

# **GCSE Religious Studies**

**Learner  
Knowledge  
organiser**

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# 1. Relationships

## 1.A. Relationships

- (a). Christian views about relationships in the 21st century:
- families
  - roles of women and men
  - marriage outside the religion
  - cohabitation
- (b). Christian views about marriage and the point of marriage
- (c). Christian weddings (marriage ceremonies)
- (d). Different Christian views about
- adultery
  - divorce
  - annulment
  - separation
  - re-marriage
- (e). Meanings of Matthew 19:8-9, Mark 10:9

## 1.B. Sexual relationships

- (a). Christian views about sex and contraception
- (b). meanings of the natural law (and absolutist) approach (Thomas Aquinas, five primary precepts, the second primary precept)
- (c). Christian views about same sex relationships
- (d). Meanings of Leviticus 20:13 and 1 Timothy 1: 8-10

## 1.C. Gender prejudice and discrimination

- (a). Christian views about the roles of women and men in worship and authority (=leadership)
- (b). Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican views on this issue
- (c). Meanings of 1 Timothy 2:11-12, Galatians 3:27- 29

**Key words:** adultery, divorce, cohabitation, commitment, contraception, gender equality, responsibilities, roles

## 2. Life and Death

### 2.A. The world

- (a). Different Christian beliefs about the origin of the universe: Genesis 1 and 2
- (b). Christian views and non-religious views of creation and whether they are opposite
- (c). Stephen Hawking's view of the Big Bang
- (d). Christian and non-religious views about
  - dominion
  - stewardship
  - environmental responsibility
  - sustainability
  - global citizenship
- (e). Meaning of Genesis 1:28, Psalm 8:6
- (f). The work of Humanists for a Better World group

### 2.B. The origin and value of human life

- (a). Christian beliefs about the origin and sanctity of human life: Genesis 1:31, Jeremiah 1:5
- (b). Non-religious beliefs about evolution; Charles Darwin, Richard Dawkins
- (c). Christian views about abortion
- (d). Christian views about euthanasia
- (e). Non-religious views on the importance of human life and animal life
- (f). Peter Singer's views on 'speciesism'
- (g). The humanist Dignity in Dying group

### 2.C. Beliefs about death and the afterlife

- (a). Christian views about life after death
  - soul
  - judgement
  - heaven
  - hell
- (b). Meaning of John 11:24-27, 1 Corinthians 15: 42-44
- (c). Christian beliefs about the afterlife
- (d). Christian funerals and how they reflect beliefs about the afterlife

(e). Humanist funerals and how they reflect beliefs about the afterlife

**Key words:** afterlife, environmental sustainability, euthanasia, evolution, abortion, quality of life, sanctity of life, soul

## 3. Good and Evil

### 3.A. Crime and Punishment

- (a). What makes an act 'wrong'?
- relative morality and absolute morality
  - conscience
  - virtues
  - sin
- (b). The causes of crime
- (c). The aims of punishment, including Christian beliefs about these:
- justice
  - retribution
  - deterrence
  - reformation
- (d). The treatment of criminals
- (e). The work of prison reformers
- (f). The work of prison chaplains
- (e). Christian views about the death penalty.

### 3.B. Forgiveness

- (a). Christian teachings about forgiveness
- (b). Meanings of Matthew 18:21-22, Matthew 6:14-15
- (c). Examples of forgiveness arising from personal beliefs.

### 3.C. Good, Evil and Suffering

- (a). The origin of evil:
- original sin
  - free will
  - 'soul-making' (Irenaeus and John Hick)
- (b). The problem of evil
- (c). Problems about free will

**Key words:** good/evil, forgiveness, free will, justice, morality, punishment, sin, suffering

## 4. Human Rights

### 4.A. Human Rights and Social Justice

- (a). Christian beliefs about the dignity of human life
- (b). Christian practices to promote human rights including equality
- (c). Agape in action
- (d). An example of conflict between personal conviction and the laws of a country (Martin Luther King)
- (e). Censorship, freedom of religious expression and religious extremism

### 4.B. Prejudice and discrimination

- (a). Christian beliefs about prejudice and discrimination
- (b). Christian beliefs about racism (racial prejudice and racial discrimination)
- (c). Martin Luther King's teachings on equality

### 4.C. Issues of wealth and poverty

- (a). Right and wrong was of acquiring (getting) and using wealth
- (b). The work of Christian charities Christian Aid and the Salvation Army to alleviate (reduce) poverty

**Key words:** censorship, discrimination, extremism, human rights, personal conviction, prejudice, relative and absolute poverty, social justice



## 5. Christian Beliefs

### 5.A. The Nature of God

(a). Beliefs and quotations on:

- God's omnipotence
- God's omnibenevolent
- The problem of evil and suffering (also called Epicurus' paradox)

(b). The Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit

### 5.B. Creation

(a). Creation stories in Genesis 1--3; the role of humans:

- Literalist interpretation
- Non-literalist interpretations

(b). The role of Word and Spirit in creation: John 1:1-5

### 5.C. Jesus Christ

Beliefs and quotations on

- incarnation
- crucifixion
- salvation
- atonement
- resurrection
- ascension

### 5.D. Salvation

(a). Beliefs about the Bible, the Word of God:

- laws
- inspiration
- revelation

(b) Different ways of interpreting the Bible

(c) The Bible and other sources of authority

(d). Sin as preventing salvation.

(e). Grace

(f). The Holy Spirit: The role of Holy Spirit in evangelical worship

#### **5.E. The afterlife**

- (a). Eschatological beliefs (which means 'beliefs about the afterlife')
- (b). Judgement (including Judgement Day)
- (c). Importance of the resurrection
- (d). Traditional and modern beliefs about heaven and hell

**Key words:** omnipotent; omnibenevolent; trinity; incarnation; atonement; resurrection

## 6. Christian Practices

### 6.A. Christianity in Britain and the Church in the local community

- (a). The 2011 census compared to the 2001 census
- (b). The UK: A multi-faith country with a Christian past
- (c). The church and the Church

### 6.B. Forms of worship

- (a). Worship
  - liturgical
  - non-liturgical (informal) worship
  - individual worship
- (b). Prayer, including
  - The Lord's Prayer
  - Set prayers
  - informal prayers
- (c). Society of Friends Christian worship
- (d). Evangelical Christian worship

### 6.C. Sacraments

- (a). Different beliefs about the sacraments
  - Roman Catholic beliefs
  - Protestant beliefs
  - baptism
  - eucharist

### 6.D. Pilgrimage and celebrations

- (a). Importance of pilgrimage:
  - Walsingham
  - Taizé
- (b). How Christians celebrate festivals:
  - Christmas

- Easter

#### **6.E. The worldwide Church**

(a). The importance of mission:

- evangelism
- church growth

(b). The work of Tearfund

(c). Persecution of Christians past and present

(d). Working for reconciliation:

- World Council of Churches
- The Ecumenical Movement

**Key words:** sacrament; evangelism

## 7. Islam Beliefs

### 7.A. The Nature of Allah

- (a). The oneness of Allah (tawhid)
- (b). Allah:
  - immanence
  - transcendence
  - omnipotence
  - beneficence
  - mercy
  - fairness
  - justice
- (c). Adalat (Shi'a Islam)

### 7.B. Prophethood (risalah)

- (a). Beliefs about prophethood
  - why the prophets are important
- (b). The importance of
  - Adam, the first prophet
  - Ibrahim, father of Isaac and Ishma'il
  - Isa as a prophet
  - Muhammad, the seal of the Prophets

### 7.C. Angels (malaikah)

- (a). The importance of angels
- (b). The difference between Shi'a and Sunni beliefs about angels and free will
- (c). The importance of
  - Jibril's revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad
  - Mika'il placed in charge of plants and rain
  - Israfil to announce the Day of Resurrection

### 7.D. Akhirah (afterlife)

- (a). Al-Qadr (predestination), and what this means for human freedom

(b). Human responsibility and accountability

- human freedom and its link to Day of Judgement

(c) Beliefs about the afterlife

- heaven, including its stages
- hell

### **7.E. Foundations of faith**

(a). The six articles of faith (Sunni Islam)

(b). The five roots (Shi'a Islam)

(c). Islamic attitudes towards

- Kutub (books)
- Sahifah (scrolls)
- Injil (gospel)
- Tawrat (Torah)
- Zabur (psalms)

**Key words:** tawhid, prophethood

## 8. Islam Practices

### 8.A. The Five Pillars of Sunni Islam (in Britain and worldwide)

- (a). Shahadah: the Muslim statement of faith: Qur'an 3:18
- (b). Zakah: How payment is made and how zakat money can be spent
- (c). Sawm: Fasting during Ramadan
- (d). Hajj: Pilgrimage to Makkah
  - issues facing British Muslims undertaking Hajj
- (e). Salah: the practice of prayer
  - in the mosque
  - at home

### 8.B. Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam (in Britain and worldwide)

- (a). Salah, prayers
- (b). Sawm, fasting
- (c). Paying zakat
- (d). Hajj: pilgrimage to Makkah and to Shi'a shrines
- (e). Khums: Shi'a Muslims pay tax
- (f). Jihad: the struggle to live as a Muslim
- (g). Amr-bil-Marroof: encouraging others to do good
- (h). Nahil Anril Munkar: discouraging bad actions
- (i). Tawalia: the duty to love the friends of Allah
- (j). Tabarra: the duty to express disapproval of evil-doers

### 8.C. Jihad

- (a). Greater jihad: The daily struggle to live as a good Muslim
- (b). Origins, influence and conditions for lesser jihad

#### **8.D. Festivals and commemorations: practices in Britain and elsewhere**

- (a). Id-ul-Adha, the festival of sacrifice.
- (b). Id-ul-Fitr, the festival of fast-breaking following Ramadan.
- (c). Ashura, the Shi'a Muslim festival of remembrance.
- (d). The Night of Power: the importance of the revelation of the Qur'an

**Key words:** halal, haram, greater/lesser jihad, mosque, shariah, ummah