring of water, which was discovered to have healing property. Now thousands of pilgrims visit Lourdes to pray at the grotto where Mary appeared. It is claimed that 67 miracles and over 6000 other cures have taken place in Lourdes.

**Iona**

Iona is an island off the west coast of Scotland. In the 6th century AD, St Columba, an Irish missionary who brought Christianity to Scotland established a small community there. It is now the home of the ecumenical Iona community and a place of Christian pilgrimage dedicated to Virgin Mary. Iona is remote place so for many pilgrims it feels like a place where nature reveals God's infinite power and presence.

The Iona Community hold daily services in the abbey church, lead a seven-mile hike to the island's holy and historic spots, and conduct workshop on Christian themes. Pilgrims are asked to help out with daily chores and meals but there is plenty of time to read the Bible, for meditation, silence and reflection.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

"As I raised my head to look at the grotto, I saw a Lady dressed in white, wearing white dress, a blue girdle and a yellow rose on each foot, the same colour as the chain of her rosary: the beads of the rosary were white." Bernadette describing her first vision of the Virgin Mary

Exam questions

- Explain two contrasting Christian views about the importance of pilgrimage. (4 marks)
- Explain two ways in which Christians think pilgrimage is important. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'Pilgrimage is a waste of money'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 18

Christianity: Practices – Festivals

Keywords	Definitions
Festival	A day or period of celebration for religious reasons.
Christmas	The day commemorating the incarnation, the birth of Jesus (25 th December in most churches), also the season of 12 days ending with the Epiphany (when Christians remember the visit of the wise men)
Easter	The religious season celebrating Resurrection of Jesus from the dead; it starts on Easter Day and finishes with the feast of Pentecost.

Festivals

Festivals have an important role in helping Christians remember the major events in their religion and to plan their public worship. Many Christians celebrate the same cycle of festivals each year. In Christian calendar there are main seasons: Advent, Christmas and Epiphany then Lent, Easter and Pentecost. By living through the events of Jesus' life Christians remember the central teaching of their faith – that God gave his only Son to save them.

Christmas

Christmas commemorates the incarnation of Jesus. In UK Christmas is celebrated 25th of December. The celebration last 12 days ending with the feast of Epiphany. Trees and homes are decorated with light and nativity scenes. Light represent Jesus as the light coming into the world of darkness. Many churches have carol services with reading from the Bible showing the events of Jesus' birth and God's promise of savior. Children act out nativity plays and Midnight Mass takes place on Christmas Eve.



Easter

Easter is the most important Christian festival. It celebrates the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. During the week leading up to Easter (Holy Week) Christians remember the events that led to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Jesus was crucified on 'Good Friday' and laid in the tomb. On Easter Sunday (Easter Day) Christians celebrate the resurrection. Orthodox churches walk around the church at midnight on Saturday and enter the darkened church with lighted candles or lamps. Catholics and Anglicans also have a Saturday night vigil that begins in darkness includes the lightening of a large Paschal candle to symbolise the risen Christ and ends with Holy Communion.



Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

"Father, you make this holy night radiant with splendour of Jesus Christ our light. We welcome him as Lord, the true light of the world. Bring us to eternal joy in the kingdom of heaven, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Opening prayer of the Catholic Midnight Mass at Christmas

"Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death and upon those in the tombs bestowing life." Traditional hymn sung by Orthodox Christians at the Easter Divine Liturgy

Exam questions

- Explain two contrasting ways in which Christians celebrate the Eucharist. (4 marks)
- Explain two contrasting ways in which Christians celebrate Christmas. (4 marks)
- Explain two ways in which Christians celebrate Christmas. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two ways in which Christians celebrate Easter. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'Christmas is the most important Christian festival'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'Easter is the most important Christian festival.' Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'Christmas is only important as it shows Jesus as special'. Evaluate the statement. (12 Marks)
- 'Christmas is too commercialised'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 19

Christianity: Practices – The role of the Church in the local community

Keywords	Definitions
Church	1. The holy people of God, also called the Body of Christ, among whom Christ is present and active. 2. A building in which Christians worship
Agape	A word used in the Bible that describes selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love.

What is Church?

The word 'church' comes from the Greek word 'ekklesia' which is defined as an assembly or gathering of Christian people. The main meaning of 'church' is not that of building but that of people. Now, most people using the word 'church' think of the building where Christians worship, however first and foremost the Church is made up of the followers of Jesus in the local community.

What does the Church do?

The church as building provides a location where Christians can meet and worship. Some churches provide space for local communities, e.g. youth clubs. The Church has always been a major source of social services like schooling or medical care. In modern Britain the Church has been involved in projects that help local community, such as food banks and other local charities.

The Trussell Trust

This based on Christian principles charity was founded in 1997 by Carol and Paddy Henderson. The Trussell Trust food banks provide emergency food, help and support to people in crisis in the UK. Non-perishable food is donated to the food banks by churches, supermarkets, businesses and individuals and it is sorted by volunteers.

The Oasis Project

The Oasis Project of the Plymouth Methodist Mission Circuit is a community hub with an internet cafe, creative courses, a job club, training opportunities and a base for meetings. It also run a food bank. Around 200 people use the centre each week.

Street Pastors

Rev. Les Isaac started the interdenominational network of Street Pastors in Brixton, south London in 2003 with 18 volunteers. It was an initiative of a Christian charity, where Christian adult volunteers receive training in order to patrol the streets in urban areas. Initially the main was to challenge gang culture but now the focus widen to include responding to drunkenness, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime. Their work includes listening to people's problems, giving guidance and discouraging anti-social behaviour.

Parish Nursing

Parish Nursing Ministries UK is a Christian charity which support whole person healthcare through the local church. Their work includes diagnosing early signs of health problems, training and coordinating volunteers to help alleviate loneliness or provide support during times of crisis, and giving additional help to the NHS.

Why should Christians be involved in the local community?

The teaching of Jesus shows that Christians should not ignore the needs of society because showing agape love is part of the Christian way of life. Churches should respond practically to the needs of their local communities, for example insufficient care for the vulnerable.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'And God placed all things under his (Jesus) feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body.'

'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you look after me, I was in prison and you came to me'.

'Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action is dead.'

Exam questions

- Explain two contrasting ways in which Christian charities respond to need. (4 marks)
- Explain two contrasting ways Christians play a role in the local community. (4 marks)
- Explain two ways in which Christians support their communities. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two ways in which Christians put their faith in action. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'Christmas is the most important Christian festival'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'Easter is the most important Christian festival'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'All Christians should donate money to Christian Aid'. Evaluate the statement. (12 Marks)
- 'It is more important to help the poor than to worship in a church'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 20

Christianity: Practices – Mission, Evangelism and the Church

Keywords	Definitions
Mission	The vocation or calling of a religious organisation or individual to go out into the world and spread their faith
The Great Commission	Jesus' instruction to his followers that they should spread his teachings to the nations of the world.
Missionary	A person sent on a religious mission, especially to promote Christianity in a foreign country through preaching or charitable work.
Evangelism	Spreading the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness.
Convert	Someone who has decided to become committed to a religion and change his or her religious faith.
Reconciliation	A sacrament in the Catholic Church; also, the restoring of harmony after relationships have broken down.

The place of mission and evangelism

The Church not only provides a place to worship and learn about God, it also has a mission to spread the good news - that Jesus came into the world to be its saviour - to non-believers. The Great Commission was some of the last words of Jesus to his disciples and in this he instructed his followers to 'go and make disciples of all nations'. Jesus also said to two of his disciples, Simon Peter and Andrew, who were fishermen, 'Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people'. Christians believe that Jesus has given them the responsibility of telling others about the Christian faith. This telling is called evangelism and can take many forms: spreading the word to people they meet in everyday life, through organised events or preaching; others may feel called to go to other countries and become missionaries. The Alpha Course is a course run by churches worldwide. It is an introduction for those interested in Christianity. It is an opportunity to 'explore the meaning of life' through a series of talks and discussions. Millions of people have attended the Alpha Course, in homes, prisons, universities and other venues.

Church growth

It is difficult to know for certain how many Christians there are in the world, but estimates say that up to 1/3 of the world claim some sort of Christian faith. This group ranges from committed Christians, to those who rarely attend church and know little of the Christian faith, but declare themselves as Christian in a census. The Church is currently growing in South America, Africa and Asia, but this is not the case in the USA and Europe, or in the Middle East where Christians have suffered much persecution. Christ for all Nations (CfaN) is an organization that began in 1974 under the leadership of Reinhard Bonnke. Bonnke held evangelistic meetings across Africa and these meetings were sometimes attended by hundreds of thousands, or on one occasion over 1.5 million, people. CfaN has offices across the world and it claims that over 74 million people have become Christians at their meetings, with over 55 million of these in Africa. The church's mission of sharing Jesus does not end with people deciding to become Christians. The Great Commission as described by Jesus was to make disciples (followers/pupils), not just new believers. For this reason, Christian mission involves not only evangelism but also the training of new converts - people who have decided to become Christians - in the way of following Jesus. Each individual Christian can encourage and train other believers, whether by sharing their testimony (the story of what God has done in their life), inviting people to Christian meetings, prayer, advertising, using the media, fellowship meals, and social events.

Working for reconciliation

Reconciliation is a sacrament in the Catholic Church and is the restoring of harmony after relationships have broken down. The primary mission of the worldwide Church is to proclaim that Jesus came so that the relationship between God and people, broken by human sin, can be restored. Christians believe that they should not only be reconciled to God but should also be reconciled to one another. Therefore, the worldwide Church has a mission to restore people's relationship with God and with one another. There is much disharmony and hatred in the world resulting in violence and bloodshed. Even parts of the Church have fallen out and fought each other, for example Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. The worldwide Church has a duty to restore these broken relationships in the same way that Jesus has restored the relationship between human beings and God.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

The Great Commission: 'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations'

'Come and follow me and I will send you out to fish for people'

'While we were God's enemies we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son'

The Alpha Course - 'to explore the meaning of life'

Exam questions

- Explain two contrasting Christian views about the importance of reconciliation. (4 marks)
- Explain two contrasting ways Christians play a role in the global community. (4 marks)
- Explain two ways in which Christians think reconciliation is important. Refer to scripture and sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two ways in which Christians evangelise. Refer to scripture and sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'The world would be a far better place if everyone was willing to reconcile'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'Helping those in need abroad is the most important part of Christian mission'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'Christians should focus on their religion and their family, not interfere with other people's lives'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 21

Christianity: Practices – Christian persecution and Church's response to poverty

Keywords	Definitions
Persecution	Hostility and ill-treatment, especially because of race, or political or religious beliefs.
Poverty	The state of being extremely poor.
Absolute poverty	Poverty which involves severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information.
Relative poverty	Poverty which involves household income being below the average income for that country.
Charity	An organisation set up to provide help and raise money for those in need, or the voluntary giving of help, typically in the form of money, to those in need.

How do Christian churches respond to persecution?

80% of all acts of religious discrimination in the world today are directed at Christians. This persecution ranges from forcing Christians to pay an extra tax, not allowing them to have good jobs or build churches, to attacks on their homes, churches and family, and even murder. Many thousands of Christians are killed each year because of their faith. However, for Christians not all persecution has a totally negative effect. Persecution can help believers to strengthen and develop their faith. Jesus said 'Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you... because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven'. The second-century Christian Tertullian claimed that the Church grows because of persecution because people see the calm assurance and hope of life after death that Christians have. Regardless of whether they are faced with verbal or physical abuse, Christians are still encouraged to show love: Jesus said, 'If someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also'.

Supporting the persecuted

St Paul likens members of the Church to different parts of a body and says, 'If one part suffers, every part suffers with it'. For this reason, the Church campaigns on behalf of persecuted Christians and supports them where possible. An example of an organisation that supports persecuted Christians is the Barnabas Fund. The Barnabas Fund sends financial support to projects that help Christians who are suffering from discrimination, oppression and persecution because of their faith. One of their aims is to raise awareness of the plight of those who are persecuted. Another example is Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW). CSW is a Christian human rights organisation that campaigns for religious freedom for all.

The Church's response to world poverty

Many Christian charities follow the teaching and example of Jesus in working to relieve poverty. Jesus told a rich man to sell everything and give to the poor (Mark 10:21). In the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Jesus told of a rich man who ended up in hell having ignored the plight of a beggar. Jesus helped outcasts such as lepers, tax collectors, sinners and the mentally ill. 1 John 3:17 says, 'If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?'

Christian organisations that work to relieve poverty

The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) is the official aid agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. It works to bring hope and compassion to people of all faiths and none in poor communities in Africa, Asia, South America and the Middle East.

Christian Aid is the official relief and development agency for 41 church denominations in Britain and Ireland. They aim to encourage sustainable development, stop poverty and provide emergency relief in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, South America and the Caribbean.

Tearfund was started by churches in the UK in response to terrible famine in Nigeria. The Church is central to the vision and mission of Tearfund and its staff. Tearfund works closely with churches – nearly 100,000 worldwide – to help relieve poverty. Tearfund has seen tens of millions of people freed from poverty.

These organisations help to relieve poverty in many ways including: increasing access to clean water, providing education and healthcare, providing emergency food aid, shelter and water, and campaigning on behalf of the disadvantaged.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'Blessed are you when people insult and persecute you because of me'

'If someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also'

'If one part suffers, every part suffers with it'
The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus

'If anyone sees a brother or sister in need but does not help them, how can the love of God be in them?' The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats –

'When I was hungry you gave me something to eat'

Exam questions

- Explain two ways in which Christians respond to persecution. (4 marks)
- Explain two contrasting ways in which Christians respond to poverty. (4 marks)
- Explain two contrasting ways in which Christians charities respond to need. (4 marks)
- Explain two ways in which Christians respond to world poverty. Refer to scripture and sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two ways in which Christians respond to persecution. Refer to scripture and sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'It is more important to help the poor than to worship in a church'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'Charities should focus more on helping the poor in Britain'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'True faith is shown through helping the persecuted'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 22

Islam beliefs and teachings: Nature of God

Keywords	Definitions
Allah	The Arabic name for God.
Beneficent	Benevolent, all loving, all-good; a quality of God.
Fairness	The idea that God treats people fairly and impartially without favour or discrimination.
Immanent	The idea that God is present in and involved with life on earth and in the universe; a quality of God.
Impersonal	God is not a person with a personality but more of an idea or a force.
Islam	The name of the religion followed by Muslims; to surrender to the will of God; peace.
Justice (Adalat in Shi'a Islam)	The idea that God is just and fair and judges human actions; rewarding the good and punishing the bad.
Merciful	The quality of God that shows compassion or forgiveness to humans, even though he has the power to punish them.
Monotheistic	A religion that believes there is only one God.
Muslim	One who has submitted to the will of God and has accepted Islam.
Omnibenevolent	Defined as all-loving and referred to be a quality of God's nature.
Omnipotent	Defined as all-powerful and referred to be a quality of God's nature.
Supremacy	Supreme power or authority; a quality of God.
Tawhid	The Oneness and unity of God.
Transcendent	The idea that God is beyond this universe in time and space.

Introduction to Islam

Muslims believe that Islam was gradually revealed to humanity through various prophets over many centuries. It was first revealed to Adam, the first man. The final and most complete revelation was made to Muhammad* in the 7th century. Islam in Arabic means 'surrender', 'obedience' or 'submission'. Muslims believe Islam also means 'peace' as it is through obeying God's will that a person will achieve peace in themselves.

The oneness of God

Tawhid is one of the most important beliefs in both Sunni and Shi'a Islam. This makes Islam a monotheistic religion. The Arabic word for God is 'Allah' and this is expressed in Surah 112: 'Say 'He is God the One, God the eternal. He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him''. This fundamental belief is repeated daily in the Shahadah: 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad* is his prophet'. A Muslim's most important duty is to declare faith in the one God. Muslims also believe that God is an undivided entity whereby God is not made up of different persons.

The supremacy of God's will

For Muslims, God is the one and only creator and controller of everything; therefore, nothing takes place unless God allows it to happen. No matter whether something is good or bad, Muslims believe it is God's will, and that God must have had a good reason for letting it happen. For Sunni Muslims, the supremacy of God's will is an important article of faith. Muslims should accept whatever happens as the will of God, trusting in God's good intentions for people. God's will is supreme. Muslims often add the words 'God willing' (inshallah) after a promise to do something. This shows their belief that they are not in control of what happens: only God is in control. This leads some Muslims to believe that God control everything human beings do and that humans do not have free will.

Names of God

Every day Muslims hear and say 'Allahu Akbar' meaning 'God is the greatest'. Muslims believe that God is so great he is beyond human understanding, and greater than anything humans can imagine. Muslims believe God has revealed himself to people through Muhammad* and the holy books. There are 99 names of God in the Qur'an and Hadith (Muhammad* sayings), which can help Muslims to understand something of God's nature. Each name described a quality that God has revealed about himself. Many Muslims memorise the names of God and recite them when they are praying privately. Each name helps them to feel God's presence. Some names show God's power, might and authority; others show God's love and care for human beings.

Qualities of God

Muslims believe that God is immanent, within all things and close to his people. But God is also transcendent, beyond all things. Muslims believe that God can be both because God is creator of the universe therefore outside and not limited by the physical world, yet he is also within all things and compassionate towards people. Muslims also believe that God is omnipotent (all-powerful) as God is the creator, sustainer and owner of all things. He is also all-knowing, aware of everything including human actions and thoughts. Muslims also believe that God is beneficent, the source of all goodness and his generosity is seen in his gift to humans of life on earth.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad* is his prophet'

'Say 'He is God the One, God the eternal. He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him''

'You who believe, obey God and the Messenger'

'Misfortunes can only happen with God's permission'

'The Most Excellent Names belong to God: use them to call on Him'

'This is God, your Lord, there is no God but Him, the Creator of all things so worship Him: He is in charge of everything No vision can take Him in, but He takes in all vision, He is the All Subtle, the All Aware'

Exam questions

- Explain two ways in which belief in the Tawhid influences Muslims today. (4 marks)
- Explain two ways in which a belief in the Supremacy of God's will influences Muslims today. (4 marks)
- Explain two ways in which belief that God is merciful influences Muslims today. (4 marks)
- Explain two Islamic teachings about justice. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two Islamic teachings about the nature of God. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'God cannot be both immanent and transcendent'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)
- 'The best way to understand God is to describe God as Beneficent'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 23

Islam: Beliefs and teachings- Sunni and Shia

Keywords	Definitions
Caliph	The chief Muslim civil and religious ruler, regarded as the successor of Muhammad*.
Imam	The person who leads prayers in a mosque.
Imamate	Is a word derived from imam and meaning "leadership".
Qur'an	The holy book revealed to Muhammad* by the angel Jibril; god's final revelation to humankind.
Sect	A group of people with different religious beliefs from those of a larger group to which they belong.
Shi'a (Shi'i)	A Muslim who believe in the Imamate, the successorship of Ali.
Six articles of faith	The six main beliefs held by Sunni Muslims.
Sunnah	The teachings and deeds of Muhammad*.
Sunni	Muslims who believe in the successorship to Muhammad of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali.
Usul ad-Din	Principles and beliefs held by Shia Muslims.

Sunni Islam

When Muhammad* died, the majority of Muslims thought that only the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Muhammad's* teachings and actions) had the authority to guide the beliefs and behaviour of Muslims. They elected Abu Bakr to be their leader (Caliph), to act on behalf of God and Muhammad to make sure people followed God's laws.

The Caliphs did not make the laws; they enforced them once the community had considered the views of scholars who studied the Qur'an and the Sunnah. This group of Muslims came to be called 'Sunni', meaning followers of the Sunnah.

Shi'a Islam

Another group of Muslims believed that Muhammad* had named his cousin Ali as his successor. Ali was one of the earliest converts to Islam and was married to Muhammad's* daughter, Fatima. Ali and his supporters thought that the true leader (called Imam) had to be a descendent of Muhammad* and chosen by God. Each Imam would identify the next one before he died.

Ali's claims to be leader were ignored by many Muslims. Over time a split developed between the followers of Ali's party, known as the Shi'a, and the Sunni Muslims. Today, the Shi'a have their own interpretation of Islamic laws and only accept sayings of Muhammad* that have been passed down through Ali or his followers.

Shi'a and Sunni Islam hold many elements in common such as belief in God, the prophethood of Muhammad*, the guidance of the Qur'an and following the Sunnah. They only differ in interpretations of certain aspects of belief and law, and in the emphasis they put on expressing key beliefs.

The six articles of faith

Sunni Muslims hold these six main beliefs:

1. There is only one God. 'Allah' combines the two Arabic words 'al' (the) and 'ilah' (God).
2. Angels communicate the message of God to humans
3. The Qur'an (meaning 'recitation') is the most important writing and the highest authority in Islam.
4. Muhammad*, whose name means 'highly praised', is the most important prophet of God.
5. The Day of Judgment is when God will judge all humanity and send them to paradise or hell.
6. The supremacy of God's will means that God already knows but also makes happen everything that occurs in the world and in human lives.

The five roots of Usul ad-Din in Shi'a Islam

Usul ad Din means the 'principles (or roots) of religion'. The roots of a tree keep it alive and firmly attached to the source of its life. For Shi'a Muslims, these five principles keep them firmly rooted in God, the source of life.

1. Tawhid means that God is One; God is not made up of different persons.
2. Prophethood means accepting that Muhammad* is God's last prophet, and that God's revelations through him are true.
3. God is just and wise, cannot do wrong, and holds humans accountable for their actions.
4. The Imamate means accepting that the twelve Imams are the leaders of Islam and guard the truth of the religion without error.
5. Shi'a Muslims believe that after death they will be resurrected to be judged by God.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

"...Righteous is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Scriptures and the Prophets..."

'You who believe, obey Allah and the Messenger.'

'Every community is sent a messenger, and when their messenger comes, they will be judged justly; they will not be wronged.'

Exam questions

- Explain two ways in which prophethood influences Muslims today. (4 marks)
- Explain two Muslim teachings about the Imamate in Shi'a Islam. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two differences between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'Tawhid, as both present in the six articles of faith and Usul ad-Din, is the most important belief held in Islam'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)
- 'Belief in the Imamate is the main difference between Sunni and Shi'a Islam'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 24

Islam: Beliefs and teachings- Angels, predestination and life after death

Keywords	Definitions
Akhirah	Everlasting life after death.
Angels	Spiritual beings believed to act as messengers of God
Day of judgement	A time when the world will end and every soul will be judged by God, and either rewarded or punished.
Heaven	The state of eternal happiness in the presence of God: paradise.
Hell	The state of total separation from God.
Jibril	The Arabic name for Gabriel, the archangel who brought God's messenger to the prophets, particularly to Muhammad*.
Judge	A term often given to God by Muslims to show that he will either reward or punish people for their actions.
Judgment	The ability to make considered decisions or come to sensible conclusions.
Mika'il (Michael)	The Arabic name for Michael, the archangel of mercy who rewards good deeds and provides nourishment to people.
Qur'an	The Islamic holy book.
Predestination	The idea that God knows or determines everything that will happen in the universe.
Resurrection	Rising from the dead or returning to life.

What are angels?

Muslims believe that angels bring the word of God to the prophets or messengers of God. For Sunni Muslims the belief in angels is one of the six articles of faith. Angels are part of the unseen world. They are supernatural beings created by God from light.

What is the role of angels?

Muslims believe that angels are able to receive God's words directly from him and pass them on to the prophets of God. They are able to do this as they are pure and sinless. Angels also do not have freewill so they cannot do anything to displease God, instead they ceaselessly praise and worship him. Muslims believe that angels are involved in the lives of human beings from soon after conception until the moment of death. Some are guardian angels who take care of each person throughout their lives, whilst others are responsible for recording in a 'book of deeds' everything each person thinks, says or does. The book will be presented as evidence before God on the Day of Judgment. Tradition suggests the angel Israfil will blow a trumpet to announce the Day of Judgment. The angel of death and his helpers take people's souls to God. Angels also escort people into paradise and guard the gates of hell. Muslims believe that God has given the angels the power to take on human form when appearing to people to whom he wishes to give a message. For example, angels appeared to Ibrahim (Abraham) and to Maryam (Mary) as men.

Jibril

Jibril (Gabriel) is the angel most familiar to Christians and Jews as well as to Muslims. He is an archangel (a special angel with higher status than others) who is a trusted messenger of God. Jibril was the angel who relayed the Qur'an to Muhammad* from God. Muslims believe that Jibril first appeared to Muhammad* when the prophet was a child. In one story, Jibril, together with Mika'il, came to Muhammad* during the night and purified his heart so that later in life Muhammad* would be able to receive God's revelation. When Muhammad* was 40 years old, Jibril returned to him in a blaze of light when he was meditating at Mount Hira. Jibril told Muhammad* what God wanted him to do and inspired him with the revelations of the Qur'an. God continued to guide Muhammad* throughout his entire life, often communicating through Jibril.

Mika'il

Mika'il (Michael) is another high-ranking archangel who is also known to Christians and Jews. Muslims believe that Mika'il is an angel of mercy and God has assigned Mika'il to reward righteous people for the good they do during their lives on earth. God has also given Mika'il responsibility for sending rain, thunder and lightning to earth. The Qur'an mentions Mika'il when it warns that anyone who is an enemy of God's angels, Jibril and Mika'il, is also an enemy of God. Muslims believe that Jibril and Mika'il have brought nourishment to human beings: Jibril brought the spiritual nourishment of God's words in the Qur'an, and Mika'il brings nourishment for earth and human life through the rain.

Predestination

Some Sunni Muslims believe that God has already determined everything that will happen in the universe in a 'book of decrees'. God creates all things, including the actions of his creatures, so they must act according to his will. Sunni Muslims believe that because God's will is so powerful, he can determine everything that is going to happen. This places greater emphasis on God's omniscience and less emphasis on human freedom, but it does not mean that people have no choice about how they behave.

The day of judgement and resurrection

Muslims believe that a day will come when God's purpose for the universe has been fulfilled. Only God knows when that will be. On this day the angel Israfil will blow a trumpet to announce that the world will be destroyed and the present world will be totally transformed into new world (Akhirah) and then the angel Israfil will blow the trumpet again. Everyone who has ever lived will be raised from the dead (resurrection) and judged by God.

Heaven and hell

Heaven is described as gardens of happiness and is a reward for faith and good deeds. Whereas hell is described as a place of fire and great torment as it is a place of punishment for those who reject God and do evil.

The importance of belief in life after death

Belief in life after death is important because it encourages human responsibility and accountability: the idea that people must be responsible for their own actions as they will be held accountable for them by God. Belief in life after death urges people to avoid sin and do the right thing. It also satisfies a deep human need for justice. God's judgment means that one day they will be held accountable and punished for their wrongdoing. For those good people who have suffered in life, there is something better to look forward to.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'Praise be to God, Creator of the heavens and earth, who made angels messengers with two, three, four (pairs of) wings'

'Each person has angels before him and behind, watching over him by God's command'

'The record of their deeds will be laid open and you will see the guilty, dismayed at what they contain, saying 'Woe to us! What a record this is! It does not leave an deed, small or large, unaccounted for!' They will find everything they ever did laid in front of them: your Lord will not be unjust to anyone'

'Only what God has decreed will happen to us'
'God does not change the condition of a people (for the worse) unless they change what is in themselves'

'Garments of fire will be tailored for those who disbelieve'

'They will dwell amid scorching wind and scalding water in the shadow of black smoke, neither cool nor refreshing'

Exam questions

- Explain how belief in Akhirah might influence a Muslim today. (4 marks)
- Explain two Islamic teachings about angels. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two of the six articles of faith. Refer to scripture in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two Islamic beliefs about predestination. Refer to scripture in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'Belief in angels is the most important article of faith for Sunni Muslims'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)
- 'The five roots of Usul ad-Din for Shi'a Muslims should include belief in angels'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'Predestination means that humans have no freedom'. Evaluate the statement.
- 'There is no life after death, there is no point in living a good life'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 25

Islam: Beliefs and teachings- Prophets

Keywords	Definitions
Admiration	Respect and warm approval.
Caliph	A person considered to be a political and religious successor to the prophet Muhammad*, and the leader of the Sunni Muslim community.
Hajj	The annual pilgrimage to Makkah that every Muslim should try to make at least once in their life.
Iblis (Satan)	A spiritual being, created from fire, who was thrown out of paradise for refusing to bow to Adam.
Idol	An image or representation of a god used as an object of worship.
Id-ul-Adha	A Muslim festival that celebrates the prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son for God.
Imam	1. A person who leads communal prayer. 2. (Imam) in Shi'a Islam, the title given to Ali and his successors.
Imamate	The divine appointment of the Imams.
Ka'aba	The black cube-shaped building in the centre of the Grand Mosque in Makkah; the holiest place in Islam.
Prophethood	When God makes someone a prophet to communicate his message to people.
Prophet	A person who proclaims the message of God.
Risalah	The belief that prophets are an important channel of communication between God and humans.

Prophethood

Muslims believe that God has chosen many prophets to bring the message of Islam to people. This belief in the prophets and their importance is known as Risalah. Prophethood- when someone is made a prophet, is a gift given by God to help humankind understand his message. Prophets are important for Muslims because they provide a method of communication between God and human beings. For Muslims to know how to live in the way God desires, it was necessary for instructions to be conveyed to people through the prophets. Many Muslims believe there have been around 14,000 prophets, of which 25 are named in the Qur'an. The most important prophets are called messengers or apostles.

Adam
Muslims believe that Adam was the first man on Earth and the first prophet of Islam. Created by God from the dust of the ground, he is regarded as the father of human race and so is treated with reverence and great respect. Adam had the responsibility of naming all things. God then asked Adam to tell the angels the names of some objects that they did not know but he did. God told the angels to bow down to Adam out of respect and admiration for his knowledge but Iblis refused. His defiance resulted in him being thrown out of paradise and he vowed to tempt humans to sin against God. So Adam was not lonely, God created Hawwa (Eve) and they lived in the Garden of Bliss. Iblis deceived them into eating the fruit from the tree and they were thrown out of the garden. Their actions brought sin into the world. All humans would now be judged on the Day of Judgment. Adam is important to Muslims because God gave him understanding and Adam in turn passed on his knowledge to the rest of human race through his descendants.

Ibrahim

Ibrahim is the Arabic name of the prophet Abraham and Muslims believe that he fulfilled all the tests and commands given to him by God, and so was promised to be the father of all nations. They believe that the prophet Muhammad* was descended from Ibrahim through his first son, Ishmael. The Qur'an presents Ibrahim as a role model because of his obedience to God his kindness and compassion, and his refusal to worship idols. The Ka'aba is considered to be the house of God and Muslims believe that it was built by Adam, destroyed in the great flood in the time of Noah, and so was rebuilt by Ibrahim and his son Ishmael. Many Muslims believe that Ibrahim had a dream in which God asked him to sacrifice his son to him. God did not take the boy although Ibrahim was willing to sacrifice him, showing his willingness to be obedient and that he was a man of faith. During the festival of Id-ul-Adha each year, Muslims slaughter an animal to remember Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son. Ibrahim is important in Islam because he was a man of faith who denounced the worship of idols, rebuilt the Ka'aba and gave the message that there is only one God.

Muhammad*

Muslims believe that Muhammad* received the final revelation of Islam from God. Therefore, he is the last and greatest prophet. Muhammad* was born in 570CE in Makkah, in present day Saudi Arabia. Muhammad* was an orphan at an early age and brought up by his uncle Abu Talib. He became a merchant and married his employer Khadijah, who was a wealthy widow. Muhammad* liked to meditate and pray and on Mount Hira in 610CE he had an experience that changed his life. Angel Jibril appeared to him with a message from God. Three years after his revelation, Muhammad* began preaching the words he had received and he spent the remainder of his life proclaiming that God is one. The people of Makkah challenged him and refused to give up cheating, drinking alcohol or idol worship. He fled persecution with his followers to Madinah in 622CE. This is called Hijrah (departure) and marks the beginning of the Ummah (the world wide family of Islam). In Madinah, Muhammad* united the tribes and gathered an army of 10,000 Muslim converts. He marched on Makkah and conquered the city in the name of God. The 360 idols at the Ka'aba were destroyed and Muhammad* set about introducing Muslim law. Muhammad* teachings and practices (Sunnah), which are found in the Hadith and Sira texts are still used as sources of Islamic law (Shariah) Muhammad* won many battles but in 632CE he returned to Madinah, became ill and died.

Imamate

When Muhammad* died it wasn't clear who should succeed him. Muslims split into two groups, Sunni and Shi'a. Sunnis elected Abu Bakr as their first Caliph. Shi'a believe that Muhammad* named his cousin and son-in-law, Ali ibn Abi Talib, as his successor- so Ali became the Shi'as' first Imam. For Shi'as, it was important that Ali took control because they believed the prophet had appointed him by divine instruction and that leadership should follow the family line. When Ali died, his son became the Imam. Each Imam that followed was the son of the previous Imam (with the exception of Husayn ibn Ali, which was the brother of Hasan ibn Ali. The Twelver branch of Shi'a Islam believe that there have been twelve Imams in total and the last of the Imams is Muhammad* al Mahdi, who they believe has been kept alive by God and hidden somewhere on earth and who will return with Jesus to bring justice and equality.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'Every community is sent a messenger'

'One of his signs is that He created you from dust'

'He taught Adam all the names of things'

'Who could be better in religion than those who direct themselves wholly to God do good and follow the religion of Abraham, who was true in faith? God took Abraham as a friend'

'Muhammad* is not the father of any one of you men; he is God's messenger and the seal of the prophets: God knows everything'

Exam questions

- Explain two ways in which belief the Prophethood influences Muslims today. (4 marks)
- Explain the importance of Muhammad* for Muslims today. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two Islamic teachings about the Islamic Prophets. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'Adam is the most important prophet for Muslims today'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 26

Islam: Beliefs and teachings- Holy books

Keywords	Definitions
Bible	The name of the Christian holy book.
Gospel (injl)	A holy book revealed by God to Jesus.
Holy book	A sacred and special book for a particular religion.
Psalms (Zabur)	A holy book revealed by God to David.
Qur'an	The Islamic holy book.
Scrolls of Abraham	A holy book revealed by God to Abraham.
Torah (Tawrut)	The five books revealed by God to Moses.

The Qur'an

The Qur'an is the holy book for Muslims, revealed in stages to the Prophet Muhammad* over 23 years. Qur'anic revelations are regarded by Muslims as the sacred word of God, intended to correct any errors in previous holy books such as the Old and New Testaments. It contains the foundation of every believer's faith, and is the most sacred text of Islam. It is believed to be infallible source of authority for all matters of doctrine, practice and law.

The first revelation of the Qur'an happened in 611 CE, when Prophet Muhammad* was meditating in a cave and the Angel Jibril appeared to him. Angel Jibril told Muhammad* to read but Muhammad* could not read but three times Jibril ordered him to 'recite', so Muhammad* learnt the Qur'an off by heart and would recite it.

Muhammad* followers memorised the Qur'an and wrote it down. After Muhammad* died, his successor Abu Bakr commissioned an official copy to be compiled by Zayd ibn Thabit, one of Muhammad*'s companions. Soon the converts of different nationalities started to read and write the Qur'an and some parts were in danger of being misread or miswritten.

So, Uthman, the third Caliph, commissioned a team of Muslim scholars to oversee the compilation of one official written version to be followed everywhere. They completed their work around 650 CE.

Today Muslim children are encouraged to learn Arabic so they can read the Qur'an in its original language. Qur'anic recitation is highly valued as Muslims believe that it brings blessings. Those who are able to recite the whole Qur'an from memory are given the title 'hafiz'.

There are 114 chapters in the Qur'an, which is written in Arabic. All the chapters except one begin with the sentence *Bismillahir rahmanir raheem*, 'In the name of Allah the most merciful and the most kind'. This is the thought with which Muslims should start every action. The arrangement of surahs does not correspond to the chronological order in which they were revealed.

The Torah (Tawrut)

Muslims believe there are other holy books that have been revealed by God. These include the Torah (revealed to Moses), the Psalms (revealed to David), and the Gospel (revealed to Jesus). Some Muslims think that these books have been lost, while others believe they can be found in the Christian Bible (although the original text has been corrupted or distorted so does not have the same authority as the Qur'an).

Muslims believe that the Torah was given to Moses (Musa). It is mentioned 18 times in the Qur'an. Some Muslims think the Torah is essentially the first five books in the Bible but over time additions and subtractions have been made in the original text.

Psalms (Zabur)

The Psalm's were revealed to David and are mentioned on three occasions in the Qur'an. Many Muslims believe these are similar to the Psalms in the Bible.

The Gospel (Injl)

The Gospel is mentioned in the Qur'an and it is believed that this refers to a book divinely revealed to Jesus (Isa). It is thought that this Gospel has been lost but that some of its message is still found in the Bible. The scrolls of Abraham (Ibrahim) are also referred to in the Qur'an, but these have been lost and so no longer exist. They are thought to have been one of the earliest scriptures of Islam, which were revealed to Ibrahim.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'Read! In the name of the Lord who created. Created man from a clot. Read: And your Lord is the Most Generous'

'This is the Scripture in which there is no doubt, containing guidance for those who are mindful of God'

'This is truly a glorious Qur'an (written) on a preserved Tablet'

'We sent Jesus, son of Mary, in their footsteps, to confirm the Torah that had been sent before him: We have him the Gospel with guidance, light and confirmation of the Torah already revealed a guide and lesson for those who take heed of God'

Exam questions

- Explain two ways in which belief in the Qur'an influences Muslims today. (4 marks)
- Explain two Islamic teachings about the Qur'an. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'The Qur'an is the most important holy book for Muslims today'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)
- 'For Muslims, following the example of Muhammad* is more important than following the teachings of the Qur'an'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 27

Islam: Practices-Differences held between Sunni and Shi'a

Keywords	Definitions
Amr-bil-Maruf	Encouraging people to do what is good.
Hajj	Pilgrimage to Makkah.
Jihad	The struggle to maintain faith and defend Islam.
Khums	20% tax on income once all expenses have been deducted. Half goes to charity and half goes to Shi'a religious leaders.
Nahi Anil Munkar	Discouraging people from doing what is wrong.
Salah	Prayer.
Sawm	Fasting.
Shahadah	The declaration of faith.
Shi'a	A Muslim who believe in the Imamate, the successorship of Ali.
Sunni	Muslims who believe in the successorship to Muhammad of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali.
Tabarra	Disassociating from the enemies of God.
Tawallah	To be loving towards the friends of God, including Muhammad* and the Imams.
The Five Pillars	The five most important duties for all Muslims: to believe, to pray, to give to charity, to fast and to go on pilgrimage.
The Ten Obligatory acts	Ten important duties for Shi'a Muslims which include the Five Pillars.
Zakah	Charitable giving.

The Five Pillars

The Five Pillars are central to Muslim practices and they have a great impact on daily life. Muslims believe that they support main principles and beliefs in Islam, just as pillars are used to support a building. They can be seen as the key to living a perfect Muslim life, and they help to give Muslims an identity as one community who share a faith, and enable them to show their obedience and dedication to God. The Five Pillars are:

1. Shahadah - The declaration of faith
2. Salah - Prayer
3. Zakah - Charitable giving.
4. Sawm - Fasting.
5. Hajj - Pilgrimage.

The Ten Obligatory Acts in Shi'a Islam

For Muslims who follow Twelver Shi'a Islam, there are ten duties called the Ten Obligatory Acts (also known as the Ancillaries of the Faith). These include the Five Pillars except Shahadah (which is covered by some of the additional acts). They are:

1. Salah- Prayer.
2. Sawm- Fasting.
3. Zakah- Charitable giving.
4. Khums-20% tax on income once all expenses have been deducted. Half goes to charity and half goes to Shi'a religious leaders.
5. Hajj- Pilgrimage.
6. Jihad- The struggle to maintain faith and defend Islam. For many Muslims this means the struggle to live by their faith as well as possible, for example by obeying the Five Pillars, contributing to the community or doing voluntary work.
7. Amr-bil-Maruf- Encouraging people to do what is good.
8. Nahi Anil Munkar- Discouraging people from doing what is wrong.
9. Tawallah- To be loving towards the friends of God, including Muhammad* and the Imams.
10. Tabarra- Disassociating from the enemies of God.

Shahadah

The basic belief of Islam expressed in the Shahadah. The Arabic translates to English as 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad* is the Prophet of Allah'. Sincerely reciting this statement in front of Muslim witnesses is the only requirement for joining the Muslim community. It is recited many times during a lifetime. It is said when a baby is born, so is the first thing they hear is this basic belief of the faith they are born into. It is also included in daily prayers. If possible it is also the last words of a Muslim before they die. Shahadah is the first of the Five Pillars, but it provides the foundation for the other four.

Many Shi'a Muslims add an extra phrase to the Shahadah: 'And Ali is the friend of God'. This demonstrates their belief that Ali, Muhammad*'s cousin and son in law, was the true successor of Muhammad* and that only he and his descendants know the true meaning of the revelation given to Muhammad*.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad* is the Prophet of Allah' -Sunni

'There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad* is the Prophet of Allah and Ali is the friend of God' -Shi'a

Arabic: 'La ilaha illa Allah wa-Muhammad* rasul Allah'



Exam questions

- Explain two ways in which the five pillars influence Sunni Muslims today. (4 marks)
- Explain two ways in which the Ten Obligatory Acts influence Shi'a Muslims today. (4 marks)
- Explain how the Ten Obligatory Acts differ from Five Pillars. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Islamic belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two Muslim teachings about giving alms (Zakah). Refer to scriptures or sacred writings in your answer. (5marks)
- Explain two Islamic teachings about Shahadah. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'The Shahadah is the most important pillar of Islam'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 28

Islam: Practices-Salah

Keywords	Definitions
Asr	Afternoon prayer.
Fajr	Just before sunrise prayer.
Isha	Night prayer.
Jummah prayer	A weekly communal prayer performed after midday on Friday, which includes a sermon.
Maghrib	Just after sunset prayer.
Mihrab	A niche in a wall that indicates the direction of Makkah.
Mosque	Islamic place of worship.
Prayer	A solemn request for help or expression of thanks addressed to God.
Prostration	Kneeling with the forehead, nose, hands, knees and toes touching the floor in submission to God.
Qiblah wall	The wall in a mosque that contains the mihrab.
Rak'ah	A sequence of movements in ritual prayer.
Recitation	Repeating a passage of text from memory.
Salah	Prayer with and in worship of God, performed under conditions set by the prophet Muhammad*.
Wudu	Ritual washing before prayer.
Zuhr	Just after midday prayer.

The times of prayer

To observe the second pillar of Islam (salah), Sunni Muslims are required to pray at five set times during the day. The times are worked out from the times of sunrise and sunset, so they change slightly each day. Muslims refer to prayer timetables based on where they are in the world so they know that the times are right.

The times of the five prayers are:

Fajr	Just before sunrise prayer.
Zuhr	Just after midday.
Asr	Afternoon prayer.
Maghrib	Just after sunset prayer.
Isha	Night prayer.

Shi'a Muslims combine the midday and afternoon prayers, and the sunset and night prayers, so they pray three times a day.

The direction of prayer

Whilst praying, Muslims face the holy city of Makkah. This means that all Muslims are physically and mentally focusing on one place associated with God, in the same way that all Muslims should focus every part of their lives on God. If the prayers are taking place in a mosque, this is easy to achieve. All mosques have a mihrab. This is a semi-circular niche built into the qiblah wall, which shows the exact direction of Makkah from the mosque. Muslims face this in order to pray. If a prayer is taking place outside a mosque, a special compass is used to show the direction of Makkah. This is sometimes part of the mat that Muslims kneel on when they pray.

How Muslims prepare for prayer

It is important Muslims are spiritually clean before they pray. This is achieved by ritual washing (or ablution) called wudu. Muslims follow detailed instructions in order to make sure that they do this properly. These are outlined in the Qur'an. Mosques have two special rooms set aside for washing, one for men and one for women. Washing is done under running water rather than using a basin. If washing is allowed using sand or dust. This illustrates that it is not physical cleanliness that is required but spiritual cleanliness, and wudu is a form of spiritual preparation or purification to allow Muslims to focus fully on God in their prayers.



Prayer inside a mosque

Many mosques have special carpets that look like separate rows of prayer mats, facing the mihrab. This gives each person a suitable space to carry out their prayer properly. The prayers are led by an Imam who is positioned in front of the congregation but also facing the mihrab. Men and women pray at the same time but in separate spaces; they are either separated by a partition or curtain or they pray in separate rooms. It is normal for the voice of the imam in the men's prayer room to be broadcast in the women's prayer room at the same time, so he can lead their prayers along with the men's.

The rak'ah

The daily prayers are made up of a number of rak'ah. This is a set sequence of actions and recitations. For example, the morning prayer is made up of two rak'ah and the night prayer is made up of four rak'ah. The rak'ah changes slightly depending on which prayer it is used in and whereabouts it occurs in the overall sequences, but it includes the following basic actions (all the recitations are said in Arabic): While standing, Muslims recite the first chapter from the Qur'an. While bowing, Muslims say in Arabic 'Glory be to my Lord who is the very greatest' three times. The bowing position shows that believe God to be great. Returning to an upright position they make a recitation praising God. They then kneel with their forehead, nose, hands, knees and toes touching the floor. This is called prostration and shows complete obedience to God. They recite 'How perfect is my Lord the most high'. Muslims then sit while reciting 'God is the greatest' and after pausing for a few seconds prostrate themselves once more while repeating 'God is the greatest'.

The significance of prayer

Prayer has its own significance as one of the Five Pillars. However, for Muslims it is more than that-it is what God has commanded them to do. Prayer creates a greater awareness of God, which in turn motivate them to do God's will. Prayer also unites Muslims worldwide because they all pray in the same way. A Muslim can go into any mosque anywhere in the world and be able to participate with fellow Muslims. In addition, reciting from the Qur'an during the prayers reminds Muslims of its importance. The actions of bowing and prostrating remind them, that God is greater and more important than they are.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'You who believe, when you are about to pray, wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, wipe your heads, wash your feet up to the ankles and, if required, wash your whole body'

'There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad* is the Prophet of Allah' –Sunni

'There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad* is the Prophet of Allah and Ali is the friend of God' –Shi'a

'So woe to those who pray but are heedless of their prayer'

'Your Lord says 'Call on Me and I will answer you' 'Believers! When the call to prayer is made on the day of congregation, hurry towards the reminder of God and leave off your trading'

Exam questions

- Explain two ways in which belief in Salah influences Muslims today. (4 marks)
- Explain two reasons why Muslims pray. (4 marks)
- Explain two ways in which a belief in the importance of prayer influences Muslims today. (4 marks)
- Explain two Islamic teachings about Salah. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'Salah does not fit in with British society so Muslims do not have to pray 5 times a day'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)
- 'Salah is the most important pillar in Islam'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)
- 'Muslims should always go to mosque to pray'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 29

Islam: Practices-Sawm

Keywords	Definitions
Ramadan	The ninth month of the Muslim calendar during which Muslims have to fast from dusk to sunset.
Fasting	Not eating or drinking for a certain length of time, usually for a religious reason.
The Night of Power	The night when the first revelation of the Qur'an was made to Muhammad* and the festival that marks the start of God's revelation to Muhammad*.
Charity	An organisation set up to provide help and raise money for those in need, or the voluntary giving of help, typically in the form of money, to those in need.

Ramadan

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and for Muslims the most important. They believe that it was during Ramadan that the Qur'an started to be revealed to Muhammad*. Many Muslims will recite the whole of the Qur'an, in daily sections, over the 30 days of Ramadan. The daily readings from the Qur'an help Muslims to remember its teachings and its importance in their lives. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims focus on fasting (sawm), charity and pleasing God.

Fasting

Ramadan is known as the month of fasting because Muslims fast during daylight hours for the whole month, going without food or drink. They get up every day before sunrise in order to eat and drink enough to keep them going until sunset. Then the fast is broken and Muslims are allowed to eat until sunrise the next day. The evening meal is often shared with family and friends, then followed with extra prayers and readings from the Qur'an. The command to fast can be found in the Qur'an, and it has been obligatory for Muslims to fast during Ramadan since the 7th century.

But for Muslims fasting is not just to do with food and drink. Smoking and sex are also forbidden during daylight hours. Muslims who live in non-Muslim countries may find this month particularly difficult since there can be more temptation to break the fast. The focus during the month of Ramadan is on God, for which purity of thought is required in order to cleanse the soul and free it from harm. Fasting requires considerable self-discipline, but allows Muslims to show they can sacrifice their physical needs as evidence of their submission to God.

Exceptions to fasting

Not all Muslims fast in Ramadan, although those excused from fasting are supposed to make up for it later if they can. People can be excused for health reasons, e.g. pregnant women, mothers nursing babies, children and the sick.

Charity

Muslims tend to fast to remind themselves what it feels like to be hungry and this encourages people to think about the poor. This inspires Muslims to find ways to help the poor. This may include inviting the poor to share their meal that breaks the fast at sunset.

The Night of Power

The night of power is an important festival that marks the beginning of God's revelation to Muhammad*. The exact date this happened is not agreed on, but it is believed to be one of the odd-numbered dates in the second half of Ramadan. The first verse of the Qur'an that were revealed to Muhammad* on this night describe how the angel instructed him to read. Observing the Night of Power gives Muslims the benefits of worshipping for a thousand months. Because of this, Muslims try to keep awake throughout the night on each of the possible dates, devoting themselves to prayer and studying the Qur'an.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'It was in the month of Ramadan as guidance for mankind...So any one of you who is present that month should fast, and anyone who is ill or on a journey should make up for the lost days by fasting on other days later'

'Read! In the name of your Lord who created: He created man from a clinging form (a blood clot). Read! Your Lord is the Most Bountiful One who taught by (means of) the pen, who taught man what he did not know'

'What will explain to you what that Night of Glory is? The Night of Glory is better than a thousand months'

Exam questions

- Explain two ways in which belief in the fasting influences Muslims today. (4 marks)
- Explain how the Night of Power changes the routine of many Muslims during Ramadan. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two Islamic teachings about Sawm. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'It is easier to observe Ramadan in a Muslim country than it is in the UK'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 30

Islam: Practices-Zakah

Keywords	Definitions
Zakah	Purification of wealth by giving 2.5% of savings each year to the poor.
Sadaqah	Good actions or voluntary payments that are undertaken for charitable reasons.
Khums	A 20% tax paid by Shi'a Muslims on their excess income.
Alms	Money or food given to poor people.

Zakah

The third pillar of Islam is Zakah. This means giving alms (giving money to the poor). For Muslims who have enough savings, it is compulsory to give 2.5% of those saving every year to help the poor. Many Muslims will work out how much they owe and give the money at the end of Ramadan. By giving Zakah, Muslims are acknowledging that everything they own comes from God and belongs to him, and that they should use their wealth to remember God and give to those in need. It frees people from desire and teaches self-discipline and honesty. Zakah literally means to purify or to cleanse. Muslims believe that giving Zakah helps to purify the soul, removing selfishness and greed.

The origins of Zakah

The giving of Zakah began as a response to an instruction in the Qur'an. The Qur'an does not specify how much should be given in Zakah; the figure of 2.5% of savings was worked out at a later date by Muslim scholars.

How Zakah is given and who receives it?

Only Muslims with savings greater than a certain figure (known as the nisab) are required to give Zakah. The nisab is either worked out as the value of 87 grams of gold which in 2015 was around £2200, or 612 grams of silver, which in 2015 was around £200. Muslims can choose which figure they use and therefore how much they pay, although using the gold nisab is more common. Zakah can be donated to charity such as Islamic Relief or Muslim Aid. Alternatively, it can be put into a collection box in the mosque to be distributed among the poor. The Qur'an makes it clear who should receive Zakah.

In addition to giving Zakah, Muslims are encouraged to voluntarily give their money and time to charity at any point of the year. This is called Sadaqah.

The significance of Zakah

In giving Zakah, Muslims are fulfilling a duty imposed by God. The Qur'an makes it clear that giving Zakah is a sign of a true Muslim. Paying Zakah gives Muslims a good attitude towards money. They learn to share it and not be greedy with it. Zakah strengthens communities by making the rich support the poor. Zakah links well with Salah (prayer). Prayers should make Muslims feel concern for others and Zakah puts this concern into action.

Khums

Khums is an important part of Muslim practice in Shi'a Islam in addition to giving Zakah. It literally means 'fifth'. Originally it referred to a requirement for Muslims to donate 20% of the spoils of war to the leader representing the state of Islam. Today, it refers to the excess income or earning that a Shi'a Muslim makes, and is still set at 20%. Half of the money collected as Khums goes to Shi'a leaders, to be spent on behalf of God on things considered necessary for religious matters, while the rest is given to charity or the poor.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'They ask you (prophet) what they should give. Say, 'whatever you give should be for parents, close relative, orphans, the needy, and travellers. God is well aware of whatever good you do'

'Alms are meant only for the poor, the needy, those who administer them, those hearts need winning over, to free slaves and help those in debt, for God's cause, and for travellers in need'

Exam questions

- Explain two ways in which belief in Zakah influences Muslims today. (4 marks)
- Explain two Islamic teachings about giving alms (Zakah). Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'Zakah is the most important pillar of Islam'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)
- 'Zakah should be compulsory in all societies'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)

Islam: Practices-Hajj

Keywords	Definitions
Arafat	Name of a place that Muslims travel to when completing Hajj.
Hajj	The annual pilgrimage to Makkah that every Muslim should try to make at least once in their life.
Hajji	Someone who has completed Hajj.
Ihram	Sacred state pilgrims enter before Hajj begins.
Ka'aba	The black, cube-shaped building in the centre of the Grand mosque in Makkah; the holiest place in Islam.
Madinah	The place Muhammad* emigrated to and part of the Islamic holy land.
Makkah	The city where Muhammad* was born, and a holy place in Islam.
Mina	The name of a place that Muslims travel to, to throw pebbles at pillars to symbolises rejecting the devil.
Pilgrimage	A journey by a believer to a holy site for religious reasons; an act of worship and devotion.
Safa and Marwah	Two hills Muslims walk between whilst on pilgrimage.
Zamzam water	Water from the zamzam well which Muslims drink whilst on pilgrimage.

What is Hajj?

A pilgrimage is a journey made for religious reasons. Hajj, the fifth pillar of Islam, is a pilgrimage that should be made at least once during a Muslims lifetime, provided they are healthy and wealthy enough to do so. Some communities will provide financial support for a poor Muslim to make the pilgrimage because it is a religious obligation and not a holiday. Hajj starts and ends in the holy city of Makkah in Saudi Arabia. It always takes place from the 8th to the 12th of Dhul-Hijah, which is the last month of the Islamic calendar. During this time, around 3 million Muslims take part in the pilgrimage.

Origins of Hajj

Muslims believe that around 4000 years ago the prophet Ibrahim was told by God to take his wife Hajira and son Ishmael to Arabia. He was then told to leave Hajira and Ishmael on their own with some supplies of food and water. Within a few days, the supplies ran out and Hajira and Ishmael were suffering from hunger and dehydration.

Looking for help, Hajira ran up and down two hills called Safa and Marwah before collapsing beside her son. She prayed and when Ishmael struck his foot on the ground, water gushed up from the earth. They traded the water for food. When Ibrahim returned he was told by God to build a shrine dedicated to him, the Ka'aba - a pure place of worship and to call people to perform Hajj there. Many centuries later, the city of Makkah was established nearby using the water from Ishmael's well (the well of Zamzam). Over the years, the people of Makkah became used to worshipping idols, many of which were stored in the Ka'aba. In 628CE, Muhammad* journeyed from Madinah to Makkah with a large group of Muslims on what is now seen as the first pilgrimage in Islam. In 630CE, the Ka'aba was returned to the worship of God alone. This story is reflected through Hajj.

How is Hajj performed?

Entering a state of Ihram

Before Hajj begins pilgrims enter in a state of Ihram by praying washing and putting on Ihram clothing, which is white to symbolises purity.

Circling the Ka'aba

Then pilgrims circle the Ka'aba in an anti-clockwise direction seven times. They touch the black stone built into the Ka'aba or raise their hand to acknowledge it. As Muslims circle the Ka'aba they recite the pilgrim's prayer: 'Here I am, Oh Lord, at your service. Praise and blessings to you'.

Travelling to Arafat

The crowd then walks along a covered walkway linking the hills of Safa and Marwah. After completing 7 circuits of this they return to the Ka'aba to collect bottles of water from the well of Zamzam. Muslims then face the prospect of a 13 mile walk or ride to Arafat. Halfway there they stop for the night at Mina where they pray and read the Qur'an.

Standing at Arafat

At dawn of the 9th day of Dhul-Hijah, pilgrims walk from Mina to Arafat, where Muhammad* preached his last sermon and they spend the whole afternoon praying in the summer sun. This heat helps Muslims to think about the Day of Judgment and what that might be like. Islam teaches that God will forgive the sins of all who complete the standing at Arafat, but only if they know they have done wrong, are determined not to do wrong again, and are prepared to try to make up for their sins.

Throwing pebbles at Mina

At the end of the day, Muslims walk to Muzdalifah, where they spend the night. They collect 49 small pebbles to be used the next day at Mina. At Mina, there are three stone walls called Jamarat. These walls represent the devil and temptation. On the 10th of Dhul-Hijrah, pilgrims throw the pebbles at the walls to show that they reject evil.

Returning of Makkah

Pilgrims then return to Makkah to circle the Ka'aba seven more times and they return to Mina to spend two nights there, remembering God and reflecting on his blessings before Hajj ends.

The significance of Hajj

Hajj has great significance for Muslims. Even though it is a requirement to go on Hajj once in a lifetime, many Muslims go a number of times. Once someone has completed Hajj, they can be referred to as a Hajji.

Hajj is so important to Muslims as:

- It can bring about a deep spiritual transformation that makes the Hajji a better person.
- It teaches sincerity and humility in a person's relationship with God.
- It produces inner peace.
- It shows self-discipline.
- It emphasises unity and equality.
- It reminds Muslims of the faith and examples of Ibrahim, Hajira and Ishmael.
- It can lead to the forgiveness for sins.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'Pilgrimage to the House is a duty owed to God by people who are able to undertake it'

'Safa and Marwah are among the rites of God, so for those who make major or minor pilgrimage to the House it is no offence to circulate between the two'

Exam questions

- Explain two ways in which belief in the Hajj influences Muslims today. (4 marks)
- Explain two Islamic teachings about Hajj. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'Hajj is the most important pillar of Islam'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)

Islam: Practices-Jihad

Keywords	Definitions
Greater jihad	The personal inward struggle of all Muslims to live in line with the teaching of their faith.
Hadiith	The sayings of Muhammad*.
Holy war	Fighting for a religious cause or God, probably controlled by a religious leader.
Jihad	A struggle against evil, this may be an inward, personal struggle or an outward, collective struggle.
Lesser jihad	The outward struggle to defend one's faith, family and country from threat.
Sadaqah	Good actions or voluntary payments that are undertaken for charitable reasons.

What is jihad?

Jihad is an important concept for Muslims. It refers to struggling against evil, either as individual or as the collective fellowship of Islam. Jihad requires Muslims to strive to improve themselves and the societies in which they live in a way that God would approve of. The origins of jihad go back as far as Muhammad*, as the concept appears many times in the Qur'an and the Hadiith. There are two elements to jihad: greater jihad and lesser jihad. Although they are strongly linked, there are distinct differences between them.

Greater jihad

Greater jihad is a personal inward struggle of all Muslims to live in line with the teaching so their faith, this means they must observe the Five Pillars of Islam, which bring them closer to God:

- The Shahadah and Salah lay the foundations for their faith, by putting God above everything else
- Zakah requires them to care for others as a duty
- Sawm requires them to show discipline by putting God above their bodily needs for a whole month.
- Hajj means that for ten days they leave behind worldly concerns and dedicate themselves to God's will.

All of this is required as part of greater jihad, which for Muslims is a constant struggle to purify one's heart from all evil traits and to establish instead all types of virtues.

Muslims must also devote their lives to God by avoiding such temptations and distractions as drugs, alcohol, greed and jealousy. Anything that takes them away from their own submission to God must be avoided. Some Muslims take their development as devout followers of their faith even further. For example, some learn the Qur'an by heart, which requires great discipline and patience. Others make great efforts to improve life for people in the community. Not only do they give Zakah, they also choose to give extra sums of money to charity. This is called Sadaqah. Others also give their time by working with the poor and vulnerable, both locally and globally. In all these ways, Muslims improve themselves spiritually and deepen their relationship with God.

Lesser jihad

As the term lesser jihad suggests, it is considered less important than greater jihad, which Muslims believe is required every single moment of their lives. Lesser jihad is seen as the outward struggle to defend Islam from threat. In the early days of the faith this was important when Muslims were being persecuted and they needed to protect their freedom to practise their faith. There are several instances in the Qur'an that appear to allow extreme violence in the name of lesser jihad, but it's important to consider the context of when it was written. Fighting for a religious cause is sometimes referred to as a holy war. The criteria for a holy war is:

1. It must be declared by a fair religious leader.
2. It must be used to make people convert to Islam.
3. It must be in response to a threat to the faith.
4. It must be not be used to gain territory or wealth.
5. It must be the last resort- all peaceful methods must be tried first.

Neither lesser jihad or holy war should be used to justify terrorist acts, whether or not there is a perceived threat to the faith. However, this is how lesser jihad is sometimes misinterpreted in modern times. Muslim extremists are often called jihadists but no Muslim for whom greater jihad is an important element of their faith would justify such violent actions by referring to terrorism as struggling to live in the way that God intends. For Muslims, jihad is essentially an important spiritual practice that brings them closer to God.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'This is My path, leading straight, so follow it, and do not follow other ways: they will lead you away from it- 'This is what he commands you to do, so that you may refrain from wrongdoing'

'But those who have believed, migrated and striven for God's cause, it is they who can look forward to God's mercy: God is most forgiving and merciful'

Exam questions

- Explain two ways in which belief in the jihad influences Muslims today. (4 marks)
- Explain the differences between greater and lesser Jihad. (4 marks)
- Explain two Islamic teachings about jihad. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain why many Muslims believe it is impossible to justify terrorism as an example of lesser Jihad or Holy War. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Islamic belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'Jihad is often misunderstood'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 33

Islam: Practices-Festivals

Keywords	Definitions
Id-ul-Fitr (Eid-ul-Fitr)	A Muslim festival that celebrates the end of Ramadan.
Id-ul-Adha	A Muslim festival that celebrates the prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son for God.
Day of Ashura	A festival that is important for Shi'a Muslims in particular, who remember the battle of Karbala and death of Husayn on this day.
Commemorated	Recall and show respect for (someone or something).
Festival	A day or period of celebration, typically for religious reasons.
Husayn	The son of Imam Ali and grandson of Muhammad* in Karbala in Iraq.
Karbala	A city in Iraq.

The origins of Id-ul-Fitr and Id-ul-Adha

It is said that when Muhammad* arrived in Madinah, he noticed that some people were celebrating two specific days with entertainment and festivities. When he asked about this, he was told that before Islam came to their city, they had celebrated two grand carnivals each year. Muhammad* replied that God has appointed two other days that are better to celebrate the days of Id-ul-Fitr and Id-ul-Adha.

Id-ul-Fitr

Id-ul-Fitr means the 'festival of breaking of the fast'. It has several other names including the sugar Feast, the Sweet Festival or Lesser Eid. The Festival marks the end of the month of Ramadan. Muslims are not only celebrating the end of a whole month of fasting but are thanking God for the strength and help he has given them to fast for a month. Muslims also give thanks to God for providing his guidance and wisdom in the Qur'an, the first revelation of which was made during the month of Ramadan. Id-ul-Fitr is celebrated for one, two or three days. Muslims gather together in mosques to say special prayers. The imam's sermon usually reminds Muslims that they should forgive and forget any differences or disputes that have occurred during the year, and focus instead on helping the poor. Everyone wears their best clothes or new clothes for the occasion, and homes are decorated. Special foods are eaten and processions take place through the streets. There is a festive atmosphere and cards and presents are exchanged.

Id-ul-Adha

Id-ul-Adha is the festival of sacrifice or Greater Eid. It is celebrated on the 10th day of the month of Dhul-Hijjah, and lasts for four days. This festival remembers and honours the prophet Ibrahim, who was willing to sacrifice his son Ishmael on God's command, provided his son agreed with him. Ibrahim informed his son and his son replied that he must do what God has told him. However, as Ibrahim was about to carry out the sacrifice, God prevented it and gave Ibrahim a ram to sacrifice instead. He had passed the test of being willing to carry out God's commands.

Id-ul-Adha festival forms part of Hajj and is celebrated by Muslims all over the world. It is a time for celebration when people visits family and friends and enjoy festive meals. It begins with prayers in the mosque, where the imam preaches a sermon about sacrifice and reminds those who attend why the festival is celebrated. During Id-ul-Adha animals are slaughtered to remember Ibrahim's sacrifice. On Hajj many pilgrims sacrifice an animal but this is not allowed in Britain.

The festival of Ashura

The Day of Ashura (Day of remembrance) is a major Shi'a festival that takes place on the 10th day of the month of Muharram. Ashura means 'tenth'. Sunni Muslims also observe Ashura but they refer to it as the Day of Atonement, and remember it as the day when the Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt. Others believe that traditionally Ashura remembers the day Noah (Nuh) left the ark after the flood. After going to Madinah, Muhammad* nominated Ashura as a day of fasting from sunset to sunset, and it is still a voluntary fast day for Sunni Muslims. To Shi'a Muslims, however Ashura is a day of great sorrow because of the tragic events of Karbala.

Shi'a Muslims remember the death of Husayn, son of Imam Ali and grandson of Muhammad* on 10th October in Karbala, Iraq. It is a day of mourning for the martyrdom of Husayn. The battle was fought between Husayn and his supporters against the army of Caliph Yazid.

Ashura is commemorated in many countries like Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, a public holiday takes place to remember the events at Karbala. During the day Shi'a Muslims take part in a public expression of grief and mourning. Some even go so far as to beat themselves on the back with chains, pound their head or cut themselves. They do this in an attempt to connect with Husayn's suffering and death. Recently these practices have been condemned by some Shi'a religious authorities, who have stated that they are the wrong actions for Muslims to take. Re-enactments and plays are performed to retell the story of Husayn's death so that people will remember the events at Karbala.

In London, several Shi'a Muslims go to Marble Arch for a procession of mourning and to listen to speeches. Shi'a Muslims might also gather in the street and some men beat themselves as part of the mourning ritual. Some British Shi'a Muslims believe that they should shed blood to remember Husayn. Rather than beating and cutting themselves, some UK religious leaders encourage them to donate blood to the blood transfusion service instead.

Exam questions

- Explain two ways in which belief in the festival of Ashura influences Muslims today. (4 marks)
- Explain two ways in which belief in Id-ul-Adha influences Muslims today. (4 marks)
- Explain two ways in which belief in the festival of Ashura influences Muslims today. (4 marks)
- Explain two Islamic teachings about Id-ul-Fitr. (4 marks)
- Explain two Islamic teachings about the festival of Ashura. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'The festival of Ashura should not be celebrated in British society'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)
- 'Id-ul-Fitr is the most important Islamic festival'. Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)

Theme E: Religion, crime and punishment – Crime and punishment in the UK, and reasons for crime

Keywords	Definitions
Crime	An offence which is punishable by law, for example stealing, murder
Punishment	Something legally done to somebody as a result of being found guilty of breaking the law
Evil	The opposite of good; a force or the personification of a negative power that is seen in many traditions as destructive and against God
Corporal punishment	Punishment of an offender by causing them physical pain – now illegal in the UK
Capital punishment	The death penalty; a form of punishment in which a prisoner is put to death for crimes committed
Poverty	Being without money, food or other basic needs of life (being poor)
Mental illness	A medical condition that affects a person's feelings, emotions or moods, and perhaps their ability to relate to others
Addiction	Physical or mental dependency on a substance or activity which is very difficult to overcome
Greed	Wanting to possess wealth, goods or items of value which are not needed

What are crime and punishment?

A crime is any action which is against the law. Offenders who are found guilty of a crime by a court face a legal punishment; something legally done to someone as a result of being found guilty. Different offences carry different punishments; more serious crimes like murder and rape carry a life sentence in prison (although this rarely means that the offender spends the rest of their life in prison), and less serious offences are punished with a shorter spell in prison. In the UK, under no circumstances can someone be punished with the death penalty, or with corporal punishment. No individuals of crime are allowed to punish the offender.

Good, evil, and Christian responses

Actions can often be separated into those that may be called 'good' and those that may be called 'evil'. Some may say that actions can be called good if they follow the law, or evil if they break the law. However, one issue with this is that actions like love and generosity, or giving money to charity, are considered 'good' but are not specified in the law. Likewise, many Christians believe that although actions such as adultery are legal, they are still wrong. Evil actions are those which cause suffering, injury or possibly death. 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 would consider these actions as sinful and against God as opposed to being directly linked to the devil.

Many Christians would claim that there is no such thing as an evil person. Human beings are not perfect and make mistakes. However, because of the belief in original sin, Christians believe that all humans have a tendency to do things that are evil even though they are not evil in themselves.

Reasons for crime

There are many reasons why people commit crimes, including;

- Poverty – some people in the UK cannot afford to live properly and theft may be a tempting way to provide for your needs.
- Upbringing – growing up in a household where crime is normal may encourage a young person to follow the example of the people they live with.
- Mental health – some people might have mental health issues which cause them to commit crimes.
- Addiction – drug addicts may resort to stealing in order to purchase the drugs their body needs.
- Greed - In the UK possessions and wealth are seen as signs of status. This greed can lead to theft or fraud.
- Opposition to an unjust law – some people deliberately break laws that appear unjust. For example, in 1955 Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white person and was arrested.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established'

'You have heard it was said to the people long ago, "You shall not murder", and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment'

Exam questions

- Explain why Christians might think criminals turn to crime. (4 marks)
- Explain two contrasting beliefs about being good. Refer to scripture in your answer. (5marks)
- 'Poverty is the greatest reason for crime in the UK'. Evaluate the statement.
- 'There is never any reason for someone to commit a crime'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

Theme E: Religion, crime and punishment – Aims of punishment and Christian attitudes to suffering and those causing suffering

Keywords	Definitions
Retribution	An aim of punishment – to get your own back; “an eye for an eye”
Deterrence	An aim of punishment – to put people off committing crimes
Reformation	An aim of punishment – to change someone’s behaviour for the better
Free will	The ability of people to make decisions for themselves without constraint
Hate crimes	Crimes, often including violence, that are usually targeted at a person because of their race, religion, sexuality, disability or gender

Three aims of punishment

Whenever a punishment is imposed by a court, the judge has to consider what purpose the punishment will serve. There are three main aims of punishment: retribution, deterrence, and reformation.

Retribution is the least positive of the three aims of punishment. It means to get your own back, for society, on behalf of the victim, to get its own back on the offender. An early form of retribution can be found in the Old Testament: ‘If there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth’. The punishment would match the crime. Today, Christians do not take this teaching literally but interpret it to mean that criminals should receive a punishment severe enough to match the seriousness of the crime. However, once this is established Christians prefer to focus on the other aims of punishment.

Deterrence involves aiming to deter criminals from committing crimes in the future. The idea is that if criminals are punished severely enough, they and other criminals might be put off from committing future crimes. For example, the threat of a ban from driving

may deter people from driving under the influence of alcohol.

Reformation is the aim of punishment that most Christians prefer because it seeks to help offenders to change. It is hoped that offenders will reform, change their attitudes, and become responsible, law-abiding members of the community. They need to realise what they have done wrong. This may involve counselling, therapy, meeting the victims of their crimes to realise the harm they have caused, or to work in the community (community service). Reformation is supported from the Bible. Paul in Romans wrote ‘Do not take revenge... if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good’. This encourages Christians not to seek revenge, but instead to help them turn their life around by helping them understand the effect of their actions on others. This is also supported by the parable of the sheep and the goats, in which Jesus ‘for I was in prison, and you came to visit me’.

Christian attitudes to hate crimes

Christians condemn both hate crimes and murder. God created all humans with equal value and no groups should be singled out for inferior treatment. Christians should ‘love your neighbour’ and follow the Golden Rule.

Christian attitudes to suffering and causing suffering to others

Christians believe that they should try to help those who are suffering, and the Bible talks about the good that can come from suffering: ‘We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope’. Christians believe that they should follow the example of Jesus, who helped many who were suffering. Many question why a loving God would allow people whom he loves to suffer. However, Christians believe that God gave humanity free will to behave as they choose and suffering is an unfortunate by-product of free will.

Christians are generally opposed to causing suffering to others. Jesus taught that humans should love each other and care for those in difficult circumstances. If Christians do cause suffering to others, it is important that they are honest, and work at repairing the damage they may have caused.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

‘Take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth’

‘Do not take revenge’

‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink’

‘Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good’

The parable of the sheep and the goats – ‘For I was in prison and you came to visit me’

The Golden Rule – ‘Do to others what you want them to do to you’

‘Love your neighbour’

‘We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope’

Exam questions

- Explain two similar religious beliefs in contemporary British society about retribution. (4 marks)
- Explain how relationships should be restored if somebody causes another person to suffer. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain three aims of punishment. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- ‘People who break the law should be punished severely’. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- ‘Deterrence is the most important part of punishment’. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 36

Theme E: Religion, crime and punishment – Christian attitudes towards the treatment of criminals, including forgiveness

Keywords	Definitions
Prison	A secure building where offenders are kept for a period of time by a judge
Corporal punishment	Punishment of an offender by causing them physical pain – now illegal in the UK
Community service	A way of punishing offenders by making them do unpaid work in the community
Punishment	Something legally done to somebody as a result of being found guilty of breaking the law
Forgiveness	Showing mercy, and pardoning someone for what they have done wrong

What are Christian attitudes to the treatment of criminals?

Punishment; in the UK, there are many ways that criminals can be legally punished and several ways that they cannot. Depending on the severity of the crime, punishments can range from a fine to a long stay in prison.

Prison is reserved for those who have committed a serious crime. The punishment of imprisonment is a loss of freedom. Prisoners have choices restricted and are locked in cells for much of the day. While most Christians support prison as a form of punishment, many would also strongly support trying to help prisoners while in prison and are keen to see education and training facilities well used.

Corporal punishment means trying to punish an offender by causing them physical pain. Many consider this a breach of Human Rights and this is illegal in the UK. Christians do not disagree with discipline but many would question whether Jesus' teaching on love and caring for people leaves room for corporal punishment to be an acceptable form of punishment.

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 of the positive aims of community service, most Christians agree that this is a suitable punishment for fairly minor offences.

Christian attitudes to forgiveness

Forgiveness is a core belief in Christianity and one that Jesus emphasised in his teachings. Forgiveness is showing mercy, pardoning someone for what they have done wrong, and choosing not to hold someone's wrongdoing against them. 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us'. For many Christians, forgiveness should not be a replacement for punishment; it is possible to forgive someone and also believe that justice is done when they serve a prison sentence or other punishment. Christians would say that the number of times they should forgive others is infinite. 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". Christians interpret seventy-seven times as an unlimited amount. Therefore, there is no maximum number of times a person should be forgiven. Additionally, there are no limits to what it is that should be forgiven; even as he was being crucified, Jesus said to those crucifying him: 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing'. Christians believe that in their lives, they should follow the example of Jesus, and this includes forgiving those who do wrong things. However, this does not mean that forgiveness is easy; sometimes offenders may show no signs of remorse for the harm they caused, and this can make forgiving someone very difficult. Maureen Greaves is an example of someone who chose to forgive in difficult circumstances; she forgave the men who murdered her husband on Christmas Eve 2012. The North East Prison After Care Service (NEPACS) is a society based on principles of forgiveness and the reformation of prisoners.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

The Lord's Prayer – 'Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us'

The Golden Rule – 'Treat others as you would want to be treated'

"'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"

'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing'

Exam questions

- Explain two contrasting religious beliefs in contemporary British society about forgiveness (4 marks)
- Explain the link between forgiveness and reformation. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two religious beliefs about forgiveness. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'Forgiveness means you are not seeking retribution or vengeance. Forgiveness is recognising that we are all in the same boat, we're all the same not perfect'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'Christians should always forgive. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

Theme E: Religion, crime and punishment – the Death Penalty

Keywords	Definitions
Death penalty	Capital punishment; a form of punishment in which a prisoner is put to death for crimes committed
Sanctity of life	All life is holy as it is created and loved by God; Christians believe human life should not be misused or abused
Retribution	An aim of punishment – to get your own back; 'an eye for an eye'

The death penalty

The death penalty can also be called capital punishment; it is the ultimate form of punishment, in which a prisoner is put to death for crimes committed. The death penalty was abolished fully in the UK in 1969 and has also been banned across Europe. There are a number of reasons why the death penalty is controversial. One of these is that the death penalty cannot be undone; since its abolition in the UK three people executed in the early 1950s have been pardoned because new evidence has emerged since they were put to death showed that they were innocent. Other people have been wrongly convicted of murder and have been pardoned, but if the death penalty was still legal, these people would potentially have been executed.

The sanctity of life is a teaching that God gave life and only he has the right to take it away. In relation to the death penalty, it appears to suggest that as executing an offender is denying God's right to take away the offender's life, it is wrong. However, some argue that as the death penalty is usually reserved for murderers who have already taken away life, they are being punished in a way that they deserve and which God approves of.

Supporters of the death penalty believe it is a justifiable retribution for serious criminal acts, such as murder. In addition to being seen as retribution, some people

claim that the death penalty deters people from committing murder. However, there is little evidence to support the view that the death penalty does deter people from committing serious crimes. Countries such as the UK that do not permit the death penalty do not all have higher murder rates than those that do. Most people who commit murder do not think about what may happen to them, although they may consider it afterwards.

Some people would also argue that the death penalty protects society by ensuring that a violent criminal does not kill again. While it can be argued that the rest of society is protected if murderers are executed, protection is achieved by imprisoning murderers. Imprisonment also gives murderers the chance to repent and be reformed so that, when released, they can become useful members of society. This is what many Christians want to happen and is why they oppose the death penalty.

Christian attitudes to the death penalty

Individual Christians may have different beliefs about whether the death penalty should or should not be allowed. Those who agree with the death penalty tend to use teachings from the Old Testament to support their views. Their main justification is taken from Genesis: 'Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed' (Genesis 9:6). They often support this by making reference to the teaching in Exodus: 'Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth' (Exodus 21:23-24).

However, Christians who oppose the death penalty do so mainly because they do not believe that taking another life is right. They believe that only God has the right to take life – after all, it is he who gifted life to humanity. Jesus taught about the importance of forgiveness and warned people not to judge each other harshly. Part of the Lord's Prayer says 'Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us'. Additionally, one of the Ten Commandments is 'Do not murder'.

Muslim attitudes to the death penalty

In some Muslim countries, the death penalty is used as a deterrent for offences such as murder and rape. However, the victim or their family are encouraged to show mercy by accepting money from the offender to reduce the penalty from death to imprisonment. A Muslim may look to their faith in order to forgive the perpetrator.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed'

'Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth'

'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn away from their ways and live'

'Love your neighbour as yourself'

'Do not murder'

'Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us'

Exam questions

- Explain two similar religious beliefs in contemporary British society about the death penalty. (4 marks)
- Explain two religious beliefs about the death penalty. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'Anybody who kills should be put to death themselves'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'All Christians should support the death penalty'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 38

Theme B: Religion and life- Origins of the universe and origins of human life

Keywords	Definitions
Universe	All of time and space and its contents; includes planets, stars, galaxies, the contents of intergalactic space, the smallest subatomic particles, and all matter and energy.
Fundamentalist Christians	Christians who believe that the statements in the Bible are literally true and believe there are certain basic beliefs that are essential to Christian faith.
Liberal Christians	Christians who believe that the Bible's authors were guided by God but that not everything they wrote is a literal account of what actually happened.
evolution	The process by which living organisms are thought to have developed and diversified from earlier forms of life during the history of the earth.
Adaptation	A process of change where an organism or species becomes better suited to their environment.

The creation of the universe.

The currently observable universe contains more than 100 billion galaxies and it is about 13.8 billion years old. Christians believe that the universe didn't just make itself but that was designed and made by God. They also believe that God created the universe out of nothing (in Latin Ex nihilo). 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 earth in six days and the rested on day seventh.

Did creation stories really happen?

Some Christians (Fundamentalists) believe that creation stories describe exactly how the universe was created. They believe that every word in the Bible has been inspired by God and is therefore correct. In contrast Liberal Christians regards 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.

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 incredibly small, hot, dense singularity which expand over the next 13.8 billion years to become the cosmos we know today. As the universe continued to expand and cool, the matter that had been flung in all directions became stars grouped into galaxies, e.g. The Milky Way Galaxy.

In Christianity there are two main views about the Big Bang theory: fundamentalist Christians do not accept the theory as it contradicts the Genesis creation stories; liberal Christians accept the theory because they believe that the Big Bang could have been God's way of forming the universe.

Adam and Eve

According to Genesis 1 God created male and female humans at the final day of creation. According to Genesis 2 Adam was formed by God from the soil and God breathed life into him. Then Adam was given instructions to look after the Garden of Eden and not to eat fruit from the tree of knowledge. Then from one of Adam's ribs God created Eve, the first woman.

What does science say?

In 1859 Charles Darwin explain the theory of evolution in his book. According to the theory life started on earth as single-celled creatures that evolved into other species. Humans evolved over millions of years from other animals on the land. Scientists discovered bones from different extinct species which they claim are possible ancestors of the human race. Humans are thought to have started evolving about 2.5 million years ago and developed into humans with the same anatomy about 200 000 years ago.

What do Christians believe?

Fundamentalist Christians believe that that the origin of human life was exactly as recorded in the Genesis, with God creating each species separately. They do not believe that there is enough evidence to support the evolution theory. Some Christians believe that God is creator but they also accept the evolution theory. They believe that God use the evolution to create and design life on earth.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.'

'So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them'.

Exam questions

- Explain two different religious beliefs about how the human race began. In your answer you should refer to the main religious tradition of Great Britain and one or more other religious traditions. (4 marks)
- Explain two religious beliefs about how the world was created. In your answer you should refer to the main religious tradition of Great Britain and one or more other religious traditions. (4 marks)
- Explain two religious beliefs about how the world was created. Refer to sacred writings or another source of religious belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'It is possible to believe both the story in Genesis 1 and the Big Bang theory'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'There has to be a creator because it is impossible for nothing to become something'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 39

Theme B: Religion and life- Value of the world, use and abuse of environment, and pollution

Keywords	Definitions
Wonder	Marvelling at the complexity and beauty of the world
Awe	A feeling of devout mixed with fear or wonder
Responsibility	Duty to care for or having control over something or someone.
Stewardship	The idea that believers have a duty to look after the environment on behalf of God.
Dominion	Dominance or power over something; having charge of something or ruling over it.
Environment	The natural world; the surroundings in which someone lives
Natural resources	Materials found in nature – such as oil and trees – that can be used by people.
Abuse	Misuse; of the world and the environment
Sustainable development	Building and progress that try to reduce the impact on the natural world for future generations
Non-renewable resources	Things that earth provides that will eventually run out as there is limited amount of them; e.g. oil, coal, gas and other minerals.
Deforestation	The cutting down of large amounts of forest, usually because of business needs.
Renewable energy	Energy that comes from a source that does not run out, such as wind and the sun.
Pollution	Making something dirty and contaminated; especially the environment
Vegetarians	A person who does not eat meat or fish.
Vegan	A person who does not eat animals or food produced by animals (such eggs); a vegan tries not to use any products that have caused harm to animals (such leather)
Abuse	Misuse; of the world, the environment and animals

The Assisi and Ohito meetings

Leaders from five different religions met together in Assisi (Italy 1986) to discuss how their faiths could and should help to care for the environment. Another meeting in Ohito (Japan 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.

How valuable is the world?

We cannot put a price on the world's value as it is our home and it provides and sustains life. Christians would 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 world is complex and beautiful. The vastness of space, the night sky, beautiful sunset are all examples of the awesomeness of creation. Such beauty gives sense of amazement and wonder. How could it all happen? Christians believe that God is responsible.

Stewardship

Christians believe that God has given humans the privilege of living on planet Earth but with 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. This idea is taken from the creation story in the Bible (book of Genesis) where Adam the first man was given task of looking after the Garden of Eden.

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 cannot do what they like to benefit themselves if this damages something that God has made.

Use and abuse of the resources.

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 it is 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.

Renewable energy sources.

Scientists are developing alternatives to fossil fuels that allows us to generate electricity through wind, wave power and the sun. However there are currently a number of problems with the renewable energy sources which is why conserving energy is so important for Christians and non-Christians alike.

How Christians help the planet?

Christians believe that they should avoid waste, conserve energy and reduce the demand for natural resources. There are few ways this can be done: walking, cycling, or using public transport instead of the car; selecting the products that don't have a lot of packaging.

Pollution

Pollution puts the health of humans, animals and plants at risk. There are three types of pollution: air pollution caused mostly by fumes from factories and vehicles; land pollution caused by the ineffective disposal of waste; water pollution caused by dumping waste into the sea.

Christian response to pollution

Pope Francis called on everyone to act to protect environment and tackle the pollution problem. Christians believe that the world is on loan to humans. Christians in Britain sometimes arrange events to help to tidy up their communities.

Christians and animals

Christians believe that animals were created by God for humans to use and care for. Many Christians believe that God values animals but humans are more important because they were created in the image of God and have souls.

Animal experimentation.

Scientists test new products, such as medicines, cosmetics, and additives 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. Testing cosmetics on animals was banned in the UK in 1998 and most Christians support that ban. Other types of animal testing have been reduced as scientists have developed alternative methods using computers or cell culture (cells that grow artificially). Most animal experiments that still occur are on mice or rats that are specially bred for the 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 human life is sacred and using animals to develop new drugs may benefit millions of people. In contrast to Christianity, Hinduism teaches that all creatures have souls not just humans and all deserve to be respected and protected.

Should Christians eat meat?

According to Romans 14:2-3 Christians have a choice to be meat-eaters, vegetarians or vegans. Most Christians eat meat as the Bible doesn't 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 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 would be produced.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'The earth is the Lord's and everything in it'.

'Every human act of irresponsibility towards creatures is an abomination (disgrace)'. Christian statement in the Assisi Declaration on Nature

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

'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 birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground'

'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 kind alive throughout the earth'

'Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you'

'The righteous care for the needs of their animals'

'Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out of grain'

'Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet, not one of them is forgotten by God'.

Exam questions

- Explain two contrasting ways in which Christians respond to the value of the world. (4 marks)
- Explain two reasons why Christians believe that humans are more important than animals. (4 marks)
- Explain Christian views about eating meat. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- Explain two ways in which Christians manage the earth. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'Caring for the environment is the most important action a Christian can take'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- 'It is not cruel to kill animals for food'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – TOPIC 40

Theme B: Religion and life- Abortion, Euthanasia and the afterlife

Keywords	Definitions
Sanctity of life	All life is holy as it is created and loved by God; Christians believe human life should not be misused or abused.
Quality of life	The general wellbeing of the person, in relation to their health and happiness; also the theory that the value of life depends on how good or how satisfying it is.
Abortion	It is the deliberate termination of a pregnancy through a medical procedure.
Euthanasia	The painless killing of the patient suffering from an incurable and painful disease or in an irreversible coma.
Eternity	A state that comes after death and never ends.

Abortion – legal problem

According to the English law 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 at danger, 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 mental or physical disabilities, an additional family may affect physical or mental health of existing children and family.

Christian views on abortion

Christians believe in the sanctity of life principle and that humans are made in the image of God. However, within Christianity there are some contrasting beliefs towards abortion. Catholics and Evangelical Christians believe that life starts at conception so they reject abortion except perhaps to save woman's life. Other denominations oppose abortion but believe that it is acceptable in some circumstances. They would say that abortion is sometimes the lesser of two evils' and the kindest things to do if the quality of life of the child will be extremely poor. There are arguments for abortion: woman's life comes first, life doesn't start until birth or the earliest viability. There are arguments against abortion: life starts at conception, life is sacred, unborn children need protection

Types of euthanasia

There are: voluntary euthanasia when a person asks a doctor to end their life; non-voluntary euthanasia, when the person is too ill to request to die; involuntary euthanasia is when the person is able to provide consent but does not; active euthanasia, when active steps are taken to end someone's life; passive euthanasia, when doctors stop provide treatment that is intended to quicken the natural process of dying. All forms of euthanasia are currently illegal in the UK. In 2015 the British Parliament rejected plans for a 'right to die' law in England and Wales.

Christian beliefs

Many Christians believe that taking someone's life is interfering with God's plan. Most Christians believe that euthanasia is against the sanctity of life. Modern drugs and hospice care provide the dying with chance to end their lives with dignity and without pain. Some Christians support euthanasia as in some cases this is the most loving thing to do.

Death and the afterlife

Christians believe that death is not the end and that God judges whether will spent eternity in heaven or in hell. The Catholic Church believes in purgatory where souls undergo purification in order to get to heaven. Christians believe that heaven is indescribably wonderful place where God resides. Hell is place of punishment where Satan lives with his demons. There are different understanding of heaven and hell in Christianity, some take descriptions of heaven and hell literally, some believe that they are symbols of spiritual realities.

Key pieces of scripture or sacred writings

'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart'

'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.'

'As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, gentleness and patience.'

'All people deserve compassion and care in their suffering and dying. Euthanasia and assisted suicide should not however, be considered acceptable responses. They undermine human dignity and are morally wrong.' The Salvation Army

'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'

Exam questions

- Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about Euthanasia. In your answer you should refer to the main religious tradition of Great Britain and one or more other religious traditions. (4 marks)
- Explain two religious beliefs about abortion. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer. (5 marks)
- 'There must be life after death'. Evaluate the statement.(12 marks)
- 'The only acceptable reason to have an abortion is when the woman's life is at risk'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)
- The right to die should always take priority over the sanctity of life'. Evaluate the statement. (12 marks)

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Y11 GCSE Exam Dates

Y11 Mock(s):

Y11 PPE(s):

Final GCSE(s):

Success Programme Sessions:

Revision Guide (if applicable):

Notes
