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

Chris Owens, Ed Pawson
Joy White, Amanda Ridley

Covering:

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



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How to use this book

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the assessment structure?

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

Component one

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

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

Each theme is covered in detail in this textbook.

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

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

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

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

Component two

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

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

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

Component three

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

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

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

Assessment objectives

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

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

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

Assessment objective 1

You need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

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

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

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

Assessment objective 2

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

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

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

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

Answering the questions

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

For all exam questions consider two questions:

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

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

Question (a)

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

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

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

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

Question (b)

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

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

Question (c)

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

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

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

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

Question (d)

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

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

For each question consider:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Question 2(d)

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

Additional note

The complete Eduqas specification is available on the Eduqas website.

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

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

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

1

Issues of relationships

► The Big Picture

Key Concepts



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



Divorce To legally end a marriage.



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



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



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



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



Responsibilities Actions/duties you are expected to carry out.



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

Core Questions



Is there such a thing as a typical family?

Are women and men equal?

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

Is cohabitation more popular than marriage?

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

Do men and women have equal roles in leading worship?

► Overview

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

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

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

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

Task

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



Monotheistic religions religions that believe there is only one God.

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

Pluralism the existence of different groups and beliefs within society.

Diversity within religion and society

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

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

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

Relationships

► What is a family?

Task

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

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

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

Rabbi Menachem Schneerson



Task

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

► Types of family

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

The most common types of family are:

Nuclear family

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



Extended families consist of different relatives all living together



Single parent families are becoming more common in Britain

Extended family

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

Reconstituted family

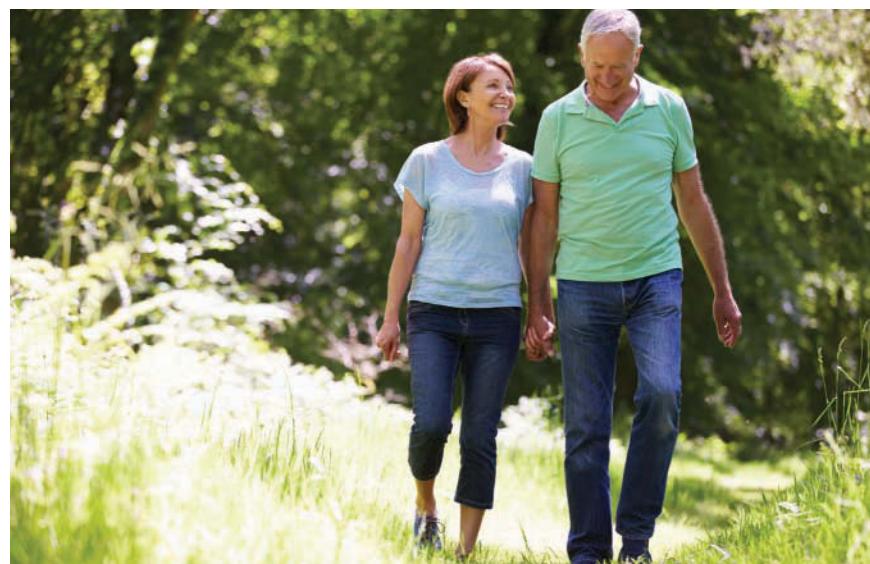
Some divorced adults choose to remarry or live in a co-habiting relationship. This may lead to the creation of a reconstituted family. This type of family structure is made up of a mix of step-parents and step-children.

Single parent family

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

Childless family

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



Some couples decide not to have children

► Roles of men and women in the family

Key Concepts



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



Responsibilities Actions/duties you are expected to carry out.

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

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

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

Traditional views

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

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

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

Hadith Sahih Bukhari 9:89:252

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

Patriarchal a family or society controlled by men.

Matriarchal a family or society controlled by women.

Task

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

- women
- men
- both men and women?

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

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

Changing views

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

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

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

► What have families got to do with religion?

Task

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



Religion and the family are interlinked in many ways.

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

In terms of religious practice, parents:

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

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



1 Jewish family worshipping together in a synagogue.

2 Christian family baptising their child.

3 Muslims celebrating the festival of Eid.

Worldwide family

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

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

Pope Francis

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

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

► The nature and purpose of marriage

Key Concept



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

Humanist attitudes to marriage H

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

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

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

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

Christian attitudes to marriage



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

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



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

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

Mark 10:6-8

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

Christian wedding ceremony

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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



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

Tasks

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



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

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

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



Muslim attitudes to marriage

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

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

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

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

Qur'an 30:21

The Muslim wedding ceremony

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

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

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



■ Muslim weddings can take place in various settings

Temporary unannounced marriage

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

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

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

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

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

Task

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



Jewish attitudes to marriage



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

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

- The kiddushin
- The nisuin



A Jewish wedding ceremony being held under a huppah.



The Kiddushin

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

The nisuin

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

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

Task

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



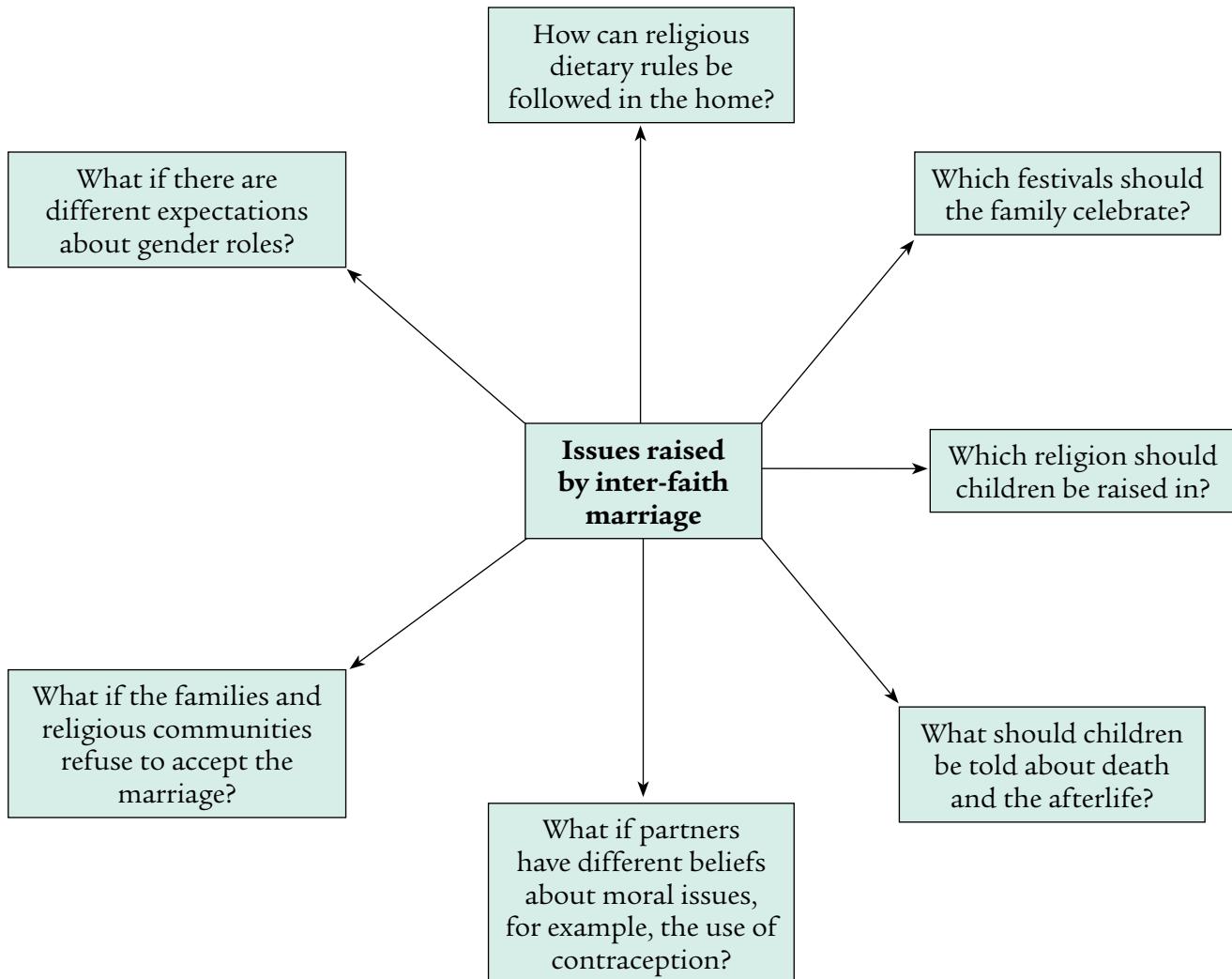
► Marriage outside religious traditions

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

Examples of issues raised by inter-faith marriages are:

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

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



► Cohabitation

Jewish attitudes to cohabitation



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

Muslim attitudes to cohabitation



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

Key Concept



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

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

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



Christian attitudes to cohabitation



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

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

► Adultery

Key Concept



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

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

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

Task

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

Against the Ten Commandments

D
U
L
T
E
R
Y

**Christian attitudes to adultery**

Christianity teaches that adultery is wrong for the following reasons:

- Marriage is sexually exclusive and should not be shared with anyone else.
 - The Ten Commandments forbid adultery:
'You shall not commit adultery.'
- Exodus 20:14
- Marriage is a sacrament – a gift from God – and adultery goes against this.
 - Committing adultery destroys the special relationship between a husband and wife.
 - Committing adultery can harm the family unit and cause the partner to feel cheated and betrayed.

Jewish attitudes to adultery

Judaism teaches that adultery is wrong for the following reasons:

- The Ten Commandments forbid adultery:
'You shall not commit adultery.'
- Exodus 20:14
- Sex is only acceptable within a marriage.
 - Halakhah (code of conduct) emphasises that a husband should be sexually considerate towards his wife and not be sexually disloyal.
 - Men and women are most fulfilled through marriage, which is referred to as 'kiddushim' (sanctified).

Muslim attitudes to adultery

Islam teaches that adultery is wrong for the following reasons:

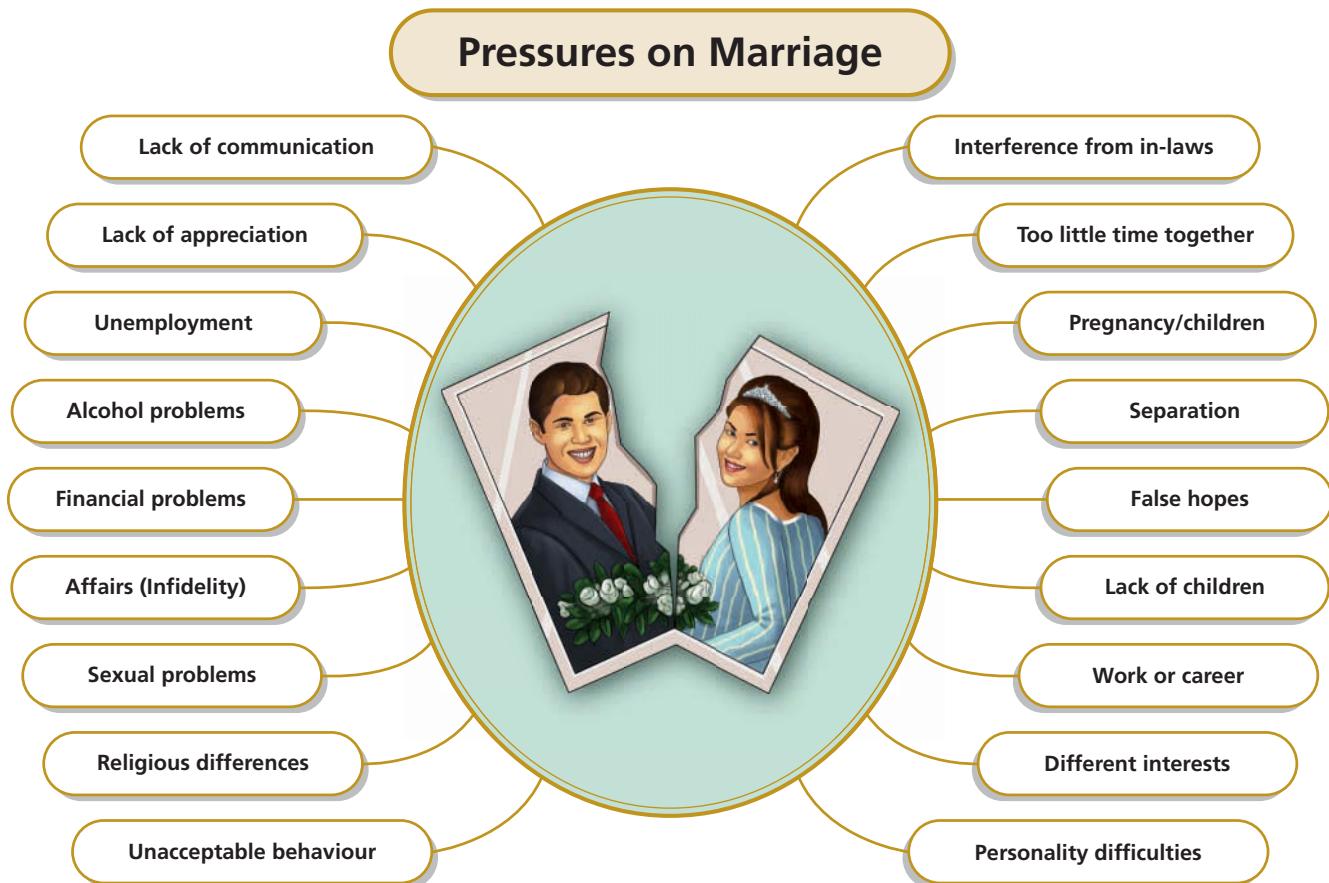
- Sex outside of marriage is generally strongly disapproved of.
- Marriage is a life-long union based on trust, morality and devotion.
- Vows promising to be faithful to one another might be exchanged in the marriage ceremony.
- Adultery is seen as harmful to society, so against the unity and peace of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

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

Qur'an 17:32

► Why some marriages fail

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



Task

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

► Divorce and separation

Key Concept



Divorce To legally end a marriage.

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

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

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

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

Christian attitudes to divorce and separation



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

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

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

Matthew 19:8–9

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

Mark 10:9

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

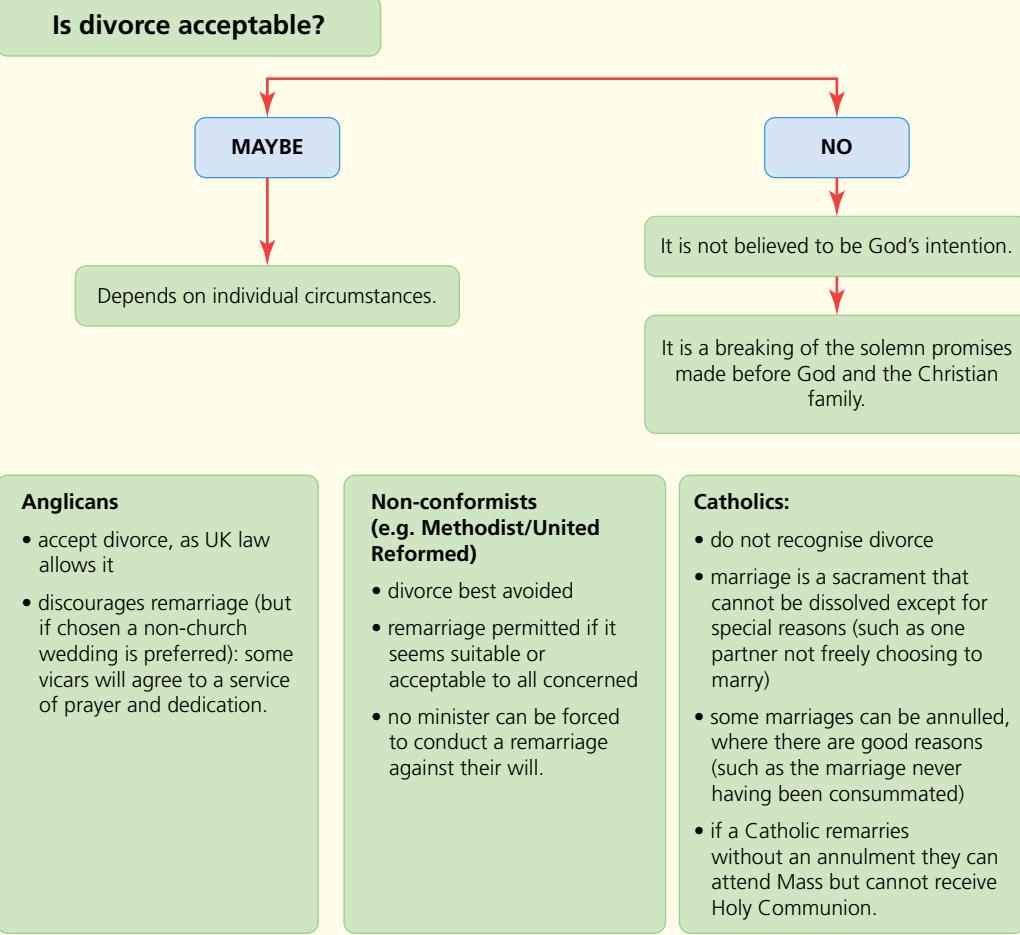
to receive Holy Communion during mass. Of course some Catholics do get divorced, however, this would not be recognised by the Catholic Church.

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

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

Annulment

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



Jewish attitudes to divorce and separation



Task

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



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

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



Is divorce acceptable?

'When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favour in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce, and puts it in her hand ...'

(Deuteronomy 24:1-4),

Yes

But ...

It is always a last resort. The community will give support and try to keep the couple together.

A religious and a civil divorce must be obtained by all couples outside of Israel.

In the Orthodox tradition the husband is expected to give a document of divorce (get) to the wife. This dissolves the marriage.

The couple will apply to the **Bet Din**, the religious court of rabbis, where the judges will question the witnesses and give their verdict.

The women is allowed to remarry after 90 days.

The divorce taken effect as soon as the woman receives the document.

Sometimes problems are caused where a husband has refused to give the woman a divorce, or where he cannot be traced: women in this situation are called *agunot* (chained).

Muslim attitudes to divorce and separation

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

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

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

Qur'an 4:35

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

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

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

Qur'an 2:229

Task



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

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

Summarise what it says about divorce in two to three bullet points and explain it to the rest of the group.

Then copy and complete the table below:

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

Is divorce acceptable?

SOMETIMES

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

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

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

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

H

Humanist attitudes to divorce and separation

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

► Remarriage

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

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

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

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

► Arranged marriage

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

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

Task

List some of the advantages and disadvantages of arranged marriages.



► End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

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

Key teachings about:

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

Knowledge check

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

'Cohabitation undermines the sanctity of marriage.'

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

Agree	Disagree

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

Skills Link



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

The Big Question

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

Your task

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

Task

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

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

This means that/Because of this they

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

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

Their beliefs do/do not differ because



Sexual relationships

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

Promiscuity having a number of casual sexual relationships.

Fidelity two people being sexually faithful to each other.

Procreation reproduction.

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

Purpose of sex

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

Christian attitudes to sex



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

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

Jewish attitudes to sex



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

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

Muslim attitudes to sex



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

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

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

Qur'an 17:32

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



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

Task

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



► Chastity

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

► Celibacy

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

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

► Contraception and family planning

Key Concept



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

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

Religious attitudes towards contraception are very varied.



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



Christian attitudes to contraception

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

The complexity of any discussion about contraception may be demonstrated in reference to Thomas Aquinas' Five Precepts.

Thomas Aquinas and Natural Law



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Muslim attitudes to contraception

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

These are:

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

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



Jewish attitudes to contraception

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

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

Humanist attitudes to contraception

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

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

► Same-sex relationships



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

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

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

Christian attitudes to same-sex relationships

Same-sex marriage cannot currently take place in Christian Churches. However, same-sex relationships divide opinion among Christians from different denominations.

Many Christians oppose same-sex marriage on biblical grounds, quoting a number of verses from both the Old and New Testaments:

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

Leviticus 20:13

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

1 Timothy 1: 8–10

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

The Catholic Church

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

In April 2010, Pope Francis wrote,

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

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

Other Christian Churches

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

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

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

Muslim attitudes to same-sex relationships

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

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

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

Qur'an 7:80-81

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

Jewish attitudes to same-sex relationships

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

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

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

Leviticus 18:22

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

Leviticus 20:13

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

Reform Jews generally support same-sex relationships.



Humanist attitudes to same-sex relationships

H

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

► End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Contraception

Key teachings about:

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

Knowledge check

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

'Celibacy has an important role today.'

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

Agree	Disagree

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

Skills Link



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

The Big Question

'Sex should only take place in marriage.'

Your task

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

Task



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

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

This means that/Because of this they

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

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

Their beliefs do/do not differ because

■ Issues of equality: gender prejudice and discrimination

Key Concept



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Galatians 3:27–29



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

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

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

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

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

1 Timothy 2:11–12

The Catholic and Orthodox Churches

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

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

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

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

The Anglican Church

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

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

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

Task

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



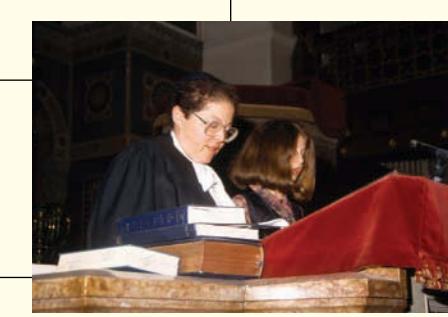
Jewish attitudes to the roles of women and men in worship and authority



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

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

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



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

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

Reform and Liberal Judaism

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

- they cannot lead certain parts of the service

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

This is because of the laws in the Torah.

During worship women and men sit together in the synagogue.



Orthodox Judaism

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

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

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

Task

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

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



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



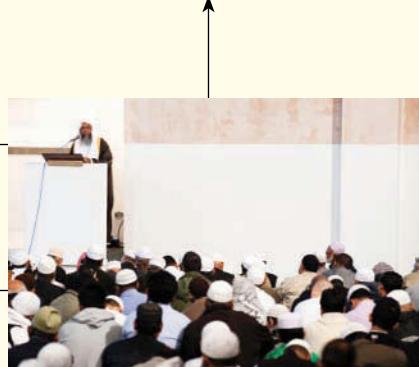
The quote below describes how Allah creates all people from the same soul and so Muslims are against discrimination:

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

Qur'an 4:1

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

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



A male imam leads prayer in a UK mosque

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

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

Qur'an 40:40

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

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

Qur'an 2:228

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

Women and men are also usually separated during worship.

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

Task

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



► End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Gender equality
- Roles

Key teachings about:

- the roles of men and women in worship and authority

Knowledge check

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

Agree	Diasgree

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

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

The Big Question

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

Your task

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

Task

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



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

This means that/Because of this they

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

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

Their beliefs do/do not differ because

► Exam focus

Issues of relationships

(c) questions

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

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

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

Before you answer, consider:

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

(d) questions

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

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

For each question consider:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2

Issues of life and death

► The Big Picture

Key Concepts



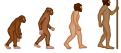
Afterlife Life after death; the belief that existence continues after physical death.



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



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



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



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



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



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



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

Core Questions



Could life have developed by itself?

Are there different ways of understanding religious scriptures?

Do humans have an immortal soul?

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

What is environmental stewardship?

Does the unborn baby have a right to life?

Should we be able ask someone to help us die?

► Overview

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

► Life: chance or God's plan?

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

Tasks

- 1 Read the quote from Psalm 139. Explain what it is saying about human life.

- 2 [a] What does Jacques Monod believe about the creation of human life?
[b] How is it similar to Richard Dawkins' ideas on creation?

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

Psalm 139:13,16

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

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

Jacques Monod

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

Richard Dawkins



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

The world

The origin of the world: religious and scientific perspectives

Religion: creation stories

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

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

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

Tasks

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



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

- Explain why ideas about creation have changed over time.

Science: evolution and the Big Bang theory

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

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

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

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

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

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

The theory of evolution

Key Concept



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



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

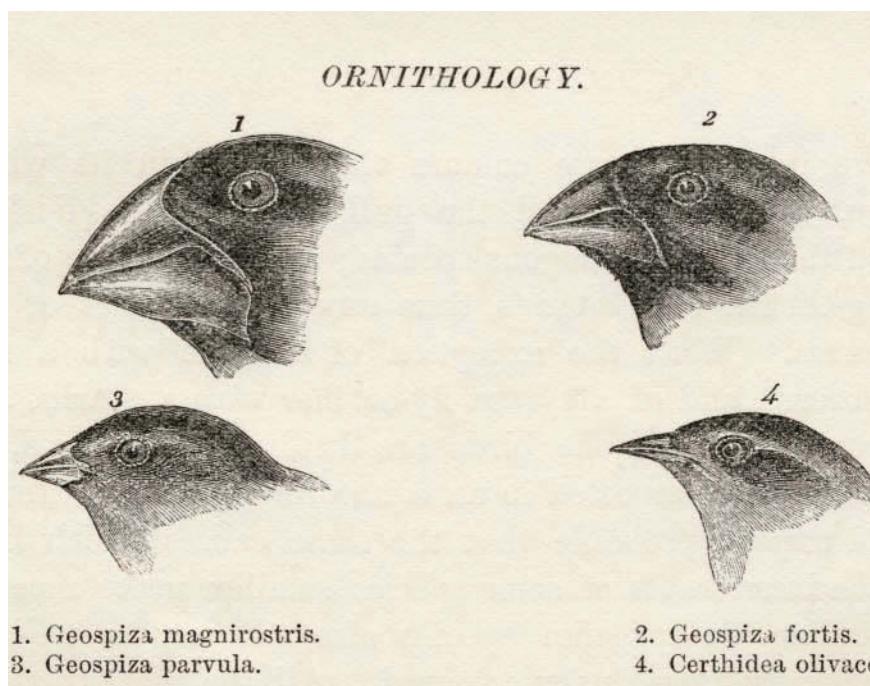
Daniel C. Dennett

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

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

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

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



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



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



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

Religious reaction to Darwin

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

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

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

Tasks

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

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

Charles Darwin, 1879



► The Big Bang theory

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

Stephen Hawking

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

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

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

Religious reactions to the Big Bang theory

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

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

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

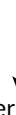
Even if scientists are correct in saying that the universe began with a 'Big Bang', have they really solved the question 'Where does the universe come from?'. We are still left with the question of what caused the Big Bang. Some Christians have argued that it was God.

Tasks



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

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



This matter expanded

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

Scientific concepts	Religious concepts

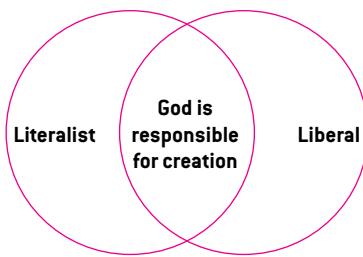
Interpretation the way we make sense of a piece of writing. Different believers interpret passages from the holy books in different ways.

Literal understanding something exactly as it is written.

Liberal free thinking.

Task

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



How did the world begin?

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

► Literal interpretation

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

'All scripture is God-breathed.'

2 Timothy 3:16

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

► Liberal interpretation

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

Christian attitudes to the creation of the world

There are two stories which describe God's creation of the world, found in the Book of Genesis. (For more detail see pages 174–276.)

Genesis 1:1–2:3

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

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

Genesis 1:3

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

Genesis 1:26



Genesis 2:4–2:25

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

Christian sacred writings and science

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

Evangelical Christians

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

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

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

The seven days of creation refer to long eras of time, rather than 24-hour periods.

Liberal Christians

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

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

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

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

Creationism the belief that all life was made by God.

Muslim attitudes to the creation of the world

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

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

Qur'an 7:54

Islamic sacred writings and science

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

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

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

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

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

Qur'an 36:81

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

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

Qur'an 21:30

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

Dr Hasan



Jewish attitudes to the creation of the world

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

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

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

The first creation story says:

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

Genesis 1:1–3

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

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

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

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

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

Jewish sacred writings and science

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

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

Humanist attitudes to the creation of the world

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

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

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

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

Andrew Copson, Chief Executive of the BHA

Tasks

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

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

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



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

► Was the world designed?

The design argument

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

William Paley

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

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

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

Intelligent design

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

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

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

other, less complex eyes in earlier species.

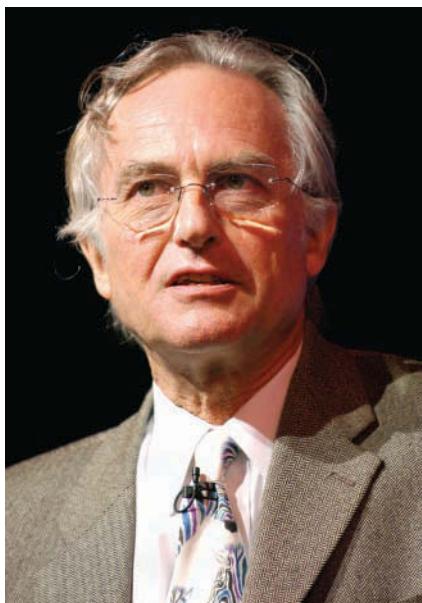


The illusion of design

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

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

Richard Dawkins



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

Tasks

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



► Science and religion

Science and religion are opposed to each other

Tasks

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



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

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

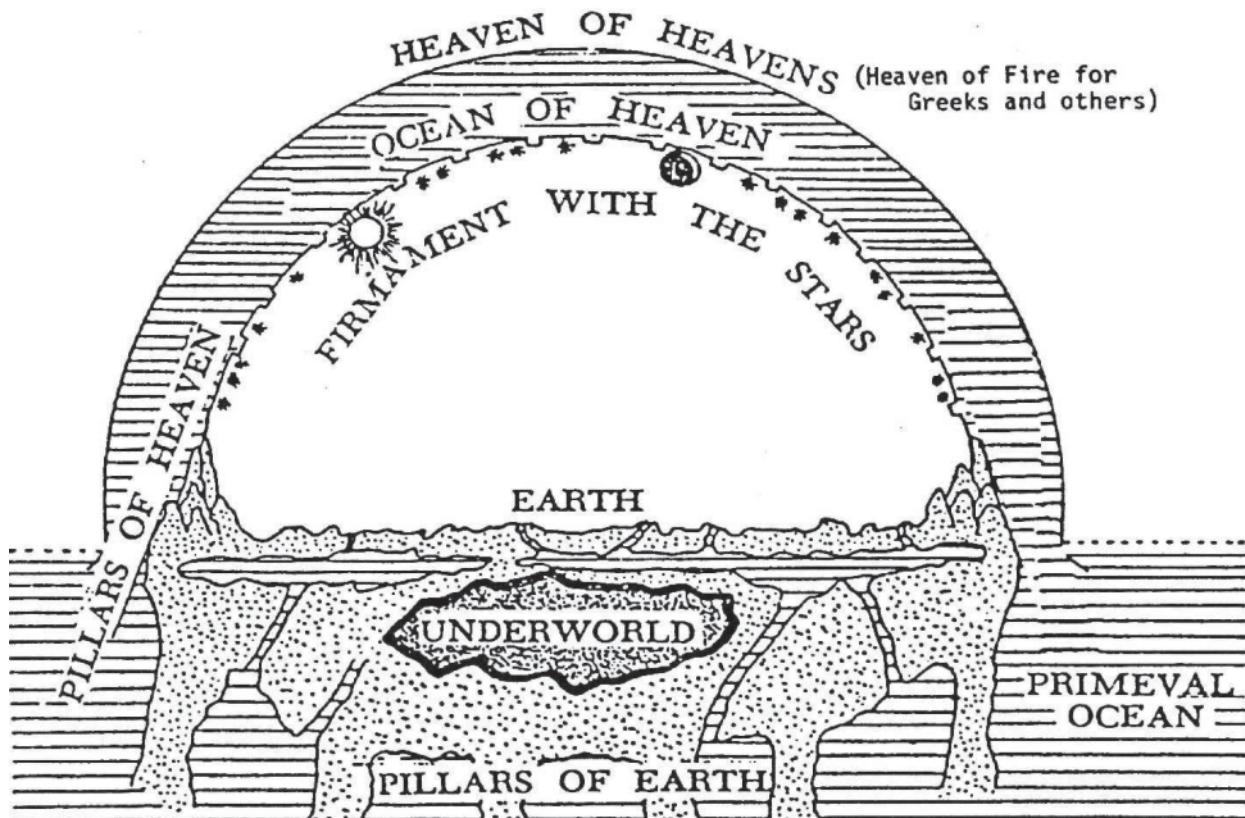
Billy Graham (Evangelist)

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

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

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

Richard Dawkins



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

Science and religion complement each other

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

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

Maimonides

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

Albert Einstein

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

Professor John Polkinghorne

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

Life in twenty-first-century Britain

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

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

And then asked:

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

The results are shown in the table.

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

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

► Stewardship and the relationship between humans and animals

What is stewardship?

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

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

Mahatma Gandhi



Stewardship means caring for the planet.

Key Concept



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



Responsibility humans have a responsibility to care for the planet.

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

Christian attitudes to stewardship

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

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

Psalm 8:5–6

Dominion: to rule over nature

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

Stewardship: to live in harmony with nature

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

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

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

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



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



Muslim attitudes to stewardship

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

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

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

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

Hadith

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

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

Qur'an 6:165

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

Qur'an 30:30



Jewish attitudes to stewardship

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

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

Genesis 1:28

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

Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Talmud

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

Are humans most sacred?

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

Humanist attitudes to stewardship H

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

Tasks

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

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

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

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

Amish saying

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

► End of section review

Knowledge check

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

Skills Link



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

Stickability



Key concepts:

- Environmental sustainability
- Evolution

Key teachings about:

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

The Big Question

'Life must have come about by itself.'

Your task

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

Task



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

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

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

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

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

Their beliefs do/do not differ because

■ The origin and value of human life

► What is sanctity of life?

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



Key Concept



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

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

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

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

Task



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

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

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

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

Beliefs do/do not differ because

► What makes us human?

Ingredients for human beings:



Seven bars of soap



Lime – to whitewash a chicken coop



Phosphorous – for 2,200 match heads



Magnesium – a small dose



Iron – for a medium-sized nail



Potassium – to explode a small toy cannon



Sugar – to fill a sugar sifter



Water – five buckets



Sulphur – a pinch

► Religious teachings about the sanctity of life

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

What is missing?

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

Christian attitudes to the sanctity of life

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



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

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

1 Corinthians 3:16

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

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

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

Genesis 1:31

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

Jeremiah 1:5

Muslim attitudes to the sanctity of life



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

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

Qur'an 6:151

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

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

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

Qur'an 5:32

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

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

Qur'an 6:151

Jewish attitudes to the sanctity of life



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

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

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

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

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

Humanist attitudes to the sanctity of life



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

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

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

► The quality of life

Key Concept



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

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

How do we measure quality?

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

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

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

Tasks



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

Skills Link

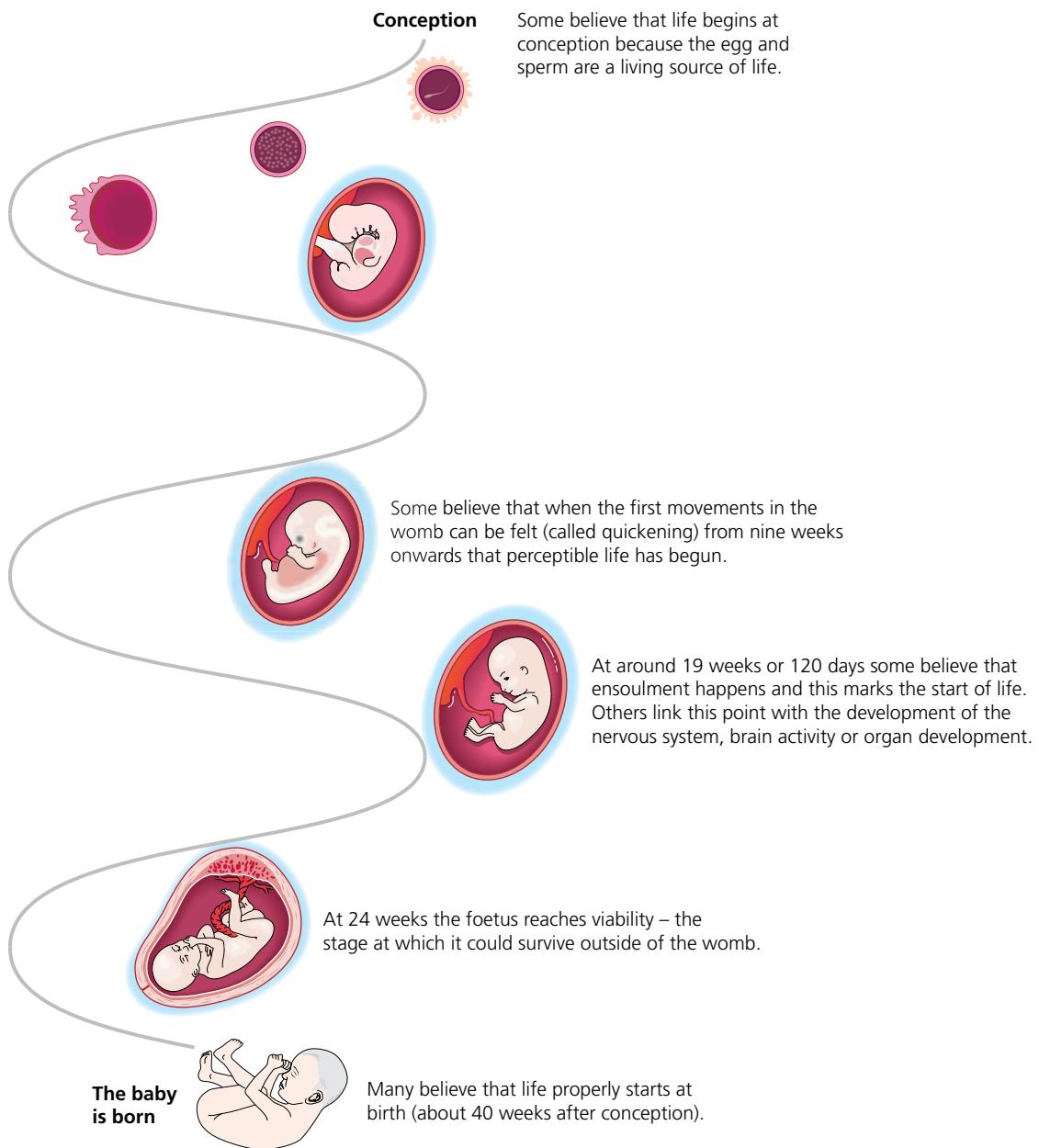


Explain the teachings about why life is sacred from one religious tradition.

► When does life begin?

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

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



► The great abortion debate

Key Concept



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

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

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

The rights of the unborn child

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

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

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

Life in twenty-first-century Britain

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

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

► Religious teachings about abortion

Christian attitudes to abortion

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

Catholics

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

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



The Church of England

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

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

General Synod

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

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



Muslim attitudes to abortion

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

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

Qur'an 6:151

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

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

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



Jewish attitudes to abortion

Judaism as a whole does not forbid abortion, but it does not permit abortion on demand. Abortion is only permitted for serious reasons. Every case is expected to be considered on its own merits and the decision should be taken only after consultation with a rabbi. The unborn foetus is not considered a 'person' in Jewish law until it has been born, and the principle of Pikuach Nefesh (see page 29?) allows for the life of the mother to be saved. There are, however, differing beliefs among Jews as to when and whether abortion is permissible.

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

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

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

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

Ethics of the Fathers 4:29



Humanist attitudes to abortion

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

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

► Abortion – case studies

Savita Halappanavar

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

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



■ Savita Halappanavar died after suffering a miscarriage

Gianna Jessen

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



■ Gianna Jessen survived an attempted abortion

Tasks

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



► Euthanasia

Key Concept



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

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

There are technically four different types of euthanasia.

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

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

Why might people want to end their own life?

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



■ Injections can provide a relatively painless way of dying

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

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

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

Living wills

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



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

Life in twenty-first-century Britain

Euthanasia is currently illegal in the UK.

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

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

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

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

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

► The 'right to die' debate – For

Free will

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



Campaigners supporting the 'right to die'

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

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



Baby RB

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

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

Stephen Hawking

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



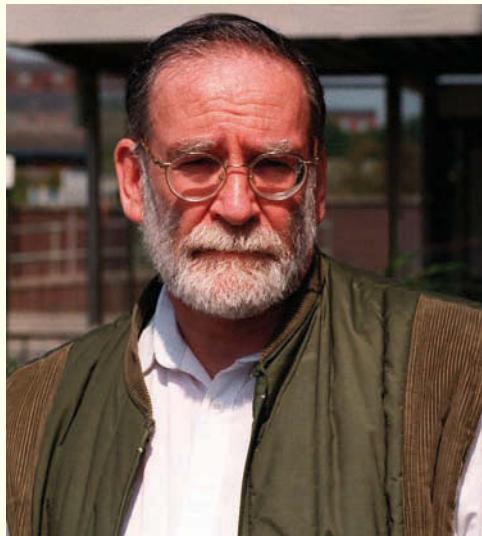
Stephen Hawking is a supporter of assisted dying

► The 'right to die' debate – Against

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

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

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



■ Harold Shipman was convicted of murder in 2000



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



It's murder



All life is special and worthy of protection.

The slippery-slope argument

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



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



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

Hospices

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

Palliative care care that focuses on relieving pain and suffering.

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

Hospices and religion

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

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

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

Dame Cicely Saunders

Life in twenty-first-century Britain

There are currently over 260 inpatient hospices in Britain.

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

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

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



A Katharine House Hospice

► Religious teachings about euthanasia

Christian attitudes to euthanasia

Most Christians agree that euthanasia is not acceptable because:

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

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

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



Muslim attitudes to euthanasia

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

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

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

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



Jewish attitudes to euthanasia

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

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

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

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



Humanist attitudes to euthanasia

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

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

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



► End of section review

Knowledge check

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

Skills Link



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

The Big Question

'Everyone should have the right to die.'

Your task

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

Task



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

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

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

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

Beliefs do/do not differ because

■ Beliefs about death and the afterlife

► The soul

Key Concept



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



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

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

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

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

Christian attitudes to death and the afterlife



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

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

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

H

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

Humanist attitudes to death and the afterlife

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

Muslim attitudes to death and the afterlife



Islam teaches that, as humans, we have both physical and non-physical aspects. The soul is an invisible part of an individual's existence which is 'pure' at birth. According to the Qur'an, God made Adam from the 'earth', so we have a physical body. We are also blessed with a soul (ruh); this is the non-physical part of our being which makes us a real person. The Qur'an teaches that humans are created when God 'breathes' a soul into them. In the Hadith there is a passage that says that this ensoulment happens in the womb at 120 days after conception.

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

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

M. Hanif

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

Jewish attitudes to death and the afterlife



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

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

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

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

Traditionally Christianity has taught that as human beings we are born with a sinful nature. This is called 'original sin'. Because Adam and Eve sinned by eating the fruit in the Garden of Eden, all generations to follow will inherit this sin. For humans to get to heaven, we must be reconciled with God; we need to be 'saved' and forgiven. This can only happen through believing that Jesus died on the cross to cleanse us from our sins.

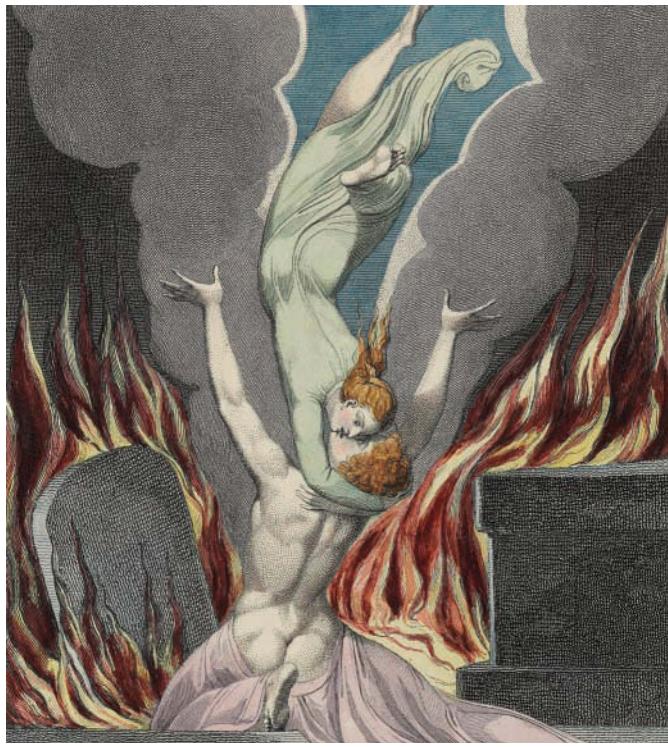
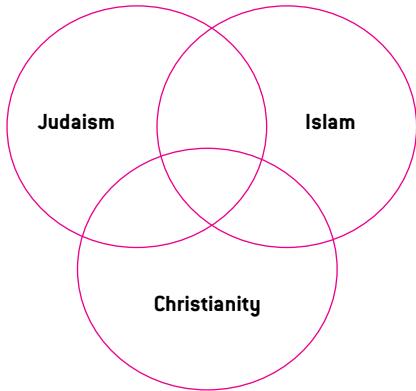
Liberal Christians do not accept the concept of 'original sin'. They argue that we need to take responsibility for our own 'sin'. It is nothing to do with a mythical Adam!

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

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

Tasks

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



The Reunion of the Soul and the Body by William Blake

► What happens when we die?

Key Concept



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

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

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



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

Concepts of heaven and hell: Are they real places?

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

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

Tasks

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

► Religious beliefs about judgement, heaven and hell

Christian attitudes to judgement, heaven and hell



Christians believe in resurrection and eternal life; death is not the end, but a gateway to a perfect existence. Some Christians say that heaven is our true home and our lives here on earth are the testing ground for life in eternity.

Christians believe that just as Jesus rose again after death, so will we. The Bible teaches that God is the Divine Judge and on Judgement Day he will decide who will be rewarded with eternal life in paradise and who will be punished. Those who believe in Jesus and have lived a good life will be taken to heaven. Those who have rejected God's love and caused harm to others will be sent to hell.

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

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

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

1 Corinthians 15:42–44

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

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

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

Heaven and hell

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

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



Muslim attitudes to judgement, heaven and hell

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

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

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

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

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

The coming of the Mahdi

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

'And everything they did is in written records.'

Qur'an 54:52

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

Qur'an 2:233

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

Qur'an 46:33

Heaven and hell

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

'Every soul will taste death.'

Qur'an 3:185



Jewish attitudes to judgement, heaven and hell

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

Early Judaism

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

Present-day Judaism

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

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

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

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

Humanist attitudes to judgement, heaven and hell

H

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

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

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

Task



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

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

This means that/Because of this they

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

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

Their beliefs do/do not differ because

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

Rite A ritual or solemn ceremony.

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

Christian funeral rites and their meaning



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

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

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

'I am the resurrection and the life.'

John 11:25

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

Jesus will be resurrected, to spend eternity with God.

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

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

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

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

Jewish funeral rites and their meaning



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



■ Jewish burial ritual

Muslim funeral rites and their meaning



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

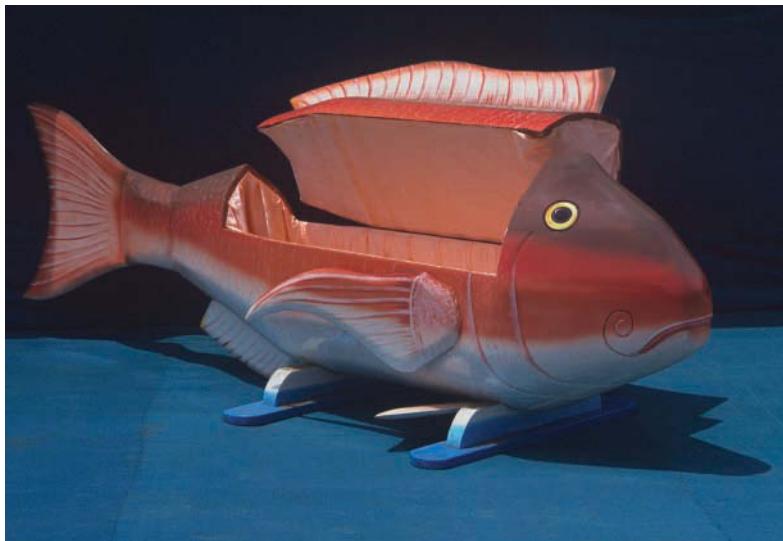
Qur'an 20:55

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

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

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

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



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



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

Non-religious funeral services

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

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

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

The service will be led by a humanist celebrant.

- ▶ **Meaning:** The service will try to show respect for the dead person without suggesting that they are going to a better place. They will be remembered for their special, unique qualities, the life they led and the achievements they made.

Tasks

- 1 Copy and complete the table below, identifying the key rites during a Christian funeral and their symbolism or meaning.

Funeral Rite	Symbolism/meaning

- 2 Explain the key benefits of a funeral for both the living and dead. Where possible provide specific examples from the religious traditions or denominations you are studying.



► End of section review

Knowledge check

- 1 Write a short paragraph (roughly three sentences) to explain what is meant by the soul.
- 2 Why might there be differences of belief about the afterlife within one religion?
- 3 Explain how a funeral reflects religious beliefs about the afterlife.

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Afterlife
- Soul

Key teachings about:

- the afterlife
- judgement

Key practices:

- Religious and non-religious attitudes towards funerals

Skills Link

- 1 From two different religions or two religious traditions, explain beliefs about life after death.



The Big Question

'Death is the end.'

Your task

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



Task

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

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

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

Finally, Christians such as believe that

This means that/Because of this they

Their beliefs do/do not differ because

► Exam focus

Issues of life and death

(a) questions

Tim has answered an (a) type of question. Look at the grade descriptors on page vii. How many marks would you give. Why?

(a) What is meant by 'sanctity of life'?

This means when life is considered sacred e.g. euthanasia.

(d) questions

For (d) type questions in the life and death unit responses must include reference to non-religious beliefs. Look at the question below:

(d) 'It is a woman's right to choose abortion.'

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

(You must refer to religious and non-religious beliefs, such as those held by humanists and atheists, in your answer.)

Sammy has considered a number of points he can make.

He wants to include two from different religious traditions but also needs to identify religious teachings or a sacred text for each. Look back through the chapter; which religious teachings would you use? Which non-religious teachings would you use and what evidence might you give?

- There are no hard and fast rules. All medical situations depend upon the context (a relative/situationist approach).
- Application of the principle of utilitarianism.
- Many religions believe days are fixed and a part of God's plan.
- Life is too sacred to be placed in the hands of human beings (sanctity of life).
- Since life is created by God it must be revered from the moment of conception.
- Up to four months after conception, ensoulment has not taken place.
- The importance of Pikuach Nefesh.
- Peter Singer's ideas that human beings have no special right to life just because they are humans (speciesism).
- Circumstances should be taken into account: rape, poverty, disability, situation of the mother and/or father etc. when considering abortion – quality of life is paramount.

3

Issues of good and evil

► The Big Picture

Key Concepts



Good That which is considered morally right, beneficial and to our advantage.



Evil That which is considered extremely immoral, wicked and wrong.



Forgiveness To grant pardon for a wrongdoing; to give up resentment and the desire to seek revenge against a wrongdoer.



Free will The ability to make choices voluntarily and independently. The belief that nothing is pre-determined.



Justice Fairness; where everyone has equal provisions and opportunity.



Morality Principles and standards determining which actions are right or wrong.



Punishment A penalty given to someone for a crime or wrong they have done.



Sin Deliberate immoral action, breaking a religious or moral law.



Suffering Pain or distress caused by injury, illness or loss. Suffering can be physical, emotional/psychological or spiritual.

Core Questions



What makes an act wrong?

Why do people suffer?

What causes crime?

What are the aims of punishment?

How are criminals treated in the twenty-first century?

Is it ever right to execute someone?

How do we make moral decisions?

Is it really possible to forgive?

Task

Discuss some of the 'core questions' on page 83 in pairs. Write a brief answer to one of them, showing you have thought about different perspectives.



Overview

This chapter explores the nature of good and evil and how both are related to suffering. You will look at religious and non-religious teachings, beliefs and attitudes to suffering, crime, punishment and forgiveness.

Firstly, you will explore what 'good' really is and what makes an act 'wrong'. You will examine the role that free will and conscience play in moral decision-making, and the different types of morality that exist.

You will then move on to question the causes of crime and the aims of punishment. The concepts of justice and reformation will be introduced, as will the work of prison reformers and prison chaplains (both religious and non-religious). The ethics of the death penalty will then be explored in detail, enabling you to apply religious, non-religious, ethical and social arguments to the debate.

From here you will examine the nature, purpose and process of forgiveness. Through examining modern, historical and religious examples, you will reflect upon the moral question of whether forgiveness is really possible.

Finally, you will consider the philosophical problems with the presence of evil and suffering in the world. Philosophical ideas about the origin and nature of evil will be investigated. You will conclude by examining how the existence of evil and suffering can challenge a belief in God.

Throughout the course of this chapter you will consider the role these issues play in twenty-first-century Britain. You will examine the diversity of belief and interpretation that exists both between and within religions.



What are the aims of punishments like imprisonment?



Why is there suffering in the world?



How might religious people respond to issues of suffering, evil and forgiveness?

Crime and punishment

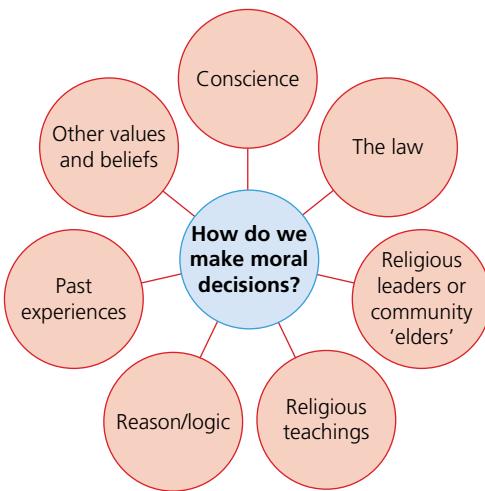
How do people make moral decisions?

Key Concept



Morality Principles and standards determining which actions are right or wrong.

Conscience an inner voice which keeps a person on the right track; a sense of right and wrong; an instinct (some think given by God) to help us to make the right choices.



Free will is a human's ability to make free choices in life.

What is 'wrong'?

Any act or pattern of behaviour which contravenes accepted moral, religious or ethical codes is considered to be 'wrong'. Much like 'good', 'wrong' is a relative term.

Making **moral** decisions is not a straightforward, risk-free process. We all have a **conscience**, which helps us to assess the right choice to make when reviewing a situation. Some believe that our conscience develops as we grow older, and that it grows through the process of making right decisions. It also grows through the guilt felt when making the wrong decisions. Some people also believe that our conscience gives us advance warning of whether the decision we are about to make is right or wrong. We then choose. It is our **free will** which enables us to make decisions and choices that are genuinely our own.

- ▶ Our past experiences allow us to learn the rightness and wrongness of our actions, partially through the responses of others to our behaviour and choices. The human brain has evolved to learn from previous experiences and use these reflections to help us to make decisions in the future.
- ▶ The law offers us strict guidance for our behaviour. Laws are made by our elected representatives in government, and exist to help maintain order, peace and harmony. Breaking these laws is met with punishments such as fines, community service and prison.
- ▶ Many people (both religious believers and those without a religious belief) consult either religious leaders or community elders for advice and guidance before making difficult moral decisions. It is widely accepted that these individuals have the wisdom, experience and knowledge to offer counselling. They have usually received special training to understand and interpret holy scriptures and teachings, and many are seen to be God's representatives on earth.
- ▶ Religious believers also look towards their religious teachings before making moral decisions. These are found within the sacred texts of each tradition: the Bible, the Qur'an and Hadith, and the Torah. In the modern world, there are many moral decisions for which ancient sacred texts are unable to provide specific guidance. In situations like these, believers look to religious leaders to interpret and attempt to apply teachings. They also look towards the example of prophets such as Muhammad or other notable individuals from within the religious tradition such as Martin Luther King or Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Other forms of belief which sit outside of strict moral codes and religious beliefs can also guide decision-making. For example, many people, such as humanists, take what is known as a 'situation ethics' approach to making decisions. Every single instance of moral decision-making is viewed as totally unique (because the circumstances of each case are always different) and choices are made with the guiding principle that the well-being of people is the most important thing.



The What Would Jesus Do (WWJD) movement was started by Evangelical Christians in America in the 1990s. It has since become popular in Britain. The bracelet is worn as a reminder of a person's Christian beliefs and to prompt them to make decisions that will be in keeping with the life and teachings of Jesus.

Virtues

A virtue is a quality thought of as good, right and honest. Examples are: chastity, temperance, charity, diligence, patience, kindness, and humility. Practising these virtues is believed to keep people safe from the temptation to commit sin.

Utilitarian decision-making – when choices are made based on the principle of creating the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people – is another example.

Finally, some people look to reason and logic to guide their moral decision-making. This is when decisions are made according to strict principles. In practice, it means looking at the moral dilemma away from our emotions and ideas from religion, law or accepted codes of moral behaviour, and making a decision rationally – according to a set of agreed principles.

► Types of morality

There are two common forms of **morality**:

- ▶ Absolute morality is when a person has a principle such as 'it is wrong to kill' and never alters it. They apply this principle or moral standard to all situations, no matter what the context or circumstance. This person might believe that all killing, including in war, is wrong. Within both the Islamic and Christian traditions there are examples of groups who traditionally adopt an absolute moralist approach, for example Catholics and Quaker Christians.
- ▶ Relative morality is when a person holds a moral principle but is prepared to adapt or adjust it in certain situations. This person might believe that, if it reduces suffering in the future, killing in war might be necessary. Buddhists and many Protestant Christian denominations like the Church of England would be considered relative moralists. Similarly, humanists follow a relative moral approach to judging situations and moral dilemmas.

Tasks

- 1 In your own words, explain what moral decision-making is and summarise how moral decisions are made by identifying five different factors.
- 2 Explain the difference between absolute and relative morality. For each, give an example of a viewpoint that would be held (for example abortion is always wrong) and a religious group that would follow that stance.
- 3 Choose three different factors that help us to make moral decisions. For each, explain their importance and how they work.
- 4 Read and reproduce the quote below from William Penn. Is he an absolute or relative moralist? Explain how you can tell.

'Right is right, even if everyone is against it, and wrong is wrong, even if everyone is for it.'

William Penn, a seventeenth-century Quaker and founder of Pennsylvania, USA

► Crime

What is crime?

Crime can be defined as any offence that is punishable by law. The government makes laws which govern our behaviour, the police force prevents and detects crime, and the principal job of the criminal justice system (including courts and judges) is to enforce these laws and punish crime. Throughout the course of history, what constitutes a crime, ideas about the causes of crime and how criminals should be punished have changed.

Crime versus sin

Key Concept


SIN

Sin Deliberate immoral action, breaking a religious or moral law.

Shari'ah law Muslim law based upon the Qur'an.

Although there are many **sins** that can be punished by law, a great many sins are not considered crimes in modern society. For example, while it goes against the Ten Commandments to commit adultery (to have an affair) and to work on a Sunday, neither are crimes according to the law.

The consequences of committing a sin are critically different. For Christians, sinful behaviour can lead to personal suffering, offending God, excommunication (being cut off from the Church) or even exclusion from heaven.

Jews believe that, while to sin is part of human life, those who sin will suffer in this life in order to atone for their behaviour.

For Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists, sinful behaviour affects **karma**, leading to negative consequences either in this life or the next.

Through **Shari'ah law**, Muslims who openly go against accepted religious codes can receive specified punishments.

Life in twenty-first-century Britain

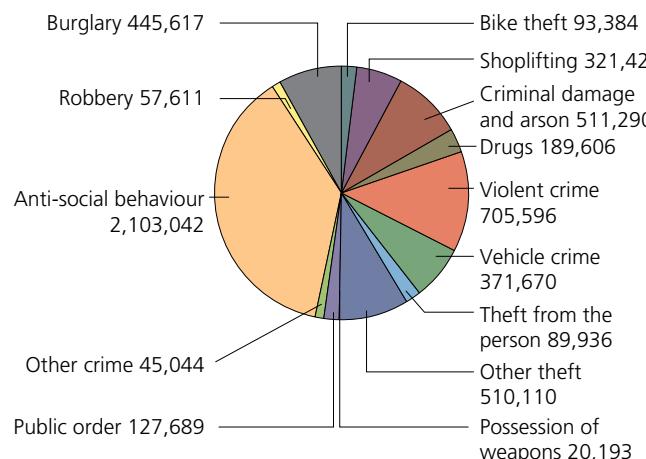
Today in Britain, over 30,000 crimes are believed to be committed each day. These range from crimes against property and people to internet crime and fraud. Many of these crimes are not reported to the police, which means it is very difficult to know the true extent of criminal behaviour in Britain. Recent crime statistics show that people are at more risk of falling victim to cybercrime than ever before.

Despite the fact that statistically the most danger is posed by anti-social behaviour, society has become most concerned with extremism, terrorism and sexual offences.

Examples of sins

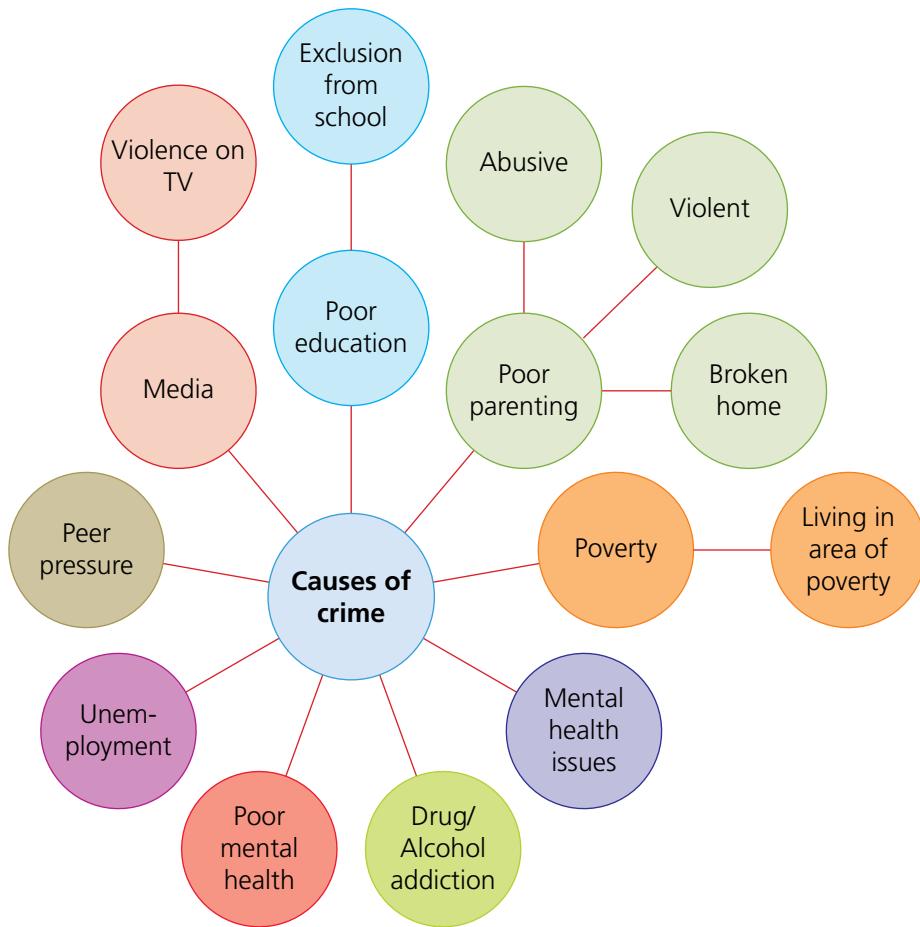
Most religions agree on the main sins of humanity. These are sometimes referred to as the Seven Deadly Sins, and are believed to be the source of all other vices:

- Pride
- Greed
- Lust
- Envy
- Gluttony
- Wrath
- Sloth



► Causes of crime

The causes of crime are complex. Most people today accept that poverty, parental neglect, low self-esteem, and alcohol and drug abuse are all connected in explaining why people commit crimes. Some people are simply at greater risk of becoming offenders because of the circumstances into which they are born.



Tasks

- 1 Define what 'crime' is.
- 2 Explain the difference between crime and sin. Give two examples for each.
- 3 Write a short paragraph to identify the main causes of crime. Give clear examples of three.



In society, it is important that people are brought up with a good understanding of the concepts of good and bad and the difference between the two. Members of any society have a duty to follow the laws of the country. When citizens choose not to be law-abiding, chaos ensues. Because of this, parents and schools have a moral responsibility to teach the difference between right and wrong so that young people will be respectful of others and, critically, not commit crime. All major religions agree on the importance of law in society and the role it plays in maintaining order and protecting citizens.

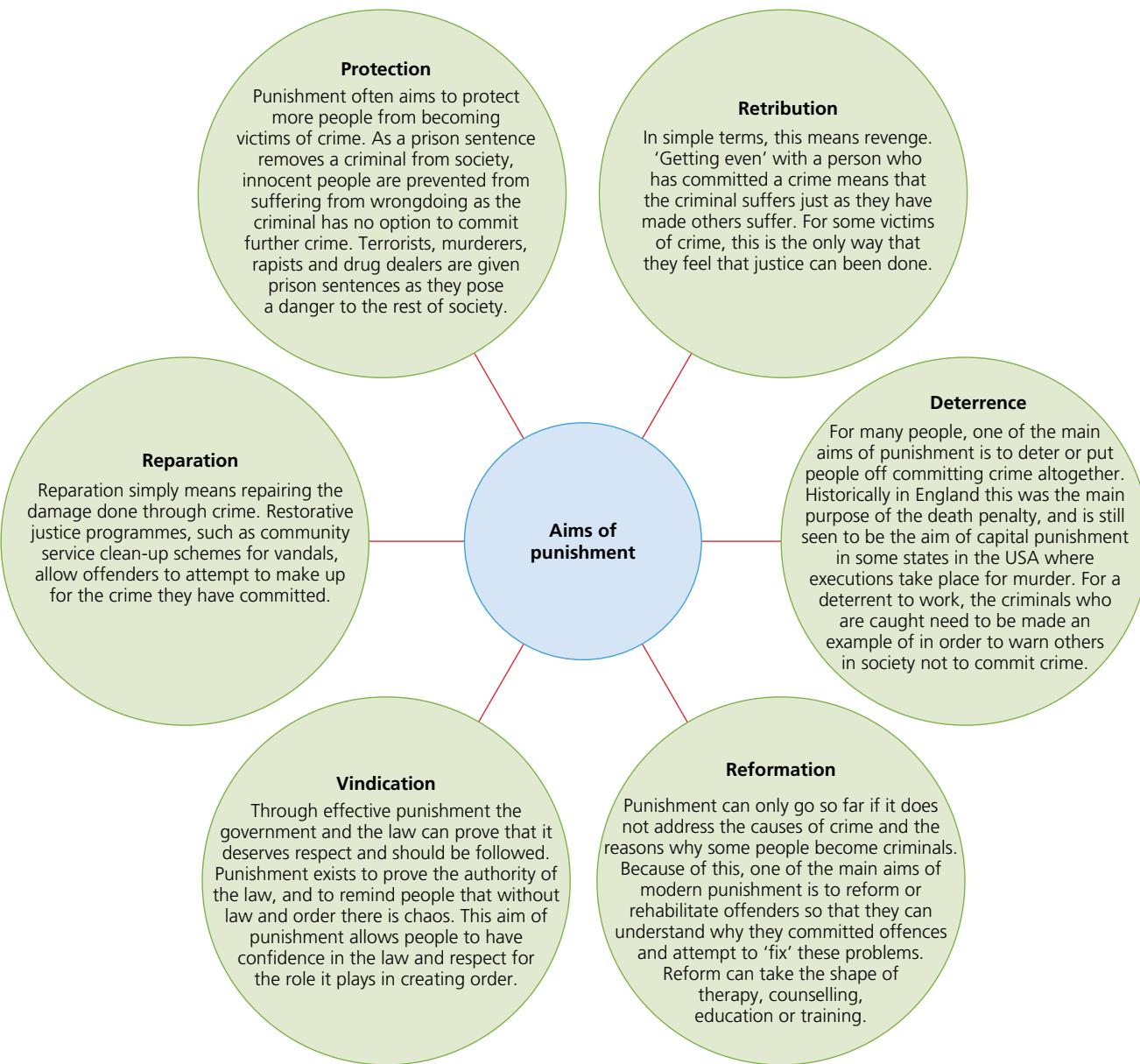
► Aims of punishment

Key Concept



Punishment A penalty given to someone for a crime or wrong they have done.

When detected and prosecuted, criminal behaviour results in **punishment**. There are a number of different punishment options available to judges (such as community service, fines and prison terms). Often, a judge will consider several different purposes when sentencing a person for committing a crime.



Utilitarianism the belief that a good act is one that brings the greatest good for the greatest number. Also known as the principle of the greatest happiness.

Punishment and utilitarianism

Utilitarianism and punishment are closely linked. The utilitarian theory of punishment is about punishing offenders to discourage, or ‘deter’, future wrongdoing. Laws and prison should be used to maximise the happiness of society. Because crime and punishment are inconsistent with happiness, they should be kept to a minimum. Small numbers of criminals suffer punishment in order to benefit the large numbers of people in society.

‘It is the greatest good to the greatest number which is the measure of right and wrong.’

Jeremy Bentham

Tasks

- 1 Draw a table like the one below. Copy the six aims of punishment from the diagram on page 89 into the first column. Explain what each aim means in the second column and then summarise each, in no more than four words, in the final column.

Purpose	Explanation	Summary (four words)
Retribution		Getting your own back

- 2 How are utilitarianism and punishment linked?



► Justice

Key Concept



Justice Fairness; where everyone has equal provisions and opportunity.

What is justice?

Strictly speaking, **justice** simply translates as fairness. When talking about crime and punishment, most people take justice to mean that a criminal is caught, fairly tried in court, and given a punishment which both fits the crime and allows the victim to overcome their resentment.

Both religions and governments focus upon maintaining justice as a key feature of a moral society.

The relationship between justice and punishment

Many people would agree that justice cannot be achieved without some form of punishment. For justice to truly be achieved, however, the punishment must address the cause of the crime and reflect the severity of the crime. It would be totally inappropriate to give a murderer a community service order, but similarly it would be ineffective to give a drug addict a life sentence in a high-security prison.

‘It is better to risk saving a guilty person than to condemn an innocent one.’

Voltaire

Life in twenty-first-century Britain

'Prisons are schools for crime.'

The prison system in Britain is at breaking point. Numbers in prison have never been so high, and yet neither have rates of reoffending on release. Something, it seems, is not working properly. There are many benefits to prisons. They protect society from violent and dangerous criminals, and remove those who have done wrong from their families, friends and communities (retribution). Criminals are given the opportunity to reflect on their actions and potentially reform. Furthermore, prison can be seen as a deterrent.

On the other hand, many prisoners reoffend on release, with the rates higher for those who have received short

sentences of less than a year. Prison has a poor record for reducing reoffending – 46 per cent of adults are reconvicted within one year of release. For those serving sentences of less than 12 months this increases to 58 per cent. Over two-thirds (67 per cent) of under 18-year-olds are reconvicted within a year of release. There are several reasons for this. It can be incredibly difficult to get a job with a criminal record, which can add to the bitterness and resentment felt at having served a prison sentence. On top of this, prisons are often referred to as 'schools of crime' – and it is well known that many prisoners educate each other in criminal methods.

Stats from PrisonReformTrust.org. Bromley Briefings Summer 2014

Tasks

- 1 What is 'justice'?
- 2 Explain why it is important to think about justice when punishing someone for a crime.
- 3 For the religions that you are studying, explain their attitude to punishment and justice. Make sure you outline both beliefs (teachings and ideas) and practice (actions or behaviour).
- 4 Look Voltaire's quote on page 90. What view on punishment do you think he holds?
- 5 Read the 'Life in twenty-first-century Britain' article about prisons. Copy and complete the table below, identifying the current benefits and problems with prisons.

Benefits	Problems

► Religious attitudes to punishment and justice

Christian attitudes to punishment and justice

Christianity is a religion of forgiveness, and as such Christians do not support the idea of retribution as a purpose of punishment. Christians do, however, believe in justice, which means that forgiveness and punishment should go together. Christians should try to follow the example of Jesus who forgave those who betrayed him. Because of this, many support punishment practices which lead to forgiveness, for example **restorative justice** programmes in prisons.

Similarly, Jesus taught compassion and not revenge and because of this many Christians have been actively involved in prison reform to ensure that people are treated humanely in prison. They also believe that it is important to recognise and address the causes of criminal behaviour, such as poverty, unemployment and poor social conditions

as a means of restoring social justice and preventing crime. Most Christians also firmly believe that punishment should enable a person to reform – to change their ways on release from prison and add value to the community. Some Christians have become prison chaplains (see page 94) so that they can help prisoners to reform effectively.

'But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream.'

Amos 5:24

Restorative justice a system of justice that enables criminals to make amends for their behaviour by meeting with their victim and apologising.

Islamic attitudes to punishment and justice



Although forgiveness is very important in Islam, so is the need to protect society (called the ummah) and keep law and order. Punishment is therefore seen as central to justice and essential in keeping people from straying from what is good and just. 'Shari'ah' translates as 'straight path' and Shari'ah law outlines both the rules to live by and the punishments if these laws are broken.

Many Shari'ah law punishments are designed to deter as well as protect society from further wrongdoing, for example: cutting off a hand for theft, or a receiving a

beating in full view of the local community. For Muslims, punishment has nothing to do with removing sin as only God can forgive – it is a way of keeping law and order. Muslims do hope, however, that offenders will repent, reform and seek forgiveness both from God and their victims.

'Indeed, God orders justice and good conduct and giving [help] to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.'

Qur'an 16:90

Jewish attitudes to punishment and justice



Within Judaism, there is a firm principle that people have been given free will and must therefore take responsibility for their actions. Jews believe that punishment should deter, protect society, provide retribution and promote justice. Just as God created a just world, Jews believe that they must practise justice themselves. Judges must be appointed to rule over the actions of others. They should be fair and incorruptible. The Torah also contains many laws giving instructions on how crime should be punished. There are many different

views on the issue of punishment within Judaism. Members of the Reform Jewish community are often active in protesting for the fair treatment of prisoners while in jail. Like Muslims and Christians, Jews are taught that they should be forgiving; however, within Judaism, only the victim is able to forgive as no one can be forgiven on behalf of others. Offenders should repent and ask God's forgiveness by avoiding repeat offending, giving money to charity and fasting – especially on the Day of Atonement.

► How are criminals treated in modern prisons?

Life in twenty-first-century Britain

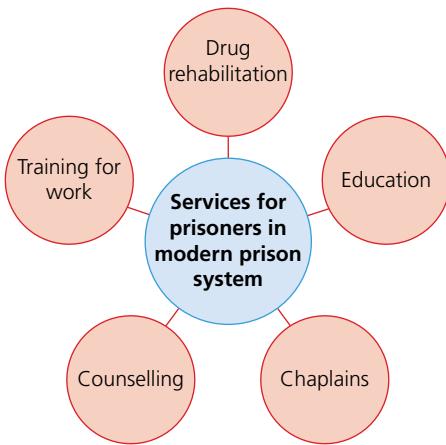
'Prisoners riot over poor treatment and overcrowding.'

Since prisons were first built there has been concern about how the prisoners within them are treated. There are many different opinions about what prison should achieve, and because of this there are a great many opinions about the kind of treatment prisoners should receive. Some feel that prison should be a place of isolation and punishment, and that prisoners should have few if any privileges, such as access to television or computers. Many others, however, see prisons as a place

of rehabilitation and reform. Because of this they believe that the treatment that prisoners receive should enable them to address the root cause of their criminality and equip them for life as a responsible citizen.

The treatment of prisoners is a carefully monitored thing. Prisoners are entitled to humane treatment which shows respect for their human rights. No matter what the arguments about prison regimes, the fact remains that many prisoners continue to complain about overcrowding, poor treatment and a lack of access to important services. Many argue that the impact of poor prison conditions can be seen in rising rates of assault, self-harm and suicide among inmates.

► Prison reformers



Reformer someone who lobbies or pressurises for change.

Quaker (also known as the Society of Friends) a Christian denomination whose central belief is that every human being contains a reflection of the image of God.

Britain has a proud history of prison **reformers**, many of whom were inspired by their religious beliefs to lobby for change.

John Howard was a committed Calvinist (Protestant Christian) and inspected prisons in the late eighteenth century. He found them to be diseased, dirty and corrupt, and gave evidence to Parliament with recommendations that conditions and practices be improved. He called for basic but essential provisions such as clean running water, separate cells for men and women, access to doctors, and greater numbers of prison officers to support and ensure the safety of inmates. This was at a time when the majority of prisons were privately run for profit.

Elizabeth Fry was a nineteenth-century **Quaker** prison reformer, who dedicated her life to improving the state of British prisons after visiting Newgate Prison in London in 1813. She was a passionate advocate of education in prisons and looked towards reforming prisoners as opposed to simply isolating them from society. She is most famous for teaching female prisoners to read and write and holding Bible readings for inmates.

By the 1870s ideas both about prison and prisons themselves had changed dramatically. Purpose-built institutions (like Pentonville Prison in London) were to be found across the country, and a lively debate about how to treat prisoners once in jail had been born. Finally, real thought was being given to how we should approach the reform of individuals once in prison.



Elizabeth Fry, a prison reformer chosen to feature on the £5 note

Life in twenty-first-century Britain

The prison population of England and Wales is 85,641, compared to 44,246 in 1993. Reoffending rates are high. According to the National Audit Office, reoffending costs us the equivalent of staging another Olympic Games every year. In light of these figures, many again are calling for a reform of prisons and prison regimes.

According to Government statistics, only 53 per cent of the prison population have any qualifications, compared to 85 per cent of the working-age population. The key focus of current discussions about prison reform are therefore focussed on education. The Government recently announced plans to overhaul the prison system in Britain, calling for prisoners to be viewed and treated as 'potential assets, not liabilities'.

Tasks

- 1 In your own words, explain what the term 'reformer' means.
- 2 What was wrong with the early prisons in Britain?
- 3 In a mind map, identify the four main suggestions that John Howard made to improve prisons in the eighteenth century. For each suggest how it would improve prisons.
- 4 Explain the current concerns with prisons in twenty-first-century Britain. Extend your answer by mentioning what the government is hoping to improve.



► Care for prisoners – chaplains

What is a chaplain?

For many of us, our only experience of chaplains is through movies or television. Here they are often portrayed as people on the side-lines, without a uniform or an easily defined role, who give out quick slices of advice. Traditionally, a chaplain is a minister, such as a priest, pastor, rabbi, imam or community member of a religious tradition. They are attached to non-religious institutions such as hospitals, prisons, schools or universities. Their job is to provide ‘pastoral’ care for patients, pupils, or in this case, prisoners.

What is their role?

Prison chaplains have a demanding and essential job, providing counselling to inmates, supporting them through their rehabilitation and seeing to their spiritual (and often religious) needs. Prisoners have to deal with a complex mixture of emotions and needs during their sentence, and they often need someone who is not a prison officer or warden to offer support. Fear, loneliness, guilt, concerns about family or children on the outside – all of these become the concern of the prison chaplain. In addition to this, chaplains often help prisoners re-enter the community, working with **parole officers** and other volunteers. Families of inmates also have access to prison chaplains. Family members can be the victims of the inmates’ crimes and require the care of the chaplain just as much as the inmate.



Prison chaplains help prisoners deal with both their emotional and practical needs

Chaplains do not have to be religious, and it is documented that 32 per cent of the prison population have no religious faith. Since 2011 the British Humanist Society has been running a project with Humanist Pastoral Support Volunteers at Winchester Prison. This includes meeting inmates with ‘nil’ religion on admission, holding discussion groups and providing counselling, such as bereavement support, for inmates. This is especially important as often prisoners are unable to attend funerals of loved ones or benefit from the type of community support offered to those who have suffered the loss of family or friends.

‘You are there primarily for the inmates. Most offenders are also victims. That doesn’t mean that we feel sorry for them; but we do offer them enough compassion.’

Kate Johnson, Quaker and prison chaplain

Tasks

- 1 What is a prison chaplain and what is their role?
- 2 Explain by offering two specific examples why you think chaplains are important in prisons. Tip: Use excerpts from the quotes of chaplains as evidence or to support your explanations.

Why do people become chaplains?

'As a Quaker I believe that there is something of God in everyone – no matter how they have behaved or what crimes they have committed. I feel it is my duty to advocate for them.'

Through my work as chaplain I am following Jesus' commands – I am showing compassion, love and kindness.

There are so many problems in prison that cannot be solved by therapy, doctors or rehab. These problems are outside of religion – they are matters of the spirit.

People are more than the worst thing they have ever done in their lives.

Helen Prejean

Helen Prejean is a Roman Catholic Nun, and leading advocate for the abolition of the death penalty. She began her prison ministry in 1981, when she began writing to a death row inmate.

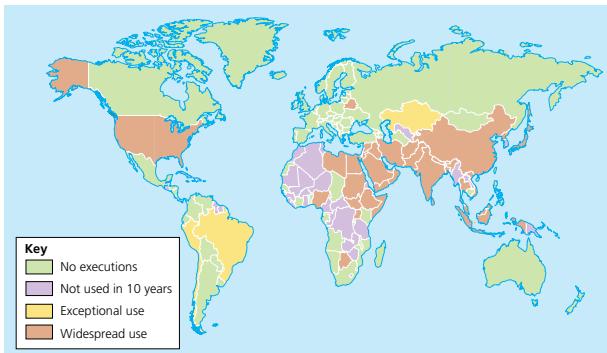
'Prison chaplains are non-judgemental. We are not there to judge their actions. Loss of freedom is the punishment for the crime and this becomes particularly apparent when they are unable to attend events, whether joyous or sad. That's when reality hits home and makes them aware of the consequences of their actions. We are there to empathise and give them hope for the future.'

Michael Binstock: Director of Jewish Prison Chaplaincy

The death penalty

The death penalty has been a feature of punishment practices for thousands of years. It has been used by societies across the world to deter crime and to punish the very worst criminal behaviours. Also referred to as capital punishment or execution, the death penalty is still legal in over 80 different countries (although 50 of these countries have not used execution as a punishment in the last ten years). The majority of the countries that retain the death penalty are African or Asian-Pacific nations like China, Afghanistan and Iran. The greatest exception to this is the United States of America. Of the 50 states in America, 31 allow execution in both law and practice for the crimes of murder and treason. Death row, the name given to the area where death penalty convicts reside in prison, has now become a popular feature of film, TV programmes and documentaries.

Methods of execution have changed over the past century as governments look for cheaper but more **humane** ways to end the life of convicts. In America, executions can take the form of lethal injection, electric chair, gas chamber, firing squad or hanging (although in practice lethal injection is most widely used). Other less humane methods still in use include decapitation (North Korea and Saudi Arabia), shooting under anaesthetic (Taiwan) and stoning (Sudan).



Worldwide use of the death penalty

Humane showing kindness and compassion.

Tasks

- 1 Copy and complete the table below. Add five statements that agree with the death penalty and five that disagree.

Agree with the use of the death penalty	Disagree with the use of the death penalty

- 2 Write down what you believe the death penalty is designed to achieve?



Life in twenty-first-century Britain

The UK parliament abolished the death penalty in 1969. Although public opinion has at times been in favour of reinstating execution for the worst criminals, all attempts to bring it back have failed. Some of the last people to be executed, including Derek Bentley, who was convicted of being involved in the killing of a policeman, have since received pardons after their death. Essentially this means that they should not have been convicted in the first place.

Last discussed in parliament in 1998 during the passage of the Human Rights Act, the death penalty has always been hotly debated. The British Social Attitudes survey has recorded popular attitudes to the death penalty since 1983. Since then, the number of those in favour of execution has fallen from 75 per cent to 48 per cent in 2015. The UK is now among the 82 per cent of global nations that do not use the death penalty.

There are a number of key arguments and beliefs linked with the death penalty.

- The death penalty is just state-sanctioned murder.
- There is evidence that innocent people have been executed.
- The death penalty does not deter murderers.
- Only God has the right to end a life.
- Two wrongs do not make a right.
- The state should be a moral force for good.
- Forgiveness is important.
- The death penalty disproportionately affects members of racial, ethnic and religious minorities, as well as those living in poverty.
- Life terms in prison are very expensive – £40,000 per year.
- Some people – such as the criminally insane – cannot be reformed.
- It is the only way that victims can experience closure.
- There has to be an ultimate punishment for the very worst crimes.
- In Britain, life sentences amount to 15 years.
- Execution is the only way to truly protect society from very dangerous murderers and terrorists.

► Religious teachings – the death penalty

Christian attitudes to the death penalty

Christian attitudes to the death penalty vary. This is due to different interpretations of the Bible (specifically the Old Testament) and the extent to which teachings about the sanctity of life and Jesus' examples of compassion and forgiveness over-rule early biblical teachings about justice.

Liberal Christians

Most Christians believe that only God has the right to take a life. Execution goes against the sanctity of life, as all life is precious and only God should end it. Christians believe that God commanded 'Thou shalt not kill' (Exodus 20:13), and that this is a clear instruction. Christians should also follow the teachings of Jesus to be compassionate and forgiving. Jesus was openly forgiving to the adulterous woman (John 8) and also pleaded with God for his executioners to be forgiven when he was on the cross:

'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do'.

Luke 23:33–34

Many Christians favour reform over execution, and because of this many have been involved in prison reform and continue to work in prisons as chaplains. Jesus also taught us to 'turn the other cheek' (Matthew 5:38–39), to love our enemies and to forgive (Matthew 5:43–47). Execution makes all of these impossible. The Golden rule of 'do to others what you want them to do to you' also compels us to treat others as we would wish to be treated.

Quakers

Quakers have campaigned against the death penalty since 1818. All human life should be respected as every person is a reflection of God/contains a little of God. Quakers firmly believe that punishments should be used to reform. Some of the first prison reformers were Quakers who worked to maintain the dignity and humanity of prisoners.



'Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.'

Romans 12:17–18

Conservative Christians

Some Christians advocate the death penalty, seeing it as following the Old Testament law of 'an eye for an eye'. In the Old Testament it states:

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

Genesis 9:6

In total, the Old Testament specifies 36 capital offences including crimes such as idolatry, magic and blasphemy, as well as murder. Some Christians would therefore argue that the death penalty was not only approved, but created by God. Some Christians also argue that capital punishment upholds the commandment 'thou shalt not kill' by showing the seriousness of the crime of murder.

Catholics

Catholic Christians are also divided. Traditionally the Catholic Church has allowed (but not encouraged) capital punishment. In 1997, the Vatican issued a statement saying that execution was acceptable where the identity of the criminal was absolutely confirmed and where execution was the only means to protect society from the aggressor. It did, however, state that non-lethal means of punishment were:

'more in keeping with the concrete conditions of the common good and... the dignity of the human person'.

Pope John Paul II – The Gospel of Life



Muslim attitudes to the death penalty

Islam as a whole accepts capital punishment. Muslims believe that capital punishment is a severe sentence but one that can be issued for the most severe crimes. While criminals will be punished by God on the Day of Judgement, Muslims also believe that they should be punished on earth.

 Forgiveness is important (and is preferred if possible) but so is the need to protect the ummah (Muslim community). Islam sees punishment as being central to justice. This means that all punishment is part of justice and stops people from straying down the wrong path.

The Qur'an 17:33 forbids the taking of life:

'Nor take life – which God has made sacred, except for just cause'.

Most Muslims agree that this 'just cause', for which the death penalty is permitted, is the crimes of murder and openly attacking Islam.

Most Muslim countries (for example, Saudi Arabia and Iran) retain the death penalty. Methods of execution in Islamic countries vary and can include beheading, firing squad, hanging and stoning. In some countries public executions are carried out to provide a deterrent.

Islamic countries that practise very strict Shari'ah law are associated with the use of capital punishment as punishment for the largest variety of crimes; for example for adultery, homosexuality, terrorism and treason.

There is a small but growing number of Muslims who disagree with the death penalty and call for it to be abolished. They argue that Shari'ah law is often used by repressive governments that attack women and the poor. In addition, there are examples of these countries executing the accused while denying them access to a lawyer or a proper trial. These acts are totally against the concept of Islamic justice.

Jewish attitudes to the death penalty



There are many different Jewish views on the death penalty.

The Torah stipulates several offences for which capital punishment could be used, and is clear in its guidance concerning the justice of using the death penalty:

'One who takes a human life must be put to death. If one kills an animal, he must pay for it, [the value of] a life for a life. If one maims his neighbour, he must be penalised accordingly. Thus, full compensation must be paid for a fracture or the loss of an eye or a tooth. If one inflicts injury on another person, he must [pay as if the same injury were] inflicted on him.'

Leviticus 24:17–20

According to the **Mishnah** the death penalty could only be inflicted, after trial, by a **Sanhedrin** composed of 23 judges and there were four types of death penalty: stoning, burning, slaying (by the sword) and strangling. Heavy restrictions and conditions are placed on the use of execution, for example the requirement for two witnesses to the crime itself and for both of those witnesses to have issued warning prior to the crime being committed.

Mishnah the Oral Torah.

Sanhedrin a council or assembly of men appointed in every city in the Land of Israel.

Orthodox Judaism

As the death penalty is allowed in the Torah, some Orthodox Jews believe that it should be allowed for certain crimes. However, many rabbis and Jewish academics view this guidance with suspicion, as it means that in practice it is virtually impossible to issue a death sentence. What it shows is that the death penalty is permitted, but should only be used with the greatest of caution.

Israel allows the death penalty for acts of genocide, treason and murder – although in practice it is rarely used. In fact, when Israel was made a Jewish state there was wide debate about whether or not to abolish the death penalty entirely. The last person to be executed in Israel was Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann in 1962. Now the death penalty exists purely as a deterrent and not as retribution.

Reform Judaism

Since 1959, the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) has formally opposed the death penalty. They said that 'both in concept and in practice, Jewish tradition found capital punishment repugnant' and there is no persuasive evidence 'that capital punishment serves as a deterrent to crime'. The death penalty also goes against the commandment not to kill (Exodus 20:13).

Humanist attitudes to the death penalty



Capital punishment is generally opposed by humanists because they think premeditated killing is wrong, even when carried out by the state. The death penalty raises the possibility of error and an irreversible failure of justice by

issuing a sentence that cannot be reversed. Humanists believe treating criminals fairly also helps to ensure that innocent suspects are treated fairly.

► Arguing for the death penalty

For those arguing from outside a strict religious belief, views about the death penalty are affected by a number of factors. Some people argue that there needs to be an ultimate punishment to act as a deterrent, and feel that for the greater good of society the death penalty is necessary. Some religious believers agree with these arguments and believe that religious teachings on justice allow for the use of the death penalty.



'While the evidence tells me that the death penalty does little to deter crime, I believe there are some crimes – mass murder, the rape and murder of a child – so heinous, so beyond the pale, that the community is justified in expressing the full measure of its outrage by meting out the ultimate punishment.'

Barack Obama, President of the USA, 2006

'I believe that people who go out prepared to take the lives of other people forfeit their own right to live. I believe that that death penalty should be used only very rarely, but I believe that no-one should go out certain that no matter how cruel, how vicious, how hideous their murder, they themselves will not suffer the death penalty.'

Margaret Thatcher, Former British Prime Minister, 1984

Arguments for Britain using the death penalty

In the last ten years, there have been plenty of examples of the system of justice and punishment in the UK failing to work, and many more examples of dangerous criminals who need to be permanently removed from society. Here are some examples of those cases, and sadly of the victims who paid the price:

- In July 2010 Jonathan Vass, 30, murdered his ex-girlfriend Jane Clough, 26, after he had been released on bail for raping her. He was jailed for 30 years.

- Myles Williams, 19, from East London, was convicted for the murder of his girlfriend Kirsty Treloar who was 20. He had previously been arrested for violently dragging her along the street, but was released on bail (on the condition that he did not contact her).
- Nathan McLeod, 16, murdered Temidayo Ogunneye, 15, for a mobile phone in May 2011. Earlier that day he had been granted bail at Camberwell Youth Court in London after being accused of attacking a gas man with a bread knife.



Average cost of keeping a person in jail for a year: \$58,351



Average cost of a lethal injection: \$1,300

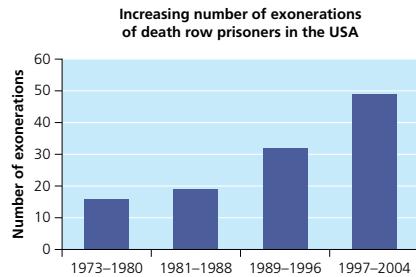


'You have to kill me. I am evil. If you don't I'll just kill again.' Aileen Wuornos, convicted serial killer, Florida. Executed 2002



'You can't have a penalty that isn't reversible – that you can't take back later and say "I'm sorry, we got it wrong" ... It is given out by human beings, and human beings make mistakes'. Ray Krone, former death row inmate

Exoneration means that a conviction for a crime is reversed, either because the prisoner is innocent or there was an error with the trial that led to conviction.



'My objection to the death penalty is based on the idea that this is a democracy, and in a democracy the government is me, and if the government kills somebody then I'm killing somebody.'

Steve Earle, musician

Arguing against the death penalty

Some people see execution of any form as morally wrong, and might argue that there is little evidence that the death penalty works as a deterrent. Religious people might agree with these views and also believe that life is sacred and shouldn't be ended by human beings.

Amnesty International

Amnesty opposes the death penalty absolutely – for all crimes without exception. They believe that:

- The death penalty violates basic human rights in every case.
- Evidence shows that it doesn't deter crime. It is often used within skewed or unfair and corrupt justice systems.
- It discriminates. Statistics show that the death penalty is used disproportionately against the poor, minorities and members of racial, ethnic and religious communities. It also discriminates based on the race of the victim – in the USA you are several times more likely to receive the death penalty if the victim was white than if the victim was African-American.
- It can be used as a political tool. In the USA, many state governors have fast-tracked the executions of inmates during re-election time to prove that they are 'tough on crime'. Similarly, many politicians use the issue of the death penalty to prove that they prioritise protection and justice.

OKLAHOMA INMATE TAKES 43 MINUTES TO DIE AFTER BOTCHED LETHAL INJECTION

BBC News April 2014



Average cost of a prisoner being sentenced to the death penalty: \$3 million



Average cost of a prisoner being sentenced to life imprisonment: \$1.1 million

'I do not think that God approves the death penalty for any crime, rape and murder included. Capital punishment is against the better judgment of modern criminology, and, above all, against the highest expression of love in the nature of God.'

Martin Luther King Jr

Task

'All murderers should be executed.'

Your task

Look at the previous three pages and respond to the statement above, referring to both sides of the argument.

Aim for at least one paragraph for each side of the debate and give a reasoned judgement on the validity and strength of that argument. Conclude your answer with a justification of your own viewpoint.



► End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Justice
- Morality
- Punishment
- Sin

Key teachings about:

- crime and punishment
- the death penalty

Knowledge check

- 1 Explain what the term 'capital punishment' means.
- 2 Create a mind map of the different methods of execution used in the twenty-first century.
- 3 Draw a table with two columns. Add five reasons for agreeing and five reasons for disagreeing with the death penalty.

Agree	Disagree

- 4 Create a Venn diagram to summarise the main beliefs about punishment of your two chosen religions or religious traditions. Ensure that where they overlap, you identify similarities.
- 5 Explain three different Christian viewpoints on the death penalty. For each, you must name the denomination and extend your explanations by highlighting why they differ.

Skills Link



- 1 Giving one example, state what is meant by 'sin'.
- 2 With reference to one religion you have studied, explain views about the use of the death penalty.

The Big Question

'The aim of punishment should be to reform.'

Your task

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

Task



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

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

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

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

■ Forgiveness

Key Concept



Forgiveness To grant pardon for a wrongdoing; to give up resentment and the desire seek revenge against a wrongdoer.

When working for peace and harmony, when trying to rebuild relationships after a wrongdoing, or when differences of opinion and hostility arise, **forgiveness** is essential. Forgiveness enables wrongs to be acknowledged and relationships to be rebuilt.

► Does true forgiveness exist?

True forgiveness is not about forgetting about wrongs done to us – in fact, it often involves exactly the opposite. To forgive properly we have to remember the wrongs done, analyse them, understand them, accept them and then continue to live our lives.

Reverend Julie Nicholson

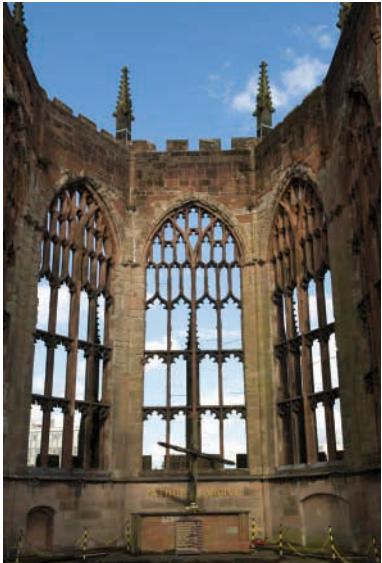
'That wound in me is having to heal'

Forgiveness is not an action, but a process. For many, it is a life-changing process. After the 7/7 suicide bombings in London in 2005, the Reverend Julie Nicholson, whose daughter was one of the 56 who died, resigned from her job as an inner city vicar.

'It's very difficult for me to stand behind an altar ... and lead people in words of peace and **reconciliation** and forgiveness when I feel very far from that myself.'

Mrs Nicholson has said that she cannot forgive her daughter's killers and that she does not want to. She now believes that there are some things that the human spirit simply cannot forgive. The murder of her daughter is one of these things.

Reconciliation accepting an apology, forgiving and moving forward together in harmony.



► Can we learn to forgive?

All religions have clear teachings about the importance of forgiveness. They do not suggest that forgiving is easy or that it comes without further conflict, but they are clear that forgiving enables believers to reach a deeper spiritual understanding about themselves.

Forgiving cannot be taught. We learn to forgive through our own human experience; through reading religious teachings, through being forgiven by others, and through learning of others who have forgiven in spite of the great wrongs done to them.

Following the destruction of Coventry cathedral during German bombing in 1940, a commitment was made not to seek revenge, but to work for forgiveness and reconciliation with those responsible. The altar, which stands in the remains of the destroyed cathedral, features a cross made out of charred wood from the ruins and has the words 'father forgive' inscribed on the wall behind it. The cathedral now houses the Centre for Reconciliation which has provided support to thousands of Christians addressing issues of conflict and forgiveness.



► Religious teachings about forgiveness

Christian attitudes to forgiveness

Beatitudes the blessings listed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

Forgiveness is a prominent theme within Christianity and within the Bible as a whole. Christianity is known as a religion of forgiveness, love and compassion, and these themes are evident in religious teachings and the example of Jesus and other leaders within the faith such as Martin Luther King.

Jesus' teachings

The Bible clearly instructs Christians to forgive:

'Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.'

Luke 6:37

The importance of forgiveness is emphasised in the Lord's Prayer. Christians ask God to 'forgive their sins, as they forgive those who have sinned against them'. This means that Christians can only expect to receive forgiveness from God if they are forgiving towards others.

Jesus taught the importance of forgiveness, which is seen in his teaching in the **Beatitudes**:

'Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.'

Matthew 5:7

His words from the cross demonstrate how central forgiveness is to the Christian tradition:

'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'

Luke 23:35

Jesus' actions

The actions of Jesus offer a further example for Christians to follow, and they are expected to do so. He visited the tax collector Zacchaeus despite his cheating and selfishness and, in doing so, enabled Zacchaeus to make

amends and reform (Luke 19:2–10). He similarly forgave the adulterous woman (John 8:1–11) imploring her to 'go and sin no more'.

Bible stories

Bible stories clearly demonstrate the importance of forgiveness. The story in the Bible of the prodigal son teaches explicitly about forgiveness and repentance. Sometimes known as the Parable of the Forgiving Father, it tells the tale of a son who demands his inheritance from his father, abandons the family home to seek his fortune elsewhere, and returns years later, poor and hungry. The father forgives his son and welcomes him back, despite his wrongdoing (Luke 15:11–24).

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matthew 18:21–22) reinforces the teaching that we must forgive others in order to be forgiven ourselves and that forgiveness is something which should have no limits. In this parable, the servant refuses to forgive a friend for borrowing a small sum of money when he had received a very large sum of money from his master. This teaches Christians to forgive a limitless number of times because they will be forgiven by God for all of their many sins.

'For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.'

Matthew 6:14–15

How to get forgiveness

For Catholics, forgiveness is supported through confession and religious acts of atonement, for example saying specific prayers. The Catholic Church teaches that Christ instituted the sacrament of penance, and they believe that God's forgiveness is granted through the priest's pardon after confession. Evangelical Christians, however, believe that forgiveness of sins is granted by God and reliant upon faith. Here, confession is not accepted as a route to forgiveness.



Muslim attitudes to forgiveness

The Qur'an states that those who forgive others will be rewarded by God and that forgiveness is the path to peace. Islam accepts that human beings are not perfect and that everybody makes mistakes in life and unknowingly sins.

Within Islam there are two kinds of forgiveness: God's forgiveness and human forgiveness. Human beings are in need of both as they make mistakes in their actions towards each other and their actions towards God. According to the Qur'an, there is no limit to God's forgiveness.

The words 'God is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful' are repeated many times throughout the Qur'an. In Islam, individuals who commit a sin ask for forgiveness directly from God; there is no intermediary. They believe that God will forgive all those who are truly repentant. In the Qur'an it says:

'God loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and He loves those who keep themselves pure'

Muslims are to follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad, who helped the old woman who became sick even though she had regularly brushed dirt in his direction. Even in punishment, forgiveness is important and valuable.

'(O you who have believed, indeed, among your spouses and your children are enemies to you, so beware of them. But ...) if you pardon and overlook and forgive – then indeed, God is Forgiving and Merciful.'

Qur'an 64:14



Jewish attitudes to forgiveness

Jews believe that it is a mitzvah, a divine command or duty, to forgive. The Torah explicitly forbids Jews from taking revenge or bearing grudges. It also commands:

'Do not hate your brother in your heart.'

Leviticus 19:17

Within Judaism it is firmly believed that humans are responsible for their actions. If someone does wrong, they have the responsibility to recognise it, regret it, decide never to do it again, admit it to the one who was mistreated, and ask for forgiveness. Once the person who has caused harm has sincerely apologised, then the wronged person is religiously bound to forgive. Only the victim, however, can forgive. Even without an apology, forgiveness is considered a worthy and virtuous act (Deuteronomy 6:9).

Repentance is important. Teshuva (literally 'returning') is a way of atoning. This requires cessation of the harmful act, regret over the action, confession and then repentance.

Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement when Jews particularly strive to perform teshuva. It is the one day set aside to atone for the sins of the previous year. Jews fast; attend synagogue; and abstain from work, sex, bathing and the wearing of cosmetics for 25 hours. Much of this time will be spent in prayer and reflection in order to seek forgiveness for sin.

'Who takes vengeance or bears a grudge acts like one who, having cut one hand while handling a knife, avenges himself by stabbing the other hand.'

Jerusalem Talmud, Nedarim 9:4

'Who is a God like You, Who forgives iniquity and passes over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not maintain His anger forever, for He desires loving-kindness'

Micah 7:18



Humanist attitudes to forgiveness

Humanists believe that forgiveness is crucial for human relationships. We all make mistakes and are all capable of selfish behaviour, but we are also capable of understanding and forgiveness. The Golden Rule to treat others as we would hope to be treated ourselves requires us to forgive mistakes and selfish behaviour and to accept different views.

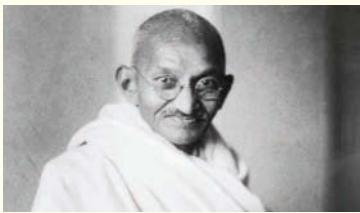
Humanists also believe that the existence of human compassion and common sense compels us to forgive.

They recognise that it is not easy to forgive, and sometimes behaviour is so inhuman that forgiveness seems impossible, so the best we can do is work to make sure that whatever needs forgiving does not happen again.

'Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive.'

C.S. Lewis

► Examples of forgiveness



■ Mahatma Gandhi – Hindu leader of the Independence Movement in British-run India, 1869–1948

'The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.'



■ Gee Walker – practising Christian and mother of Anthony Walker, who was murdered during a racially motivated attack in Liverpool in 2005

'Unforgiveness makes you a victim and why should I be a victim? Anthony spent his life forgiving. His life stood for peace, love and forgiveness and I brought them all up that way.'
 'I have to forgive them. I cannot hate. Hate is what killed Anthony.'

Victims' relatives and members of the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, speaking after the South Carolina Church shooting, where nine people were killed in a racially motivated shooting by Dylan Roof

'I thank you on the behalf of my family for not allowing hate to win. For me, I'm a work

in progress and I acknowledge that I'm very angry. But ... DePayne always taught me we are the family that love built.'

'We have no room for hate. We have to forgive. I pray God on his soul. And I also thank God I won't be around when his judgment day comes.'



■ Martin Luther King, Baptist Minister and American civil rights protestor, 1929–68

'Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a constant attitude.'



■ Nelson Mandela, South African anti-apartheid protestor and the first black President of South Africa, 1918–2013

'Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies.'

'As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison.'



■ Khaled Hosseini, Afghan-born American author of *The Kite Runner*

'I wondered if that was how forgiveness budded; not with the fanfare of epiphany, but with pain gathering its things, packing up, and slipping away unannounced in the middle of the night.'



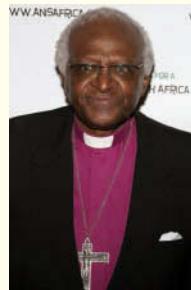
■ Confucius, Ancient Chinese philosopher, 551–479 BCE

'To be wronged is nothing, unless you continue to remember it.'



■ Eva Kor, Jewish Holocaust survivor who, with her twin sister Miriam, was subjected to human experimentation under Josef Mengele at Auschwitz. Both of her parents and two older sisters were killed at the camp; only she and Miriam survived

'My forgiveness... has nothing to do with the perpetrator, has nothing to do with any religion, it is my act of self-healing, self-liberation and self-empowerment. I had no power over my life up to the time that I discovered that I could forgive, and I still do not understand why people think it's wrong. I forgave the Nazis not because they deserve it but because I deserve it.'



■ Desmond Tutu – South African civil rights activist during apartheid and Anglican Bishop

'Holding onto your resentment means you are locked into your victimhood – and you allow the perpetrator to have

a hold over your life. When you forgive, you let go, it sets you free, and it will probably set free the perpetrator. There is much to be won from making yourself a little vulnerable.'

'Forgiving is not forgetting; it's actually remembering – remembering and not using your right to hit back. It's a second chance for a new beginning. And the remembering part is particularly important. Especially if you don't want to repeat what happened.'

Task

Select five of the forgiveness case studies. For each individual you choose, provide an excerpt or quote on forgiveness and explain what it means.

Person / Individual	Excerpt on forgiveness	Meaning



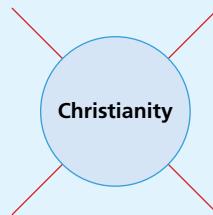
► End of section review

Stickability

Key concept:
• Forgiveness

Knowledge check

- 1 In your own words, explain what forgiveness is and why it can be difficult to achieve.
- 2 What is important about the altar at Coventry Cathedral? What does it symbolise?
- 3 For each of the religions or religious traditions you are studying, create a detailed mind map describing the teachings about forgiveness. Ensure that you refer to the example of religious leaders, stories from sacred texts, and at least one quote for each religion. Your mind maps should have at least four arms each.



- 4 Explain three different reasons why forgiveness is necessary and important. In your answer refer to at least three different case studies from the previous two pages – for example, Desmond Tutu.

The Big Question

'True forgiveness is impossible.'

Your task

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

Task

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

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

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

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



Good, evil and suffering

Key Concepts



Good That which is considered morally right, beneficial and to our advantage.



Free will The ability to make choices voluntarily and independently. The belief that nothing is pre-determined.

► What is 'good'?

'**Good**' means different things to different people. Do your ideas about good depend upon the life that you have lived, the experiences you have had, and the things that you have seen?

'Good' is a relative term – which means that it really is different things to different people. One person's good could quite easily be another person's evil. Similarly, it is a flexible concept – we can have some elements of good and some of evil, and can even work to develop the good within ourselves.

What we know for sure is that ideas about good have shaped our history, the way that we are governed by our leaders, and our opinions of other people and nations.

► The nature of good

Some might say that good is just when there is no evil or 'badness'. Others would argue that it is something which is approved of or desired. Either way, most people would agree that good is something which is morally right.

Good qualities tend to be linked to empathy. Caring, selfless, charitable, kind and giving people are generally seen to be good. Those people who sacrifice themselves for others, who are compassionate, and who treat all people equally as human beings are also considered good. If we think of the people throughout history who we consider worthy of respect, from Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King to Mother Teresa, they all possessed these qualities of compassion for others and selflessness.

The question still remains, however, of whether a person can be good or whether it is just their actions that are good. Many believe that good is not an intrinsic thing – it is not something which you just possess as a natural part of you. Good actions come from our conscience, and we are able to make good actions as a result of our **free will**. As such, good can come from environmental factors such as our childhood or from social factors such as family and friends. A person who, of their own free will, continually makes good choices driven by the qualities of empathy that we discussed above, would therefore be a good person.

Life in twenty-first-century Britain

In modern Britain, good behaviour is often judged in terms of the moral values that are seen as underpinning British society: tolerance; respect; democracy; the defence of individual liberty; mutual respect for different religions, faiths and beliefs and those with no faith at all. As such, any act which goes against these values is generally accepted to be wrong.

► Religious teachings about good

All religions have general principles that help believers to assess what is right and good, as well as teachings that help to explain the presence of good in the world.

Christian attitudes to good

In Genesis it says that God made the earth 'and it was good'. The world that God has created is basically good. God has, however, given people free will – the ability to choose between right and wrong for themselves. The story of humanity's battle with good and evil is told in the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). Adam and Eve chose to disobey God by eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge. This is called the Fall, and explains how free will can be used to stray from what is good.

God has shown people how they should live a good life through both rules of behaviour found in the Bible, for

example the Ten Commandments (a list of religious and moral rules that were given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai) and through religious teachings. Jesus' life and example also show Christians the ways to lead a moral, good and righteous life. It is up to individuals to decide whether or not to follow God's instructions.

Christianity is a religion which places 'good' qualities at its core – tolerance, compassion and love. Jesus demonstrated all of these qualities through his life, and it is considered a Christian duty to treat others with kindness, humanity and genuine acceptance.



Muslim attitudes to good

Everyone is born with a natural instinct to understand the difference between right and wrong (fitrah). All humans have free will, and they must choose between right and wrong. Some say this means choosing between the path of God and the temptations of **Shaytan** (the devil).

Doing good and having the right belief go hand in hand in Islam. The Qur'an speaks of true Muslims very often as 'those who believe and do good deeds'. Doing the will of God is indistinguishable from doing good.

The Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad outline the qualities required for good, including truthfulness, patience, humility and kindness to others. Muslims are expected to follow this example to guide their actions and choices in everyday life, for example, by doing **sadaqah**. God will judge each person individually, according to their faith and their good actions. God will show mercy and fairness in his judgement. According to Islamic teachings, those who believe in God and perform good deeds will be eternally rewarded in heaven.



Shaytan Satan or the devil.

Sadaqah voluntary charity given out of kindness. The Prophet Muhammad said that every act done to please God or make life more pleasant was sadaqah.

Jewish attitudes to good

Judaism teaches that God is good and will always protect and care for people. The goodness of God is shown by the creation of the world, by the giving of the Ten Commandments and on the occasions when God saved the Israelites.

Jews believe that when God created humans he gave them free will so that they could choose whether or not to worship him. If free will is to mean anything, then humans have to live in a world which allows them to make moral choices between good and evil. The Torah

provides guidance in how to live a life of good actions, and the Ten Commandments are the ultimate guidance for how to live a good life.

Judaism recognises that people are born with the inclination to do good but also with the impulse to do wrong. Empathy, compassion and giving are encouraged as good impulses, for example, through the practice of pushke in the home. For more on Judaism and free will, see page 300.



Tasks

- 1 What is 'good'? Give some examples of good qualities.
- 2 Copy and complete the table below. For each of the religions you are studying, explain three different teachings about 'good'. Then summarise each one in no more than four words.

Religion	Teaching on 'good'	Summary (four words)

► What is 'evil'?

Key Concepts



Evil That which is considered extremely immoral, wicked and wrong.

People talk about **evil** in different ways: evil people, evil deeds and evil as a force that somehow makes people do wrong.

The question of evil is an example of an ultimate question (a question about the fundamental principles in life). There are many different answers to why evil exists in the world, and none of them are necessarily wrong. It is up to each individual to decide which is right based upon their religious beliefs, their own experiences, their own reasoning and upbringing.

There are two different types of evil in the world: moral and natural. Both lead to suffering, but each have different causes or sources.

► Moral evil

Moral evil is the result of human actions and is often caused by humans acting in a way that is considered morally wrong.



These are all examples of moral evils

► Natural evil

Events that have nothing to do with humans, and which are to do with the way the world is, for example natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions, floods or earthquakes, are examples of natural evil. These events cannot be stopped or affected by human action. Natural evil can also include disease and illness.

Even Britain, with its temperate climate, has had to face its own natural disasters over the years.

Human evil and natural evil can often work together, with human evil making natural evil even worse (for example, by looting after an earthquake).



Weather events, like hurricanes, that cause suffering are a natural evil.

Life in twenty-first-century Britain

Evil (and the suffering that it brings) is one of the most common reasons that Britons give for not believing in God.

Tasks

- 1 In a short paragraph (roughly three sentences) explain what is meant by 'evil'.
- 2 Copy and complete the table below. Describe five different types of moral evil and five different types of natural evil.

Moral evil	Natural evil

► Religious teachings about evil

All religions offer some form of response to questions of why there is good and evil in the world and how we make moral choices.

Christian attitudes to evil

Christians have different viewpoints about the causes of evil and suffering and the origin or source of evil within the world. Many argue that God created people with free will and because people are not programmed like computers, they can choose whether to do good or evil. When they choose evil, suffering happens.

Soul-making

Some Christians believe that God allows evil to exist because suffering through evil is necessary for

individuals to develop or complete their moral souls. This concept is known as 'soul-making'. We need to learn what morality is about and we need to develop the proper virtues. We are not born instinctively knowing what morality and goodness is. The suffering of ourselves and others is essential for individuals to learn lessons about morality and virtue. Without the opportunities offered by suffering and evil, people would not have the chance to develop or demonstrate moral virtues, like compassion or courage.

St Irenaeus

St Irenaeus (130–202 AD) was a Father of the early Christian Church. He believed that human kind was not created perfect, but that they required growth in order to become spiritually perfect and moral. He argued that God does not necessarily intend evil to provide the only opportunity for this kind of spiritual growth, as a person could grow to spiritual perfection simply by obeying God's laws. Irenaeus also believed that God does not intervene in human affairs to prevent evil because that would mean interfering with free will.

John Hick

John Hick (1922–2012) agrees with Irenaeus' theory (known as the Irenaean Theodicy). He believes that God

created humans with the potential for spiritual growth. Hick argues that the process of 'soul making' (as he calls it) is a response to the evil in the world. If murder, cancer and natural evils did not exist, we would not have the means to develop and perfect ourselves spiritually. There is some suffering in the world that we can never understand or rationalise, which simply proves to us that we can never truly understand God's reason or plan.

Hick also believes that humans are born with an immense distance between themselves and God. We are born not knowing of God's existence, and it is not something which it is easy to gain knowledge of. Therefore, the process of soul making also involves the struggle to find religious faith.

Original sin

Catholics believe that evil comes from human beings. Adam and Eve introduced sin to the world (known as **original sin**) when, in the Garden of Eden, they chose to disobey God and eat from the tree of knowledge. This act brought sin into humanity. Since then people have been born with the ability to commit acts of evil. Within the Catholic tradition, every baby is born with 'original sin'.

Original sin the first sin ever committed – when Eve ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. The action that brought sin and evil into the world.

Life as a test

Many Christians also believe that life is a test. Part of this test is whether or not an individual will tolerate suffering and keep their faith. The way people react to suffering and evil determines whether they go to heaven or hell in the afterlife. The story of Job in the Bible gives Christians an example of how suffering can come to anyone, even the most holy and good-living, and that we will be judged on how we behaved throughout our suffering. Job suffers greatly and is taken from great success to tragedy. His friends try to convince him that he is suffering due to his own past sins. Job questions God on this but is given no direct answers. He somehow maintains his faith in God and is rewarded when his suffering is brought to an end.

Evil and suffering as beyond human understanding

The story of Job also reveals to Christians that we should not question why we suffer, but simply accept

that we do. Many say that 'God works in mysterious ways' and he has reasons for letting evil and suffering happen, but humans will never be able to understand the mind of God. We have to accept that God has chosen suffering for us, and that he has a purpose. We can be reassured with the knowledge that God is compassionate and understanding and will never give us more suffering than we are truly able to cope with.

Suffering helps humans understand Jesus

Christians point to the example of Jesus as a way of explaining suffering and its purpose. Jesus chose to endure suffering and pain in order to achieve greater good. His death and resurrection were to bring an end to death and suffering forever, with the promise of everlasting life and a new heaven and earth. For many Christians, suffering is both a way to bring them closer to an understanding of Jesus and his suffering and a way to bring about a greater good.

Other explanations for evil and suffering

Some Christians argue that evil is simply the absence of good. St Augustine believed that things were created good but free will enabled things to grow away from good and become evil. Others argue that evil comes from Satan. Satan creates evil in the form of temptation, pain and suffering.

Many Christians simply argue that evil exists because good exists. The world is not perfect – evil in the world is not malevolent, it is just a natural happening.

Muslim attitudes to evil

Within Islam it is believed that everything happens because it is the will and the plan of God. This is known as al-Qadr, and means that suffering and hardship are part of God's greater plan for humanity. Even though people may be unable to appreciate the value or purpose of suffering, they must accept that suffering exists and that they will never be able to truly understand God's will and purpose. Muslims believe that all life is a test. Humans are given life as a gift by God, and throughout their life their good and evil acts are noted down by two angels. Muslims will have to answer to these at Judgement Day, and these will determine whether they will enter paradise or be sent to hell – a blazing fire that never ends.



Good can come from suffering and evil. It is a greater good when people resist temptation and follow the right path and the example set by the Prophet Muhammad. God is also known as Ar-Rahman (The Merciful), Ar-Rahim (The Compassionate) and Al-Karim (The Generous). Because of this, those who resist Shaytan and follow the straight path will be rewarded in the afterlife.

Many Muslims believe that evil comes from Shaytan. The Qur'an explains how he refused God's command to bow down before Adam. As a result of pride and disobedience, God banished him from heaven. He now exists to tempt people to turn from God and to do wrong.

The following teaching from the Qur'an directs Muslims to beware those who might be corrupting, and to resist temptation and follow the path laid down:

'O you who have believed, indeed, among your wives and your children are enemies to you,

so beware of them. But if you pardon and overlook and forgive – then indeed, God is Forgiving and Merciful.'

Qur'an 64:14



Jewish attitudes to evil

On the one hand, evil exists due to the presence of free will – in Genesis it is explained that God gave humanity free will and therefore the ability to choose between good and evil [see page 301]. However, evil also comes from God as he can use it as a way to cause suffering and discipline, punish or test.

The story of Job gives Jews an example of how suffering though evil can come to anyone, even the most holy and good-living, for no apparently clear reason. Job suffers greatly and is taken from great success to tragedy. His friends try to convince him that he is suffering due to his own past sins. Job questions God on this but is given no direct answers. Job accepts that God has control, even though Job cannot understand what is happening to him and why. Judaism teaches that God is merciful and holy and that it is wrong to question him.

'A person is obligated to bless upon the bad just as he blesses upon the good. As it says, "And you shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart and all your soul and with all that you have."

Berakhot 9:5

This teaches Jews to welcome both good and evil in their lives in a similar way, as both are sent by God and have purpose.

Jews also believe that the punishment for being tempted by evil is death and destruction, whereas

the reward for resisting temptation is protection and prosperity:

'See! Today I have set before you [a free choice] between life and good [on one side], and death and evil [on the other].

I have commanded you today to love God your Lord, to walk in His paths, and to keep His commandments, decrees and laws. You will then survive and flourish, and God your Lord will bless you in the land that you are about to occupy.

But if your heart turns aside and you do not listen, you will be led astray to bow down to foreign gods and worship them.

I am warning you today, that [if you do that] you will be utterly exterminated. You will not last very long in the land which you are crossing the Jordan and coming to occupy.

I call heaven and earth as witnesses! Before you I have placed life and death, the blessing and the curse. You must choose life, so that you and your descendants will survive'

Deuteronomy 30:15–19

The Avodah Zarah is a part of the Talmud which talks of the rules regarding idol worship and interacting with those who practise it. It makes clear that engaging in idol worship is the same as denying God, and is therefore viewed as an outright evil.



Task

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

All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Christians such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/Because of this they Their beliefs do/do not differ because

► Suffering

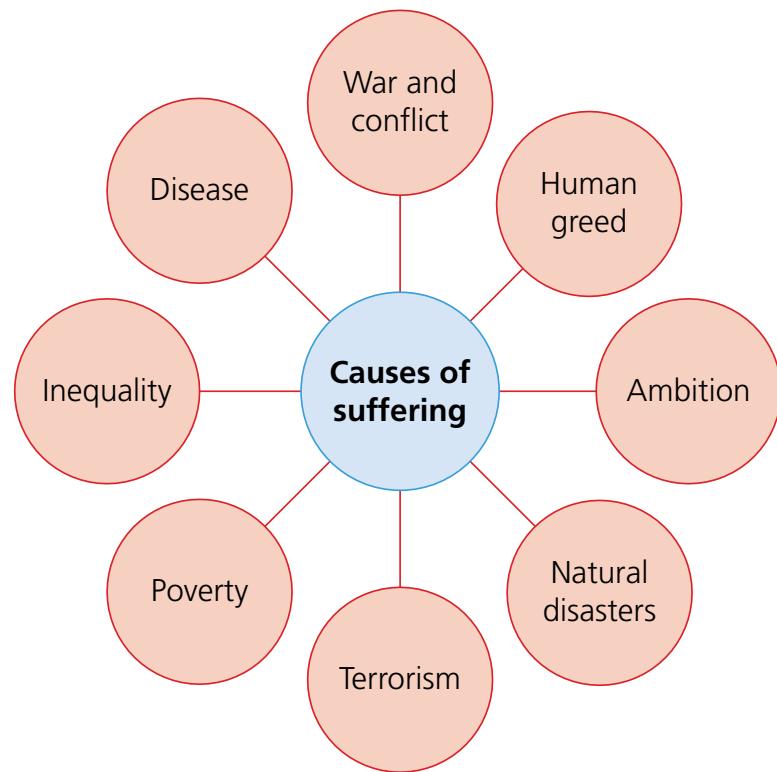
Key Concept



Suffering Pain or distress caused by injury, illness or loss.

Suffering can be physical, emotional/psychological or spiritual.

We simply need to turn on the news or glance at the front cover of a newspaper to see **suffering** in the world. Suffering, it seems, is an inevitable part of living. Why people suffer is one of the greatest of all ultimate questions (questions about the fundamental principles in life). There are many different beliefs linked with the causes of suffering, some of which we have already looked at in the previous section on evil.



Types of suffering

Natural suffering is caused by events beyond human control – by natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis and floods, as well as disease.

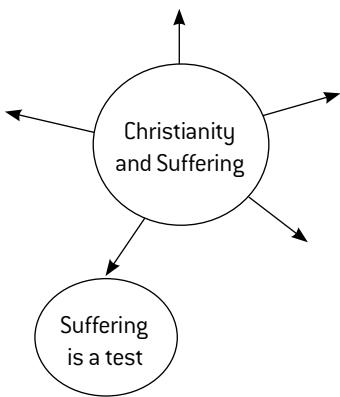
Human suffering is caused by the actions of human beings – murder, rape, terrorism and so on.

'Try to exclude the possibility of suffering which the order of nature and existence involve, and you find you have excluded life itself.'

C.S. Lewis, the Christian author of *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*, whose wife tragically died of cancer two years after they married.

Task

- Explain the causes of suffering in the world. Aim to include the following terms: natural, human, evil.
- Copy and complete the mind map below, outlining the key beliefs on the suffering for Christianity.



► Religious teachings about suffering

Religious teachings about suffering are closely bound into teachings about evil, as evil leads to suffering. Below is a basic summary of religious teachings about suffering – many of which we have already examined through evil.

Christian attitudes to suffering

Christians might view suffering in the following ways:

- Within the Christian tradition, suffering is seen to be a test.
- Suffering is a punishment for sin and for Catholics is the result of original sin.
- Suffering is also part of God's plan – we might not understand it but should know God will never make us suffer beyond our ability to cope.
- Suffering enables us to appreciate what is good in the world and allows us to grow closer to Jesus, who also suffered.
- Stories from the Bible, such as that of Job in the Old Testament, teach Christians that anyone can suffer and that persevering with suffering can strengthen faith in God.



Muslim attitudes to suffering

Muslims might view suffering in the following ways:

- Islam teaches that everything that happens is part of the will and plan of God (al-Qadr).
- Life is a test and therefore so is suffering.
- Suffering enables Muslims to prove their faith by resisting temptation. Those who resist Shaytan and follow the straight path will be rewarded in the afterlife.
- Good can come from suffering, both because it leads to personal spiritual development and because it allows us the opportunity to support others.
- Muslims should follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad.



Jewish attitudes to suffering



Jews believe that suffering ultimately results from free will. It can also come from God as a means to discipline, punish for wrongdoing, test, or force someone to return to God. The story of Job shows that we may not be able to understand why suffering happens. Throughout history, many Jews have been persecuted for their beliefs and suffered greatly (see page 116).

Humanist attitudes to suffering



Humanists do not believe that suffering is punishment or a test or see evil and suffering as part of a divine plan. Human beings have a degree of choice and control over their lives and must take some responsibility for the way they turn out. Some evils, for example war, famine and poverty, are caused or made worse by human greed and folly. Some forms of suffering like illness, floods, or earthquakes, may have natural causes or happen by chance, just because the world is the way it is.

Often those who suffer the most are not to blame. Humanists see the concept of original sin as cruel and unjust. They do not believe that all human beings are innately flawed and 'sinful' or that suffering and evil are inevitable. Humanists believe that it is up to human beings to fight evil and suffering in the world.

► The Holocaust

The word 'Holocaust' means a burnt offering. The Holocaust is often referred to as the Shoah – literally 'the catastrophe'.

Between 1933 and 1945, Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe suffered prolonged **persecution**. During this period, Hitler and the Nazi regime carried out a programme of systematic discrimination against Jews. At first, through the Nuremberg Laws, Jews were banned from parks, theatres and universities.

They were forbidden from holding positions in public office and forced out of employment. Eventually, the rights to own property and businesses were removed and Jews were rounded up and placed in ghettos. Across occupied Europe atrocities took place, and whole communities were wiped out by paramilitary units tasked with rounding up and executing Jews. This programme concluded with the 'final solution' – the extermination of Jews in purpose-built concentration and death camps.

This genocide resulted in the murder of over six million Jews, two-thirds of the Jewish population of Europe. Hundreds of thousands of Jews were left displaced and homeless, as refugees in their own homeland, with no family or livelihood to return to.



The entrance to Auschwitz, one of the most notorious of the Nazi death camps



'After the Holocaust I did not lose faith in God. I lost faith in mankind.' Elie Wiesel, who survived a concentration camp

*'Why did miracles occur only during biblical times?
Why don't they happen in our time?'*

The rabbi replied, 'The fact that there are Holocaust survivors who, after all they endured, can still keep faith, is itself, the greatest miracle of all.'

Memory of a Holocaust survivor questioning a rabbi who lost his wife and 11 children.

Where is God?

For some Jews, their experiences during the Holocaust – especially in the camps – were so hideous and impossible to understand that they ceased to believe in God. Many questioned how a loving, just and righteous God could allow such senseless tragedy. A great many Holocaust survivors could not reconcile their terrific suffering and personal loss with the God that they had believed in before the war. They felt abandoned by the God who they had believed was their protector and provider.

For some, continuing to practise their religion became their ultimate act of defiance. Some risked their lives to be able to continue to mark holy days and fulfil the ritual of prayer while in the concentration camps and ghettos. For others, believing in God became the key to their ability to survive.

► Suffering, good and evil – a perfect link?

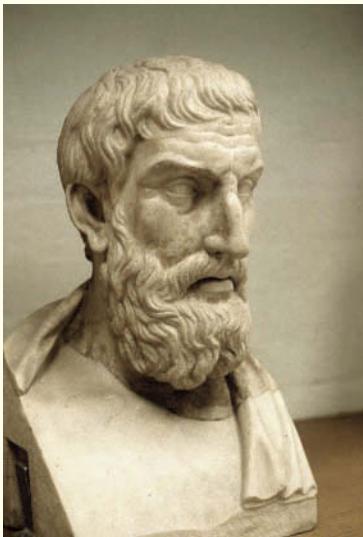
It is clear that suffering and evil are inextricably linked.

Evil – whether natural or moral – causes human suffering. Ironically, good and suffering are also closely linked. Good, especially the human qualities associated with good, such as compassion and empathy, have the power to alleviate the suffering caused by evil.

All religious people and many without a religious faith (such as humanists) believe that it is important to try to help those around them who are suffering. This becomes a motivator for how they behave and how they treat and ‘serve’ others.

‘We place human welfare and happiness at the centre of our ethical decision making.’

British Humanist Association



Is God willing to prevent evil,
but not able?

Then he is not omnipotent.

Is he able, but not willing?

Then he is malevolent.

Is he both able and willing?

Then whence cometh evil?

Is he neither able nor willing?

Then why call him God?

Epicurus



► The problem of evil and suffering

For religious believers, the presence of evil and suffering in the world creates a number of problems. God is believed to be omnibenevolent (all loving), omnipotent (all powerful) and omniscient (all knowing). Because of this, evil should not really exist. But it does. There are, therefore, a number of possibilities:

- ▶ God is not powerful enough to stop evil.
- ▶ God does not know that evil is happening.
- ▶ God does not love us enough to want to stop the evil.

None of these are very satisfactory conclusions. As a result, religions have a number of teachings which help to explain how it is possible for there to be both evil in the world and a benevolent, all-knowing and all-powerful God.

► Are we free to choose?

Religious believers would argue that there is genuine purpose to life, and many would say that God has a plan for everyone.

The dilemma here is that, if this is really true, then human beings are not free to make their own decisions and forge their own path in life. Whether we call it **fate** or predetermination, the idea of humans having a purpose and plan means that their lives are planned out in advance for them.

In some ways, modern science supports this argument. How a person looks and even what illnesses they might suffer from in later life is determined by their genes (passed from their parents). Experts can predict with a high degree of accuracy weather systems, eclipses, tides and what times the sun will rise and set. Natural and human laws combine to make people behave in a certain way in society.

Fate

A power or force that determines the future. The idea that the outcome is predetermined or unchangeable – inevitable and irresistible.

Free will

The belief that humans have free choices in life. The belief that humans were created with the ability to obey God or not according to their own choice.

vs

Fate a power or force that determines the future. The idea that the outcome is predetermined or unchangeable – inevitable and irresistible.

Predestination the belief that all events have been willed by God. The idea that God has already chosen who will receive salvation and enter heaven.

► Religious responses to the problem of evil and suffering

All religions try to explain why evil and suffering exists and all their explanations make some reference to free will.

Christian attitudes to the problem of evil and suffering



Christians believe that free will is given by God to human beings. Humans therefore have the ability to choose to do good and the ability to choose to do evil. Catholics believe that as a result of original sin, humans find it easier to choose to do wrong, but with the help of God can choose to do good. Those who do sin can attempt to atone and gain forgiveness through prayer and, for Catholics, confession and penance.

Fate is not a Christian idea, and the vast majority of Christians do not believe that their life is totally planned out for them. Some denominations (for example Lutheran and Calvinist Christians) believe in **predestination** – that God has already chosen who is to reach salvation. Predestination, here, is subtly different to fate, as it particularly focuses on the notion of salvation after life on earth and not on the decisions that we make during earthly life.



Jewish attitudes to the problem of evil and suffering

Many Jews believe that what happens in life is ultimately decided by God. In the Talmud there is a description of an unborn child being shown the fate that awaits it. This means that predestination exists, but critically so does free will. Jews believe that everyone is responsible for their own actions, but that God chooses the *final* outcome. There is an emphasis in the Talmud on everyone learning the law so that they can properly understand the difference between good and bad behaviour. Whether a person is good or bad is therefore a part of their free will.



Muslim attitudes to the problem of evil and suffering

'Say, "Never will we be struck except by what God has decreed for us; He is our protector." And upon God let the believers rely.'

Qur'an 9:51

Teachings on free will and predestination in Islam are not straightforward. For Muslims, free will must exist as without it humans are simply puppets – unable to truly take responsibility for themselves or offer genuine faith and submission to God. Similarly, though, predestination must exist as without it, God is not ultimately powerful and omniscient:

'God has power over all things.'

Qur'an 3:159

Islam teaches that every person is free to choose whether or not to follow God. As some do not, suffering occurs.

'Whatever of good befalls thee it is from God, and whatever of ill befalls thee it is from thyself.'

Qur'an 4:79

Al-Qadr is the will of God and translates literally as 'fate' or 'pre-ordination'. It is one of Islam's six articles of faith. In the Qur'an this is also referred to as God's 'decree'.

Some Muslims believe God wrote down all that has happened and will happen (on the 'Preserved Tablet'). God has measured out the span of every person's life, their

lot of good or bad fortune, and the fruits of their efforts. Again, God does not need to force anyone to do good or evil. Although many Muslims believe in predestination they also believe that we have free will. It is granted by God so that people are not puppets. The idea of iktisab means that while God knows the final outcome, a person must 'acquire' or 'merit' responsibility for their own actions. These Muslims believe there is no fate in Islam as this infers surrendering yourself helplessly. Instead there is the idea of working to understand and cooperate with God, and bringing oneself to a unity with his will.

Sunni and Shi'a beliefs

Sunni Muslims believe in the concept of the 'Preserved Tablet' and that God has written down all that has happened and will happen. An individual has power to choose, but since God created time and space he knows what will happen.

Shi'a Muslims reject the idea of predestination. They firmly believe in the concept of 'Bada', which states that God has not set a definite course for human history. Instead, God may alter the course of human history as is seen to be fit. Shi'a Muslims believe that God has definite power over the whole of the universe, however, whenever he wills, he can replace a given destiny with another one (effectively changing the course of fate). Some of these changes of destiny are brought about by man himself, who can through his free will, his decisions, and his way of life, lay the foundations for change.

► End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Evil
- Free will
- Good
- Morality
- Suffering

Key teachings about:

- the origin of evil
- free will and the problem of evil and suffering

Knowledge check

- 1 Write a paragraph outlining how Christians explain the presence of suffering in the world.
- 2 What is the difference between free will and fate?
- 3 Explain one of the problems with believing in fate and predestination.
- 4 Why does evil and suffering cause a challenge for believing in God?

The Big Question

'You can't believe in God while there is evil in the world.'

Your task

Answer the question above, referring to both sides of the argument.

Aim for at least one paragraph for each side of the debate and give a reasoned judgement on the validity and strength of that argument. Conclude your answer with a justification of your own viewpoint.

Skills Links



- 1 From two different religions or two religious traditions, explain views about 'free will'.
- 2 "The existence of suffering proves there is no God." Discuss this statement, showing that you have considered more than one point of view. (You must refer to religion and belief in your answer.)

Task



For both of the religions (or denominations) you are studying, explain in detail religious teachings about **suffering**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Christianity and a second one for your other chosen religion or denomination. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Christians such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/Because of this they Their beliefs do/do not differ because

► Exam focus

Issues of good and evil

(b) questions

In these questions you will be expected to describe a particular religious teaching or view. There is a maximum of five marks for this type of question. To gain full marks you should be able to show your knowledge using appropriate religious terms and any relevant sources of wisdom or sacred texts.

- (b) With reference to one religion you have studied, explain views about the use of the death penalty. (5)

Mark looked at this question and noted:

- How many marks? Five marks are awarded so that means he has about five minutes to answer the question.
- What is the question asking him to do? He needs to show his knowledge about one religion's attitude to the death penalty. The question is not asking him about his views on the death penalty or even what the death penalty is. He needs to focus the whole of his answer on the Christian attitude to the death penalty.

Which words in the question are important? Mark has decided the most important words are:

'With reference to one religion you have studied, explain views about the use of the death penalty.'

Firstly Mark realises he needs to only write about one religion. However there are many different Christian attitudes to the death penalty so Mark is going to show diversity of views in his answer.

Secondly Mark realises he will need to explain views and this will include using some references to religious teachings.

Thirdly Mark realises that the question is about the death penalty. Although other areas such as sanctity of life and attitudes to punishment are relevant the focus of the answer are on the death penalty.

Look at the band levels on page vii.

How many marks would you give to this answer? Using the words from the band justify your reason.

In Christianity there are many different beliefs about the death penalty. The sanctity of life is very important in Christianity because in Genesis it says God gave everyone life. For this reason many Christians do not believe in Euthanasia or abortion.

4

Issues of human rights

► The Big Picture

Key Concepts



Censorship The practice of suppressing and limiting access to materials considered obscene, offensive or a threat to security. People may also be restricted in their speech by censorship laws.



Discrimination Acts of treating groups of people, or individuals differently, based on prejudice.



Extremism Believing in and supporting ideas that are very far from what most people consider correct or reasonable.



Human rights The basic entitlements of all human beings, afforded to them simply because they are human. An example of human rights as stated in the Declaration of Human Rights is that all people should receive an education.



Personal conviction Something a person strongly feels or believes in.



Prejudice Pre-judging; judging people to be inferior or superior without cause.



Relative poverty A standard of poverty measured in relation to the standards of a society in which a person lives, for example, living on less than x per cent of average UK income.



Absolute poverty An acute state of deprivation, whereby a person cannot access the most basic of their human needs.



Social justice Promoting a fair society by challenging injustice and valuing diversity. Ensuring that everyone has equal access to provisions, equal opportunities and rights.

Core Questions



What rights do we have simply because we are human?

How do religious people support human rights?

Should people always have the right to express their views?

Should you always stand up for what you believe in?

How do religious people work to tackle poverty?

Are some forms of poverty worse than others?

► Overview

Task

Discuss some of the 'core questions' on page 122 in pairs. Write a brief answer to one of them, showing you have thought about different perspectives.

This chapter explores issues of human rights and social justice. You will look at moral issues and religious beliefs concerning practices to promote human rights, censorship, prejudice and discrimination and wealth and poverty.

Firstly, you will explore what is meant by human rights and consider the connections with social justice. You will then move on to examine the importance of human dignity for Christians, Jews and Muslims, and examine the ways they put their convictions into practice. You will consider questions posed by human rights such as conflicts between personal conviction or belief and the laws of a country, and when freedom of speech is a right or an offence.

You will then move on to consider the difference between prejudice and discrimination, and issues of discrimination today. You will consider how the beliefs and teachings in Christianity, Islam and Judaism impact on the work of religious campaigning groups.

Finally, you will consider the nature of wealth and poverty, and the differences between absolute and relative poverty. Through a consideration of ethical issues regarding the acquisition and use of wealth, the key teachings of Christianity, Islam and Judaism will be considered. For each religion there will be an examination of a charity that seeks to alleviate poverty in twenty-first-century Britain.

Throughout the course of this chapter you will consider the role these issues play in twenty-first-century Britain.

Task

Look at this picture. Create a spider diagram as to why people might need to campaign to have the freedom to marry.



Article 16: Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family

■ Human rights and social justice

Key Concept



Human rights The basic entitlements of all human beings, afforded to them simply because they are human.

Human rights are universal moral rights that apply to all people at all times in all situations, regardless of gender, race, religious or non-religious beliefs and age.



Human Rights Day, on 10 December each year, marks the day when the UN issued the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

In 1948 the United Nations issued the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This contained a set of articles, which are statements listing rights that all human beings should be granted. The declaration includes 30 articles, but all are based on the first article, '**All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights**'.

Many countries have formally agreed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and are expected to maintain each of the rights in their country. When any of the articles are broken then other countries and international agencies step in to try to persuade the country to restore basic human rights.

Action groups such as Amnesty International continually monitor situations where human rights are not being upheld. Their work continues to be important. Although it was written in 1948, many people today still don't have the rights identified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Amnesty International

Set up in 1960 by Peter Benenson, Amnesty International works worldwide to protect and campaign for men, women and children whose basic human rights are denied.

Amnesty International uses a range of nonviolent methods to raise awareness and protest against human rights abuses:

- Forming protest marches
- Writing letters to governments, campaigning for justice
- Raising awareness, through the media, of people whose rights have been abused
- Running schools programmes and events to educate about human rights abuses

In 1977 Amnesty International were given a Nobel Peace Prize for the impact their work has had worldwide.



- Article 4: No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms

► Social justice

Key Concept



Social justice Promoting a fair society by challenging injustice and valuing diversity. Ensuring that everyone has equal access to provisions, equal opportunities and rights.

Today many agencies and individuals actively support people's entitlement to human rights in an attempt to create **social justice** – a fair and just relation between the individual and society.

'Social justice is an underlying principle for peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations. We uphold the principles of social justice when we promote gender equality or the rights of indigenous peoples and migrants. We advance social justice when we remove barriers that people face because of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture or disability.'

United Nations

Social justice often involves governments and agencies working together to try and help developing countries. They might try to make less of a divide between rich and poor or make sure environments are clean and safe so that societies are not affected by pollution or risks to their health.

Task

- 1 Create a poster to illustrate what Ban Ki-Moon says about social justice.



'Circumstances such as where a person is born, where they live or their gender and ethnicity should never determine their income or their opportunities for quality education, basic healthcare, decent work, adequate shelter, access to drinking water, political participation or living free from threatened, or actual, physical violence.'

Ban Ki-Moon, Eighth Secretary General of the United Nations

► Individuals who campaign for human rights

Key Concept



Personal conviction Something a person strongly feels or believes in.



Throughout history individuals and religious people have campaigned for human rights and social justice by putting their own lives at risk. Their actions and commitment result from a belief in trying to create a world that is more socially just.

Malala Yousafzai

Malala Yousafzai is an example of a human rights campaigner who wanted to create a more socially just society. Malala campaigned against the lack of education for girls in the Swat area of northwest Pakistan where she lived.

'I raise up my voice – not so I can shout but so that those without a voice can be heard . . . we cannot succeed when half of us are held back.'

The Taliban were a powerful force in the Swat Valley, and had banned girls from attending school. For Malala, girls not being allowed an education went against Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Everyone has the right to education.

Malala knew that her campaigning would put her life at risk, as the Taliban had issued death threats against her. When she was 11 she began a blog detailing her views on promoting education for girls and this led to her giving interviews for the media. On the afternoon of 9 October 2012, she was boarding her school bus when a gunman asked for her by name, then pointed a pistol at her and fired three shots. Malala survived the attack and, despite severe injuries, continues to campaign for issues of social justice.



■ Malala Yousafzai is a campaigner for education for girls

Task

Why are human rights important? In your answer you should explain three different reasons.



Many religious believers consider it important to campaign for issues of social justice as a response to the teachings of sacred texts. It is the teachings from the sacred texts that often inspire the actions of religious believers in the twenty-first century. As we will see, however, many of the texts can be interpreted differently which results in different beliefs and practices within the same religious tradition.

For Malala, her **personal conviction** or belief in the importance of education for girls drove her actions. For many people, their belief in the importance and dignity of each human being drives them to campaign against human rights abuses in order to create social justice.

► Attitudes to human rights and social justice

The **dignity** of human life is a common belief for all religious and non-religious traditions. This doesn't just mean that life is important but that each life, irrespective of age, gender or ability, is of worth and value and should be treated as such.

Task

Look at the index of this book (page 344). Which issues that you are studying would be influenced by a belief that all human life is of worth and should not be destroyed or maltreated?



Humanist attitudes to human rights and social justice



'As humanists, we support the right of every person to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be allowed to speak, and believe, as they wish.'

Humanists seek to live good lives without religion, using reason and respect for others when making moral decisions. The basic humanist principles underlying their support for human rights are:

- respect for all humans as worthy of equal consideration
- support for freedom of belief and expression
- tolerance for all beliefs and ways of life as long as they do not harm others.

Humanists oppose racism, sexism, torture, unfair imprisonment, persecution because of beliefs, and vast inequalities in wealth and education, all of which they believe stand in the way of social justice. As they do not believe in a God or divine force they consider it is up to each individual to create a just society. They believe that every human life has dignity and that this life is the only one that humans will have.

For centuries, humanists have considered it important to campaign for human rights and social justice. They were among the founders of the United Nations and other organisations concerned with human rights. The International Humanist and Ethical Union have been very active in supporting the **empowerment** of **oppressed** people.

Dignity being worthy of honour or respect.

Empowerment authority or power given to someone to do something.

Oppressed governed or treated with cruelty or injustice.



Christian attitudes to human rights and social justice

'How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points? This is a case of exclusion.'

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*

Dignity of human life

For many Christians, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reflects the main principles of Christianity. For Christians, all people are children of God and created in God's image. This means that the characteristics of God are reflected in all human beings, and for this reason they believe each individual has worth and value. So human life should not be destroyed or maltreated.

A teaching from the Bible that is often used by Christians to express their understanding of the relationship between God and human life comes in the first book of the Bible, Genesis. As shown in Chapter 5, p. 172 there are different beliefs among Christians regarding the validity of the creation story. However, all Christians would argue that parts of the story, whether taken as literal or not, reflect the importance of human life.

'Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.'

Genesis 1:26–27

As an Anglican these verses teach me that all humans are created in the image of God and therefore have God-like qualities and characteristics.

As a Catholic this verse teaches me that all human life is created in God's image and so I do not agree with the death penalty or euthanasia.

Task

Explain how Christians might show dignity to other humans. In your answer consider the role of prison chaplains from page 94.

Christian practices to promote human rights – agape in action

The belief that each person is sacred and worthy of respect is a core Christian belief, so it is expected that each person will be treated with unconditional love – **agape**. Agape is the foundation of all the principles of Christian social teaching and campaigns for social justice, and follows the example set by Jesus. It is a selfless, unconditional love that voluntarily suffers inconvenience, discomfort, and even death for the benefit of another without expecting anything in return. So following the example of Jesus, the work of many Christian charities and individuals expresses agape.

I volunteer to help at the Salvation Army Hostel three times each week. As each person walks through the door I remember they are made in the image of God and as such must be treated with dignity and respect. My love is unconditional however I am treated.
Helen

Agape selfless, unconditional love, the highest of the four types of love in the Bible.

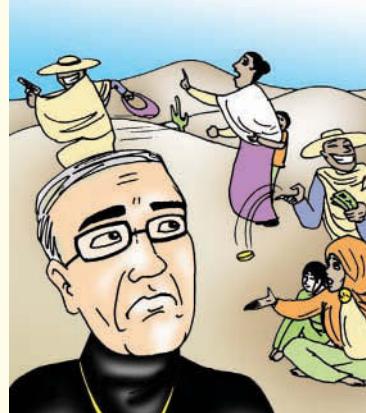
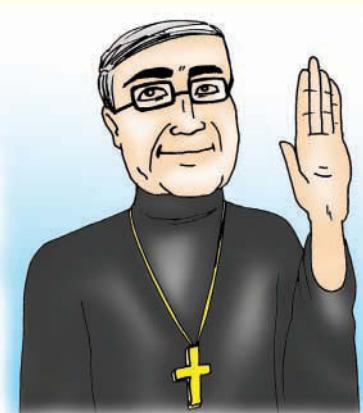
Because Christians believe that each human life has dignity they believe in equality and taking a stand against unfairness and injustice. There is a long tradition of Christian individuals working to promote equality, human rights and social justice – often at a risk to their own lives.

Liberation theology

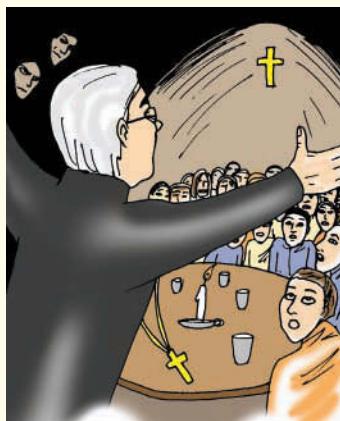
Within Christianity there is the concept of liberation theology, which is based on the teachings and actions of Jesus. During Jesus' life his actions helped to liberate people from unjust economic, political or social conditions. Jesus is often depicted as a freedom fighter. Liberation theology is the Christian idea that God has the power to change situations in the world that are unjust.

Some Christians have taken this belief to mean that it is right to stand up against governments that oppress their people or to challenge abuses of power.

As part of their commitment to liberation theology, Christians may take part in peaceful protests or actively take part in supporting those harmed by injustice, for example people who are imprisoned for political reasons and without a trial. Some supporters of liberation theology have been killed for speaking out against injustice. Among them was Oscar Romero.



- 1** Oscar Romero was born in El Salvador in 1917. After training to be a carpenter he decided to become a priest and was ordained in 1942. He became Archbishop of El Salvador in 1977.



- 3** His views changed after a close friend of his was murdered. He knew that he had to speak out against the injustices, and openly criticised the government. He held meetings, which had been banned by the government.

- 2** In the 1960s there was much crime and corruption in El Salvador. Some people were very wealthy, but many people were very poor. To begin with, Romero decided not to speak out against all the corruption that he saw.



- 4** Protestors in the Church became targets of violence. Government slogans included 'Be a patriot – kill a priest'. After many threats, on 24 March 1980, soldiers burst into the chapel and gunned down Romero while he was celebrating mass.

Task

It's exam time and John is trying to answer a question. The question he has to answer is: 'Religion is not about solving injustices in the world. To what extent do you agree?'

John has decided to include three areas in his answer but he can't work out which to select.

Which of the following do you think he should discuss in his answer?

- Having a religious faith means putting your beliefs into practice.
- Religion is about going to places of worship and celebrating festivals.

- Every individual has to act on what they believe is right.
- The sacred texts from each religion guide the way that you should behave.
- As all humans are created by God they should be treated equally.
- It doesn't matter if you are religious, you should look after yourself first.
- Politicians deal with social injustices not religions.

For each area you have chosen, suggest some details John could include.



Jewish attitudes to human rights and social justice



I believe that the use of 'us' means that all the ingredients of creation have been completed, and now they participate in the creation of humans, the crown of creation.

In Judaism, human dignity is linked to the belief that God created human beings. Jews believe that human beings are made up of flesh and blood [the material] as well as the soul [the spiritual]. Earth provides the material while God provides the spiritual.

'God said, "Let us make man with our image and likeness. Let him dominate the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock animals, and all the earth – and every land animal that walks the earth."

God [thus] created man with His image. In the image of God, He created him, male and female He created them.'

Genesis 1:26–27

For many Jews these two verses influence their views on human rights and issues of social justice. If humankind was made in the likeness of God then all people must be equal and must be treated with respect. Some believe therefore that when you insult another person then you insult the Creator. So the actions of humankind should reflect those of God. The Talmud teaches:

'Just as the Lord clothes the naked as He did with Adam, so you clothe the naked;
just as the Lord visits the sick as He did with Abraham, so you visit the sick;
just as the Lord comforts the bereaved as He did with Isaac, so you comfort the bereaved;
just as the Lord buries the dead as he did with Moses, so you bury the dead.'

Softah 14a

Because only humankind has been made in the image of God, I believe only humankind resembles God in having free will.

There are many ways in which Jews have campaigned for social justice.



Jewish practices to promote human rights – tzedakah in action

In *To Heal a Fractured World: The Ethics of Responsibility* the former Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks states that social justice is central to Judaism. He explains why the concepts of simcha (gladness), tzedakah (the religious obligation to perform charity), chesed (deeds of kindness), and tikkun olam (healing the world) all allow for social justice.

Tzedakah is defined by one of two terms: charity or social justice. While the word itself translates to 'charity' it can be thought of as giving justice, or assistance. Most importantly, tzedakah is giving because you can, not because you have to. The act of giving tzedakah is a **mitzvah** and is considered by many to be one of the most important commandments.

It can incorporate giving:

- money to those in need either as random acts or as annual donations
- time and energy to support those in need and campaigning for issues of social justice and human rights.

An example of tzedakah in action can be seen in Mitzvah Day, a day which reflects the teachings of the Talmud:

'Tzedakah and acts of kindness to others are the equivalent to all of the mitzvot in the Torah.'

Jerusalem Talmud, Pe'ah 1:1

Mitzvah Day is a Jewish-led day of social action. On Mitzvah Day thousands of people worldwide take part in hands-on projects, to support charities and to build stronger communities.

'Our mission is to reduce hardship and poverty, to help our environment and to bring a little joy – hands on – no fundraising. It is a way for all of us to make our mark regardless of our affiliation, wealth, age, sex or nationality.'

Mitzvah Day UK

Mitzvah although usually translated as duty or commandment, it can also refer to a kind deed.



■ Jewish people helping refugees on Mitzvah Day

Ensure Muslim attitudes to human rights and social justice

A Muslim is not just expected but obliged to oppose injustice and oppression no matter who the victim happens to be. The Qur'an teaches the equality of all humans and the special duties that humans have in creating a just and fair society.

An important teaching in the Qur'an which reflects the uniqueness and dignity of humans is:

'Because of that, We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land – it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one – it is as if he had saved mankind entirely. And our messengers had certainly come to them with clear proofs. Then indeed many of them, [even] after that, throughout the land, were transgressors.'

Qur'an 5:32

For me this means that you should treat others how you want to be treated.

This bond is what I consider is essential to the ummah – an invisible thread that joins us.

For Muslims, the worth and dignity of each human is a natural and absolute right. It is given by God and cannot be taken away by individuals or the state. Even criminals, although they may be punished, should not be mistreated.



Ummah the worldwide community of Muslims.

Zakah one of the pillars of Islam – the compulsory payment of money or possessions to help the poor and needy. It is considered an act of worship (ibadah). Each year a Muslim will give about 2.5 per cent of savings to support the needs of others. Each mosque will have a collecting box and a committee to decide how the money should be spent. Through this system the whole ummah is made more equal.

Muslim practices to promote human rights – ummah in action

A bond between Muslims is expressed through the term **ummah**. It refers to the unity of Muslims all over the world.

When Malcolm X made his journey to Makkah he felt a sense of true brotherhood.

Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is practised by people of all colours and races here in this ancient Holy Land, the home of Abraham, Muhammad and all the other Prophets of the Holy Scriptures.

As Muslims believe all people were created by God so therefore each human life should be respected and treated with dignity. Within the ummah all Muslims are equal – rich or poor. The ummah promotes the welfare of the whole Muslim community in supporting human rights and trying to create a just society.

- They support each other through the giving of **zakah** and Sadaqah.
- They encourage people to live a good life and oppose inequalities. This might include being a member of organisations such as the London-based Islamic Human Rights Commission.



■ Islamic Relief responds to worldwide challenges

Islamic Human Rights Commission

The stated mission of the Islamic Human Rights Commission is to 'work with different organisations from Muslim and non-Muslim backgrounds, to campaign for justice for all peoples regardless of their racial, confessional or political background'. The group is based in London and was established in 1997. Its activities include raising awareness and protesting against human rights abuses worldwide.

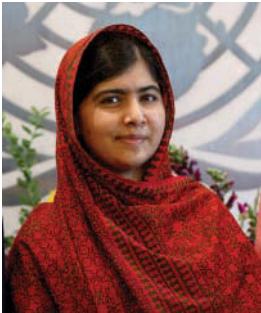
► Human rights – questions and conflicts

Although many individuals and organisations actively support human rights and social justice there are many questions and problems that are raised.

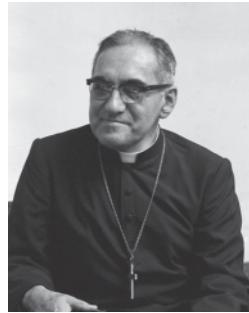
What happens if a person's belief in a human right conflicts with the law of the country?

You have already read about two examples of an individual's personal convictions conflicting with the law in the countries they were living in – Malala and Oscar Romero. This results in choices having to be made: either to obey the law or to act from their personal conscience and risk punishment.

Task



■ Malala Yousafzai (page 126)



■ Oscar Romero (page 129)



■ Martin Luther King (page 148)



■ Raheel Raza (page 144)



■ Rachel Finegold (page 145)



■ A protest against same-sex marriage



■ Pro-life campaigners



■ Supporters of euthanasia



■ Supporters of capital punishment

From the information in this chapter and your own research, complete a table like the one below:

Name of person/organisation	How did they campaign?	What convictions drove their work?

Censorship

Key Concept



Censorship The practice of suppressing and limiting access to materials considered obscene, offensive or a threat to security. People may also be restricted in their speech by censorship laws.

I believe in the freedom of speech. We should be allowed to say what we want and express our religious and non-religious views in public.

We should be able to talk about our beliefs in public but not if it going to offend others or encourage hatred against people.

Article 19 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights States:

'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.'

However, this can raise many different views.

No views should be allowed to be stated in public that are going to offend or harm others. Religious beliefs should only be expressed in the home.

In the UK and Europe people are free to express their views about any religion unless the content is likely to incite violence or discrimination against its followers. However, there are many different views about whether people should be able to express views that cause offence or whether there should be censorship of these views. **Censorship** would mean preventing the publication or broadcast of certain content.



In class we were discussing the Charlie Hebdo case, when people working for a magazine were murdered just because of the drawings they published.

Jamal

Hold on now. Those weren't any old drawings. Those were drawings of the Prophet Muhammad which could be considered really offensive. They shouldn't have been allowed to publish any material that is going to offend people.

Sian



But it is all relative. What might offend you may not offend me. In Denmark when pictures of the Prophet were published some countries allowed them to be seen but some censored them. Do you want to live in a country where no one can speak their minds? In some countries all the media is censored so only the view of the government can be expressed. Up until 2008 there was a blasphemy law in England, which censored things in the media which were offensive in Christianity.

Tom



Anti-Semitic hostile towards or prejudiced against Jews.

Islamophobic hostile or prejudiced against Muslims.

I am not saying that but when I look at some websites and I see the **anti-Semitic** and **Islamophobic** statements I know they have only been written to offend . . . and that can't be right.

Sian



In the UK and Europe people are free to express their views about any religion unless the content is likely to incite violence or discrimination against its followers.

Jamal

But surely that's really hard to prove. Anyway some of the offensive comments come from religious people themselves. Those comments that come from the Westboro Baptist Church in the US about gay people and Jewish people really offend me.

Sian



But their views aren't reflecting the majority of Christians. They are just examples of extremist views and you get those in every religion. Extremism is when people state extreme political or religious views. If people weren't allowed to express offensive views then they would still hold them.

Jamal

I think for all of us it's a personal decision that often relates to the context. I am not sure we can ever get a balance between free speech and censorship.

Tom



I suppose it does depend on the individual. I get really fed up when people come to my door and talk to me about religion.

Sian

Now that leads us to a really difficult question. How far should there be freedom of religious expression?

Jamal



Task

Tom, Sian and Jamal all have different opinions. Explain which three arguments you think are the strongest and why you think this.



► Freedom of religious expression



Religion is expressed in many different ways. Often in the media we read of situations in which one person's desire to express their faith has led to others complaining or being offended.

One way religion can be expressed is in the clothes or symbols we wear. In some countries it is illegal to wear religious symbols to school. In France, for example, any 'overtly' religious symbol cannot be worn or displayed in school.

Task

From the picture above identify the ways that people are expressing their faith.



In America a 13-year-old girl was banned from wearing her rosary to school. Although the school allowed pupils to wear jewellery, they had banned all rosaries because some gangs were wearing them as a symbol of gang identity. It's not unusual for schools to ban students from wearing gang symbols. If students are unable to outwardly identify with rival groups when they are in school, it lessens the potential for school violence. A representative from the Catholic Archdiocese said it was wrong that Christians had to give up wearing a symbol expressing their commitment to Christ because some people misused it.

Often symbols will be worn that reflect a particular belief and are an important part of the believer's identity.

When I put my kippah on in the morning I feel that it shows my respect to God by covering that part of my body which is nearest to him. I feel it is part of my identity as a Jew.

When I was 11 I decided to wear the hijab. No one forced me. After reading the Qur'an it was my own personal conviction to dress modestly.

I am Christian and member of the Salvation Army. Our uniform reminds everyone of what we stand for and our commitment to God. I am proud to wear it because it shows the God I serve.

When I became an ordained priest I was allowed to select the vestments I wanted to wear. These are important to me when I lead worship and make me feel humble to be part of such a long tradition.

For some religious people, for example Christians and Muslims, it is important to tell other people about their faith. This could involve inviting friends to religious activities in the hope they will join the faith community.

It could also be as part of a **mission** where a person (missionary) is sent out from the faith tradition to **evangelise** to try to convert people to join their tradition. There are very many different views within religious traditions to mission and **conversion**. For some Christians it is a duty to tell others about the Gospel in the hope of converting them. This might be through pamphlets, door-to-door visits or preaching in public places. Their activities are driven by their interpretation of passages in the Bible such as:

'He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation".'

Mark 16:15

Other people think that trying to convert people from other faiths (or people of no faith) is disrespectful towards their beliefs.

Mission calling of a religious organisation, especially a Christian one, to go out into the world and spread its faith.

Evangelise to try to convert someone to a different religion (usually Christianity)

Conversion changing one's religion or beliefs.

Task

'Religious beliefs should not be expressed in public.'

Discuss this statement, showing more than one point of view.

In your answer you should include reference to:

- censorship
- extremism
- human rights
- personal conviction
- social justice.

► Religious extremism

Key Concept



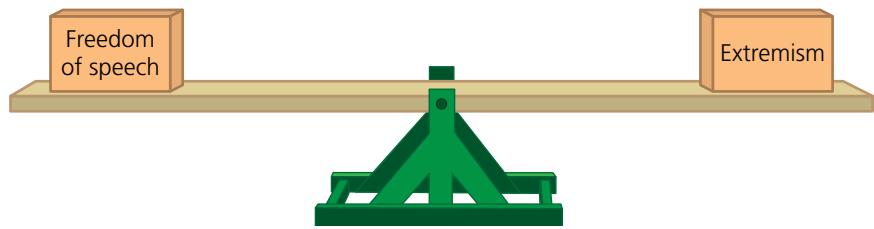
Extremism Believing in and supporting ideas that are very far from what most people consider correct or reasonable.

Anti-abortion extremism

Sanctity of life is an important belief in Christianity. For many this belief guides personal considerations and actions on issues such as medical ethics, family planning, euthanasia, capital punishment and abortion. However, some people hold very extreme views on the issue and believe that procedures like abortion are wrong and that they must act to stop them. This can lead to acts of violence.

In 2015 Robert Lewis Dear shot and killed three and injured nine more at the Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado. Planned Parenthood advises people on contraception and other issues of sexual health as well as abortion. He believed that the Bible condemns abortions and by attacking people who worked in abortion clinics he was doing 'God's work'.

There are many ways that people might show the importance of their beliefs. For some it is important to join organisations and activities where people can share similar views and beliefs. For others it is important to try and persuade people to have the same beliefs. There are many ethical questions concerning what activities people should engage in because of their beliefs. There is a fine balance between freedom of speech and action, and actions and speech that are considered extreme.



For some religious believers their beliefs and faith are so important to them that they may feel justified in acting in certain extreme ways to uphold the belief or to try and make others believe it too. These actions can cause harm to themselves or other people. Such actions might occur because the individuals:

- ▶ interpret the religious scripture in such a way that they believe this is the way to behave or react
- ▶ that through such actions they will be rewarded in this life or an after-life
- ▶ are influenced by friends and family who act in similar ways
- ▶ believe that they are doing the work of God.

There are many different types of religious **extremism**. The one factor they have in common is that the individuals involved are all acting because of a belief that they hold to be true. To understand some of the issues caused by religious extremism in the world today, see page 266 on the rise of jihadist groups.

► End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Censorship
- Extremism
- Human rights
- Personal conviction
- Social justice

Key teachings about:

- the dignity of human life
- promoting human rights

Knowledge check

- 1 Write a short paragraph (roughly three sentences) to explain what is meant by agape.
- 2 What is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Write your answer in four bullet points.
- 3 In your own words explain what the term 'religious extremism' means.
- 4 Draw a table with two columns. Describe three different reasons for supporting censorship and three for disagreeing with censorship.

Agree	Disagree

The Big Question

'People should be allowed to express their religious beliefs in public.'

Your task

Respond to the statement above, showing that you have considered more than one point of view. Give reasoned judgements on the validity and strength of these views.

Skills Link



- 1 Describe one example of when personal religious conviction has conflicted with the laws of a country.



Task

For both of the religions (or denominations) that you are studying, you need to explain in detail religious teachings about the **dignity of human life**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Christianity and a second one for your other chosen religion or denomination. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Christians such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/Because of this they

Their beliefs do/do not differ because

Prejudice and discrimination

Key Concepts



Discrimination Acts of treating groups of people, or individuals differently, based on prejudice.



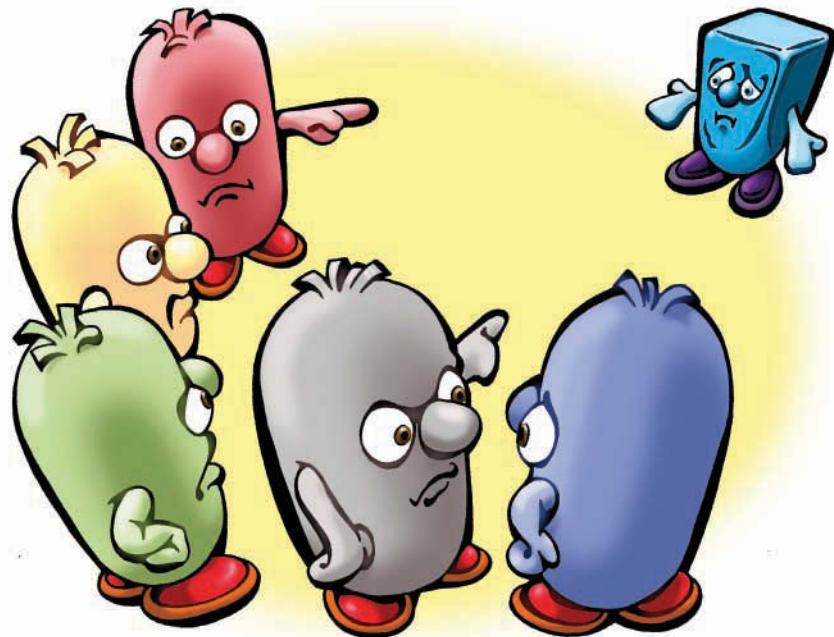
Prejudice Pre-judging; judging people to be inferior or superior without cause.

'Prejudice is a great time saver.
You can form opinions without
having to get the facts.'

E.B. White

The two key words in this area, '**prejudice**' and '**discrimination**' are linked, but their meaning is slightly different.

Prejudice means pre-judging something or someone based on a certain characteristic such as race, religion, gender or age, usually without any real evidence on which to base that judgement.



Prejudice means pre-judging someone on a certain characteristic. Discrimination is when you change the way you act towards a person based on your prejudice.

Prejudice is about what we think, but discrimination involves those pre-judgements being put into action. Individuals, organisations and governments can all be guilty of discrimination. Throughout history, governments have discriminated against certain groups of people, for example by preventing them from:

- ▶ being able to take certain jobs
- ▶ marrying who they want
- ▶ attending their places of worship
- ▶ living in certain areas
- ▶ voting
- ▶ driving a car.

In Britain there are many laws to protect people who in the past have been discriminated against. However, many people would say that discrimination still exists, for example:

- ▶ Some buildings do not allow access for all the people who want to use them.
- ▶ In certain firms there is an expectation that particular types of people won't become leaders. This is known as a 'glass ceiling' and is a term commonly used to explain the difficulties women can experience when trying to become leaders and managers.
- ▶ The interpretation of religious texts can result in actions that are considered discriminatory. One such example is the role of women in worship in Christianity. In some Christian denominations, such as Catholic and Greek Orthodox, although women can take many important roles, they are not allowed to become priests. For some, this is considered an act of discrimination but many reasons are given why women shouldn't become priests:

All of Jesus' apostles were males, he did not select any females.

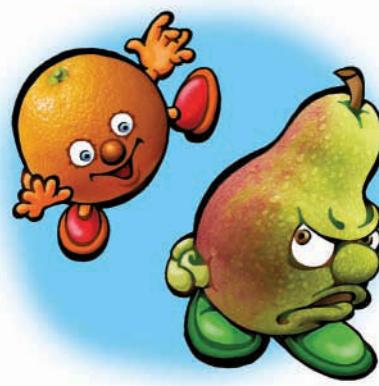
No one, not even the Pope has the authority to change the designs of a Church that Jesus selected.

It is not that women are inferior but they have different roles in the Church.

Task

John has been asked to design a poster to explain to a Year 5 student what is meant by prejudice. Which of the four ideas below would be the most effective?

Give reasons for your answer.



► Religious discrimination

Religious discrimination is the unequal treatment of an individual or group based on their beliefs. Like all discrimination, it is often based on prejudices, which have been formed by ignorance. Across the world, people are being discriminated against for their religious and non-religious beliefs. Actions can include:

- ▶ name-calling and ridicule
- ▶ attacks on places of worship
- ▶ burning of sacred texts
- ▶ not being allowed to wear symbols of religion in public
- ▶ acts of violence.

Islamophobia is a term often used to describe a distrust or dislike of Muslims. It can include stereotyped views, which are presented as if they are truthful about all Muslims. Many people believe that, as with all forms of prejudice and discrimination, greater education is the key to a greater understanding. Today in the United Kingdom activities are organised by Muslim individuals and communities to try to inform and educate about Muslim beliefs and practices and counter harmful stereotypes.

Speaking out – Isra Mohammed

After the Paris terrorist attacks in 2016, a 15-year-old Newcastle schoolgirl, Isra Mohammed, decided to speak out in a school assembly. Because Isra is Muslim some people had called her a terrorist but she told her classmates that terrorism has no religion and it does not represent Islam. Isra described how her seven-year-old sister had come home crying from school because she had been called a terrorist. She did not want to return to school. Isra told her classmates that they should not always believe what other people or the headlines in some newspapers said, and that Islamophobia can only be tackled by people learning more about each other's religions and beliefs. Isra's speech has now been downloaded many times from YouTube and she has been asked to speak to pupils in other schools.



■ Isra Mohammed spoke out against Islamophobia following the 2016 Paris attacks

Visit My Mosque day

Each year a mosque open day is organised by the Muslim Council of Britain. The aims of the day are to counter the negative attitudes to Islam and Muslims, which are often shown in the media. Over 80 mosques are open throughout the day and many activities take place. The open day gives opportunities to ask questions and to understand the role that the mosque plays in local communities, and national charity and welfare activities.



■ A poster for Visit My Mosque day

Task

Rank the activities below in the order you think would be most effective in countering negative attitudes to Islam.

- Reading the Qur'an
- Learning about Islam in school
- Listening to a talk about Islam
- Going to a mosque and being allowed to ask questions
- Hearing experiences from a classmate
- Watching a DVD about Islam



Christian attitudes to prejudice and discrimination

Christians believe all human life was created by God and therefore each person is equal and sacred. The many laws which Moses received from God gave guidance for people to live in harmony with each other and support and protect those people who may be **marginalised**.

In Leviticus 19: 33–34 it is stated that strangers must be accepted. And in Deuteronomy it says:

'Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge.'

Deuteronomy 24:17



■ Campaigners supporting racial equality

Jesus' example and teaching reflects the importance for Christians of treating all people as created by God. Jesus' ministry extended to many people who were marginalised and discriminated against. He healed women and lepers. He befriended Zacchaeus, a tax collector, even though tax collectors were shunned by other Jews.

In the later writings of the New Testament there are many references to the importance of recognising equality of all people. St Paul wrote in his letter to the Galatians:

'For all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise'

Galatians 3:27–29

This sums up the Christian teaching for me. As we are all one there should be no discrimination of race, gender, religion or status. I find it hard to believe that this letter was written so long ago – it is still relevant.

Marginalised put in a place of little importance.

Christian beliefs about women in worship

In Christianity a central belief is that all people are part of God's creation and should be treated with dignity and respect. There are many different views, however, as to whether men and women should have the same roles in worship. In the Catholic tradition women cannot be ordained as priests. The basis for this decision can be found in the New Testament which shows that while women could publicly pray and prophesy in church (1 Corinthians 11:1–16), they could not teach or have authority over a man (1 Timothy 2:11–14). In 1994 Pope John Paul II confirmed that this would remain the case.

'I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful.'

Ordinatio Sacerdotalis 4

Some Christian churches have recently begun to allow women to be priests or ministers (for example the Methodist church). In the Church of England the first woman to be ordained as a bishop was Libby Lane in 2015.

Tasks



Carefully read the quote above from Galatians and then answer the following questions.

- 1 According to St Paul why are people 'all one'?
- 2 What does this quote reveal about Christian attitudes to prejudice and discrimination?



Muslim attitudes to prejudice and discrimination

Islam teaches that God created everyone as equal but different. As all are created by God, discrimination against any human is unjustified. The ummah crosses all gender, race and wealth boundaries.

'O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you. Indeed, God is Knowing and Acquainted.'

Qur'an 49:13

When Muslims go on pilgrimage to Makkah they all wear simple white garments, showing they are equal before God. These garments are often used to cover their bodies when dead for the same reason.

The Qur'an teaches that men and women have equal religious and ethical rights:

'O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for God, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear God; indeed, God is Acquainted with what you do.'

Qur'an 5:8

This does not mean that men and women are the same but that they have equally important different roles.

Muslim beliefs about women in worship

There is currently some different opinions among Muslims regarding the circumstances in which women may act as imams to lead a congregation in salat (prayer). The Qur'an does not mention whether females can lead prayers although historically it has been a male role. Many scholars look at interpretations of the

Hadith. In several passages there are mentions of two of Muhammad's wives, Aisha and Umm Salamah, leading prayers.

In some Sunni sects woman may be imam (leader) of a congregational prayer if the congregation consists of women alone. When this is allowed the woman stands among the congregation in the front row, instead of alone in front of the congregation as a male imam would do. In China there are nusi, which are mosques only for women, and men are not allowed to enter.

In many countries, Muslims have been active in campaigning for a woman-led prayer movement.

In Britain, Raheel Raza became the first Muslim-born woman to lead a mixed-gender British congregation through Friday prayers at a small prayer session in Oxford. Raheel argues that nowhere in the Qur'an are female imams forbidden.



■ Raheel Raza

Raheel received death threats when she led a mixed-gender prayer session in Canada but she believes what she is doing is important for all women.

'It's not just about taking the job of an imam. It's about reminding the Muslim community that 50 per cent of its adherents are women who are equal to men. Women are equally observant, practising Muslims who deserve to be heard.'

Hadith an account describing the words and actions of the Prophet Muhammad.

Tasks

According to the Qur'an:

'O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for God, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear God; indeed, God is Acquainted with what you do'

Qur'an 5:8

Carefully read the quote and then answer the following questions.

- 1 Identity five ways that Muslims could show justice to others.
- 2 What does this quote reveal about Muslim attitudes to prejudice and discrimination?





Jewish attitudes to prejudice and discrimination

Judaism teaches that prejudice and discrimination are incompatible with Jewish law as God created all equally. Judaism teaches that everyone is equal in the eyes of God and that everyone should be treated well. The laws that Moses received from God make it clear that people should live in harmony and care for others:

'When a proselyte comes to live in your land, do not hurt his feelings. The foreigner who becomes a proselyte must be exactly like one who is native born among you. You shall love him as [you love] yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am God your Lord.'

Leviticus 19:33–34

It is taught in the Mishnah that the bond between human beings is so great that doing harm to one person is like doing harm to the whole world.

'Therefore, humans were created singly, to teach you that whoever destroys a single soul [of Israel], Scripture accounts it as if [s]he had destroyed a full world; and whoever saves one soul of Israel, Scripture accounts it as if [s]he had saved a full world.'

Mishnah Sanhedrin 4.5 part 2

Rachel Kohl Finegold

For Rachel Kohl Finegold, 33, from Montreal, being a Jewish educator wasn't enough. She wanted ordination to serve in a rabbinic role. After her first sermon she walked back down to the women's

The hardest part is the first thing people see about me is that I'm female and they don't think beyond that right away. I'm not here to be the token woman, I'm here to do my job.

Jewish beliefs about women in worship

In both Orthodox and Reform Judaism women and men have equal rights although they may have different roles. In Reform and Liberal Judaism both men and women can become rabbis and women can sit wherever they want in a synagogue service.

Although they are allowed to lead prayers, there are still a number of things a female rabbi cannot do based on Jewish laws written in the Torah. She cannot:

- lead certain parts of the service
- serve as a judge on a Bet Din (a rabbinical court that decides things like conversions)
- be counted in a minyan (prayer service that requires a minimum of ten men). She may organise the service but cannot be counted as one of the ten.

In Orthodox Judaism women sit in a separate part of the synagogue. At present there are no women rabbis in the Orthodox movement in Britain despite an increasing campaign worldwide for female ordination.

section, where she was greeted with warm welcomes and congratulations. One woman grabbed her hand, looked her in the eye and said, 'We've been waiting for you'.



Rachel Kohl Finegold is a female rabbi



Tasks

In the Mishnah it states:

'Therefore, humans were created singly, to teach you that whoever destroys a single soul [of Israel], Scripture accounts it as if [s]he had destroyed a full world; and whoever saves one soul of Israel, Scripture accounts it as if [s]he had saved a full world.'

Mishnah Sanhedrin 4.5 part 2

Carefully read the quote and then answer the following questions.

- 1 According to the Mishnah, how should people behave towards one another?
- 2 What does this quote reveal about Jewish attitudes to prejudice and discrimination?

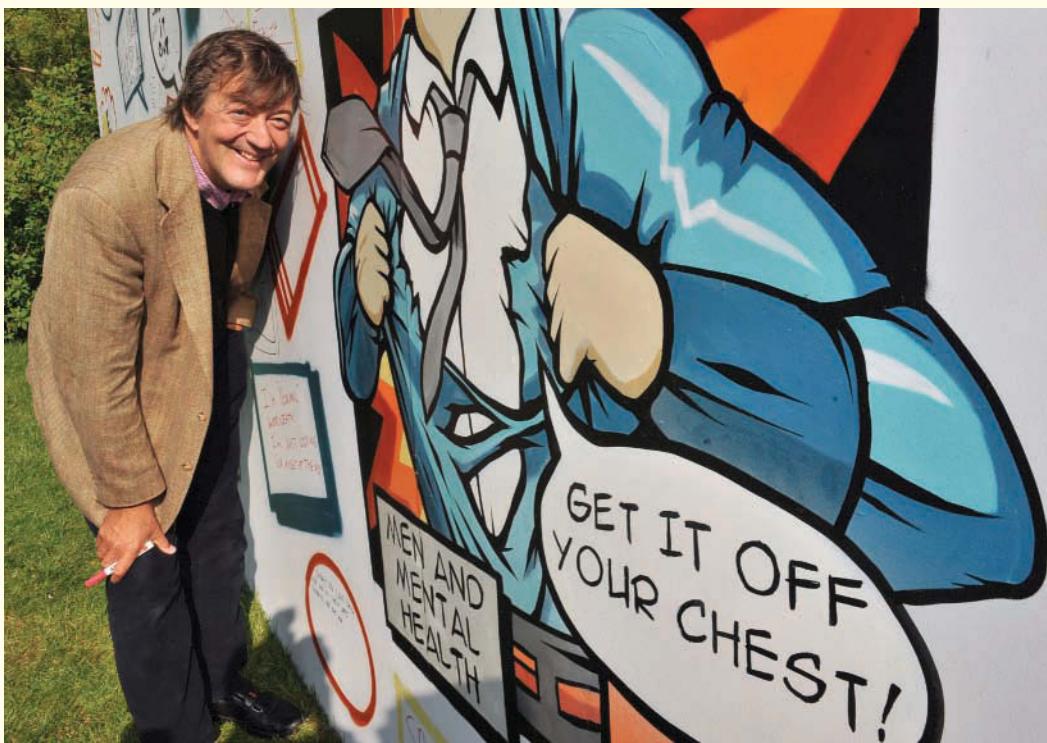
Humanist attitudes to prejudice and discrimination

H

Humanists accept the theory of evolution. They believe that all human beings are part of the same species 'Homo Sapiens' and share the same ancestors. Humanists recognise that there may be differences between people but they all share a common bond. They believe in treating people as individuals, not in stereotyping and not in discriminating against groups of people because of differences such as age, race or sex.

As a humanist I always try to treat other people as I want to be treated. I may be a different age or race to other people but I share a humanity.

The actor and humanist Stephen Fry has spoken out against the damage that prejudice and discrimination can create. He has campaigned to counter the prejudice which often exists in society regarding mental illness. For Fry, like many other people, the key to countering prejudice is through education.



■ Stephen Fry supporting a campaign to counter negative attitudes towards mental health

► Racism

Racism is discrimination against people on the basis of their race. Throughout history people from religious and non-religious beliefs have worked together to try to stop racism.

Campaigns have successfully changed the practices in many countries, making it illegal for people to discriminate against others because of their race. There are many education programmes in Britain which focus on explaining to students the dangers of racism and what to do if they see any racist actions. One such programme aims to tackle racism at football matches.

Show Racism the Red Card

Show Racism the Red Card is an anti-racist charity that has been growing from 1995, when Shaka Hislop donated £50 to a local anti-racism campaign in Newcastle upon Tyne. Show Racism the Red Card is now present in the United Kingdom, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Ireland. The charity in Ireland was formally launched in 2006. It combats racism through using high profile sports stars to present an anti-racist message to young people and others. It works with schools and provides resources to help educate young people against racism and contribute towards integration.



Christian attitudes towards racial prejudice

Christian teachings promote the equality of all races, such as in the story of the good Samaritan.

Jesus' own actions also showed how important it was to treat all races as equal, healing men and women

from different races. The words and actions of Jesus have influenced many Christians throughout history to campaign against race discrimination.



Today there are many different Christian organisations in Britain that continues to work against race discrimination and support racial and religious harmony.

The Church of England's Committee for Minority and Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC):

- ▶ encourages minority ethnic people to become part of the ministry of the Church
- ▶ supports race awareness initiatives throughout society
- ▶ creates links with other faiths and cultures through inter-faith dialogue.

The Catholic Church works to oppose racism and to raise awareness of the importance of cultural diversity. This is led by the Catholic Association for Racial Justice (CARJ). Through its work it seeks 'to value, respect and celebrate the equality and dignity of all God's people'.

A dream and inspiration

'I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.'

For King, his dream and motivation was that one day people would not be discriminated against because of their race.

Acting on convictions

'I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for the law.'

King showed this in practice when he was imprisoned for leading nonviolent protests.

Martin Luther King

For many Christians the teachings and actions of Martin Luther King continue to act as an inspiration in their fight against racism.

As a Baptist Minister, Martin Luther King was influenced by Jesus' teachings on love. In his campaign against the racism in the United States he adopted nonviolent protests to support civil rights for black Americans. People of all races and religions joined his protests and staged sit-ins and marches. Despite being imprisoned and suffering violence, Martin Luther King knew that retaliation with violence wasn't the answer. He followed Jesus' teachings to turn the other cheek and not return hate for hate.

Martin made many inspirational speeches, the nature of which he demonstrated through his actions.



Forming a community

'We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.'

King organised groups of protestors, inspiring many through his ministry in churches.

Use of nonviolence

'Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time; the need for mankind to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence. Mankind must evolve for all human conflict a method

which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.'

Despite being threatened and physically attacked, King only ever used peaceful protest in his campaigns for equality. He led many nonviolent protest marches.

Task

Earlier in the chapter we learnt about the importance of agape in Christianity (see page 128).



Complete the acrostic to show how Martin Luther King's beliefs, teachings and actions showed agape in practice. An example for A has been done for you.

Acting on his convictions, Martin Luther King went to prison for leading nonviolent protest.

G
A
P
E



Muslim attitudes towards racial prejudice

The Islamic creation story describes how God sent angels to earth to collect different types of soil in order to create the first man – Adam. The soil was of different colours, different strengths and from different parts of the earth. For many Muslims this shows that the descendants of Adam were destined to be as diverse as the handful of soil; to have different appearances, attributes and qualities. The Qur'an teaches that such diversity was all a part of God's plan for the world:

'And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and your colors. Indeed in that are signs for those of knowledge.'

Qur'an 30:22

There has been a long tradition of race equality in Islam, dating back to the actions and words of the Prophet Muhammad. When it was decided that a **muezzin** was to be established to recite the call to prayer, the Prophet Muhammad selected a former black slave Bilal ibn Rabah. The Prophet's last sermon showed how important the brotherhood (ummah) of Muslims is:

'All mankind is descended from Adam and Eve, an Arab is not better than a non-Arab and a non-Arab is not better than an Arab; a white person is not better than a black person, nor is a black person better than a white person except by piety and good actions. Learn that every Muslim is the brother of every other Muslim and that Muslims form one brotherhood.'

For many Muslims it has been important to challenge racism, even at a risk to their own lives. For example, Farid Esack, a Muslim university teacher was involved in the fight against the **apartheid** system in South Africa.

Apartheid was the systematic discrimination against the black population of South Africa. Esack established a Muslim anti-apartheid group and spoke at meetings against apartheid.

The Christian/Muslim Forum

Today many Muslims work to promote inter-faith dialogue, sharing their views with people of different beliefs to try and create a more just and tolerant society. One such group, the Christian/Muslim Forum has been doing that since 2006. Based in London, it brings together Christians and Muslims from around the country to build good relationships. It has four Christian ministers who are selected from different Christian Churches (Anglican, Catholic, Free Churches, Minority Traditions) and four Muslim Presidents who represent the different Sunni and Shi'a traditions. Through creating safe spaces, discussions are held which explore differences between and within Islam and Christianity. Through inter-faith dialogue and activities, the Forum seeks to educate and campaign for a greater understanding between religions.

We pray together that ignorance and racism will end.

We share festivals together. A break of fast was held at a local mosque.

We use internet forum, blogs and tweets to learn about each other's beliefs. We can ask each other questions and in this way break down our stereotypes and ignorance.

Apartheid a system of segregating people by races, which was used in South Africa.

Muezzin the person who calls Muslims to the mosque to pray.

Task

Earlier in the chapter we learnt about the importance of ummah in Islam [see page 132].

Complete the acrostic to show how the Christian/Muslim Forum activities show ummah in action. An example for **U** has been done for you.

Unites Sunni and Shi'a Muslims in discussions about shared beliefs

M

M

A

H



Jewish attitudes towards racial prejudice



Judaism teaches that everyone is descended from Adam and Eve and so are equal in the eyes of God and should be given equal respect. An important principle of Judaism is tzedakah, which is often translated as justice. This has inspired many Jews to seek justice through campaigning for racial harmony. In the civil rights movement in America and the campaign against apartheid in South Africa, many Jews took active roles.



■ Martin Luther King meeting with Jewish people

Task



Earlier in the chapter we learnt about the importance of tzedakah in Judaism (see page 131).

Complete the acrostic to show how JCORE activities show tzedakah in action. An example for T has been done for you.

Taking donations of clothes and shoes to refugees.

Z
E
D
A
K
A
H

JCORE

The Jewish Council for Racial Equality (JCORE) campaigns against racism throughout Britain. Their work began in 1976 and focuses around the belief that concern for social justice should be an important part of Jewish identity. They argue that Jews have a duty both to work with others and to work for others in the struggle against discrimination. They consider that racism is still a fact of life in modern Britain. They run activities and campaigns to try to combat racism, believing that working together is the best way to tackle prejudice and discrimination. JCORE initiatives include:

- Muslim Jewish task force: A task force has been set up to provide a common voice on both anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. The aim of the group is that neither Muslims nor Jews feel they are alone in tackling race hate directed against them and feel a responsibility towards each other.
- Young neighbours: Bringing together young Muslims and young Jews to campaign for and support asylum seekers to the UK.
- Working with refugees: A major focus of JCORE is campaigning for the rights of refugees and giving them practical support. This includes donating clothes, running charity events and befriending refugees who have recently arrived in Britain.

► End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Discrimination
- Prejudice

Key teachings about:

- racism

Knowledge check

- 1 Write a short paragraph (roughly three sentences) to describe what is meant by discrimination.
- 2 Why are people prejudiced? Write your answer in four bullet points.
- 3 In your own words explain what the term 'racial discrimination' means.
- 4 Select two of the following:
 - JCORE
 - Martin Luther King
 - Christian/Muslim Forum.

Explain for each three ways in which they counters discrimination.

Skills Link



- 1 Giving one example, state what is meant by 'discrimination'?
- 2 "Religions should do more to fight against racial prejudice and discrimination." Discuss this statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. (You must refer to religion and belief in your answer.)

The Big Question

'Religions can't stop people being prejudiced.'

Your task

Evaluate the statement above, referring to at least four of the following ideas:

- sacred texts
- examples of religious leaders
- media
- education
- agape
- tzedakah
- ummah

Task



For both of the religions (or denominations) that you are studying, you need to explain in detail religious teachings about **prejudice and discrimination**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Christianity and a second one for your other chosen religion or denomination. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote

This means that/Because of this they Some/other Christians such as believe that

This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/Because of this they

Their beliefs do/do not differ because

■ Issues of wealth and poverty

► Wealth

Income and wealth in the UK

- The bottom fifth of the UK population have 8 per cent of the UK's total income; the top fifth have 40 per cent.
- Income and wealth in London and the South East is considerably higher than in other areas of the country, for example the North East.
- The top 10 per cent of the population hold 45 per cent of the wealth and the bottom 50 per cent have 8.7 per cent.
- In 2014 it was reported that the five richest families in the UK were worth more than the bottom 20 per cent of the whole population.

Source: Figures from The Equality Trust and other news sources

► The acquisition of wealth

As you can see from the statistics above, wealth is not evenly spread out across society. Some people are much richer than others. There are many ways in which people might get their wealth:

- ▶ Through working for a business and receiving an income. Some jobs have fantastically high salaries, for example sports stars and TV presenters. Other workers receive much lower pay.
- ▶ Some people start their own business. Some of these grow and become extremely profitable.
- ▶ Some people inherit wealth, maybe on the death of a relative.
- ▶ A few people get their wealth through criminal means, for example, fraud or burglary.
- ▶ Some people get wealth through activities such as gambling.

► The use of wealth

Britain is often described as being a materialistic society, which values money and the possessions that money can buy. Newspaper headlines often describe people rushing out to buy the latest mobile phone or designer handbag.

However, people don't only use their wealth to buy material goods and holidays. A report by the Charities Aid Foundation in 2015 found that the UK was Europe's most generous nation in terms of charitable giving. In 2015 75 per cent of UK adults donated to charity, and that was compared to a worldwide average of 31.5 per cent.

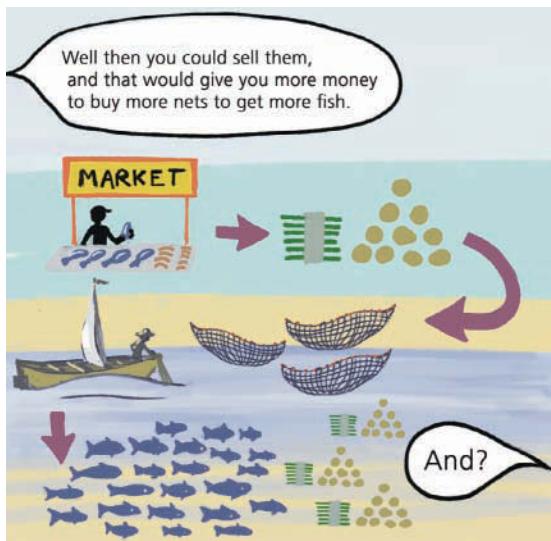
As well as giving to charities, people might use their wealth to help family and friends. For example, as property in the UK becomes more expensive compared to average wages, many parents are lending their children money so that they can buy a home.

► Does money bring happiness?

The storyteller Anthony de Mello in *The Song of the Bird* tells how a wealthy businessman was horrified when he saw a fisherman resting by his boat, looking up to the sky.

Everyone agrees that we need enough money to survive. But when is enough money too much?

For many people there are difficult balances to be made regarding materialistic wealth and happiness. There is an old saying that 'Money can't buy happiness'.



Task

The musician Bob Marley once said:

'The greatness of a man is not in how much wealth he acquires but in his integrity and his ability to affect those around him positively.'

Look through this textbook and describe three situations where people have used their ability to 'affect those around them positively'.

► Poverty

Key Concepts



Relative poverty A standard of poverty measured in relation to the standards of a society in which a person lives, for example, living on less than x per cent of average UK income.



Absolute poverty An acute state of deprivation, whereby a person cannot access the most basic of their human needs.

We often use the term 'poverty' to refer to someone who is living in extremely poor circumstances. There are two levels of poverty:

- **Absolute poverty** – a set standard which is consistent over time and between countries. It usually includes having no access to basic services, such as medicine or shelter.



Absolute poverty is when people fall below a global level of income; they may have no access to basic services

- **Relative poverty** – a level of income below the majority of one particular country.



Relative poverty means an income level below other people in the country you live in

We often don't think of people in the UK living in poverty as most people have access to accommodation and the state should provide some support for people who really need it, for example, council houses and monetary benefits. The UK is a very wealthy country compared to many others.

However, Oxfam indicates that there are 2 million malnourished people in the UK, with a further 3 million at risk of malnourishment. They state that food poverty is on the rise with increasing numbers of people relying on services like food banks, where they can get parcels of food and other essentials. The charity Barnardo's suggests that there are 3.7 million children living in poverty in the UK.

Worryingly, children who are born into poor families are more likely to develop chronic illnesses and less likely to do well in education than those children who are not. This means that they are more likely to continue to live in poverty as an adult.

Throughout the centuries, people have tried to support those who are living in poverty. Sometimes this has been through voluntary work, giving donations of money or making people aware of those who are living in absolute and relative poverty who often have no voice to speak out.

'Poverty is not an accident. Like slavery and apartheid, it is man-made and can be removed by the actions of human beings.'

Nelson Mandela

Fairtrade

For many companies, being socially responsible is very important. This means that they will not exploit people or the environment.

Many companies are now Fairtrade Providers and are allowed to use the FAIRTRADE mark on their products.

This means that the products have been produced by small-scale farmer organisations or plantations that meet Fairtrade social, economic and environmental standards. Fairtrade works to benefit small-scale farmers and workers and those who are marginalised.

Christian attitudes to wealth and poverty



Acquisition and use of wealth

Christianity teaches that a person's value should be judged by their actions and not by what they possess or how much money they have. Having wealth is not necessarily bad or wrong but there are ethical considerations about how Christians gain their wealth and how it is used.

Christianity does not state whether certain jobs should or should not be allowed. Rather, Christians need to ask themselves: 'Is the job exploiting or helping people?'

Many Christians are against gambling because it encourages a love of money for its own sake. They also believe that gambling and lotteries encourage greed. Some denominations refuse to take part in any form of gambling. The Society of Friends (Quakers) and Methodists, for example, are opposed to gambling as they believe it is gaining at the expense of others. They also believe that it promotes the view that having lots of money automatically produces happiness.

Jesus taught that wealth doesn't make people happy and can lead to greed. In Matthew 6, Jesus warns his disciples that money can take the place of God in their lives and that they must be careful to remain faithful to him. When a rich young ruler wanted to follow Jesus he was told that to do so he should sell his possessions and give his money to the poor. Today, members of some religious orders take a vow of poverty to give up everything they possess.

Helping those in poverty

All of the Gospels show that Jesus taught about the care of the poor. The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25) teaches that God will judge people not on how much wealth they have gained but on their treatment of the poor.

In Luke 16 Jesus tells a story about a man who lived in great luxury. At his gate lay a poor beggar called Lazarus who was covered in sores but he took no notice of him. Eventually, they both died. Lazarus went to heaven

but the rich man went to hell. The rich man asked that Lazarus should come to hell to cool his tongue with a drop of water. He also asked that Lazarus be sent back to earth to warn his brothers to repent so that they would

never join him in hell. Both requests were denied by Abraham who told the rich man that if his brothers did not believe the Scripture, neither would they believe a messenger, even if he came straight from heaven.



Task

Read the story of Lazarus carefully. Explain which of the following you think the story teaches?

- [a] Spend your money while you are alive.
- [b] Your actions on earth will be rewarded after death.
- [c] People must pray if they are to go to heaven.
- [d] Rich and poor can go to heaven.
- [e] People should look after those who have less money.
- [f] Riches don't automatically get you into heaven.



I give 10 per cent of all my wealth to charity. The money I have came from God and belongs to God.

There are many different Christian charities working to tackle poverty in Britain and globally. Some of these are connected with a particular denomination such as CAFOD and St Vincent de Paul, which both come from the Catholic tradition. There are also **ecumenical** Christian charities such as Christian Aid.

Ecumenical representing or promoting unity between a number of different Christian churches.

For many Christians supporting charities either through donations or voluntary work is an important part of showing their faith. Some Christians, give a tithe or set amount of money each year to charity.

Case study: Christian Aid

What is Christian Aid?

Christian Aid is a Christian charity working in partnership with local organisations in over 60 countries to help those in need – regardless of religion, ethnicity or nationality. It aims to stop poverty and challenge systems that favour the rich over the poor and marginalised. It does this by organising projects run by partners in the different countries and educating people about the causes of poverty through running campaigns and Fairtrade activities.

How does the work of Christian Aid reflect Christian teachings and values?

It works on the basis of a belief in one God who loves all and the dignity of all human life.

Its values include:

- **Love and solidarity:** We are called to love and care for one another in compassion and humility, as we stand alongside all those who struggle against poverty, powerlessness and injustice.
- **Dignity and respect:** We are convinced that every human being has innate dignity. All people are of equal worth, which is why we place honesty and respect for others at the heart of what we do.
- **Justice and equality:** We understand that where people lack power, poverty prevails, so we support work that empowers individuals and communities. We fight injustice and inequality with courage, hope and determination, challenging the structures and systems that prevent people from rising out of poverty.
- **Cooperation and partnership:** Our work is rooted in a spirit of cooperation and we affirm the value of acting in partnership with others. We work with and for the churches, as well as with other faith and secular groups. We also engage with other key actors, including civil society, government and the private sector, in various ways and on various levels.
- **Accountability and stewardship:** We are accountable for how we use the resources entrusted to us, ensuring that our decision-making is open and transparent. We measure our impact and are always striving to improve our performance. We are committed to being effective stewards of the planet's scarce resources and caring for the earth for the sake of future generations.

Source: Christian Aid website

Task

Christian Aid has five values that they show through the work they do.

For each value select a picture from this book that you think illustrates that value.

- love and solidarity
- dignity and respect
- justice and equality
- cooperation and partnership
- accountability and stewardship.





Muslim attitudes to wealth and poverty

In Islam, all wealth is a gift from God – humans are caretakers of God's wealth, and will be judged by their use of it. Muslims have a duty to support others and care for the poor and those in need. It is important that a family's needs are met first and that Zakah is collected on surplus money.

Acquisition and use of money

Muslims are required to live according to the Qur'an and therefore some occupations are forbidden. As receiving interest (riba) on any loans is forbidden, Muslims should not become money lenders. Islamic banks set up ways that people are able to borrow money without the bank making interest on the loan.

The Qur'an forbids gambling (qimar) or any way of gaining money through chance:

'O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than God], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.'

Qur'an 5:90

The fact that the Qur'an forbids doing any work connected with gambling has caused difficulties when the money made from lotteries is used to support charitable causes. For many Muslims it would be wrong to accept this money.

'Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in God, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and who gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveller, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives Zakah; [those who] fulfil their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous'

Qur'an 2:177

Helping those in poverty

Charity is an important part of Muslim life. Although it is one of the Five Pillars of Islam (see page 250) it should be given through love and not through a sense of duty.

There are different types of giving:

- **Zakah:** Both Sunni and Shi'a Muslims make a charity (Zakah) payment of 2.5 per cent of their wealth every year. This goes to support the poor and those in need.
- **Khums:** In addition to Zakah, Shi'a Muslims are expected to pay Khums, a wealth tax of 20 per cent of their savings. This money is paid to Muslim scholars and community leaders for the welfare of the community.
- **Sadaqah:** It is a duty for all Muslims to pay Zakah once a year, but Islam also teaches that voluntary giving is important too. Sadaqah is any good deed done out of compassion or generosity; it could be a gift of time, helping others or a donation to a charity.
- **Zakat-ul-Fitr:** This additional donation, given at the end of Ramadan, goes to the poor. It allows everyone, even those in poverty, to eat a generous meal at Id-ul-Fitr.

Muslim children often learn about the importance of Zakah by reciting simple poems.

We have to share with those in need
And not give in to thoughts of greed,
Zakah then helps us in this way,
Lest we should err and go astray.
The receiver and the giver of aid,
All feel good when Zakah is paid,
And society as a whole will be,
Enriched by acts of charity.

Mymona Hendricks *Muslim Poems for Children*

There are many Muslim organisations and charities that work in Britain and globally to help Muslims and non-Muslims in need.

Islamic Relief

Islamic Relief aims to help those in need by upholding the principles of Islam. Founded in Britain in 1984, Islamic Relief now works in over 40 countries. It responds to disasters and emergencies as well as providing long-term support with sustainable economic and social development such as providing shelter, healthcare and education.



How does the work of Islamic Relief reflect Muslim teachings and values?

'Our Vision'

Inspired by our Islamic faith and guided by our values, we envisage a caring world where communities are empowered, social obligations are fulfilled and people respond as one to the suffering of others'

Working with those in need reflects the teachings from the Qur'an:

'Because of that, We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land – it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one – it is as if he had saved mankind entirely.'

And our messengers had certainly come to them with clear proofs. Then indeed many of them, [even] after that, throughout the land, were transgressors.'

Qur'an 5:32

The work of Islamic Relief reflects the key values of Islam:

- Compassion – giving support in disasters
- Justice – raising awareness of marginalised voices through the media
- Custodianship – recycling and selling donated clothes in the UK
- Sincerity – sponsoring over 30,000 orphans in one year
- Excellence – signing the Red Cross Code of Conduct, an international set of standards on working in disaster zones.



■ Fundraising for Islamic Relief



Jewish attitudes to wealth and poverty

Attitudes to wealth

Judaism teaches that humans are custodians of wealth for God. It is not considered wrong to be rich but what is important is how you earn and use your wealth.

Work is considered an important part of Jewish life but it is also important that Jews recognise Shabbat on which no work is done.

Task

Using pages 310–12 on Shabbat, explain how an Orthodox Jew might respond to the following question. Write an email back in response.

We would like to offer you a job with our company but you would need to work on a Saturday. Why do you state this would be a problem?

The types of work that are permissible for Jews depends upon how far they observe the teachings of the Torah. For some it is important that the laws of **kashrut** are kept and so, for example, they would not work in factories where they would have to handle pork products.

Kashrut Jewish dietary laws.

Pushke box money boxes displayed in Jewish homes to encourage charitable giving.

It is forbidden to be dishonest or cheat in any business transaction.

'When you sell... or buy [property] from your neighbour, do not cheat one another.'

Leviticus 25:14

Maintaining strict honesty in business dealings is important and is judged by God. One who robs or cheats the public has no one to repay and can never actually atone for his crime.

Helping those in poverty

'Tzedakah' comes from the Hebrew word meaning justice or righteousness. The belief is that giving money to those in need is not only a duty and source of justice but also a right of the poor. The rabbis emphasise the need to ensure that the dignity of the poor person is maintained when charity is given. The guidelines for giving tzedakah vary from community to community. The general guideline is that all Jews should give one-tenth of their income to charity. The receiving charity can include one's synagogue, educational institution or organisation. At most Jewish festivals contributions are made to charity and most Jewish families have a **pushke box** in which money is donated at Shabbat.

What is Tzedek?

Tzedek is a Jewish charity which began in Britain in 1990 and works to reduce absolute poverty and care for those involved in national disasters. Believing that poverty is a human-made problem, they seek solutions not just by giving charity but by seeking to increase social justice in the world.

How does the work of Tzedek reflect Jewish teachings and value

'When a man leaves the world, neither silver nor gold nor precious stones nor pearls accompany him, but only the Torah he has learnt and the good works he has carried out.'

Mishnah

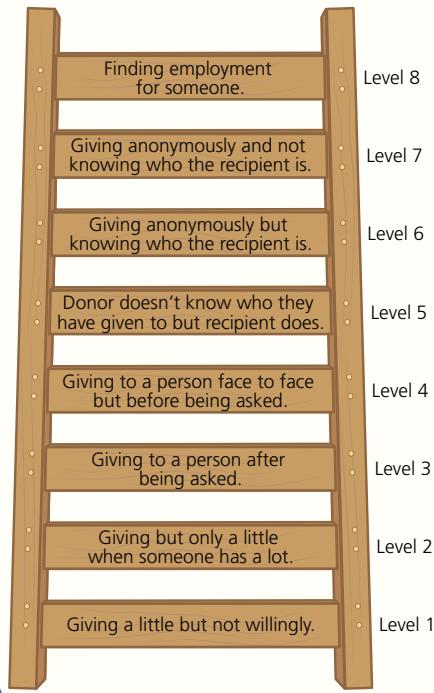
Many Jewish values are reflected through the work of Tzedek:

- **Ahavtah et HaGer (you shall love the stranger)** – Jewish traditions teach us to see the world globally. The work they do stretches beyond racial or religious boundaries.
- **Naaseh v'nishma (we will do and we will understand)** – Awareness, knowledge and learning lead to deeper commitments and actions. Tzedek raises awareness of social injustices through schools and education programmes.



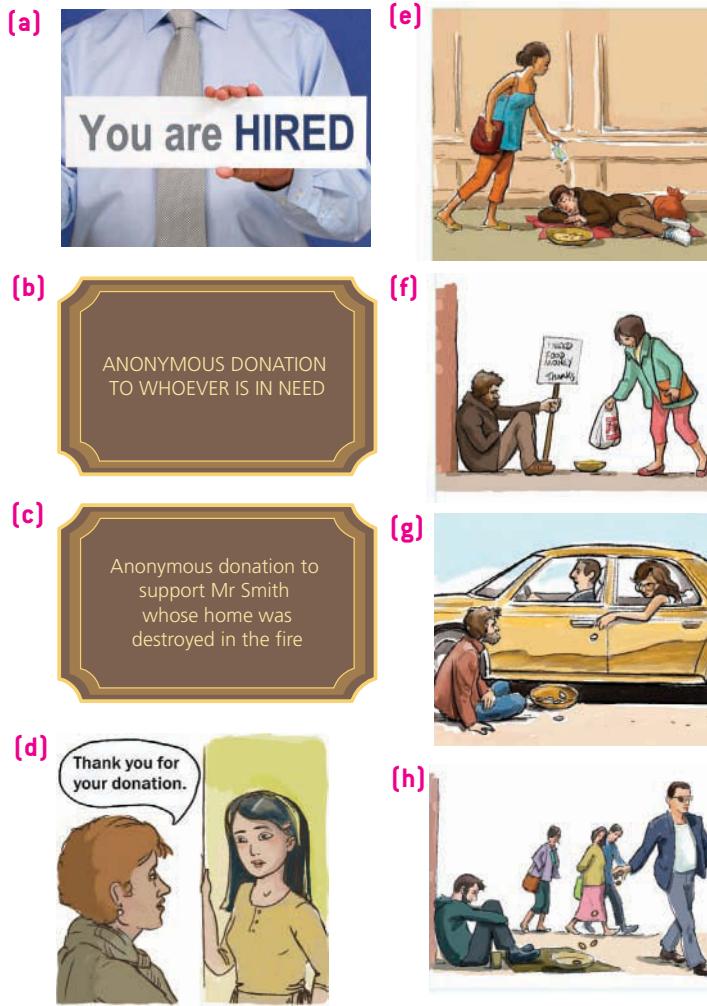
Maimonides eight levels of charity

In the Mishnah Torah the Jewish philosopher Maimonides identified eight levels of charity. Although written in the twelfth century, these are still relevant to today.



Task

- 1 Which pictures illustrate each of the Maimonides' levels shown on the left?



- 2 Why do you think levels 7 and 8 are the highest forms of charity?

Humanist attitudes to wealth and poverty

For humanists it is important to care about poverty because of shared humanity. An important belief of humanists is that people should treat others in the way they want to be treated. This means that their actions should be fair and just. Humanists do not believe that poverty and suffering is caused by fate or is a punishment for previous actions. For many humanists it is important to consider why there is poverty and to try to create a world that is socially just through active campaigning.

► End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Absolute poverty
- Relative poverty

Key teaching about:

- wealth and poverty

Knowledge check

- 1 Write a short paragraph (roughly three sentences) to explain what is meant by absolute poverty.
- 2 Identify three religious charities and the religion they are connected to.
- 3 Explain the attitudes to gaining money in two religious traditions.

The Big Question

'We are prone to judge success by the index of our salaries or the size of our automobiles rather than by the quality of our service and relationship to mankind.'

Martin Luther King

Your task

Respond to the statement above, showing that you have considered more than one point of view. Give reasoned judgements on the validity and strength of these views.

In your answer you should include references to at least four of the following:

- Absolute wealth
- Relative wealth
- Social justice
- Human dignity
- Absolute poverty
- Charity
- Human rights

Skills Link



- 1 Explain, from two different religions or two religious traditions, attitudes to gaining and using wealth.

Task

For both of the religions (or denominations) that you are studying, you need to explain in detail religious teachings about the **acquisition and use of wealth**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Christianity and a second one for your other chosen religion or denomination. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.



All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote

This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Christians such as believe that

This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/Because of this they

Their beliefs do/do not differ because

► Exam focus

Issues of Human Rights

Questions on charities and people

In many units you will be expected to explain or describe the work of various charities or people.

None of these questions will expect you to give a biography of the person or charity. Questions will ask for a particular focus, which must be the core of your response.

Look at the following question:

Describe one example of when someone's personal religious conviction has conflicted with the laws of a country. (5)

Firstly, write down:

- How many marks are there?
- What is the question asking me to do? Which of these do I think is correct?

'I need to write about a religion that has disagreed with the laws of a country.'

'I need to write about a person whose religious beliefs have conflicted with the laws or practices of a country.'

'I need to write about how religion helps those in need.'

Using religious and sacred text references

In (b), (c) and (d) questions references to sacred texts should be included in your answers as evidence. They are important to support a point you have made. You will need to practise how you use sacred texts.

Some candidates lose marks because they have a scattergun approach. They include a reference but without any further detail. For example:

Christians don't believe in racism, for example the story of the Good Samaritan.

Or

Christians don't believe in racism because of Jesus' teachings.

Other candidates describe the whole of a story from a sacred text but with no reference to how it relates to the question.

There are many different ways that sacred texts can be used as evidence, for example:

Analysing the importance of the text for action today:

Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan is demonstrating more than the importance of being kind. It shows that people considered enemies should actively support each other in need.

Briefly describing the text reference in relation to practice today: The actions of the Prophet Muhammad, when he saved the ants from the fire, shows how Muslims should care for all living things.

Making direct reference to a textual quote to support an answer: Many Christians refer to Genesis chapter 1, 26–27 to show the importance of human dignity.

Select three sacred texts from this chapter. For each, practise how you would use them as supporting evidence in a point you are making.

Christianity

► The Big Picture

Key Concepts



Omnibenevolent The state of being all-loving and infinitely good – a characteristic often attributed to God.

Omnipotent The all-powerful, almighty and unlimited nature of God.

Trinity The three persons of God: God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Incarnation God becoming human in the form of Jesus.

Atonement The belief that Jesus' death on the cross healed the rift between humans and God.

Resurrection The belief that Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday, conquering death.

Sacraments An outward sign of an invisible and inward blessing by God, for example baptism, Eucharist.

Evangelism Preaching of the gospel to others with the intention of converting others to the Christian faith.

Core Questions



what is monotheism?

Do you think Britain is becoming a more secular society?

Why are Walsingham and Taizé important places for Christians?

Why has church attendance declined in Britain?

Do you need to go to church to be a Christian?

What is a sacrament?

Why are there different types of prayer?

Why are there different Christian denominations?

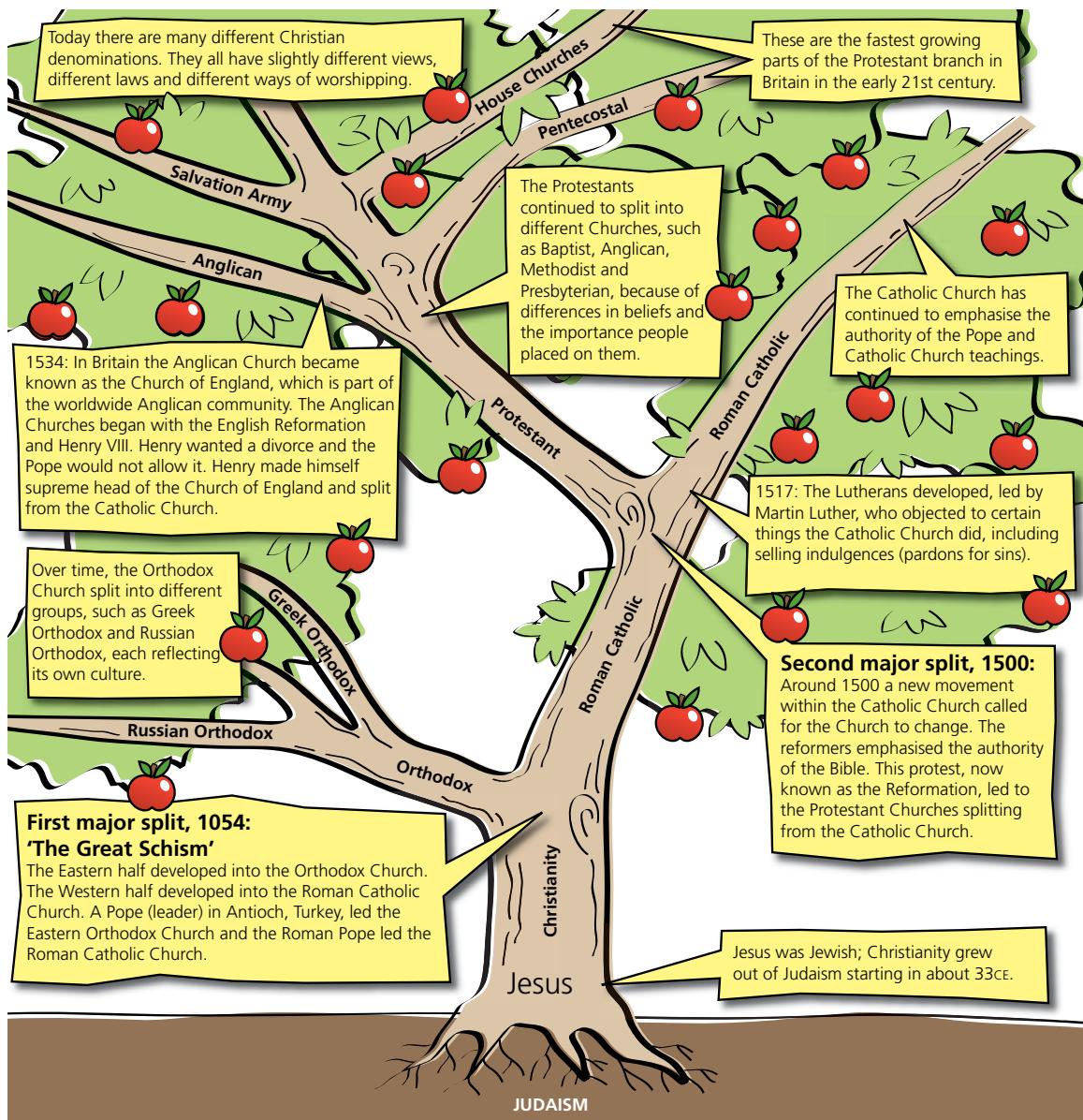
► Overview

Pluralist a society where a number of religions are followed alongside each other.

Secular a society where religious beliefs and practices are increasingly less important to a growing number of people.

The religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian, but also diverse. Today people follow many different religions and some people have no religious belief at all. In this **pluralist** and more **secular** society, Christianity remains an important faith for millions of people in Britain; there are many denominations which make up the Christian family. The diagram below shows how these denominations developed.

In the next chapter you will study the main beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity, including different views and practices across the denominations.



Task

Look at the tree diagram. Come up with a caption to show how it represents the diversity of Christianity today.



Task

Discuss some of the 'core questions' on page 164. Write a brief answer to one of them, showing you have thought about different perspectives.



► Christian beliefs

To understand Christianity you need to look at Christian beliefs about the nature of God, including God as the Trinity.

The word 'Christian' literally means 'follower of Christ', so central to any study of Christianity is the understanding of the main key Christian beliefs about Jesus. The most important beliefs about Jesus include his incarnation, his crucifixion and death, his resurrection and his ascension to heaven.

What Christians know about Jesus' life comes from the Gospels in the New Testament of the Bible. The Bible, which some Christians believe is the inspired word of God, has been revealed by God as a source of authority to help people live in a good way. The Bible is an important book for all Christians but there are different ways of interpreting the Bible. For some Christians there are also other sources of authority, such as conscience.

In the Book of Genesis in the Bible there are ideas about the creation of the world, and in these accounts beliefs are expressed about the nature and role of human beings on earth.

Christians believe that Jesus' death brought salvation, which means that after death humans can hope to spend eternity in heaven with God. There are different beliefs about sin, but all Christians believe that they should try and live a good life following Jesus' example. God will judge how people live their lives and this influences what happens to them after death.

► Christian practices

Christians believe that in order to develop a relationship with God they must 'worship' or give worth to God in their lives. There are many different forms of worship across the different Christian traditions and denominations.

Two of the most important practical expressions of Christian faith are baptism and sharing in the Eucharist. The Catholic and Anglican Churches regard these as sacraments but many other Protestant denominations do not.

Pilgrimages are an expression of faith, and two important examples of Christian pilgrimage are the shrine at Walsingham in Britain and the monastic community of Taizé in France.

Celebrations are important religious practices, and the two most important festivals in the Christian calendar in Britain are Christmas and Easter. Both are rich in symbolism and ritual and both commemorate important historical events in the life of Jesus.

In modern Britain the Church has an important sense of mission, and part of this is shown through evangelism and the need for Church growth.

The work of many charities is a practical expression of Christian beliefs in action. Tearfund is a Christian charity the aim of which is to help the poor in many countries throughout the world.

Christians have been persecuted since the beginning of Christianity and this continues in parts of the world. All of the 12 disciples and St Paul were **martyred** for their faith.

Finally the Church works for reconciliation in the world. An example of this is the work of the World Council of Churches, which seeks to bring Christian Churches together.

Martyr a person who is put to death for not renouncing their religion

5

Christianity: Beliefs and teachings

The nature of God

'What is God like?' When Christians talk and write about the nature of God they are essentially trying to answer this question.

Christians believe there is only one God, this belief in one God is known as **monotheism**, so Christianity is a monotheistic religion. Christians use a variety of words to describe the nature of God.

- ▶ omnipotent (all powerful)
- ▶ omnipresent (everywhere)
- ▶ omniscient (all knowing)
- ▶ omnibenevolent (all loving)
- ▶ transcendent (outside of this world).

Christians also believe that God is timeless and eternal.

All of these ideas are found in the Christian Bible, which is made up of the Old and New Testaments and believed to be part of God's revelation to humanity.

God is the creator and the giver of all life:

'In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth.'

Genesis 1:1

All Christians believe that God created everything and is still involved with the world in a mysterious way. In the Genesis text God is clearly seen as the creator of the universe and all that it contains.

Humankind is made in a special way in the image of God.

'Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness..."'

Genesis 1:26

This spiritual likeness enables all human beings to have some understanding of God's nature. Christians believe all we know about God is through God showing or revealing himself to people and this process is known as 'revelation'.



What is God like?

Tasks

- 1 Create a mind map to explain how Christians describe God. Give a definition and a reason for each of God's characteristics.
- 2 Explain why Christians believe God is omnipotent, making reference to the Bible. Include the following terms; exodus, slavery, Jews, control.
- 3 Choose one of the biblical quotes demonstrating God's omnibenevolence. Explain how it proves God's love for humanity.



► God is omnipotent

Key Concept



Omnipotent The all-powerful, almighty and unlimited nature of God.

Read the detailed account found in Exodus 7:11

The story describes how God is able to show his power over nature and ultimately over human life.

Many of the stories in the Old Testament are a revelation about the power of God. In the Book of Exodus, which tells the story of God's relationship with the Jews, one of the most well-known stories is the story of the ten plagues. God instructed Moses, who was a Jew living in Egypt, to lead all the other Jews (who were slaves in Egypt) out of the country. The Egyptian pharaoh refused to let them go and God sent a series of plagues down on the Egyptian people. When the pharaoh sent his army to stop the Jews leaving Egypt, God parted the Red Sea to let the Jews cross, but brought it crashing down on the Egyptian army. The account shows that the Jews believed God was all powerful and in control of nature.

'Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided ...'

Exodus 14:21

Christians today may debate whether the plagues were miraculous events or a sequence of natural disasters but what all Christians agree upon is that the story is a demonstration of God's power in the freeing of the Jews from slavery.

The immensity of God's power is also shown in the creation story (see page 174).

► God is omnibenevolent

Key Concept



Omnibenevolent The state of being all-loving and infinitely good – a characteristic often attributed to God.

Christians believe that God is all loving. Here are three texts about the importance of God's love.

'But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.'

Psalm 86:15

Psalm 86 was attributed to King David and in the quotation the writer expresses the idea that God is merciful and is rich in love.

'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.'

John 3:16

The Gospel of John expresses the fundamental belief that because God loved humanity he sent Jesus to earth so that people could have eternal life.

'No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Romans 8:37–39

In this passage St Paul writes of how God's love is more powerful than anything else.

► Why is there evil and suffering?

Epicurus, an ancient Greek philosopher (341–270 BCE), wrote the following about God and the idea of evil and suffering.

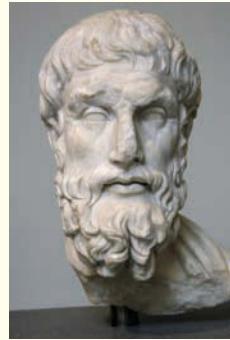
'Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent.

Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent.

Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil?

Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?'

Epicurus lived at a time when the Greeks believed in many gods but the question about the relationship of God and suffering is very well expressed in this quotation.



Tasks

- 1 Read the quote from Epicurus. Explain why suffering causes a problem for believing in God.
- 2 Outline what is meant by the term 'theodicy'.
- 3 Create a mind map identifying the different explanations for why there is suffering in the world.

For many people, the idea that God allows evil and suffering in the world is one of the reasons why they find it difficult to believe in God. Such people will often describe themselves as atheist (believing in no god) or agnostic (unsure whether there is a god). It appears difficult to believe in any god who allows evil and suffering in the world. If God is all powerful or **omnipotent**, then why does he not stop evil and suffering? If God is all good or **omnibenevolent**, then why would a god who is kind and a god of love allow evil or suffering to be created in the first place? Or allow suffering to continue? These are difficult questions for all people of faith.

For Christians, suffering is seen as an essential part of human life and there are a number of arguments about why evil and suffering exist in the world. The arguments are known as 'theodicies'. It is a complex topic. In very simple terms some of the reasons given for the existence of evil and suffering are:

- ▶ God has given each person free will and people must make their own choices. Some of the choices people make cause evil events and suffering.
- ▶ There is a force for evil in the world, sometimes characterised as the devil/satan. Traditionally the devil was believed to be a fallen angel, thrown out of heaven when he disobeyed God.
- ▶ God shares in our suffering.
- ▶ Suffering is a test.
- ▶ Suffering is a result of sin.
- ▶ How we deal with suffering gives us the opportunity to become better people – it is soul-shaping.



Why a loving God would allow innocent people to suffer is a major issue for religious people.

The story of Job

'Then Job replied to the Lord:
"I know that you can do all things;
no purpose of yours can be
thwarted. You asked, 'Who is this
that obscures my plans without
knowledge?' Surely I spoke of
things I did not understand, things
too wonderful for me to know.'

You said, 'Listen now, and I will
speak; I will question you, and
you shall answer me.' My ears
had heard of you but now my
eyes have seen you. Therefore
I despise myself and repent in
dust and ashes."

Job 42:1–6

'Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job?
There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who
fears God and shuns evil."

"Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. "Have you not put
a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You
have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are
spread throughout the land. But now stretch out your hand and strike
everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."

The Lord said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your
power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."

Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord'

Book of Job 1:8–12



Job is reduced to sitting on a dung heap while his friends look on after God allows Satan to take away his wealth and family.

In the Old Testament there is a 'case study' of a man called Job. In the Book of Job we read of a wealthy man who lives in a land called Uz, with his large family and flocks. He is described as a blameless and upright man who is always careful to avoid doing evil. In the story Satan appears before God in heaven. Satan argues that Job is only good because God has blessed him. Satan challenges God. He claims that if he is given permission to punish Job, Job will turn and curse God. God allows Satan to torment Job to test him and see if he turns from God. This is described in 1:8–12 in the extract above.

The two questions, 'Why do we suffer?' and 'Why do good and innocent people suffer so much?' are part of this story as it considers the universal theme of the good person who suffers.

In the story, Job receives the news that his flocks, servants and ten children have all died. Job still blesses God in his prayers. Satan appears in heaven again and God allows Satan to test Job again. Job is afflicted with terrible sores and his wife encourages him to curse God, but Job refuses. Three of his friends visit him and they discuss why Job is suffering. Job questions humankind's relationship with God. He laments the injustice of God allowing wicked people to prosper while he and other innocent people suffer so much. However, in Job 42:1–6 (above) Job shows that though God's ways are beyond human understanding, he has faith in God and understands his own place in the world.

Tasks

- Briefly retell the Story of Job. Ensure you identify who he is and the order of the suffering he encounters and the advice he receives. Tip: This could be done as a timeline or flow chart.
- Explain what the Story of Job teaches Christians about suffering.



Key Concept



Trinity The three persons of God:
God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Trinity

Christians believe in the ‘oneness’ of God. However, they often speak of the **Trinity**. This is the belief that God is one but is made up of three persons:

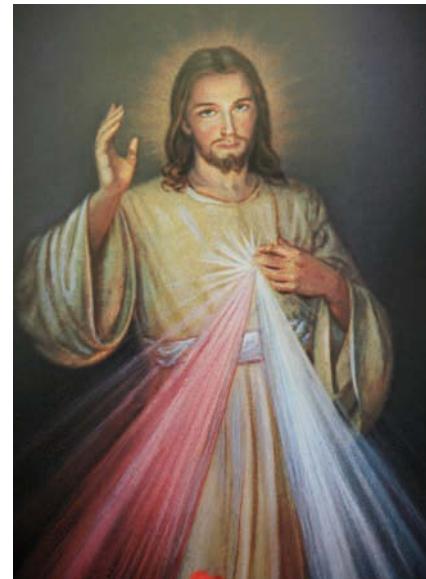
- ▶ God the Father
- ▶ the Son Jesus Christ
- ▶ the Holy Spirit (or Paraclete).

Christians are often blessed in church services by a minister with a reference to this belief. Catholics will often bless themselves by making the sign of the cross and reciting this prayer.

‘In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.’



God the father



Jesus Christ

Incarnation the way in which God becomes ‘flesh’ or human in the form of Jesus.

God the father

Jesus taught his followers to refer to God as the Father. This refers to the all-powerful, all-knowing part of God, who created the world. Christians also believe that it shows the caring, personal relationship between humans and God, like that between a child and their father.

Jesus Christ

Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God. For Christians, he is God in human form. This belief is known as the **incarnation**.

Christians believe that through becoming human as Jesus, God revealed something of himself to the world.

God the Holy Spirit

Christians believe that after his resurrection (see pages 181–82) Jesus rose up to heaven. They believe that God then sent the Holy Spirit or ‘Paraclete’ into the world. Christians believe the Holy Spirit guides Christians to live their lives in the best way possible. The Holy Spirit is able to give comfort, courage, inspiration and guidance to all Christians, and helps people to believe in Jesus and strengthen their faith. It also helps Christians to understand and interpret the Bible



The Holy Spirit represented as a dove in a stained glass window in St Peter’s Basilica in Rome.

as the word of God. Christians believe the Holy Spirit intervenes in the world in a miraculous way and is present during worship. In special church services, such as baptism and marriage, Christians believe they are really in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Charismatic Christians, such as Pentecostals, believe the Holy Spirit empowers people to **speak ‘in tongues’**. This type of worship may be very lively as people feel they are directly moved by the spirit of God.

► Why do Christians believe in the Trinity

The belief in the Trinity is based, on passages from the New Testament and, in the two examples which follow, on the words of Jesus himself.

‘I and the Father are one.’

John 10:30

‘Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves.”

John 14:6–11

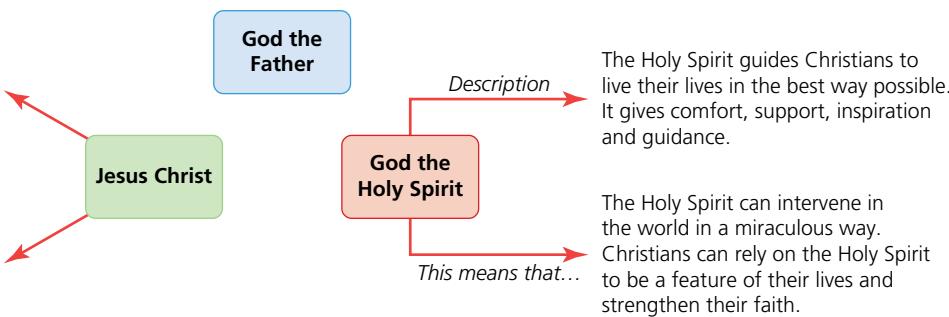
Both of these passages are taken from the Gospel of John. In the first passage Jesus clearly says that he is one with God. In the second, Jesus talks about his special and unique relationship with God.

Tasks

- 1 Create a key word table for the following terms:

Key term	Definition
Incarnation	
Charismatic Christians	
Speaking in tongues	

- 2 Copy and complete the diagram below, using it to explain the different parts of the trinity.



- 3 Explain why Christians believe in the Trinity. Include at least one quote in your answer.

► The Apostles' Creed

The most important Christian beliefs about the nature of God are contained in a creed, which is a statement of beliefs. The Apostles' Creed may be recited in church either on Sundays or at solemn occasions, such as a baptism. On some occasions the more detailed and longer Nicene Creed may be recited.

Tasks

Look at the bullet points below stating the beliefs shown in the Apostles' Creed. For each one identify the part of the Apostles' Creed that expresses that belief.

Resurrection has two distinct meanings:

- 1 It is used to refer to the Christian belief that Jesus rose from the dead after his death and burial.
- 2 It is used to refer to the idea that the human soul lives on after death and in the resurrection on Judgement Day.

The Apostles' Creed

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.*

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

*He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.*

*He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.*

*He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.*

*He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.*

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.*

Amen.

Tasks

- 1 In one sentence, summarise the Apostles' Creed.
- 2 Explain briefly why the Apostles' Creed is important for Christians.
- 3 In a detailed paragraph (approximately 6–8 sentences) summarise the main beliefs contained within the Apostles' Creed. Aim to include the following terms: God, Jesus, Judgement, resurrection, Creator, Holy Spirit.

The creed is a simple statement of the most important Christian beliefs which all Christians adhere to. Whatever the Christian tradition or denomination, all Christians sign up to the beliefs stated in the creed.

The most important beliefs in the Apostles' Creed are as follows:

- God is an all-powerful creator.
- Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus was crucified, buried and rose from the dead and ascended to heaven.
- There will be a Day of Judgement when God will judge how each person has lived their life.
- There is one holy and universal Church.
- God will forgive our sins.
- There will be resurrection of the body and an eternal afterlife.

Creation

'How was the universe and earth made?' is one of the so-called fundamental questions.

Many people today look to scientific explanations, such as the Big Bang to give an answer to this question.

For all Christians what is important is that God is the creator of the universe. They believe that whatever the exact process was that created the universe, God is the overall architect of that creation. It is the 'spirit of God' which is the source of all life and creation (see page 39). There are two accounts of creation in the Bible; Genesis 1 and Genesis 2.

There are a number of major events in the biblical Creation accounts:

- ▶ creation of the universe
- ▶ creation of the earth
- ▶ creation of Adam and Eve (or humankind)
- ▶ the temptation of Adam and Eve
- ▶ the fall of humankind from grace.

► Genesis 1

The biblical account of the creation in Chapter 1 of the Book of Genesis, begins:

'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.'

Genesis 1:1–3

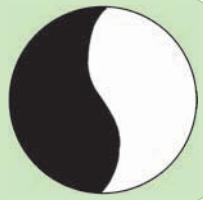


The Big Bang is the idea that about 13,700 million years ago all the matter in the universe was concentrated at a single point. A huge explosion – a Big Bang – sent this spiralling outwards, eventually creating the universe as we know it today. Scientists believe they have found evidence for the Big Bang, including that the universe is still expanding due to the force of the explosion and that the energy from the explosion can still be detected.

Genesis 1 shows how God created the universe over seven days. 'And God saw that it was good' is a phrase used to describe each stage of Creation.

Day 1 – God created night and day:

God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.



Day 2 – God created the heavens:

And God made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven.



Day 3 – God created land and plants:

And God said, 'Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. And God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, upon the earth.'



Day 4 – God created the sun, moon and stars:

And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also.



Day 5 – God created birds and fish:

And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the firmament of the heavens.'



Day 6 – God created living creatures including man:

Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'



Day 7 – God rested:

And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done.



Tasks

- 1 What does Genesis 2 teach Christians about humankind?
- 2 When Christians refer to 'The Fall', what event from the Bible are they referring to?
- 3 Describe two reasons why 'The Fall' is significant for Christians.



▶ Genesis 2

In Genesis 2 Adam lives in paradise in the Garden of Eden. God creates a companion for Adam from his rib, and his companion is Eve:

'Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.'

The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man"

Genesis 2:22–23

God gives Adam and Eve one command which is not to eat from the tree of knowledge that grows in the Garden of Eden.

'We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, "You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die."

Genesis 3:2–3

The Genesis creation story is clear that humankind is unique among God's creation as humans were created in God's image.

▶ Genesis 3: The Fall

The nature of humankind is that people are made in the image of God but sinful and in need of God's forgiveness. Humankind has a clear purpose in the creation account. People have 'dominion' or power over the earth but this must be exercised through stewardship on God's behalf.

Genesis 3 describes an event which Christians call the 'Fall', when Adam and Eve are tempted by the devil, in the form of a serpent, to eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge against God's will.

The devil or serpent claims that the only reason God doesn't want Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of knowledge is because it would make them as knowledgeable as God. Although Eve first resists the serpent, eventually she gives in to temptation and eats the fruit and then gives some to Adam.

They confess to God what they have done and as punishment he sends them out of the Garden of Eden to live somewhere else on the earth. They are no longer allowed to eat from the tree of life, which has given them eternal life, so death enters the world.

This is very significant for Christians as it represents the point when the perfect relationship between humans and God was broken. Because of this event most Christians believe all humans are born with 'original sin'. It is the reason why it was necessary for Jesus to die on the cross, as his death paid for human sin and restored the broken relationship with God. This will be covered in more detail on pages 179–81.

▶ Interpretations of the Genesis creation story

Christians have a wide range of different views on how the Genesis account should be interpreted:

- ▶ Some fundamentalist Christians believe the story to be absolutely true in every detail. They are said to have a literal interpretation of the creation story.
- ▶ Other Christians believe the story is more symbolic (metaphorical) and myth-like in nature and that the account needs to be interpreted. They do not believe every detail of the story to be literally accurate or true.

These different understandings of the creation story are due to diverse opinions between Christian denominations about how the Bible should be read and interpreted: literally or non-literally.

For example, there are diverse views on how the word 'day' in the Genesis creation story should be interpreted. A literal Christian may accept the term 'day' in the literal sense so that a day becomes 24 hours. They would therefore reject any scientific theory that said the universe has developed over millions of years.

Many Christians, however, may see the term 'day' as representing a longer period of time, so the seven 'days' of creation could actually represent millions of years. This means they can believe in both the creation story and the scientific theory that the Big Bang started the development of the universe. This would be a non-literal interpretation.

Regardless of whether Christians believe in the Big Bang theory, all Christians believe that God was the ultimate creator of the universe.

Tasks

- Reproduce the table below, explaining the different interpretations of creation in Genesis.

Attitude to the Creation story	Interpretation
Literal	They believe that..... 'Day' means
Non-literal	They believe that..... 'Day' means

- Why are there differing interpretations of the Genesis account of Creation?
- Explain the four key beliefs about creation that most Christians agree on.



► The role of the Word and the Spirit in creation

There is also an account of the creation in the Gospel of John:

'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. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.'

John 1:1–5

You will see the repeated use of 'Word' in the text of John. There are different views within Christianity as to what is meant by it. Some people believe that 'Word' refers to God's creative self-expression and the purpose and plans that he put in place as he created the universe.

However, most Christians understand the 'Word' to be a reference to Jesus, the second part of the Trinity. For the majority of Christians, John 1:1, and the belief that the 'Word' is Jesus, are central to the belief that Jesus is God as part of the Holy Trinity.

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'

They believe this line clearly states that Jesus (the Word) was present at the beginning of creation and that he is God.



A painting of the Nativity scene

Tasks

- 1 Write the sub-heading 'Key events in the Life of Jesus'. Identify the four key events that you will be examining as a bullet list.
- 2 Explain why Christians believe Jesus was divine. Include four different examples in your answer.



Jesus Christ

Christians believe there are a number of important events in the life of Jesus. Four of the most important events are:

- ▶ the Incarnation (God becomes Man)
- ▶ the crucifixion and death of Jesus
- ▶ the resurrection of Jesus
- ▶ Jesus' ascension to heaven.

Atonement the belief that Jesus' death on the cross healed the rift between humans and God.

Some Christians believe Jesus' life and death is an act of **atonement** for the sins of the world and that salvation is offered to all those who believe this.

All of these events are recorded in the Gospels.

► Incarnation

Key Concept



Incarnation God becoming human in the form of Jesus.

Some Christians believe that Jesus was God **incarnated**. This means 'God made flesh' or God in human form. Jesus was not conceived in the same way as other humans, through sexual intercourse between a man and a woman. Mary, Jesus' mother, was told by an angel that she would give birth to a child named Jesus. She was a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus.

This passage from the Gospel of Luke describes Mary being told that she will give birth to Jesus:

'The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

Luke 1:28–33

In the Gospels, Jesus is often referred to as the Son of God, as in this passage from the Gospel of John:

'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.'

John 1:14

For many Christians there are many events or miracles from the life of Jesus which provide evidence that he was divine, such as:

- ▶ the miracle of the Virgin birth
- ▶ the voice of God was heard at the baptism of Jesus
- ▶ Jesus' ability to perform miracles
- ▶ the transfiguration of Jesus, when he was transformed in front of some of his apostles and shone with glorious light
- ▶ the resurrection of Jesus (see pages 181–82).

Crucifixion

Blasphemy showing a lack of respect to God or other holy things.

Messiah or ‘Anointed One’, a title given to Jesus by the early Christians who believed Jesus’ life had been foretold in the Old Testament.

Jesus’ teachings brought him into conflict with the Jewish authorities. The Jewish authorities viewed Jesus with suspicion and accused him of **blasphemy** because he claimed to be able to forgive sin. His followers believed he was the **Messiah** and this was seen as a challenge to the authorities, this led to his eventual arrest and execution. The Jewish authorities used the argument that in claiming to be the Messiah, Jesus was in fact claiming to be a king and this was treason.

The Roman form of execution was crucifixion. This was a common form of the death penalty used throughout the Roman Empire. Its purpose was to ensure a criminal died in agony and it was a powerful way to intimidate the civilian population. In the Gospel account Jesus is one of a number of men crucified in Jerusalem at the same time. However, an unusual feature in the account of Jesus’ crucifixion is when the soldiers plait a crown of thorns and place it on Jesus’ head.

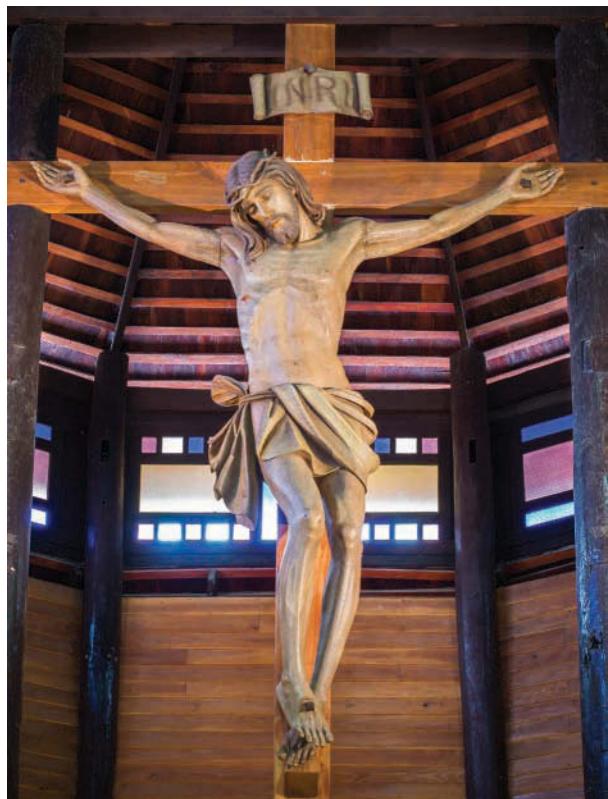
Because Christians believe Jesus was both truly God and truly human, they believe that when he died on the cross he suffered like any other human being. Jesus participates in the suffering of humanity and this is important to Christians because it means that God understands human suffering.

A summary of the main points of the crucifixion story are:

- ▶ Jesus is executed by the Romans.
- ▶ The soldiers mock Jesus and put a crown of thorns on him.
- ▶ He is crucified at a place called Golgotha.
- ▶ Two criminals are crucified with him.
- ▶ Jesus is mocked by people in the crowd.
- ▶ Jesus prays while on the cross.
- ▶ Jesus dies on the cross.

‘From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).’

Matthew 27:45–46



A model of Jesus’ crucifixion

Tasks

- 1 Read the full gospel account of Jesus’ execution in Matthew 27:28–50
- 2 Create a timeline of events for the crucifixion of Jesus. Start with ‘Jesus is sentenced to execution by the Romans’ and finish with ‘Jesus dies on the cross’.
- 3 Explain why the crucifixion of Jesus is important for Christians.

► Salvation and atonement

Key Concept



Atonement The belief that Jesus' death on the cross healed the rift between humans and God.

For Christians, Jesus' death on the cross is an act of **atonement**. The Fall, when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, destroyed the perfect relationship between humans and God and introduced sin into the world. Some Christians believe that because of this all people are born with sin, which they call 'original sin'. The sins which people commit in their daily lives take them further away from God.

Christians believe that God sent Jesus to earth to repair the broken relationship and that through his death Jesus paid the price, 'atoned', for human sin. This offers humankind salvation, which means they can live on for eternity with God in heaven after death.

Before Jesus, the Jews often used animal sacrifices to 'atone' or make up for the sins they had committed. This is shown in passages of the Old Testament.

'And when he has made an end of atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar; he shall present the live goat; and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins; and he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and send him away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. The goat shall bear all their iniquities upon him to a solitary land; and he shall let the goat go in the wilderness.'

Leviticus 16:20–22

However, Christians believe that the sacrifice Jesus made by dying on the cross meant he became the sacrifice to atone for the sins of humanity. Jesus became a 'sacrificial lamb' to take upon himself the sins of the world. His sacrifice meant that there was no longer any need to sacrifice animals as he paid the price for human sins once and for all.

The Last Supper

'While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Matthew 26:26–29

This passage from the Gospel of Matthew refers to the last supper Jesus shared with his disciples before his death. Jesus is celebrating the Jewish festival of the Passover with his disciples but he gives the shared meal a new significance. He tells the disciples that the bread they are eating represents his body and the wine they are drinking represents his blood.

He predicts his death on the cross and says that by sacrificing his body and blood, human sins will be forgiven. This quotation forms the basis of the Eucharist, in which Christians share bread and wine in worship today (see pages 201–2). The passage also contains the

Tasks



- 1 Explain why Jesus' life and death on Earth is so significant for Christians. Aim to include the following terms in your answer: The Fall, sin, atone, repair, broken relationship.
- 2 Give two reasons why Christians would identify the Last Supper as being an important event in the life of Jesus.

promise to Christians of eternal life in heaven. Christians believe that the suffering and death of Jesus was foretold by the prophet Isaiah in the Old Testament, who is writing about the Messiah or ‘Chosen One’ of God. For Christians, Jesus is the Messiah or the ‘Christ’.

‘He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgement he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.’

Isaiah 53:3–9

Tasks

- Reproduce the table below, and complete by matching the prophecies from Isaiah with the life of Jesus.

Isaiah's Prophecies	Jesus' Life
“Despised and rejected by mankind.”	The Roman Empire pursued and arrested Jesus.
“Was pierced for our transgressions.”	
“He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth.”	
“He was lead like a lamb to the slaughter.”	

- Using the information from the table above, explain why Christians believe that Jesus was the Messiah contained within Isaiah’s prophecy. Ensure that you refer to 3 different reasons in your answer, using quotations if possible.

► Resurrection

Key Concept



Resurrection The belief that Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday, conquering death.

For Christians, the **resurrection** of Jesus is fundamental to the Christian faith. It is when Jesus rose from the dead after his crucifixion. The belief that Jesus rose from the dead is the greatest miracle recorded in the New Testament and is evidence that Jesus was God.

The passage below says that if Christians don’t believe in the resurrection of Jesus then their faith is pointless:

But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

1 Corinthians 15:12–14

Task

Reproduce the table below, analysing the four key events in the life of Jesus. Complete it by giving a **definition** for each key term linked to the event, an **explanation** of what happened, an **outline** of why it is significant for Christians, and a **quote** linked to the event. (You will need plenty of space!)

Event	Definition	Explanation	Significance	Quote
Incarnation				
Crucifixion				
Salvation and atonement				
Resurrection				

The different Gospels disagree slightly on the exact events of the resurrection, but they agree that on the Sunday following Jesus' crucifixion, some of Jesus followers went to his tomb. They found that the stone covering the mouth of the tomb rolled away and Jesus' body was not inside.

The following passage outlines some of the events that happened after the resurrection:

'For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.'

1 Corinthians 15:3–8

Jesus appears to the eleven disciples.

Paul, an apostle, also claims Jesus has appeared to him.

Jesus appears to many other people.

It is important to understand that all of the accounts in the different Gospels record these significant events in the life of Jesus in very similar, but not identical, ways.

Ascension

After Jesus rose from the dead there are few references in the Gospels to what Jesus did. He appeared to the disciples and groups of other people but the account is very short and vague. After a period of time the Gospels record that Jesus ascended (rose up) to his father in heaven. There are different understandings of what this actually means. Some Christians believe that Jesus physically ascended to heaven in a literal sense. Others believe that the description of Jesus physically rising up to heaven are just meant to be symbolic, showing that Jesus' time in human form on earth was over. For Christians, it is a very significant event. It marks an end to the presence of Jesus on earth in a physical way but includes an acceptance of Jesus' spirit at work in the world.

Jesus blessed his followers before ascending to heaven as described in this passage from the Gospel of Luke. Ministers of the Church will bless individuals and groups of Christians using Jesus' example:

'When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.'

Luke 24:50–53

Tasks

- 1 Which part of the Bible teaches us about the life of Jesus?
- 2 Why do you think that the accounts of Jesus' life differ slightly within the Bible? Give two different suggestions.

■ Salvation

► Law

The Bible is the sacred text, or ‘scripture’, for Christians. It is made up of 66 ‘books’ and was written by a number of authors over a long period of time. The authors write in different styles, but all were inspired by their experience of God.



Christians have different beliefs about how the Bible should be interpreted. Does it need to be adapted to apply to modern society or is it the direct word of God that should always be followed?

Christians that they turn to for advice about how to live their lives. The teachings of the Bible and in particular the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life inspire Christians to live good lives. It has a major role in worship in all denominations. There is a reading from the Bible in every Christian service and many Christians read the Bible on a daily basis. However, there are different views on how biblical writings should be interpreted.

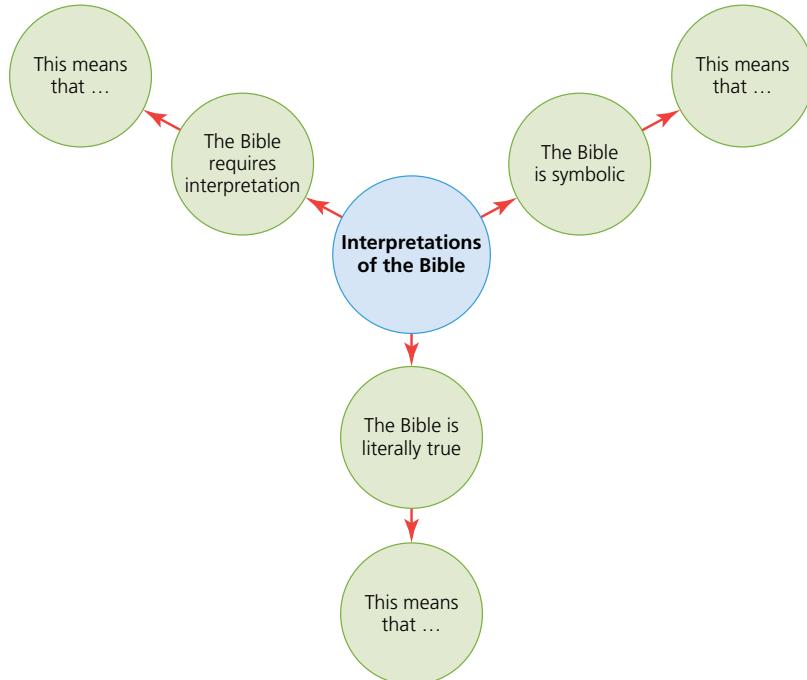
- ▶ Some Christians believe the Bible is the directly inspired ‘Word of God’ and they take all of the Bible content as literally true because it is a divine revelation. This means that when science seems to contradict some of stories that appear in the Bible, for example the Genesis creation story (see page 39), these Christians will believe the biblical account over the scientific one. For these Christians, it is the most important source of authority.
- ▶ Other Christians may take the view that the Bible is a book which requires interpretation. They believe that the Bible was written in a specific time and culture, and so some teachings may need to be adapted to apply in modern society.
- ▶ Some Christians take a more liberal view of the Bible, that is, they don’t believe that all of the events it talks about actually happened, but that they are symbolic stories that show us how God would want us to live our lives.

Of course, Christians will draw on other sources of wisdom and authority to make life decisions. They may seek advice from a minister of religion or other Christians. A person may pray and ask for guidance. Some Christians will follow their conscience.

Tasks



- 1 Explain what the Bible is in a short paragraph of roughly three sentences.
- 2 Copy and complete the mind map below, exploring the different ways in which the Bible is interpreted.



- 3 As a sentence, state what is meant by Divine Law.

► Sin

A sin is an immoral act that goes against God's law. The Bible contains ideas about human sinfulness and its link with salvation.

Original sin

One idea is that Christians are born with Original sin – the tendency to disobey God. Original sin came into the world as a result of the Fall (see page 176) when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and were sent out of the Garden of Eden. Adam's sin has been passed down from generation to generation. It is original sin that causes humans to do things in their lives that go against God's law and it is this sin that separates humans from God.

However, there are some problems with original sin. Many modern Christians object to traditional ideas about original sin since they believe it would be unfair for God to punish all humanity for an act committed by one man. Also, many Christians take a non-literal interpretation of the Bible and don't believe the events of the Fall actually happened. Even if it did happen as stated in the Bible, it's hard to explain biologically how original sin actually passed from one generation to the next.

Many modern Christians now understand original sin to be a useful way of understanding that humans are prone to doing bad things and acting in a way that is against God's law.

► Sin and salvation

Human sinfulness separates humans from God. However, Christians believe that Jesus' death on the cross atoned for human sin and allowed them the hope of salvation. It is the chance to live with God for eternity after death. There are different views on exactly how Jesus' death achieved this:

- ▶ That Jesus was a sacrifice that paid for human sin. Just as the Jews that had come before Jesus sacrificed an animal once a year to pay for their sins, Jesus' death did the same thing but once and for all.
- ▶ That Jesus paid the ransom for human sin, which released humans from captivity and allowed them to be saved.

► How do Christians achieve salvation?

Jesus' death allowed humans the chance of salvation, but different Christian denominations have different ideas about how they should act to receive that salvation.

Catholics believe that by taking part in the sacraments they will be able to achieve salvation and go to heaven. They believe that baptism washes them clean of sin, and that by confessing (the sacrament of penance) the sins they commit in their life they are absolved (or freed) from them.

Many Protestants believe that they must have faith in Jesus and repent their sins to achieve salvation.

► Grace and the spirit

In order to help them live a good life, Christians believe God sends the Holy Spirit to bring grace. This supernatural gift of grace means that Christians are able to pray for help from God, to turn away from sin and live good lives. This gift from God of the Holy Spirit is recorded in the Book of Acts, when the Holy Spirit appears to the disciples after Jesus' ascension to heaven:

'When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.'

'Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.'

Acts 2:1–6

Many Christians believe in special 'rites' called sacraments (for example, baptism and the Eucharist, see page 198) and that the Holy Spirit comes down upon them as the sacraments are performed. All Christians believe the Holy Spirit is at work in the world today.

Tasks

- 1 How are Grace and The Holy Spirit linked?
- 2 Explain what happens during Evangelical worship and the role of the Holy Spirit within it. Use the structure below to help you:

Evangelical Christians encourage members of the congregation to be moved by the Holy Spirit during worship. This can take several forms. Firstly... Secondly... Finally...

The **Nicene Creed** statement of Christian faith from 325 CE.

Tasks

- 1 What is 'eschatology'?
- 2 Where do Christians find the main references to eschatology in the Bible?



The cross is an important symbol for Christians because it represents Jesus' death and resurrection.

The role of the Holy Spirit is particularly important in Evangelical worship. Evangelical Christians use a form of worship where worshippers are encouraged to be moved by the spirit. This means they believe the Holy Spirit is present and influences them in their prayers; they often shout out and praise God. Some Christians feel they are moved to speak in tongues, which they consider a gift from the Holy Spirit. Also, some Christians believe acts of 'faith healing' may take place within religious services, where the Holy Spirit works in miraculous way to heal people. This may be a physical or spiritual healing.

The afterlife

► Eschatological beliefs

Eschatology refers to beliefs about the 'last things': death, judgement, heaven and hell.

Christians believe in life after death. Indeed, this belief that there is life beyond death is at the very centre of Christianity. Christians believe that three days after Jesus was crucified and died, he rose from the dead and came back to life. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, summed up the importance of this to the Christian faith when he wrote:

'If the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.'

Corinthians 1:15–17

There are a number of references in the New Testament concerning eschatological beliefs and the afterlife, and belief in an afterlife is stated in both the Apostles' Creed and the **Nicene Creed**. Christians believe this life is a preparation for an afterlife to be with God in heaven. The Nicene Creed ends with a reference to resurrection:

'I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.'

This explains why the story of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection is so important to Christians, because it provides them with evidence that death is not the end and although physical bodies die, the immortal souls live on. The cross is so important in Christianity because it is symbolic both of death and resurrection.

The Gospel of John

The Gospel of John was the last gospel to be written and is often referred to as the 'eschatological gospel'. In the gospel there are frequent references to the afterlife.

In one account, Jesus raises a man called Lazarus from the dead. When Jesus performs this miracle it is a sign of his power and it has a profound effect on the faith of the people who witness the miracle. Jesus says that anyone who believes in him will never die.

'Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"'

John 11:25–26

The words of Jesus in the following passage offer an insight into heaven and explain that the way to heaven is through faith in Jesus.

"My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going."

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

John 14:2–7

► Judgement

Christians believe that there will be a Judgement Day when people will be judged by God for the quality of their lives. Christians believe that on this day Jesus will return to earth in a 'second coming'. This will mark the end of human existence on the earth. This belief is known as the 'Parousia'. The quotation below from Matthew describes how Jesus will separate the people who will go to heaven from those who will go to hell, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 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 looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"

The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

Then he will say to those on his left, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me."

They also will answer, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?"



Jesus will separate those who are going to heaven from those who are going to hell, just like the shepherd in the parable separates the sheep from the goats.

Tasks

- 1 Summarise the parable of the Sheep and the Goats in no more than four sentences.
- 2 Explain what Christians learn about judgement and the afterlife from this parable.
- 3 In what ways are the messages or morals contained within the parables of the Sheep and the Goats and Lazarus and the Rich Man similar?



He will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.”

Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.’

Matthew 25:31–46

Essentially Christians believe that the quality and goodness of our lives will be judged by God. The Apostles' Creed states quite explicitly that God ‘shall come to judge the living and the dead’. People will be bodily resurrected on this day but they will be transformed into some glorified state. Illness, pain and death will no longer exist and the world will be purified of sin.

Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man

Jesus frequently used **parables** to explain a teaching. The parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man shows there is a clear divide between those who will be rewarded in heaven and those punished in hell, and the afterlife is only achieved by faith and good actions, regardless of success or wealth in an earthly life (see pages 155–56).

‘There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, “Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.”

But Abraham replied, “Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.”

He answered, “Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.”

Abraham replied, “They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.”

No, father Abraham, he said, “but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.”

He said to him, “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.”

Luke 16:19–31

Parable a short, often simple story which contains a deeper meaning.

► Resurrection

Christians believe that the spiritual part of a person, their soul, is able to join God in heaven when they die. However, they believe that at the end of time there will also be a physical resurrection. This means that people will be brought back to life with physical bodies, just as Jesus was.

This belief is stated in the Creeds. Jesus himself did not teach a great deal about the nature of the afterlife but the teaching of Jesus and St Paul refers to a physical resurrection.

This quote from Corinthians describes that at the end of time a trumpet will sound and the dead will rise up.

'So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.'

If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit." The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.

I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

1 Corinthians 15:42–55

► Heaven and hell

Although there are numerous references in the Bible to heaven, there are not many descriptions of it, which explains why Christians believe different things about it. Most Christians believe that it is where people go in the afterlife if they have the right to go there and that is where God and angels are located.

However, Christians have different views on what it is: some believe that heaven is an actual, physical place whereas others believe it exists in a more spiritual dimension, more of a state or condition.

Christians have different opinions, too, about what hell is although most believe that, whatever it is, it is undoubtedly a place of suffering. Again some Christians believe that it is a physical place where people burn eternally; others believe that it exists in a more spiritual dimension. Most Christians believe that the real torment of hell resides in absolute separation from God as he is not present in hell. To be in hell is not to be in the presence of God.



The gates of heaven and hell



Traditional and contemporary beliefs about heaven and hell

Traditionally heaven and hell were thought of as real places. It was believed that hell was underground and heaven in the sky. Modern understandings of heaven and hell are more likely to see heaven as a place where God is and hell is a place where God is not.

Contemporary beliefs about heaven and hell raise important questions. If God is a God of love and a God of forgiveness then would God not ultimately forgive everyone, which means nobody goes to hell forever?

This is the sort of question modern Christian thinkers debate. In reality there is very little teaching about the nature of these places.

Both heaven and hell are connected to an idea of reward and punishment at the end of an earthly life and are an important basis for the Christian belief in an afterlife.

Purgatory

In addition to heaven and hell, Catholic Christians believe in purgatory. They believe that many people who die cannot gain immediate entry into heaven because they are stained by their sins. These people go to purgatory, a sort of waiting room for heaven, where they undergo a process of cleansing and purification before eventually securing entry to heaven. It is a temporary state of being. On Judgement Day all of those held in purgatory will go to heaven. Catholics believe it is important to pray for the souls of the dead and those in purgatory.

Tasks

- 1 Why do Christians have differing beliefs about hell?
- 2 Copy and complete the table below, exploring the different features of the afterlife in Christianity.

Place	Nature: permanent or temporary	Purpose	Description



► End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Atonement
- Incarnation
- Omnipotency
- Omnipresence
- Resurrection
- Trinity

Key teachings about:

- the nature of God
- evil and suffering
- the creation
- the Trinity
- salvation
- the afterlife

Knowledge check

- 1 Write a short paragraph (roughly three sentences) to explain what Christians believe about the nature of God.
- 2 Write a long paragraph (roughly eight to ten sentences) to explain how Christians believe the incarnation and the resurrection are linked.

The Big Question

'The Bible needs to be adapted to suit the modern world.'

Your task

Respond to the statement above, showing that you have considered more than one point of view. Give reasoned judgements on the validity and strength of these views.

Skills Link



- 1 State two Christian beliefs about God.
- 2 Explain why Christians believe Heaven is important.

Task

You need to explain in detail religious teachings about **Creation**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Christianity. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Christians such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote..... . This means that/ Because of this they

Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/Because of this they..... . Their beliefs do/do not differ because

► Exam Focus

Christianity: Beliefs and teachings

(b) questions

In these questions you will be expected to describe a particular religious teaching or view. There is a maximum of five marks for this type of question. To gain full marks you should be able to show your knowledge using appropriate religious terms and any relevant sources of wisdom or sacred texts.

Look at the following question:

(b) Explain Christian teaching about the crucifixion of Jesus. (5)

John has decided there are a number of different points he could include in his answer.

Select three and add any further details that could be included in his answer.

- ▶ The death of Jesus was part of a divine plan
- ▶ The death of Jesus was necessary to allow the resurrection to take place
- ▶ The crucifixion of Jesus was an act of atonement for the sins of people
- ▶ The crucifixion is part of the process for the redemption/salvation of humanity
- ▶ The crucifixion was a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy
- ▶ Reference to biblical texts, such as Luke 18:31–33

(d) questions

(d) 'Jesus was just an ordinary man.'

Discuss this statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. (15)

(You must refer to religion and belief in your answer.)

In (d) questions, different points of views are needed. These do not have to be contrasting views but must be different. Look at the list below: there are only three different point of view. The other points are just repeats. Identify the three different views.

- ▶ Christians believe Jesus was the Son of God
- ▶ Although Jesus might not have been divine he gave some good teachings
- ▶ Christians believe God had one son called Jesus
- ▶ Some people believe Jesus was simply an ordinary man who preached a particular ethical code
- ▶ If Jesus was ordinary lots of people wouldn't worship him
- ▶ Jesus is important because his teachings are for everyone, whether they are Christians or not
- ▶ The importance of Jesus is shown by the many Christians who believe in him.

6

Christianity: Practices

Forms of worship

Worship is an expression of adoration and praise for God. Acts of worship and their importance are referred to frequently in the Bible. For example, in the Ten Commandments the commandment 'to keep holy the Sabbath day' has been interpreted as a command to worship God.

There are many different forms of worship and different Christian traditions have different ways of worshipping God. Different forms of worship include:

- ▶ **Liturgical worship** is when worship follows a very set structure which is more or less the same every time. An example of this is the Eucharist service (see page 201).
- ▶ **Informal worship** refers to worship that doesn't have a set structure and is more spontaneous than liturgical worship. Services in Evangelical denominations are often more informal than traditional worship.
- ▶ **Individual worship** takes place in addition to worshipping together in a church. Christians believe that it is important to form a personal relationship with God and worshipping alone is often part of this.

Set and informal prayers are an important part of all forms of Christian worship. These will be examined on page 193.

Not all worship however involves praying or listening to sermons. For some denominations, like the Salvation Army, music has become central to their worship and congregational singing of hymns plays an enormously significant part in their services.



When Christians come together to worship this is known as a congregation. Worship that takes place as a congregation is sometimes called 'corporate worship'.

'Where two or more are gathered in my name, I am there with them'
Matthew 18:20



The Eucharist service is an example of liturgical worship

► Liturgical worship

Liturgical worship is a form of worship which follows a set pattern and has established rituals as part of public church worship. This might be a set pattern of prayers, or the use of a set service book as in the Church of England.

In the Church of England, liturgical worship is rooted in Thomas Cranmer's *Exhortation and Litany* of 1554. It was the first 'service book' written in English and outlined how church services should take place. Most denominations include the Lord's prayer (see page 196) in their services, which, because of its biblical origins, has real significance for all Protestant denominations.

Most Christian churches have some form of liturgical worship. A good example of liturgical worship is the Eucharist, which is also known as Holy Communion or Mass. In the Catholic Church for example, the Eucharistic service would contain:

- ▶ the Liturgy of the Word: this consists of readings from the Bible, a homily (sermon), a public profession of faith (for reciting the Apostles' or Nicene Creed, see page 173) and prayers of intercession (prayers for those in need)
- ▶ the Liturgy of the Eucharist: in this part of the service the altar is prepared with the bread and wine. The Eucharistic prayer and Lord's Prayer are said and people then share in the bread and wine. The service ends with prayers and a blessing from the priest.

► Informal worship

Some Churches have moved away from liturgical worship to adopt a more informal approach which does not have a set structure. In some denominations where informal worship is more common, it would be quite hard to identify any set structure or 'liturgy' at all. The modern charismatic and evangelical approach to worship has distanced itself from traditional Protestant rituals. They emphasise the importance of the Holy Spirit and spontaneous action, and this shows itself in services, in worship and in prayer. Although this informal worship may seem modern, it does in fact resemble the type of worship offered by Christians in the first decades of the Church before rituals and tradition had been established.

Some Christian movements have moved away from the church building being the place in which all worship should take place. Instead they emphasise the ability to worship in any place where Christians gather. Again this is similar to worship in the early Church.

► Individual worship

Many Christians believe that a personal relationship with God is possible and important, so individual worship is important to them. Traditionally worship tended to be seen as a formal process that should take place when Christians gathered together (in 'congregations') at set times in set places (chapels and churches). This is known as 'corporate worship' and, indeed, this corporate gathering of Christians is what actually makes up a Church.

However, as society has changed over the centuries, and given more responsibilities and freedoms to the individual, so the idea of private worship has gained ground. There are many people today

'Go to your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is in Heaven'

Matthew 6:6

who declare themselves to be Christians, with a personal relationship with God, although they seldom go to church or take part in public worship. They pray alone or with their families but do not gather with others in a Church. The Bible instructs Christians to do both.

Attendance at Church of England services declined to its lowest ever level in 2016 and so the continued debate about the roles of individual and public worship is likely to become more important, not least because it has enormous implications for the use and sustainability of church buildings.

► The nature and importance of prayer

Prayer was at the heart of Jesus' lifestyle. Christians believe it is an essential part of their faith.

In John 4:23 Jesus says:

'Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks.'

Jesus states that Christians should worship God in the Spirit and in truth. Christians believe that this means worship should not be superficial, but that they should worship God with all of their thoughts, actions and words.

Worship involves prayer and prayer is about developing a special relationship with God. Prayer serves a number of purposes and is found in many different forms within different Christian denominations. Some of the most important types of prayer are:

- ▶ Adoration – deep love and respect for God
- ▶ Confessional – statement of faith through prayer
- ▶ Contemplation – meditation
- ▶ Penitential – saying sorry
- ▶ Praise – giving praise, which might include singing hymns
- ▶ Thanksgiving – saying thank you
- ▶ Supplication – asking for something.

Most people are familiar with the idea of someone sitting or kneeling alone in a church, deep in their own thoughts and surrounded by silence. Perhaps many more people, including those without faith, are familiar with how, in times of great adversity, people say a silent prayer, often out of a sense of desperation. All of these people in their own ways are talking to God, and prayer, quite simply, is how Christians communicate with God. For some there is a real sense of talking to God, whereas for others the means of communication is more mysterious. Certainly Jesus taught the early disciples to pray, encouraging them to pray to God as a father and this suggests that prayer is something to be learnt.

For Protestants, the importance of individual prayer cannot be underestimated. One of the great principles of the Reformation, which led to the creation of Protestantism, was a belief that each Christian is in their own way a priest. This means that Protestants believe that all Christians have direct access to God through Christ; they don't have to go through a priest.

Prayer is a significant factor in making faith deeply personal. Many people pray alone but many people find tremendous spiritual support from praying together, believing that they are following the instructions of Christ himself, who encouraged his followers to pray together.



For some Christians prayer is a direct way of having a conversation with God.



Our Father,
who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done.

On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
And the glory, for ever and ever.

Amen

Source: From the Book of Common Prayer

The Lord's Prayer is the most important Christian prayer. It is the words of Jesus given directly to the disciples when they asked Jesus to teach them how to pray.

Set prayers

Set prayers are one form of praying. They allow Christians to learn and repeat prayers that have a significant meaning for them. They allow prayer to become collective so when Christians recite the Lord's Prayer with others their single voices become a communal voice.

One example is the Lord's prayer, which is recited in almost every Christian service. Jesus instructed the disciples to pray by using the Lord's prayer in response to the disciples asking Jesus to teach them how to pray.

Like the disciples, many people find set prayers very useful. They are part of the tradition and ritual of worship that goes back hundreds of years.

Set prayers were originally passed on by word of mouth before being written down so that they could be repeated and used by more than one person.

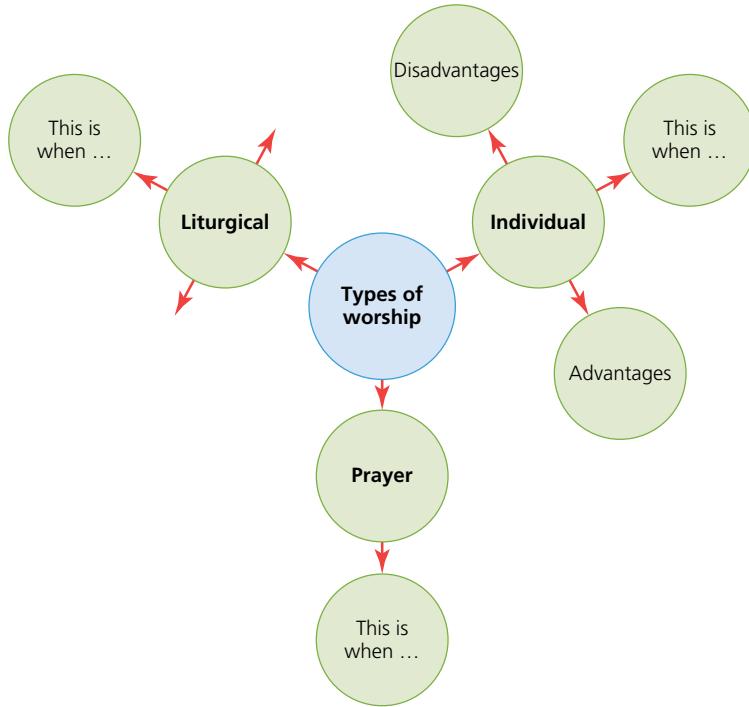
Many Protestant denominations in Britain use the set prayers in the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Tasks

- 1 State what is meant by worship.
- 2 Reproduce the table below. Complete the table by defining each different type of prayer.

Adoration	Confessional	Contemplation	Penitential	Praise	Thanksgiving	Supplication

- 3 Reproduce the diagram below, analysing the different types of worship. For each, give a definition/description, and suggest the advantage and disadvantages.



- 4 Why is the Lord's Prayer so important for Christians?
- 5 Read the Lord's prayer above. Explain, using quotes if necessary, three different things that it tells Christians about God.



Extemporaneous prayers

Extemporaneous prayers are non-formulaic, spontaneous prayers. Some Christians prefer these types of prayers because they believe that their spontaneity in some ways is more spiritually honest. Some Christians believe that when they pray in this way their choice and use of words are influenced by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Some Christian denominations have gone so far as to reject set prayers other than the Lord's Prayer. They believe that by repeating set prayers, the real meaning is lost and people just end up repeating them without thinking carefully about the meaning.

Informal prayers

Set prayers are written in a particular style of English, namely formal, standard English. For example, God is referred to as a 'father' rather than a 'dad'. For some Christians this very formal language means they feel they can't really relate to the set prayers and so they have adopted an informal voice in their prayers, speaking to God in more day-to-day language.

► How Quakers worship

Informal prayer tends to be private and involves more than just communicating with God. It can include meditation, contemplation, personal reflection and simply being in the presence of God. Quakers (the Society of Friends), for example, value this idea of simply being in the presence of God.

Quaker 'services' do not consist of any set prayers. Instead they sit in silence and stillness. They believe that this allows them the opportunity to listen and reflect. This helps them to become closer to God and to the other members of the congregation. There is no official leader of the worship, but occasionally someone might feel moved to speak, this is called ministry. Others may listen in silence or feel they want to speak too.

► Evangelical worship

In many Evangelical Churches, such as the Pentecostal Church, worship is also very informal. These Christians feel they are moved by the Holy Spirit during worship. This may involve them falling into trances or even speaking in unknown languages (speaking in tongues). Movement and participation is encouraged and there is often music, singing and dancing in the congregation.

The sacraments

Key Concepts



Sacraments An outward sign of an invisible and inward blessing by God, for example baptism and Eucharist.

Rite a ritual or series of ritual practices which often have symbolic meaning.

The word **sacrament** originates from the Latin ‘sacramentum’, an oath of allegiance made by Roman soldiers in a ceremony conducted in a holy place. By the second century CE it had started to be used to describe Christian **rites**. By the fifth century it was defined by the early Christian thinker St Augustine in his writings as a ‘visible sign of invisible grace’. This means that the actions, words and objects involved in each sacrament are a sign that Christians are receiving God’s grace or blessing.

By the twelfth century it was used to describe seven specific rites that were seen as central to Christian life. These sacraments are still acknowledged by the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions. They are:

- ▶ Baptism (see page 199): initiates people into the Christian church. Catholics believe that it washes away sin. Many churches practice infant baptism, though some only allow adults to be baptised. The belief is that as an adult they can understand the commitment they are making.
- ▶ Confirmation: in churches that practice infant baptism, confirmation takes place when a person reaches an age when they commit to the church for themselves. They remake the promises that were made by their parents or guardians on their behalf at their baptism.
- ▶ Eucharist (see page 201): in the Eucharist service worshippers share bread and wine in remembrance of Jesus’ death.
- ▶ Penance: also known as the sacrament of reconciliation or confession. Catholics are required to confess their sins to a priest and repent them. The priest will then ‘absolve’ (or free) them from their sins and ask them to carry out a penitent act to show they are sorry for what they have done. This might include praying or fasting.
- ▶ Anointing of the sick: this sacrament is performed when a Catholic is seriously ill or dying. It is carried out by a priest who will apply oil to (‘anoint’) the sick person.
- ▶ Holy orders: the sacrament of Holy orders is the way people join the priesthood of the church. Joining the priesthood is called being ‘ordained’.
- ▶ Marriage: (see page 7) the sacrament of marriage shows the spiritual union of the couple and God.



Most Protestants only recognise two sacraments: baptism and the Eucharist (or Holy Communion). This is because these were the only two sacraments documented in the Gospels as being practised by Jesus during his life.

Some Christian denominations, such as the Quakers (the Society of Friends) and the Salvation Army, don't even believe in these two sacraments. They both believe that sacraments are an inward spiritual experience and that there is no need for external services or rituals. They believe that some people might get so caught up in the external rituals that they forget the important inward grace they receive from God. These churches believe that it is possible to live a holy life without the need of the sacraments.

Many Evangelical Christian churches carry out rituals like baptism, but don't believe they are especially sacred so don't consider them sacraments.

► The role, meaning and celebration of baptism

What happens at a baptism?

Lay person a person who is not a member of the clergy.

Christians believe that the rite of baptism must be carried out by an ordained minister or an authorised **lay person**, but different denominations have different practices. In most Christian Churches, including the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church, children and infants are baptised, celebrating the birth of a child and marking their entry into the Christian community.

Parents and godparents of a baby make promises to bring them up in the Christian faith. For denominations that practise infant baptism, children will often have a 'confirmation' ceremony when they reach their early teens or as adults when they are able to declare their own faith and remake the promises their parents and godparents made on their behalf at baptism.

Some denominations, for example Baptists, don't believe in infant baptism because they think that a believer should be able to declare their own faith, and obviously babies cannot do this. As a result, babies and children are not baptised because this type of 'believers' baptism' is for only for those who are able to state their faith. Indeed, Jesus himself was baptised as an adult. Some denominations, and certainly many Evangelical Christians, fully immerse the person being baptised in water.



An adult being baptised



The rite of baptism involves the use of water. The word 'baptism' stems from the Greek word 'bapto' which means to dip in water. The water used to baptise can be poured over the head or a few symbolic drops can be sprinkled on the head.

Why do Christians believe baptism is important?

Christians believe that baptism is important because:

- ▶ it is a rite of entry that allows people to become members of the Christian Church
- ▶ many Christians believe original sin is removed through the action of baptism
- ▶ it follows the personal example of Jesus who was baptised as an adult by John the Baptist
- ▶ believers' baptism gives an individual an opportunity to publicly proclaim their personal faith.

It is thought of as the first sacrament, acting as a 'covenant' or agreement between human beings and God.

Christians believe very strongly in the importance of baptism and there are a number of important references to it in the Bible. St Paul suggests that baptism links us directly with the death and resurrection of Jesus when he states:

'We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.'

Epistle to the Romans 6:4

Jesus himself was baptised. He gives the disciples a clear instruction to baptise people:

'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

Matthew 28:19–20

In Christianity, baptism is regarded as a sign of the gift of the Holy Spirit. The baptised Christian becomes united with Christ, including in his death and resurrection. Through being baptised they are able to enter heaven and live eternally with God after death, as this quote from John shows:

'Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

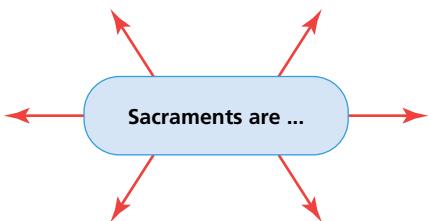
"How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."

John 3:3–6

Tasks

- 1 Complete the diagram below, explaining what sacraments are and giving examples of the different sacraments of the Church.



- 2 Explain why baptism is important to Christians. Make reference to at least one quote in your answer.
 3 Write the sub-heading: **Key features of an Infant Baptism**. Underneath, write down the main parts of the baptismal ceremony as bullet points.
 4 Why do some denominations disagree with infant baptism?

► The Eucharist



The bread and wine shared during the Eucharist service are representative of Jesus' body and blood.

Many Christians believe that the Eucharist (also known as Mass or Holy Communion) is a sacrament instituted by Jesus at the Last Supper, the final meal that he shared with his disciples before the crucifixion. At this meal Jesus shared bread and wine with his disciples and told them that the wine represented his blood and the bread represented his body. He told them that they should share bread and wine when they gathered together after his death in his memory.

Christians today continue this tradition – taking bread and wine when they meet to worship in a sacrament that they call Eucharist. They believe this brings them closer to God. The word 'Eucharist' is a Greek word, meaning thanksgiving, and in one sense it is an act of thanksgiving for the life and death of Jesus and for the Christian faith.

Eucharist services are examples of liturgical worship, which means they have a set structure and the same rituals happen each time. The outline of a typical Catholic service is described on page 194.

Different views about the Eucharist

Different denominations have different views about what happens in Eucharistic services:

Lutheranism a Protestant denomination that follows the religious doctrines of Martin Luther (1483–1586).

- ▶ Catholics believe that the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ in a process called transubstantiation. In the sixteenth century, Protestant Reformers the **Lutherans** adopted a position called consubstantiation. This is concept of ‘sacramental union’, that the body and blood of Jesus are somehow present ‘in, with and under’ the forms of bread and wine. This has been explained by using the analogy of an iron rod placed in fire. Both fire and metal are united within the red-hot iron and yet the fire and the metal retain their distinctiveness as well.
- ▶ Many Protestants reject the view of the Catholic Church and its belief in transubstantiation. They do not believe that the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ. The Reformed and Presbyterian view of the Eucharist is that Christ is present spiritually rather than literally in the bread and wine.
- ▶ Other Protestants, such as Baptists, believe that Christ is not present in the bread and wine but that the ritual is simply an act of remembrance. This is known as memorialism.

Whatever the Christian view, the fact that the ritual revolves around bread and wine is important. Food and drink are intrinsic to human physical health and survival in the same way that Christians believe this sacrament is important to spiritual health and survival.

Tasks

- 1 What is the Eucharist?
- 2 Reproduce the table below. Complete it by outlining the differing views about the Eucharist.



Denomination	View
Catholic	
Lutheran	
Protestant	
Baptist	

Pilgrimage and celebrations

Celebrations

Christian celebrations are religious festivals which remember important events in the life of Jesus or mark important events in the history of the Christian Church. Because Britain is traditionally a Christian country the major celebrations or festivals became the basis of public holidays in Britain. The two most important Christian celebrations are Christmas and Easter.

Christmas

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ – the incarnation. Christians do not believe Jesus was actually born on Christmas day but mark this day in the Christian calendar to focus on the incarnation.

Because the celebration is so important, a period of time known as Advent was set aside to allow Christians to prepare for Christmas. Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas day. Traditionally many Christians fasted during Advent, and the Eastern Orthodox Church still practises fasting, though the Western Churches no longer do. Many people have advent calendars or advent candles to count down the days until Christmas.

In the run up to Christmas Christians may celebrate in a number of ways:

- ▶ **Nativity** the accounts of Jesus' birth in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew.
- ▶ Nativity or crib scenes are very common in homes and churches.
- ▶ Nativity plays are acted out in schools and churches.
- ▶ Special Christingle services take place in church where children traditionally make a Christingle (orange with a candle) to show Jesus was the 'light of the world'.



A card portraying the Nativity scene

- ▶ Carol concerts where people sing Christmas carols
- ▶ Exchanging Christmas cards with a religious image and greeting
- ▶ Decoration of houses inside and outside
- ▶ Advent wreath decorations
- ▶ Midnight Mass communion service takes place on Christmas Eve

On Christmas day itself Christians may attend Church services as well as having family meals and exchanging gifts. Christmas is also celebrated

by many non-Christians in the UK and, for these people, holds no particular religious significance. School nativity plays become winter concerts and the design of many Christmas cards show only the fun or wintry aspects of this time. Many people regard it as a 'wintertime' festival rather than a religious one.

► Easter

Easter is the most important festival in the Christian calendar. It remembers the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Lent

A period of 40 days, known as 'Lent' leads up to Easter. Lent remembers the time Jesus spent in the desert fasting and praying. The devil tried to tempt him several times during this period but he resisted the temptations.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday when there are special church services. Catholics, for example, attend a special service where they are marked with black ashes in the shape of a cross on their foreheads. Traditionally Ash Wednesday is a day of abstinence and fasting. To mark the fact that Jesus fasted in the desert, Christians often give up something for Lent. The day before Lent starts is known as Shrove Tuesday or Pancake Day and was an opportunity to use up the foods that Christians would be giving up during Lent.

Holy week

Holy week is the week that precedes Easter Sunday, and it is when Christians remember the events in Jesus' life that led up to his death:

- ▶ **Palm Sunday:** Palm Sunday commemorates the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem. In some Christian traditions, for example Anglicanism and Catholicism, Christians receive crosses made of palm leaves to remind them of this event.
- ▶ **Maundy Thursday:** The Thursday before Easter remembers Jesus' last meal with his disciples. During the meal they shared bread and wine, which Jesus told them represented his body and blood. To commemorate this, Christians often have Holy Communion services (Mass). Jesus also washed his disciples' feet and in Catholic churches the priest will often wash the feet of some members of the congregation.
- ▶ **Good Friday:** On Good Friday Christians remember Jesus' death on the cross. It is a day of mourning and services will be held. Some Christians, for example Catholics, fast on this day. In some countries there will be processions or re-enactments of the death of Jesus.

Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday marks the day of Jesus' resurrection, when those coming to his tomb found it empty. It is the most important day in the Christian calendar and is a day of celebration. Christians attend special services and churches are filled with flowers.

As well as attending church, Christians may also celebrate Easter in the following ways:

- ▶ exchanging cards with family and friends
- ▶ exchanging Easter eggs
- ▶ attending church services in Lent
- ▶ visiting cemeteries to leave flowers for deceased family and friends
- ▶ personal reading of the Bible
- ▶ evening vigil on the Saturday of Holy Week.



Some Christians paint eggs during Easter to commemorate Jesus' resurrection

Task

Reproduce the table below. Complete by analysing each of the major celebrations, outlining their significance, what they involve, and how they are traditionally celebrated.

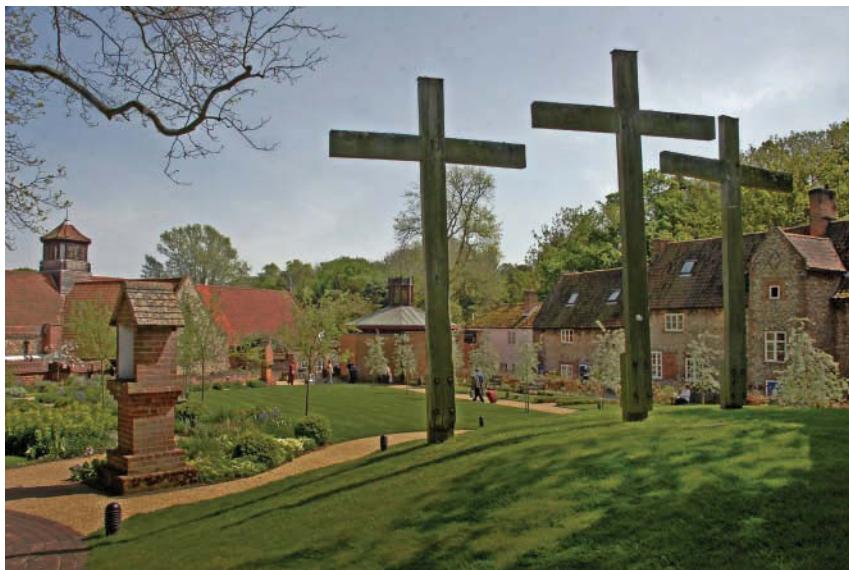
Celebration	Significance	Involves ...	Celebrated by ...
Christmas	Marks the birth of Jesus	Advent – a time of preparation for Christmas	Nativity plays, carol concerts, ...
Lent			
Holy Week		Palm Sunday ...	
Good Friday			
Easter Sunday			

► Pilgrimages

A pilgrimage is a journey to a sacred place, usually as an act of religious devotion.

Pilgrimage has always been a practice in the Christian religion where many pilgrims have travelled to the Holy Land to ‘walk in the footsteps of Jesus’. Today pilgrimage is still practised by many Christians worldwide. You need to study two sites of pilgrimage in particular: Walsingham in Britain and Taizé in France.

The reasons why people travel on a pilgrimage are many and complex and they have changed over time. Certainly, a modern-day pilgrim does not face the dangers faced by a medieval pilgrim. However, all pilgrims believe that life itself is a journey towards God. And a pilgrimage is faith in action, the journey representing the journey that all Christians undertake from earth to heaven.



Walsingham became a shrine to which pilgrims would travel

Walsingham as a Christian place of pilgrimage

Walsingham is in the county of Norfolk, 30 miles from Norwich, in England. It has been a holy place since 1061 when the widow of the Lord of the Manor of Walsingham Pava, Richeldis de Faverches,

Reformation when Henry VIII split with the Catholic Church and established the Church of England. He destroyed many of the monasteries in Britain.

Ecumenical representing or promoting unity within the different Christian Churches.

had a dream in which the Virgin Mary asked her to build a replica of the house in Nazareth where the announcement of the birth of Jesus took place. This she did and then, around about 1150, a priory or small monastic church was built on the site.

From this time onwards Walsingham became a shrine to which medieval pilgrims would travel from all around the world – until 1538 when the **Reformation** resulted in its destruction. People probably continued to travel in secret to this holy place but it was only in 1829, after the laws to allow Catholics to practise their religion fully in Britain, that people were able to travel openly to Walsingham again. Today there is also an Anglican shrine at Walsingham.

Walsingham is an important place of pilgrimage because our human journey begins with birth and what could be more special than the place where the announcement of the birth of Jesus took place?

Taizé as a Christian place of pilgrimage

What is the Taizé community?

Taizé is a Christian site of pilgrimage in Burgundy in France. It was founded in 1940 by Roger Schutz and is an important **ecumenical** monastic order. The monks come from many different countries and live a life of communal prayer.

The men who become monks at Taizé are from different Christian denominations. This is unusual and is what makes it an ‘ecumenical’ monastic community. Today there are more than one hundred ‘brothers’, from both Catholic and Protestant Christian traditions. Reconciliation, the resolution of conflict, is at the heart of the Taizé community. By bringing together different Christian denominations the Taizé community promotes understanding and cooperation between them.



A Taizé service

Why is Taizé famous?

The community today has become one of the world’s most important sites of Christian pilgrimage for young people. It is estimated that over 100,000 young people make pilgrimages to Taizé each year.

The reason so many young people go on pilgrimage to Taizé a year may include:

- ▶ curiosity
- ▶ adventure
- ▶ holiday
- ▶ act of religious devotion
- ▶ an attempt to walk in the footsteps of people of faith
- ▶ historical reasons
- ▶ act of atonement
- ▶ act of supplication to ask God for something.

When the pilgrims arrive they join in the life of the monastic community by participating in the set times of prayer in the 'Church of Reconciliation'. They also spend time in private prayer, attend Bible-study discussion groups led by the monks and share in the communal work.

The services are world famous for the use of chants and music, and Taizé chants have become popular in many churches. During the church services the monks wear white robes and all of the pilgrims who visit Taizé are required to attend the monastic church services three times each day.

Tasks



- 1 What is pilgrimage?
- 2 Explain two reasons why a Christian might choose to go on a pilgrimage.
- 3 Reproduce the table below. Complete it by analysing each place of pilgrimage, outlining the location, history, significance, and why Christians go.

Place of Pilgrimage	Location	History	Significance	Why Christians go
Taizé				
Walsingham				

Atheist believing there is no God.
Agnostic unsure whether there is a God.

Christianity in Britain and the role of the Church in the local community

The changing religious landscape in twenty-first-century Britain

The Christian Church faces many challenges in twenty-first-century Britain. Increasingly many of the religious beliefs and teachings are regarded as either out of date or irrelevant. In Britain today many more people claim to be either **atheist** or **agnostic**. Also, Christianity is now only one of many religious traditions followed by people in Britain. This means the religious landscape is pluralist with people following a number of religions.

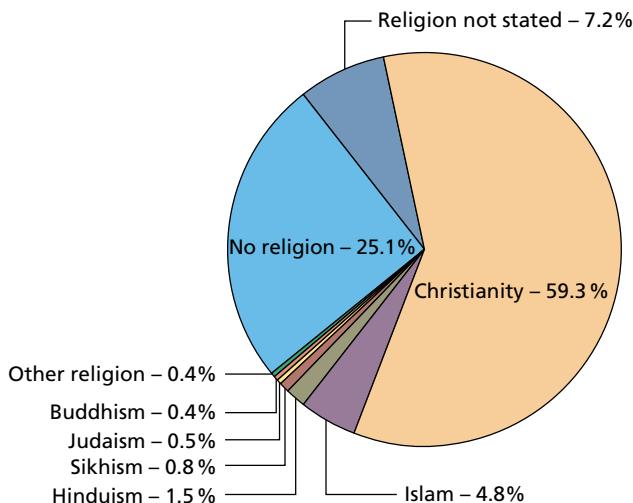
Attendance at Christian places of worship has declined and the celebrations of religious festivals for many have lost their religious significance. One example of this is the celebration of Christmas. Many people regard this simply as an important time to spend with family and friends and an opportunity to share a feeling of good will to others. Cards and presents are exchanged without any religious connection. It is celebrated without a Christian reference and much more as a secular celebration.

Life in twenty-first-century Britain

The results of the last government census poll in 2011 showed a changing religious landscape in Britain.

Despite falling numbers, Christianity remained the largest religion in England and Wales. Muslims were the next biggest religious group and have grown in the last decade. Meanwhile the proportion of the population who reported they have no religion reached a quarter.

- In the 2011 census, Christianity was the largest religion, with 33.2 million people (59.3 per cent of the population). The second largest religious group were Muslims with 2.7 million people (4.8 per cent of the population).
- 14.1 million people, around a quarter of the population in England and Wales, reported they had no religion in 2011.
- The religion question was the only voluntary question on the 2011 census and 7.2 per cent of people did not answer the question.
- Between 2001 and 2011 there was a decrease in the numbers of people who identify as Christian (from 71.7 per cent to 59.3 per cent) and an increase in those reporting no religion (from 14.8 per cent to 25.1 per cent). There were increases in the other main religious group categories, with the number of Muslims increasing the most (from 3.0 per cent to 4.8 per cent).
- In 2011, London was the most diverse region with the highest proportion of people identifying themselves as Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Jewish. The North East and North West had the highest proportion of Christians and Wales had the highest proportion of people reporting no religion.



■ Summary from Office for National statistics, 2012

Task

- 1 Copy and complete the table below. For each key word, define the meaning of the term and summarise it in no more than three words.

Key term	Definition	Summary in three words or less:
Denomination		
Pluralist	When a number of different religions are followed side by side in society.	
Atheist		
Agnostic		
Martyred	Dying for beliefs	
Secular	Non-religious society	

- 2 Read the 'Life in twenty-first-century Britain' box on the previous page. In one paragraph, summarise what it tells us about religion in modern Britain. Each time you make a point support it with evidence or statistics from the census report.
- 3 What do you think these statistics are telling us about the future of religion in modern Britain? Think about the overall trend that the statistics show.
- 4 Give one reason why people might say that they belong to a religion but do not regularly attend a place of worship.
- 5 Why do you think church attendance in Britain has declined? Give three different suggestions.

► UK laws, festivals and traditions

Christianity was introduced to the UK by the Romans almost two thousand years ago. This long history means that it is deeply embedded in many of the laws, festivals and traditions of the UK. The Church of England is the 'established' religion of England. This means that it has links to the government and other official bodies such as the judiciary (the court system).

In the sixteenth century King Henry VIII broke away from the Catholic Church and the authority of the Pope and made himself head of the Church of England. Today as well as being Head of State, the monarch is the Supreme Governor of the Church of England. All monarchs are crowned by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Traditions

Many of our customs and ways of life have their foundation in Christianity, for example:

- ▶ 'Keep holy the Sabbath day' is a Commandment. Traditionally Christians go to church on a Sunday and it was regarded as a 'day of rest'. As a result the hours shops can trade on a Sunday are restricted.
- ▶ In a UK court of law witnesses giving evidence are asked to swear they are telling the truth. They often do this on the Bible, although if they are from a different religious tradition they can swear on their own holy book or if they are non-religious they can make a 'witness affirmation' where they promise to tell the truth without reference to a holy book.
- ▶ Christian hymns and readings are often made at public events, for example the National Service of Remembrance held each year to commemorate those who died in the Second World War.
- ▶ Lots of people in the UK mark important life events, like marriage in a church, even if they are not religious.

Tasks

- 1 Describe the way in which the church and the state are linked in Britain.
- 2 Outline the impact of the relationship between the church and the state on public life.
- 3 Explain whether you believe that there should be this kind of link in modern British society.

Task

-  1 Should the State fund schools with a religious character?
 2 Should religious education be compulsory in state schools?

Laws

The UK parliament is the body that makes all UK laws by passing Acts of Parliament. It is made up of two 'houses'. The House of Commons is made up of elected representatives, MPs. The House of Lords is not elected and its members are of two types. Lords Temporal are appointed by the monarch, but the Lords Spiritual are 26 of the most senior Church of England Bishops. For laws to be passed they must be approved by both houses of parliament. So the Church of England has a direct role in shaping UK law. Meetings of both houses of parliament open with Christian prayers and indeed, many of the laws of the UK reflect the teaching of some of the Ten Commandments, such as 'Do not kill' and 'Do not steal'.

Festivals

The Christian calendar influences UK public holidays. The two major Christian festivals, Christmas (see page 203) and Easter (page 204) are still widely celebrated in the UK. School holidays fall over these periods and many businesses will close. Other Christian festivals such as St. Valentine's Day are also celebrated, though for most people the religious context of the day is no longer important and it has become a more 'secular' festival, celebrating romantic love.

As the 2011 census results (page 208) show, the UK is a place where many religions are practised. Today people of other religious traditions may take time off school or work to celebrate their own festivals. For example, the biggest celebration of the Muslim festival Eid al-Fitr happens in Small Heath Park in Birmingham, where 75,000 people gather to celebrate the end of fasting during the month of Ramadan (see page 257). There are games, entertainment and food stalls and people of all religious traditions (and none) are welcome to come and celebrate.

There are also many other festivals celebrated in the UK. Bonfire Night for example remembers the Gunpowder Plot when plotters led by Guy Fawkes attempted to blow up Parliament. Some non-religious festivals, for example the Notting Hill Carnival that happens each summer in London, celebrate the diversity of modern Britain with no specific focus on religion.

Non-religious groups such as humanists might recognise World Humanist Day (in June) or Human Rights day (in December) but these are not widely celebrated in the UK.

The role of religion in education

Today, about one third of state-funded schools in England and Wales are faith schools. This means that, although their income comes from public funds, these schools have a 'religious character'.

Of the 7,000 faith primary and secondary schools in England and Wales, ninety-eight per cent have a Christian character. 68 per cent are Church of England schools and 30 per cent are Catholic.

All pupils must, by law, be taught religious education and all schools should provide a daily act of worship. Religious education should reflect the fact that the traditions of the UK are, in the main, Christian. For state schools without a religious charter, more than half of the acts of worship should be Christian.

However, many schools celebrate a variety of religious traditions throughout the school year.

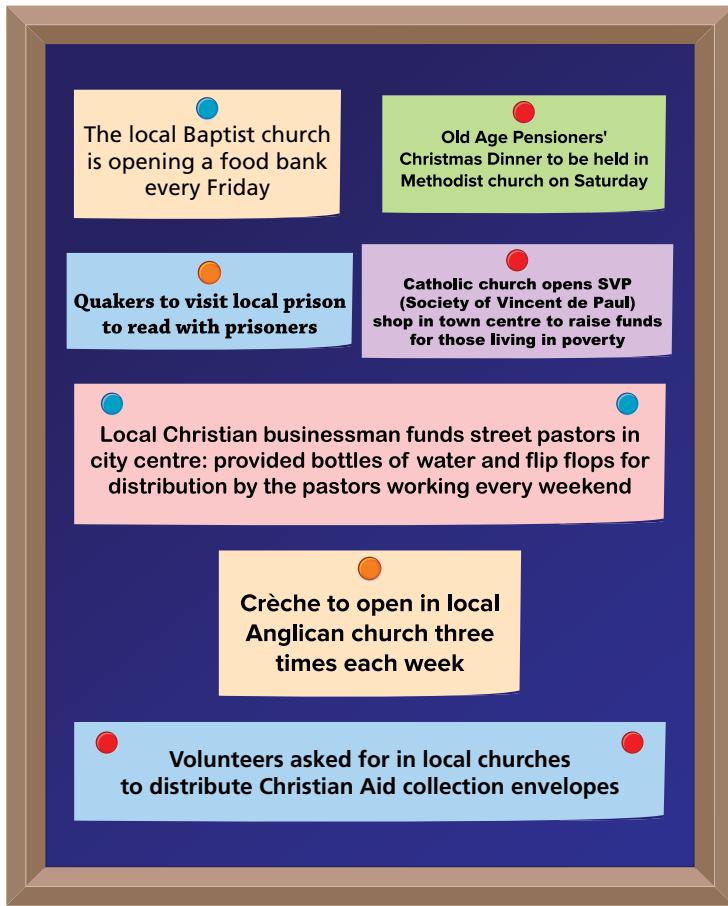
► The role of the church in the local community

Primarily a church is a place of worship, but as part of living out the values Jesus demonstrated in the Gospels churches reach out into communities in a variety of ways.

Some of the services the Church provides to the community might be religious in nature, for example marking important rites of passage for individuals and families. Services such as baptisms, confirmations, marriages and funerals will be held in the church.

Lots of churches have an attached 'church hall' and this may be used for a variety of activities, including:

- ▶ refreshments after Sunday service
- ▶ a weekly meal for the homeless provided by money donated by a congregation
- ▶ food banks
- ▶ coffee mornings for the elderly
- ▶ youth clubs
- ▶ mothers' union meetings
- ▶ crèche facilities for young mothers
- ▶ summer fetes
- ▶ organisations like cubs and brownies
- ▶ fitness classes or slimming groups
- ▶ Christmas parties for old age pensioners
- ▶ birthday parties
- ▶ as family and community centres
- ▶ emergency shelters.





Many Christians feel they have a duty to convert others to the Christian faith.

■ The worldwide Church

► The importance of mission, evangelism and Church growth

Key Concept



Evangelism Preaching of the gospel to others with the intention of converting others to the Christian faith.

► Evangelism

Evangelism is the way in which the gospel is spread – it means ‘preaching the good news’ and is one way in which the Church grows. By telling others about Jesus’ message, Christians hope to convert them to the Christian faith.

All Christians are evangelists in the sense they are sharing the good news with other people in their everyday lives. However, for many Christians, evangelism is best shown through the way they live their lives rather than talking about religion.

► Mission

The mission is what the Church is supposed to do in terms of every Christian being an evangelist as ‘a preacher of the Gospel’. At the time of Jesus it was important that the early Christians had a sense of mission to convert Jews and others to the new religion of Christianity. It is the mission of the Church to help Christians live a life of faith but also to tell the Christian message of salvation to all. Many Christians regard it as their duty or mission to convert other people to Christianity, whether they have no faith at all or belong to a different religion.

In the past, missionary work had the clear intention of bringing people to the Christian faith. Though at the same time missionaries were also important for bringing education and health support to poor and disadvantaged people around the world.

Today missionary work and evangelism are more contentious, and many would debate the ethics of trying to convert people to Christianity. In an increasingly pluralist society many think that you should be respectful of different faiths (or non-religious beliefs) rather than trying to persuade people to change religion.

Tasks



- 1 Select five different activities run by the Church (for example, coffee mornings for the elderly). For each, outline how they serve the community.
- 2 In one sentence, describe ‘evangelism’.
- 3 Why is evangelism important within Christianity?
- 4 Suggest two reasons why mission and evangelism might be difficult in twenty-first-century Britain.

► Church growth

There has been a decline in attendance at Church of England and Catholic churches in the UK. In January 2016 it was reported that Church of England weekly attendance had dropped to its lowest ever level – below one million. Many churches are closing because of falling church attendance. When this happens there is an issue about what happens to churches, as they have been ‘sacred spaces’.

However, some churches are thriving in Britain. Evangelical churches in particular have grown in recent years. Some Christians have decided to leave their own denomination and join a more evangelical church. Evangelical church services are very animated and charismatic. Worship has a direct focus on Bible reading, hymn singing and preaching. There is no formal liturgy and services are spontaneous; people worship and believe they are moved by the Holy Spirit.

Some Evangelical churches have been engaging in the process of church planting. Church planting is the process of establishing new non-traditional churches and has been successful in many areas. It happens when groups from an existing church split off and go to a new area to establish a church there. The Icthus Fellowship, which started in London in 1974, aims to spread Christian values by Church planting. They have established new churches across London and Kent and have links with churches across the UK and abroad.



Café churches aim to appeal to people who don't attend traditional church services.

Fresh Expressions

Fresh Expressions refers to a movement in the Church of England to change the way some churches and congregations meet and worship. This is an attempt to attract people to the church who wouldn't usually attend church services. Groups often meet in less traditional settings and are more informal.

One type of fresh expression, is a café church. These might take place in a café linked to a church or in a commercial café. People will meet there to talk about their faith at the same time as having refreshments. Other locations for fresh expressions gatherings include workplaces, gyms and even a beach!

Worldwide Church growth

It is important to remember Christianity is a world religion and it is spreading and growing very successfully in other parts of the world, for example Asia, South America and particularly Africa. The Pew Research Center estimates that by 2050, four in ten Christians will live in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Task

Copy and complete the table below, outlining the different evidence which proves that Churches are still important in twenty-first-century Britain, and the evidence which shows that they are no longer important.



Churches are still important	Churches are no longer important
Faith can never become outdated or less important.	Church attendance is falling.

► The work of Tearfund

Tearfund is a Christian charity whose aim is to put Christian beliefs and Jesus' command to 'love your neighbour' into action. Christians believe they are putting into practice the unconditional or unselfish love Jesus talks about in the gospel. This sort of love is known as 'agape' love.

The charity works through church groups giving help to the poor in many countries. Tearfund currently works in over 50 countries providing emergency aid when natural disasters occur and carrying out long-term projects to support local communities.

In the UK many people support Tearfund by raising money through coffee mornings and buying Tearfund Christmas cards.

There is a lot of information about the work of Tearfund on their official website at tearfund.org.

Why is Tearfund important?

- ▶ Tearfund has a role in raising public awareness of social issues, such as poverty and discrimination in the world.
- ▶ Tearfund campaigns against the causes of poverty worldwide.
- ▶ Tearfund gives practical help in order to act out the teachings of Jesus to help others.
- ▶ Tearfund encourages self-help for both individuals and communities.

Tearfund in Columbia

One example of how Tearfund put Christian beliefs into action is their work with children and teenagers in Columbia. By working with partner agencies, churches and youth groups in the country Tearfund has set up 30 sports clubs where children can come for football training.

These clubs provide safe spaces for young people, at risk of joining gangs, to come and socialise. They also offer mentoring to equip them with life skills.

► Persecution of Christians past and present

Persecution persistently cruel treatment, often due to religion or belief.

Persecution of Christians has always taken place and the word 'martyr' is used for someone who dies or is killed for their religious beliefs. Jesus himself was a martyr and he warned the disciples they would be persecuted for their faith; each one of them was eventually martyred. Christians believe they were given a divine commission from Jesus to spread the good news of the Gospel and this may be in the face of personal danger. Christian persecution continues into the twenty-first century in a number of countries throughout the world.

In some parts of the world Christians are treated unjustly in societies where the Christian faith is a minority religion. For example, terrorist organisations like Islamic State in the Middle East have targeted Christians, forcing them from their homes and subjecting them to violent attacks.

Evangelical Christian organisations, such as Christian Freedom International and Open Doors, seek to help persecuted Christians. These organisations provide practical help to persecuted Christians, provide Bibles and work actively for the human rights of Christians suffering persecution.

Open Doors

Open Doors was established in 1955 when Brother Andrew, a Dutch missionary, smuggled Bibles into the Soviet Union. Under the communist system in the Soviet Union Christian Churches were persecuted.

Today Open Doors still supports persecuted Christians across the world in different ways:

- ▶ It distributes Bibles and other resources to those who might not have access to Bibles, or may have had them confiscated.
- ▶ It trains Christians and Church leaders to deal with the trauma they may be suffering while maintaining their faith.
- ▶ It provides practical support for Christians who have been the victims of disasters.
- ▶ It speaks on behalf of persecuted Christians to raise awareness of their situation and gather support, for example by lobbying MPs in the UK government.

People in the UK and in Ireland support their work both practically and financially.

Task

Discuss some of the 'core questions' on page 164 in pairs. Write a brief answer to one of them, showing you have thought about different perspectives.



► Working for Christian reconciliation

Reconciliation is the idea that people should make up after an argument and move on. Within the Christian Church there are many different denominations and in the past these differences have led to conflict and tension. Many Christians believe it is important for the different Christian denominations to work together as much as possible. Today, living in a pluralist society, the need for the different Christian denominations to work together is greater than ever.

Two important organisations working for Christian reconciliation in the world today are the Ecumenical Movement and the World Council of Churches.

The Ecumenical Movement

'Ecumenical' means relating to a number of different Christian Churches and the Ecumenical Movement is an attempt to bring closer together the different Christian denominations and promote Christian unity throughout the world.

It began with the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910. The movement aimed to unify the Protestant Churches of the world and ultimately all Christians.

As a result of the work of the Ecumenical Movement there is much more cooperation between different Christian denominations, such as different Churches sharing a common building and joint ecumenical services. Although denominational differences still exist, today many Christians believe there should only be one church. At a local level, many churches actually cooperate and work together.

The World Council of Churches

The World Council of Churches is:



**World Council
of Churches**

'A worldwide fellowship of churches seeking unity, a common witness and Christian service.' The aim of these churches is to be 'a visible sign ... deepening communion ... sharing the Gospel together ... making connections'.

Each year, the World Council of Churches holds a special week of prayer for Christian unity. It brings together churches, denominations and church fellowships in more than 110 countries. The Roman Catholic Church isn't a member of the World Council of Churches, but does take part in some national and local ecumenical organisations.

At a local level 'Churches Together in England', grew out of the work of the World Council of Churches and is a practical attempt to focus locally on the fellowship of those who share the Christian faith. The aim today is to offer practical ways of achieving greater unity. During the week of prayer for Christian unity each January, special ecumenical services are organised.

Tasks

- 1 What is Tearfund and how do they put Christian beliefs into practice?
- 2 In one sentence, state what is meant by 'reconciliation'.
- 3 Why is it important for different Christian Churches or denominations to work together? Give two different reasons.
- 4 Closely read the text on this and the previous page about the Ecumenical Movement and the World Council of Churches. Suggest three advantages of the movements and three disadvantages.



Advantages	Disadvantages
Promotes reconciliation	Is only open to Christian denominations

► End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Evangelism
- Sacraments

Key practices:

- Worship
- Prayer
- Baptism
- Eucharist
- Celebrations
- Pilgrimages
- Mission
- Reconciliation

Skills Link



- 1 State two ways in which Christians may worship God.
- 2 'Great Britain is a Christian country.' Discuss this statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view including the fact that religious traditions in Britain are in the main Christian and also diverse.

Knowledge check

- 1 Write a short paragraph (roughly three sentences) to explain what Christians believe about prayer.
- 2 Write a long paragraph (roughly eight to ten sentences) to explain why some Christians believe the sacraments are important.
- 3 Explain, with specific reference to Taizé and Walsingham, why Christians might choose to go on a pilgrimage.
- 4 Write a developed paragraph (approximately 6–8 sentences long) to explain why some people argue that Churches are no longer necessary in twenty-first-century Britain. Include three different reasons in your answer

The Big Question

'Pilgrimage is still important in Britain today.'

Your task

Respond to the statement above, showing that you have considered more than one point of view. Give reasoned judgements on the validity and strength of these views.

Task



You need to explain in detail religious teachings about **baptism**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Christianity. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote..... . This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Christians such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/Because of this they

Their beliefs do/do not differ because

► Exam focus

Christianity: Practices

Questions on charities and people

You will be expected to explain or describe the work of various charities or people.

None of these questions will expect you to give a biography of the person or charity. Questions will ask for a particular focus which must be the central focus of your response.

Look at the following question:

(b) Describe how Tearfund helps those in need. (5)

Firstly, write down:

- How many marks are there?
- What is the question asking me to do?

Secondly look at the mark bands on page vii. How many marks would you give to Tony's answer below? What advice would you give to him before he rewrites his answer?

Tearfund is an important Christian charity it used to be called the Evangelical Alliance Relief Committee.

In 1969 Cliff Richard did two fundraising concerts for Tearfund at London's Royal Albert Hall. Tearfund helps those in need wherever they might be.

Reflecting the diversity within a religion

In your answers it is important to refer to diversity of belief and practice where it exists. There are very few responses where you can say 'All Christians believe ...'. Within every religion there are different beliefs and practices. This can sometimes arise because of different interpretations of biblical passages or because of different beliefs. Look at the question below.

(c) Explain why baptism is important for many Christians. (8)

Consider:

- How many marks are awarded for the question?
- What is the question asking you to do?

Now write an answer in just eight minutes. In your answer you need to refer to infant and adult baptism.

Islam

► The Big Picture

Key Concepts



Tawhid ‘Oneness’ in reference to God. The basic Muslim belief in the oneness of God.

Prophethood or ‘risalah’ The term used of the messengers of God, beginning with Adam and ending with the Prophet Muhammad.

Halal (permitted) Actions or things which are permitted within Islam, such as eating permitted foods.

Haram (forbidden) Any actions or things which are forbidden within Islam, such as eating forbidden foods.

Jihad Means ‘to strive’. There are two forms of jihad. The greater jihad is the daily struggle and inner spiritual striving to live as a Muslim. The lesser jihad is a physical struggle or ‘holy war’ in defence of Islam.

Mosque or ‘masjid’ A ‘place of prostration’ for Muslims, it is a communal place of worship for a Muslim community.

Shari‘ah (straight path) A way of life; Muslims believe God has set out a clear path for how Muslims should live. Shari‘ah law is the set of moral and religious rules that put the principles set out by the Qur'an and the Hadith into practice.

Ummah Means ‘community’. Refers to the worldwide community of Muslims who share a common religious identity.

Core Questions



The word ‘Islam’ means ‘submission’. Why do Muslims believe they need to live their lives in submission to God?

Is belief in angels still important for Muslims today?

What are Muslim beliefs about the afterlife and God's plan for our lives?

What issues do you think Muslims face living in Britain today?

Why is the Prophet Muhammad known as the ‘Seal of the Prophets’?

Does belief in Al-Qadr (predestination) mean people aren't responsible for their actions?

What is the difference between Sunni and Shi'a?

Which holy books do Muslims use?

What is meant by the greater and lesser jihad?

How do Muslims make decisions about right and wrong?

Which festivals are important to Muslims?

► Overview

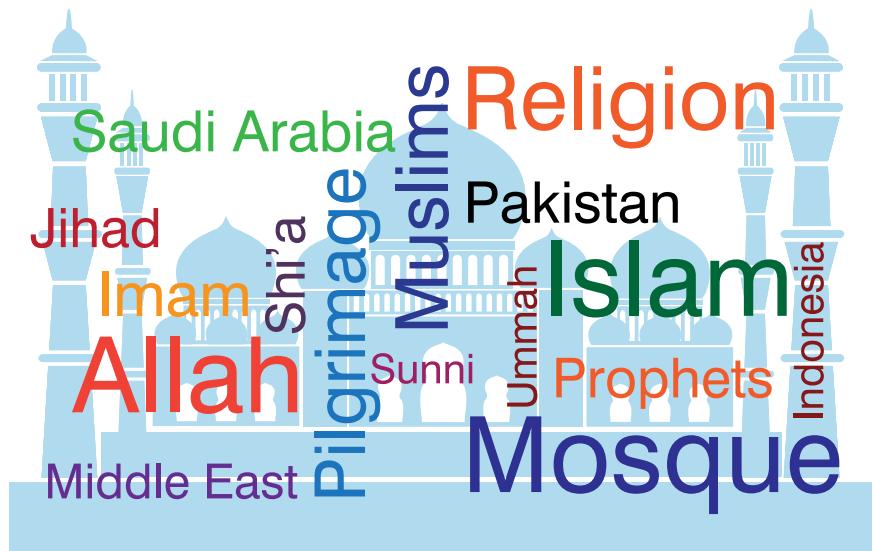
This chapter begins by asking 'What is Islam?'. It looks at the diversity of the ummah (the Muslim community) in the UK and across the world, exploring the similarities and differences between the two great branches of Sunni and Shi'a. Important beliefs such as the nature of revelation and authority in Islam are discussed.

It then moves on to look at the beliefs, teachings and practices within the religion (the foundations of faith), exploring significant aspects of both the Sunni and Shi'a traditions. Shi'a Muslims talk about the five roots of religion (Usul ad-Din), whereas Sunni Muslims refer to the six articles of faith. The following beliefs are covered in some detail: God (Allah), prophethood (risalah), angels (malaikah), holy books (the Qur'an), the afterlife (akhirah) and predestination (al-Qadr).

The second section covers some of the main practices in Islam, looking at the Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam and the Five Pillars of Sunni Islam: the declaration of faith (Shahadah), prayer (Salah), charity (Zakah), fasting during Ramadan (Sawm) and pilgrimage (Hajj).

It then moves on to discuss jihad, exploring the difference between greater and lesser (military) jihad, and concludes with a description of Islamic festivals and commemorations: Id-ul-Adha, Id-ul-Fitr, Ashura and the Night of Power.

The spelling of words used in Islam can cause many problems, because there is often disagreement about how words should be translated from the original Arabic. This book uses the generally accepted spellings. Throughout the book the word 'God' has been preferred to the word 'Allah' to emphasise to the non-Muslim reader that Muslims worship God, not some other being*. It was the Prophet Muhammad's belief that he was worshipping the same God as the Jews.



Islam submission or peace.

Divine perfect or God-like.

Creator one who brings something into existence, in this case the world.

Task

In your own words, can you explain why Muslims believe they should submit to God.

What is Islam?

The word '**Islam**' means 'submission' in the Arabic language. Muslims believe in one God (Allah) and they worship him because he is the **divine creator**. Islam teaches that, through the centuries, God revealed his truth to many special people or prophets. However, most importantly, God spoke to the last and greatest Prophet, Muhammad, in special messages that were collected together in the form of the Qur'an.

Another meaning of the word Islam is 'peace' and Muslims are committed to establishing a fair and respectful society. They believe that God has set out clear laws (called the Shari'ah) to guide human beings, allowing them to live together in peaceful communities, as he has intended.

Islam worldwide

There are an estimated 1.6 billion Muslims in the world today (23 per cent of the world's population), making Islam the world's second largest religion after Christianity. It is also the fastest growing religion in the world. Islam originates from the Middle East: Muhammad lived in Arabia (modern-day Saudi Arabia) and the most important Islamic holy sites are in this part of the world. The Middle East and North Africa has the highest concentration of Muslim population today: 93 per cent of people in this region are Muslims. However, nearly two-thirds of the world's Muslims live in the Asia-Pacific region (in countries including Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Indonesia).

Islam in Britain

In Britain today there are nearly 3 million Muslims, making up more than 4.5 per cent of the population. Up until the mid-twentieth century there were very few Muslims in the UK, but from the 1950s onwards significant numbers of people came from the former colonies, taking up the offer of work in post-Second World War Britain. Some of the first were East African Asians, while many others came from South Asia.

The 2011 census shows that Britain is now home to one of the most diverse Muslim communities in the world. The largest groups originate from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, but many come from Arab and African communities, as well as Muslims from south-east Asia, the Balkans and Turkey. There are also many Muslims who have converted from other faiths.

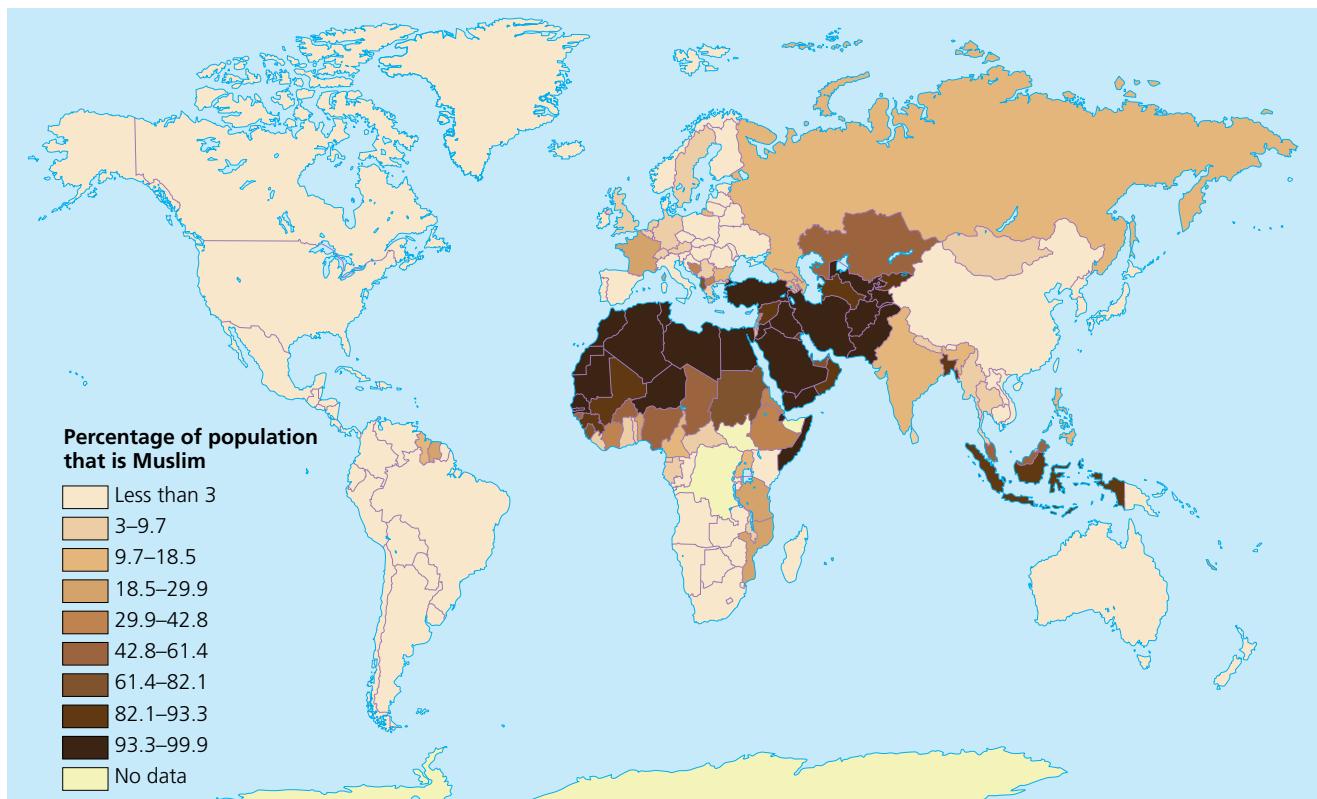
Some Muslims in Britain describe themselves as Sufis. Sufis try to find the heart of the religion and they practise a more mystical version of Islam. There is also a significant Ahmadiyya community in the UK. They believe the long-awaited Messiah (Mahdi) has come in the person of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad after Muhammad. Many Muslims regard the Ahmadiyyas as non-Muslims.

The majority of British Muslims are Sunnis (95 per cent), with the remaining 5 per cent coming from the Shi'a tradition. Within the Sunni community there are groups such as the Deobandi, Barelvi and Salafi. Types of Shi'a groups include the Twelvers, Zaydis and Ismailis.

Task

In your own words, can you explain why Muslims challenge the idea that Muhammad was the 'founder of Islam'.

A useful infographic showing diagrams and statistics relating to different Islamic sects, schools and groups can be found at: <http://www.informationisbeautiful.net/visualizations/islamic-sects-schools-branches-movements/>



World map showing the distribution of Muslims

Authority the idea that something or someone is in charge of what is right or wrong. We look to an authority to guide our own understanding and decision-making.

'The Qur'an is not the Qur'an unless it is heard.'

The Art of Reciting the Qur'an by Kristina Nelson

Qur'an means 'reading' or 'recitation'. The Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad as a 'living sound' and it must be spoken to reveal its beauty and truth.

A **Hafiz** someone who has been able to memorise the whole Qur'an in Arabic.

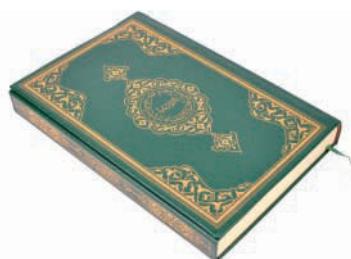
Sources of authority in Islam

Islam teaches that there is a divine law, sent by God, to guide human beings in the right way to live. They believe that this law is, set out in the Qur'an, which is the perfect communication from God to humans. However, not every single area of life is covered by its teachings, so Muslims also look to a number of other sources of **authority** to help guide them. Some of these other authorities are: Hadith, Sunnah, Shari'ah, traditions, Imams, scholars, etc.

The Qur'an is the word of God

The **Qur'an** is the most important source of authority in Islam. Muslims believe that the Qur'an:

- is the complete book of guidance for all human beings
- was revealed by God to the Prophet Muhammad (through the Angel Jibril) over a period of 23 years
- was written down in Arabic by his followers and compiled into one book shortly after the Prophet's death in 632 CE.

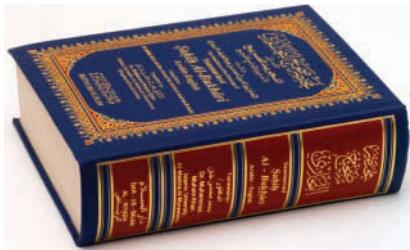


The Qur'an is arranged into chapters (surahs) and verses (ayat). There are 114 surahs and 6,616 ayats.

Task

- 1 Explain what a 'hafiz' is.
- 2 Why do you think it is considered to be special amongst Muslims to become a hafiz?

The **Sunnah** is the record of all that Muhammad said and did and this helps guide Muslims today, to live a life that is pleasing to God.



The Hadith are the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad

'The warrior who truly fights for God's cause is he who looks after a widow or a poor person.'

Hadith

'If you think of God, you will find Him there before you.'

Hadith

The Sunnah: the way of the Prophet

The Prophet Muhammad is an inspiration to all Muslims, so they try to imitate the way he lived. The **Sunnah**:

- is the second most important source of authority for Muslims
- describes the customs, practices and traditions of Muhammad
- teaches the perfect path or model of how Muslims should live.

The Hadith: the sayings of the Prophet

Muslims love and respect the words of Prophet Muhammad, because he was such an outstanding character. He had deep devotion to God, but he was also a man of enormous wisdom, kindness and compassion. The **Hadith** is a book which contains his sayings, as recorded by his family and companions. There are different collections of these sayings, each accepted by different Muslim groups.

Hadith an account describing the words and actions of the Prophet Muhammad. To 'tell' or 'narrate'.

The Shari'ah: the straight path

Key Concepts



Shari'ah (straight path) A way of life; Muslims believe God has set out a clear path for how Muslims should live. Shari'ah law is the set of moral and religious rules that puts the principles set out by the Qur'an and the Hadith into practice.

Halal (permitted) Actions or things which are permitted within Islam, such as eating permitted foods.

Haram (forbidden) Any actions or things which are forbidden within Islam, such as eating forbidden foods.

Tasks

- 1 What is the Hadith?
- 2 Although Muslims treat the Hadith with enormous respect, can you explain why you think it is not regarded as sacred in the same way as the Qur'an?

The **Shari'ah** law sets out the moral and religious rules that Muslims must follow. It puts into practice the principles set out by the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the Hadith, so by following Shari'ah law Muslims can know that they are obeying the will of God. Shari'ah lays down laws about what is **halal** (allowable) and what is **haram** (forbidden). It deals with many everyday topics, setting out rules for Muslims on personal matters like food, clothing, crime, money, sex and relationships.

In the Hadith there is an account of Prophet Muhammad's last sermon, delivered in Makkah shortly before his death. Here he instructed his followers to be obedient to the teachings set out in the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

'I have left among you that which if you hold fast to, then you would never go astray, clear things, the book of God and the Sunnah of his prophet.'

► The Islamic community

Ummah, the worldwide Islamic community

Key Concept



Ummah Means ‘community’. Refers to the worldwide community of Muslims who share a common religious identity.

The **ummah** is the worldwide community of Muslims. Within the ummah all Muslims are equal, whatever their language, culture or nationality. There is great diversity across the Islamic world. There is no one, single pattern for what it means to be a Muslim, but there are certain fundamentals they all hold to. The central belief for Muslims is that there is one God (Allah) who has revealed his divine teachings to the Prophet Muhammad, in the Qur'an.

Sunni ‘one who follows the Sunnah’. (The Sunnah is the book which describes the way the Prophet Muhammad lived.)

Shi'a ‘from the House of Ali’. (Ali was a close relative to Muhammad.)

Sunni and Shi'a: who are they?

One of the major divisions within Islam is the split between **Sunni** and **Shi'a**. Sunnis form the majority of Muslims in the world today (87–90 per cent); they live in the countries of North Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and Indonesia. The remaining 10–13 per cent of Muslims today are from the Shi'a community (although only about 5 per cent of British Muslims are Shi'as). Shi'as live mainly in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon and India. Sunnis and Shi'as have coexisted for centuries, living peacefully side by side, often worshipping together in the same mosques, sometimes intermarrying. Although they share most central beliefs, they do have significant differences in the way they understand religious truth, laws and practices.

The Sunni and Shi'a split

Soon after the death of Prophet Muhammad a dispute arose over who should lead the emerging Muslim community. Abu Bakr had been a close companion of the Prophet and a large group of believers chose him to become the new Khalifah (leader). After Abu Bakr's death Umar became the leader, then Uthman and then Ali. These four leaders have come to be known as the Rightly Guided Khalifahs and Sunni Muslims accept that they were God's appointed leaders.

However, there was a smaller group who believed that Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad, should have become the first Khalifah. It was their belief that the Prophet Muhammad had chosen and appointed Ali as his successor and they rejected the leadership of Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman. They were angry that Ali had been overlooked and when Ali was later murdered they began to separate themselves, calling themselves the Shi'a (the House of Ali). They believe that the Prophet Muhammad appointed 12 successors (**Imams**) from his own descendants, who are known as the Ahl al-Bayt, ‘the Family of the House’ of Muhammad.

Imam a leader, but Sunnis and Shi'a differ in the way they understand the term. In Sunni Islam an imam is the leader in a local mosque, where he has been chosen by the local Muslim community to lead worship. In Shi'a Islam there were only twelve Imams. They are seen as holy figures who were all divinely appointed members of Muhammad's descendants.

Tasks

Sunni Islam

- 1 What would Sunni Muslims say to explain why Abu Bakr had the best claim to be Muhammad's successor?
- 2 Who were the 'Rightly Guided Khalifahs'?

Shi'a Islam

- 3 What was Muhammad's relationship to Ali?
- 4 What is meant by the phrase 'Ayl al-Bayt'?

Choosing a future leader: what makes most sense to you?

- 5 Set out the case for who would be the best suited to become a future leader. Would it be someone who was close to the last leader or would it be the one who was part of their family and dynasty? Give your reasons.
- 6 Who do you think had the best claim to succeed Muhammad? Why?

'Fears over deepening Sunni-Shi'a divide in UK.'

BBC news, 6 March 2015

Sunnis believe that:

- Religious guidance can only come from God through the Qur'an and the Hadith. Together these holy books form the Shari'ah, Islamic law.
- There should be no religious hierarchy. Imams are not holy figures appointed by God. They are simply good teachers and leaders and should be chosen through agreement among the local community.

Following Prophet Muhammad's death in 632 CE, the Muslim community needed to decide how to choose a new leader. Shi'as said that his successor could only come from his bloodline (his close family), while Sunnis looked to those men that the Prophet Muhammad had most trusted while he was alive.

Shi'as believe that:

- God guided the Prophet Muhammad to appoint Ali as his successor.
- The leadership of the Muslim community has continued through Imams who are divinely appointed from descendants in Muhammad's family.
- The last Imam will appear at the end of the world as the Mahdi (the Chosen One who will bring justice to the world).

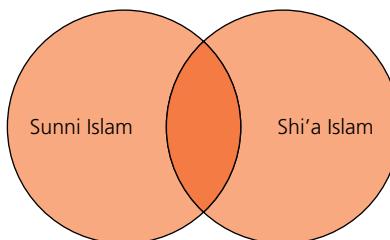
Sunni and Shi'a communities in the UK

Most Muslims living in Britain today are Sunnis, but there are many Shi'as too. When Muslims began coming to Britain, in the 1960s and 1970s, Sunnis and Shi'as often lived together as part of a single Islamic community, sharing mosques, praying and socialising together. However, as they have grown in numbers and gained confidence to explore their own heritage, these communities have begun to express their identities in different ways. This has often been fuelled by events in the Middle East, where tensions between the Sunni and Shi'a communities have become more pronounced. Recently, wars and conflict in Iraq and Syria have added to the division among these groups.

Many Muslims from both the Sunni and Shi'a traditions have friends in the other community, but some say that there are tensions developing which are spilling over from Syria and Iraq, where members of these communities are in conflict.

Task

Copy the Venn diagram below and add to it the similarities and differences between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims.



7

Islam: Beliefs and teachings

The foundations of faith

The six articles of faith in Sunni Islam

Creed a set statement of faith that all religious believers follow.

There is no official **creed** in Islam, but for Sunni Muslims there are six central beliefs, or articles of faith, which define their understanding of God. This teaching can be found in the Hadith, where Muhammad is recorded as saying: 'You must believe in Allah, his angels, his holy books, his messengers, in the Last Day and in fate (both in its good and in its evil aspects).'

- 1 **Allah** (God): the unity and oneness of God is called Tawhid. Like Jews and Christians, Muslims believe in one God. The Arabic word for God is Allah, which simply means 'the (al) God (ilah)'.
- 2 **Malaikah** (angels): God created angels to interact with human lives, bringing his divine message. Each Muslim has two guardian angels who record that person's good and bad actions.
- 3 **Holy books**: God has revealed his word to humans in the Qur'an. This tells Muslims all they need to know about how to live their lives. Other inspired scriptures include the Tawrat of Musa (Torah), the Zabur of Dawud (Psalms) and the Injil of Isa (Gospels).
- 4 **Risalah** (prophethood): God has spoken through numerous prophets throughout time, including Adam, Nuh (Noah), Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus). However, Muhammad is the greatest prophet.
- 5 **Akhirah** (the afterlife): Belief in the final judgement and life after death. This life is a preparation for the eternal life that follows. On the last day there will be a time of judgement, when Muslims will have to account for their lives.
- 6 **Al-Qadr** (God's predestination): God is responsible for everything and has set out a divine destiny for all things. God has written down all that has happened and all that will happen in the universe. However, this does not take away human free will.

Jihad striving to do what is right, for God. The greater jihad is the struggle that each person has, as an individual, to follow God's will in their life. The lesser jihad is the fight to defend Islam (holy war).

Submission to the will of God Islam means 'submission'; following the Five Pillars and the rules of Shari'ah law are a sign of being a true Muslim.



Task

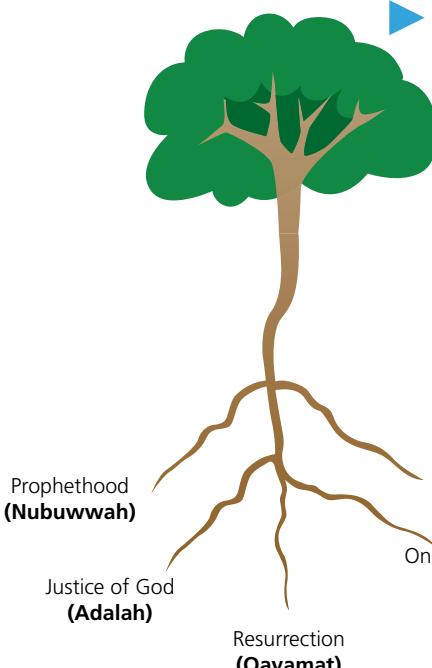
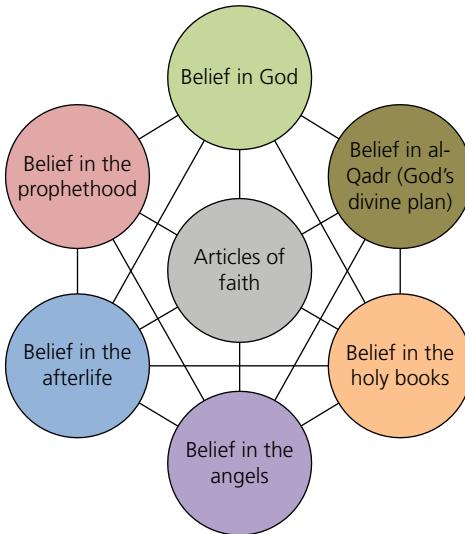
The six articles of faith in Sunni Islam

Create a mind map around these six articles of faith. Write out the six key beliefs on a large sheet of paper and add in the following ideas, linking them in where you think they belong:

- Prophet Muhammad
- Angel Jibril
- The Qur'an
- Free will or predestination?
- The afterlife
- One God (Tawhid)

- Ibrahim, Musa and Isa
- Two guardian angels
- Revelation from God

Can you think of six more of your own to add to the diagram?



The five roots of religion in Usul ad-Din in Shi'a Islam

Diversity of beliefs in Islam

All Muslims share the central beliefs of the Islamic faith: the understanding that there is one God (Allah) who is creator, protector and judge; the belief that Muhammad is the Seal of the Prophets, to whom God revealed the Qur'an. However, over the centuries, as Islam developed in different cultures and societies, Muslim scholars developed different ways of understanding the faith. Today there are some significant differences in the way different Muslim groups interpret these truths.

The five roots of religion (Usul ad-Din)

Shi'a Islam emphasises the importance of five fundamental principles which are sometimes called the 'roots of religion'. Every individual must make themselves aware of these truths as the foundation of their faith.

Usul ad-Din, the five roots of religion, can also be referred to as the ‘foundation of faith’. They are:

- oneness of God (Tawhid)
- justice of God (Adl or Adalah)
- prophethood (Nubuwwah)
- leadership (Imamate)
- resurrection (Qayamat).

1 The oneness of God (Tawhid): There is one God who has no equals; he is a divine unity. He cannot be compared to anyone or anything. He is perfect and unique and he possesses infinite power and knowledge. He is immortal (he was never born) and has no partner or children. He alone should be worshipped.

‘Say, “He is God, [who is] One, God, the Eternal Refuge.”

Qur'an 112:1–2

2 The justice of God (Adl or Adalah): God is perfect justice, fairness and wisdom. He does not wrong anyone and he will not tolerate wrongdoing. He cannot abuse his power by performing acts that go against his own nature to be just and fair. Humans must be responsible for their own actions, good or bad.

3 Prophethood (Nubuwwah): God has appointed prophets and messengers to guide human beings, showing them how to live in peace and submission to God. According to some Islamic sources, God sent 124,000 prophets; some of these brought God's divine scriptures with them. Muhammad was the Seal of the Prophets, meaning that he brought the final, perfect and unchanging message from God.

4 Leadership (Imamate): Most Muslims believe that Muhammad was the last prophet, who brought the final scripture (the Qur'an) to humanity. Shi'a believe that, after his death, God appointed 12 infallible Imams to guide the Muslim community, leading them on the path set by the Prophet Muhammad. These Imams are part of what Shi'a call Ahl al-Bayt (the Family of the House). In other words, they are part of Prophet Muhammad's extended household.

Of these 12, 11 have been killed. They believe that the 12th (or hidden) Imam is still alive, but is in hiding (occultation), waiting to reappear and rule on earth with justice. They sometimes refer to him as the Mahdi.

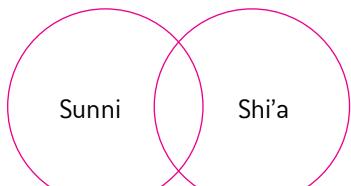
5 Resurrection (Qayamat): The belief that, on the Day of Judgement, there will be a resurrection, when all human beings will be physically raised to life to be judged by God. He will reward the good and punish the evil.

‘So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.’

Qur'an 99:7–8

Task

Using the information here and on page 275 (Key differences between Sunni and Shi'a beliefs and practices) compare and contrast Sunni and Shi'a beliefs about imams.



Sunni and Shi'a beliefs about imams

The Nature of God (Allah)

Key Concept



Tawhid ‘Oneness’ in reference to God. The basic Muslim belief in the oneness of God.

Allah the Arabic word meaning God. Muslims believe that they worship the same God that spoke through Musa (Moses) and Isa (Jesus).

‘God witnesses that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those of knowledge – [that He is] maintaining [creation] in justice. There is no deity except Him, the Exalted in Might, the Wise.’

Qur'an 3:18

The single most important belief in Islam is **Tawhid**, the oneness and unity of God. There is one God (**Allah**) who is the universal God of all humanity.

Muslims believe that God is:

- ▶ **Immanent:** God is always close by. The Qur'an says that God is closer to each one of us than the veins in our necks (50:16).
- ▶ **Transcendent:** God is beyond all things, not limited by the rules of nature.
- ▶ **Omniscient:** God has all knowledge, nothing can be hidden from him.
- ▶ **Beneficent:** God is always kind; he loves us.
- ▶ **Merciful:** God is always fair; he forgives us if we are sorry.
- ▶ **Judge:** on the last day, God will be our judge.
- ▶ **Creator:** God is the beginning; he is the cause of all that exists.

In Shi'a Islam there is an emphasis on **Adalat**, the Justice of God. This is one of the five roots of religion (Usul ad-Din).

The Qur'an teaches that it was God ‘Who created the heavens and the earth’ and that ‘He has power over all things.’ (46:33)

► Al-Fatihah, the opening

The al-Fatihah is the first surah (chapter) in the Qur'an. It means ‘the opening’, and many Muslims learn to recite it from memory in their daily prayers.

‘In the name of God, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. [All] praise is [due] to God, Lord of the worlds – The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful, Sovereign of the Day of Recompense.

It is You we worship and You we ask for help.

Guide us to the straight path – the path of those upon whom You have bestowed favour, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray.’

Qur'an 1:1–7



Al-Fatihah in calligraphy

Tasks

- 1 Copy out the al-Fatihah in your book.
- 2 Why do you think Muslims might try to learn this passage by heart?
- 3 Choose three things it says and write down what they teach Muslims about God.

The word 'anthropomorphism' comes from 'anthros' meaning man and 'morph' meaning shape. In some religious traditions it is acceptable to picture God in human form (for example in some Christian art). Islam rejects this sort of anthropomorphic representation.

'Whenever I am in a difficulty, I remember God with his words and through his names. There are ninety-nine names for God and we remember them for different purposes.'

Musarat S

The 99 names of God

In Islam, God is not to be confused with any living creature; he is beyond all things and cannot be pictured as a physical being. God is outside our human understanding, but for Muslims he lies at the very centre of everything they think and do. So, how do Muslims 'see' God?

The Qur'an and the Hadith have many different 'names' for God, not as a person, but using words that describe his qualities and attributes. They use names like: King, Protector, Wise, Eternal, Light, etc. These are known as the 99 beautiful names of God.

In fact, there are different lists of these names, recorded through different traditions of Muslims, but reciting these names has been a powerful form of prayer for Muslims through the centuries.

'Vision perceives Him not, but He perceives [all] vision; and He is the Subtle, the Acquainted.'

Qur'an 6:103



Calligraphy showing the 99 names of God

Task

Here are some of the 99 names of God:

Giver of life, Protector, Just, Generous, Guide, Ever-forgiving, Watchful, Creator, Watcher, Compassionate, Avenger, Tremendous, Mighty, Finder, Patient, Knower, King, Gentle.

Copy out the table below. Put each of the 'names' of God in the list above into the column you think it most relates to.

Then compare your table with your neighbour's. Did you have different ideas? Why?

Transcendent: beyond all things	Omniscient: all-knowing	Beneficent: always loving	Merciful: kind and forgiving	Judge: decision- making, fair	Creator: maker, designer

► God: One, eternal and absolute God

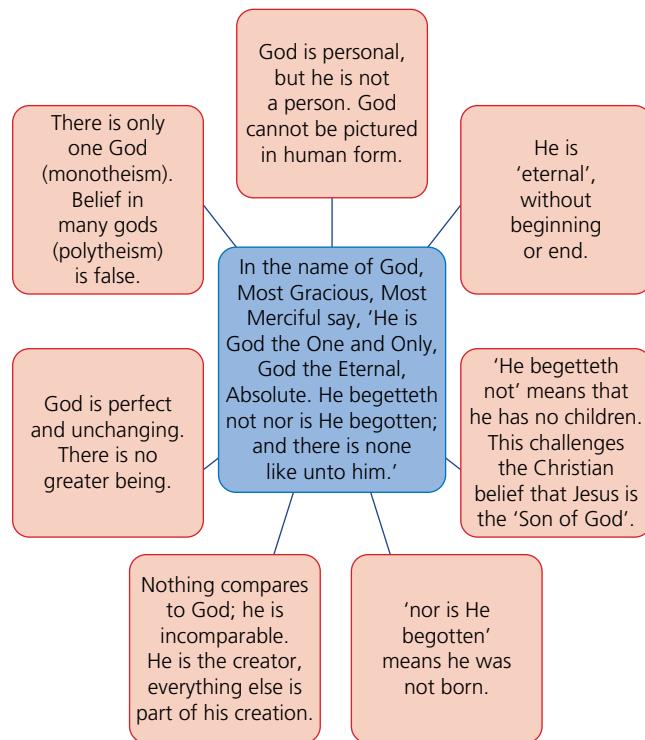
One God (Tawhid)

Beget to bring a child into existence, or to create offspring.
Surah a chapter from the Qur'an.

Islam is a monotheistic faith; it teaches that there is only one God. There are no other divine beings and it is a sin to compare God to other 'false' gods. Muslims reject the Christian belief that Jesus is the Son of God. The passage 'He **begetteth** not, nor is he begotten' (Qur'an 112:3) makes it clear that God has no children and he is not the child of anyone.

Tasks

This mind map shows **Surah** 112: 1–4 from the Qur'an, with notes around it to explain some of its meaning. This passage sums up the nature of God and is one that many Muslims will learn by heart.



- 1 Make a list of the qualities and attributes of God mentioned in Surah 112.
- 2 Using the information above, write a paragraph to explain what Muslims believe about God. Include two quotations from Surah 112.

'There's nobody and there's nothing like Allah. I love him. I can't see him, but I know he's beneficent, merciful, master of the Day of Judgement.'

K Farzana (From *Committed to Islam* by Silvia Sutcliffe)

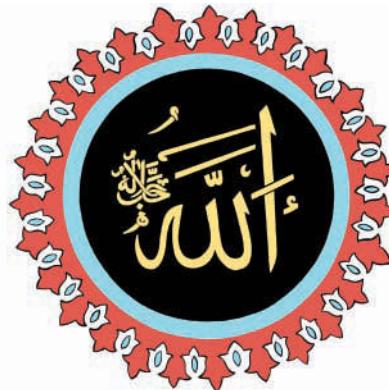
Shirk associating other beings or things with God.

► The sin of shirk

Islam warns of the sin of **shirk**. This is when a person worships something else other than God. There is one God and there can be no pictures to represent him. Muslims must worship the true God, not the image of him, created by human hands.

The prophets bring the word of God, but they are only human; God is divine.

For most Muslims, it is a sin of ‘shirk’ to show a picture of the Prophet Muhammad.



This text means Allah in Arabic. To worship anything other than Allah is to commit the sin of shirk.

► Revelation: God reveals his truth

Bringing God's message

Islam teaches that, God does not communicate directly with humans, but instead he uses special beings (humans and angels) to carry his message to us.

God's duty to guide us

Muslims believe that, because all humans have a duty to serve God, he must have shown us what his will is. As humans, we can only know what is truly right and wrong by understanding God's laws. Since God is just, it makes sense to believe that he must have shown us the right path to follow.

'We believe in God, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob... Moses and Jesus, and that given to all prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another.'

Qur'an 2:136

Revelation a message sent by God and ‘revealed’ or ‘shown’ to the human mind.

► Revelation of God's inspired truth

Revelation is the idea that God has made known his special truth to humans. Islam teaches that the prophets received God's divinely inspired message, instructing humans how to live. God's final and perfect message was given to the Prophet Muhammad, sent down to him over the last 23 years of his life. Each passage was memorised and recorded by his followers and then later written down to form the Qur'an, the final revelation.

'This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of God.'

Qur'an 2:2

Fitrah the natural instinct all humans have, from birth, to know and worship God.

Taqwa having an awareness of God in every aspect of life.

Hanifs people who lived in Arabia before the Prophet Muhammad and who believed in one God.

Fitrah, the need for God

Islam teaches that we are all born with an instinctive need for God. This is called **fitrah**. It is the natural spirituality that connects us to our creator, making Muslims aware of God's presence and drawing them to worship him. This is where our conscience comes from, helping us discern right from wrong.

Taqwa, awareness of God

Taqwa is the desire for a personal connection with God. Muslims try to live in a state of taqwa, the awareness of God. The Qur'an refers to taqwa as the highest quality of a Muslim, leading them to show worship and submission to God. Taqwa is often understood as a shield against wrongdoing; it allows Muslims to live as God would want, protecting them from evil.

'O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you. Indeed, God is Knowing and Acquainted.'

Qur'an 49:13

Task

Create your own word file.

Make a list of the following terms, adding a definition for each in your own words:

- shirk
- revelation
- fitrah
- taqwa
- hanif
- rasul
- risalah

Hanifs, the devout people

Islam teaches that, long before the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, in pre-Islamic Arabia, there were groups of people known as **hanifs**. The hanifs rejected idol worship; they believed in one Supreme God, creator of the universe, the God of Ibrahim who had sent revelations to the prophets through the ages. It is said by some Muslims that Muhammad's grandfather was a hanif and through him Muhammad learnt the practice of spending time alone in the desert to fast and pray.



Fitrah is the natural instinct that all people are born with to worship God

A 'rasal' is a prophet. 'Risalah' means bringing prophecy from God.

Risalah: prophethood

Key Concept



Prophethood or 'risalah' The term used of the messengers of God, beginning with Adam and ending with the Prophet Muhammad.

Divine wisdom

Muhammad did not write the Qur'an from his own words; he was the channel through which God spoke. Islam makes a clear distinction between the divine revelation of the Qur'an and the human words of the Prophet Muhammad, which are preserved in the Hadith.

The channel of communication between God and humanity is called **risalah**; the prophets are our guides. They are human beings chosen to carry guidance from God to people, but their wisdom does not come from within themselves; it comes from God.

'And We have already sent messengers before you and assigned to them wives and descendants. And it was not for a messenger to come with a sign except by permission of God. For every term is a decree.'

Qur'an 13:38

The Qur'an teaches that every community has been given its own prophet, bringing God's message in a book. The message brought by the Prophet Muhammad is essentially the same message as had been preached by all the prophets back to Adam: the need to worship the one, true God, who will be the judge of all.

'And We send not the messengers except as bringers of good tidings and warners.'

Qur'an 6:48

'People, no prophet or messenger will come after me, and no new faith will emerge.'

Muhammad's last sermon (Hadith)

► Muhammad is the last and greatest prophet

Muslims believe that through history, God has communicated to humans through revelations and the last and greatest of these revelations was given to the Prophet Muhammad. Muhammad did not come from a rich family and it is likely that he could not read or write. He was not a learned man or a scholar, but he was very **devout**. He would take himself off for days to meditate in a cave in the desert, seeking God. Muslims believe that God chose Muhammad as a prophet because he was a humble, honest man; a man he could trust with such a special message.

'God chooses for Himself whom He wills and guides to Himself whoever turns back [to Him].'

Qur'an 42:13

Devout having deep religious feeling or commitment



Names of the 25 prophets mentioned in the Qur'an

► Bringing God's message

Key figures in the Qur'an

Islam teaches that God has sent many prophets throughout history; 25 of them are mentioned by name in the Qur'an, going right back to the creation of the world. Many of these prophets are characters from the Jewish and Christian scriptures (what Christians refer to as the Bible). However, Islam teaches that, over the centuries, the messages from these prophets have either been lost or become corrupted, so there was a need for a final revelation. Muhammad is known as the Seal of the Prophets, because his revelation of the Qur'an was God's final and absolute word.

'To every people was sent an apostle.'

Qur'an 10:47

Muslim tradition says that, in total, there have been around 124,000 prophets and that, once a prophet had been called by God, he lived a sinless life. Muslim authors put PBUH (peace and blessings be upon him) after a prophet's name to show them a deep level of respect.

In Islam the major prophets (apart from Muhammad) are: Adam, Ibrahim, Musa, Dawud, and Isa.

Adam

Adam is said to be the father of the human race. According to the Qur'an, God formed Adam from a handful of soil of many colours. This represents the diversity of people on earth. Eve was created from Adam's rib and they lived together in paradise. They were commanded not to eat from a particular tree, but the devil was able to convince them to taste its fruit. As a result, they were banished to earth. However, Adam confessed his sin and was forgiven, becoming the first prophet.

Muslims believe that Adam was created as God's 'khalifah' (his representative on earth). It was to be his job to rule in the place of God. Tradition says that he built the first **Ka'ba** in Makkah.

Ibrahim

Ibrahim (Abraham) is regarded as a hanif. This means that he had an inner knowledge that there is really only one true God. For this reason, he is seen as the greatest of the prophets before Isa (Jesus). He was born into a family of **Polytheists**, but he rejected these beliefs in favour of monotheism and became a Muslim (one who bows down to God).

'Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was one inclining toward truth, a Muslim [submitting to God]. And he was not of the polytheists.'

Qur'an 3:67

Ka'ba known as the House of God, the black covered, cube-shaped building at the centre of Islam's holiest mosque in Makkah.

Polytheism belief in many gods.

Ibrahim had two sons who were both prophets: Ishma'il (the prophet to the Arabs) and Ishaq (the prophet to the Jews). For Muslims, Ishma'il is the more important, because he is an ancestor to Muhammad.

When Muslims go on Hajj they remember the distress of Hajar (Ishma'il's mother) as she ran between the hills of Al-Safa and

Al-Marwah in search of water. They also remember how God instructed Ibrahim to sacrifice Ishma'il. When Satan tried to tempt Ibrahim to disobey God, telling him to refuse to sacrifice his son, Ibrahim drove the evil one away by throwing stones at him.

There is a tradition that God revealed a holy book to Ibrahim, known as ‘the scrolls of Ibrahim’ or the ‘Sahifah’. The Qur'an mentions this book, but no record remains of it today.

Musa

Musa (Moses) is remembered by Muslims as one of the most significant prophets. The teachings of Ibrahim had been forgotten and his book lost, so a new prophet had to be sent. Musa led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and into the Promised Land. Islam teaches that he was given the word of God, known as the Tawrat (Torah), but the people were disobedient and the message became distorted.

Dawud

Dawud (David) was Israel's greatest king, who made Jerusalem a holy place for Muslims. He received the word of God in the Zabur (Psalms), beautiful hymns of praise to God.

Isa

Isa is the Islamic name for Jesus. Apart from Muhammad, Isa (Jesus) and his mother Maryam (Mary) are the most prominent figures in the Qur'an. It recognises Isa as a prophet and as a successor to Moses. He was given the Injil (Gospel) and he performed miracles. However, Muslims deny the Christian teaching of the Trinity (pages 171–72) and reject the belief that Isa is God. They say God is ‘one’ not ‘three’.

‘We gave Moses the Book and followed him up with a succession of apostles; We gave Jesus ... signs (miracles) and strengthened him with the holy spirit.’

Qur'an 3:87

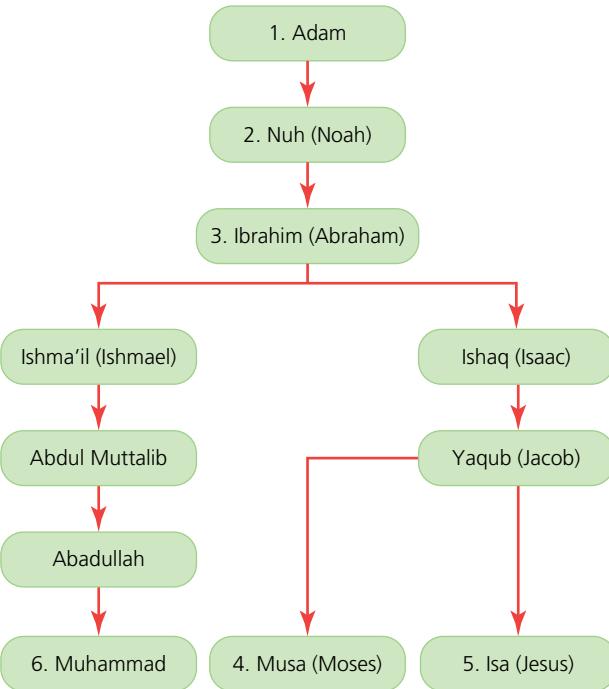
The Qur'an teaches that, although it appeared as if Isa (Jesus) had been crucified, in fact he did not die. God could not allow evil men to triumph over his prophet in such a way. Instead, Isa was taken up to heaven and will reappear in the second coming when God judges the world.

‘And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them.’

Qur'an 4:157

Task

Write out the name of five of these key figures in Islam and make a list of the things Muslims believe are special about each one.



■ The Tree of Prophets: Islam teaches that Ibrahim (Abraham) was father to Ishaq (Isaac) and Ishma'il (Ishmael). Musa (Moses) and Isa (Jesus) are descendants of Ishaq. Muhammad is the descendent of Ishma'il.

► The Prophet Muhammad: his early life in Makkah

What makes Muhammad so important?

Islam teaches that Muhammad is the last and the greatest prophet, sent by God. He is a role model for Muslims because of the moral and prayerful way he lived his life. Unlike Jesus he performed no miracles; he was born, lived and died an ordinary man, but Muslims see him as the perfect example of a human being.

Who was Muhammad?

Muhammad was born in Makkah (in Arabia) in 570 CE, but by the age of six he had become an orphan. As he grew up he gained a reputation for truthfulness and intelligence, working as a shepherd for his uncle. In his twenties he entered the service of a wealthy merchant named Khadijah and he so impressed her with his honesty and character that Khadijah proposed marriage. They married and had four daughters, and two sons (who sadly died in infancy).

As a young man Muhammad was known as al-Amin, meaning the trustworthy one.

Life in Makkah

As he grew older, Muhammad began to feel troubled by the corruption and cruelty he saw in Makkah. He believed that the worship of idols by the people of Makkah was wrong and that there was really only one true God.

Laylat-ul-Qadr, the Night of Power

He started to spend more time alone in prayer and solitude and one night, in the year 610 CE, while he was praying in a cave near Makkah he had an experience that would change his life. As he sat meditating, the Angel Jibril appeared before him and ordered him to recite the words that had miraculously appeared before him. Muslims call this event Laylat-ul-Qadr, the Night of Power and they remember it today on the 27th day of Ramadan. It is one of the holiest days of the Muslim year.



Pilgrims at the Cave of Hira' where the Qur'an was first revealed to the Prophet Mohamed on Laylat-ul-Qadr, in 610 CE

'Surely We revealed it (Quran) on the Night of Qadr – And what do you know about what Night of Qadr is – The Night of Qadr is better than a thousand months – The angels and the Spirit descend in it by the permission of their Lord every command – It is peace till the break of the morning.'

Qur'an 97:1–5

The revelation of the holy Qur'an

These revelations were to continue for the next 23 years, until Muhammad's death. He did not always see the Angel Jibril; sometimes he heard a voice speaking to him; sometimes these revelations took place while he was in prayer, at other times when he was going about his everyday life.

'Not once did I receive a revelation without thinking that my soul had been torn away.'

Hadith

Prophet Muhammad's message

The message Prophet Muhammad brought to the people of Makkah was:

- There is one true God, Lord of goodness and power.
- We need to show thanks to God through worship.
- There will be a judgement day where God will judge our lives.

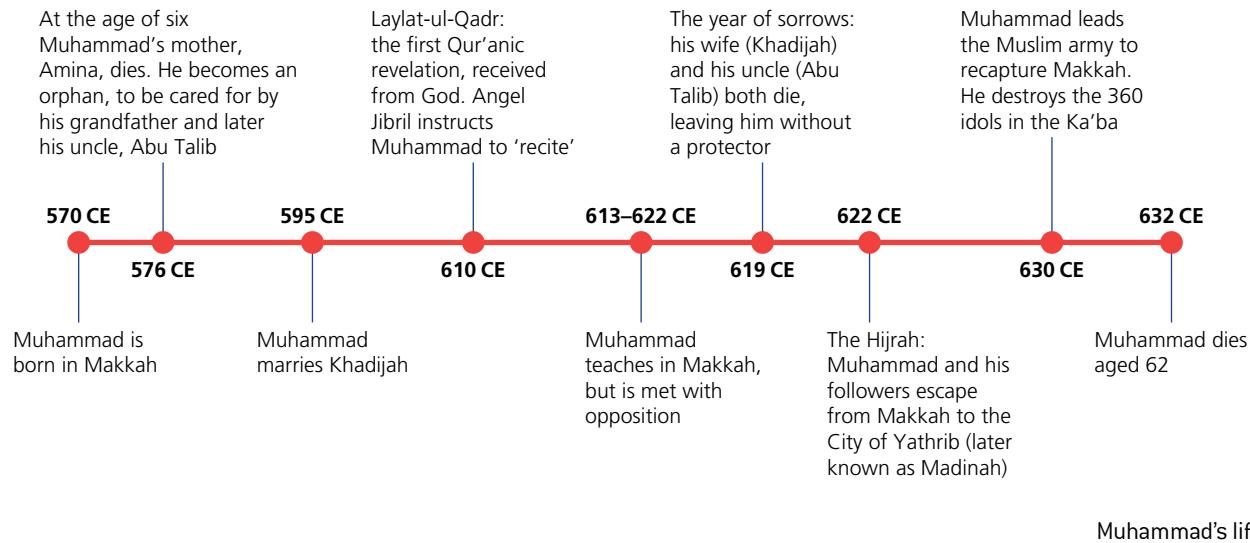
Many in Makkah did not receive this message well; he was ridiculed and insulted. However, some did follow him and they became known as 'Muslims'.

Task

Copy out the timeline in the diagram below and add your own information to it from these pages.

'Say, "I am not something original among the messengers, nor do I know what will be done with me or with you. I only follow that which is revealed to me, and I am not but a clear warner."

Qur'an 46:9



Prophet Muhammad and the 'Muslims' faced fierce opposition and persecution from many in Makkah. One of his followers, Bilal, a black slave, was taken and left to die in the hot desert sun, with a huge rock placed on his chest.

Ali was Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law. Shi'a Muslims refer to him as the first Imam and look to Ali as Muhammad's rightful successor.

The Prophet Muhammad: the Muslim community in Madinah

Opposition in Makkah

In the years following his first revelation, Prophet Muhammad gained some followers in Makkah, but his ideas also angered many. Makkah was a centre for pagan pilgrims who came to worship the idols in the Ka'ba, bringing great wealth to the city. Muhammad began preaching openly that the worship of idols offends God and that these idols were no more than useless bits of wood and stone.

His message, that God is merciful, but that there will also be a Day of Judgement caused many to turn against him and threaten violence. For nearly ten years Prophet Muhammad struggled to gain converts in Makkah, with little success and then tragedy struck: two of his closest supporters, his uncle and his wife Khadijah, died. This was a devastating blow.

The Hijrah: migration from Makkah to Madinah

Not long after, while teaching in Makkah, Prophet Muhammad was approached by some pilgrims from Yathrib, a city some distance to the north. They were impressed with his message and invited him to visit, to judge their community disputes. He agreed and sent some of his followers ahead of him.

Now, as he planned to leave, it became clear that his life was in danger; there were people plotting to kill him. Ali insisted on staying behind in Makkah, to act as a decoy, while Muhammad

There is a story that tells how, as he fled from Makkah, Muhammad had to hide for his life in a cave. Soldiers hunting him came upon the cave, but a spider had miraculously woven a web over the entrance which convinced them that no one had entered recently.

Muslims follow a lunar calendar which is 11 days shorter than the Western calendar. Each year consists of 12 'lunar' months [cycles of the moon] lasting a total 354 days.

Muslims regard Prophet Muhammad as the greatest of all men: the Seal of the Prophets, the servant and messenger of God.

In Shi'a Islam, however, Muhammad's son-in-law Ali is also held in very high regard. Shi'as sometimes add his name into the Shahadah: 'There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the prophet of God, and Ali is the friend of God'.

Ahmadiyya Muslims view Prophet Muhammad as the central figure in Islam, but they also revere Ghulam Ahmad as the promised and divinely appointed Mahdi and Messiah.

The Qur'an teaches that the angels say to God: 'Glory to thee, of knowledge we have none, save what Thou hast taught'. (2:32). Angels have no knowledge of their own; they are channels for God's truth.

made the treacherous journey. This migration of Muhammad from Makkah to Yathrib is known as the Hijrah. It marks the start of the Muslim calendar.

Prophet Muhammad was welcomed into Yathrib, where he came to be seen not just as a prophet, but also as a political leader and military commander. He became the city's ruler and it was renamed Madinah (City of the Prophet). For the next ten years he worked to unite the different communities. There were a number of Jewish tribes in Madinah and he had expected them to become Muslims. However, many rejected Prophet Muhammad's belief that the revelations he received were from the same God that they worshipped. They refused to believe that they should now turn towards Makkah to pray (instead of Jerusalem) and that they should fast during Ramadan. Some of these Jewish tribes in Madinah began to plot against Muhammad and so he was forced to expel them from the city. By 630 CE he had gained enough support across Arabia to march on Makkah with an army of 10,000 men. Faced with this overwhelming force, the rulers of the city conceded defeat and opened the gates. Makkah was taken without the shedding of a drop of blood and the Ka'ba was cleansed of idols and re-dedicated to Allah.

Muhammad returns to Makkah triumphant

In 630 CE Muhammad and his followers were able to return to Makkah, where they forgave their enemies and established Islam as a permanent religion. Muhammad was now accepted as the final and true prophet of God. He continued to lead his community until his death in 632 CE.

'I leave behind me two things, the Qur'an and the example of my life (the Sunnah). If you follow these you will not fail.'

Muhammad's final sermon in Makkah

Task

- 1 What was Muhammad's message to the people of Makkah?
- 2 What roles did Muhammad take on when he arrived in Yathrib/Madinah?
- 3 Why do you think the migration from Makkah to Madinah marks the start of the Muslim calendar?
- 4 Why is it significant to Muslims that when Muhammad returned to Makkah in 630 CE he was able to destroy the pagan idols in the Ka'ba?



Malaikah (angels)

Communicating God's message

Islam teaches that angels are heavenly, immortal beings, God's first creation. According to the Qur'an, humans were formed from clay, but angels were made out of light. They are God's messengers, the channels through which we can become aware of his laws and his purposes in our lives. They are God's servants and they can take on many forms to carry out his commands, but unlike humans they have no free will. They are without sin and so they are able to enter into God's divine presence, but they can also communicate with humans.

Diversity in belief between Shi'a and Sunni Muslims regarding angels

In general, Sunnis and Shi'as share common beliefs about angels. According to the Qur'an, angels were God's first creation, they are immortal and they always obey the commandments of God.

Sunnis believe that God created the angels from light and they have no free will.

Shi'as, however, accept that angels do have a limited free will, although this will never lead them to sin or act against the will of God.

Shi'as also believe that it was through an angel that God made it clear to Prophet Muhammad that, following his death, Ali would be the next leader of the Muslim community. Further, they say that the angel Jibril visited Fatima sharing divine wisdom with her, thus confirming the importance of Ahl al-Bayt (Muhammad's household).

Fatima was Muhammad's daughter. She was married to Ali and was the mother of Hasan and Husayn.

The nature of angels

Muslims believe that, although angels are invisible, they exist everywhere, throughout the whole universe. They are never far away and they are always in contact with humans, especially when someone prays or thinks about God. They have no physical bodies, but the Qur'an describes them as having wings and they are always described as male.

Angels mentioned by name

In the Islamic tradition there are countless angels, but the Qur'an and the Hadith mention some by name:

'The Qur'an says "Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel – it is [none but] he who has brought the Qur'an down upon your heart, [O Muhammad], by permission of God", confirming that which was before it and as guidance and good tidings for the believers.'

Qur'an 2:97

- Jibril (Gabriel) is the angel of revelation. He is the archangel who is responsible for revealing the Qur'an to Muhammad and brings messages to God's chosen ones.
- Mika'il (Michael) is the archangel responsible for keeping the devil out of heaven and protecting faithful worshippers. He brings sustenance for the body and soul and rainfall for the earth, to water the land.
- Israfil (Raphael) is the archangel who will blow the trumpet on the Day of Judgement to announce the resurrection of all from the dead.
- Azrail is the archangel that takes souls at death.
- Raqib and Atid are the angels referred to in the Qur'an as the 'noble recorders'. They sit, one on each shoulder, noting down our good and bad deeds, to be read from the book on the last day.
- Munkar and Nakir are the two terrifying, judging angels who will question each person after their death, testing their faith.

Task

Create a table and write a summary of the roles or duties performed by these angels in the Islamic tradition.

Angel	Role or duties
Jibril (Gabriel)	
Mika'il (Michael)	
Israfil (Raphael)	
Azrail	
Raqib and Atid	
Munkar and Nakir	



Islamic art depicting angels

'The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in God and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], "We make no distinctions between any of His messengers." And they say, "We hear and obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination."

Qur'an 2:285

► Islamic holy books

God's message

Muslims believe that God has sent messages and messengers to set out the laws and moral codes by which humanity should live. These communications are called revelations and the most significant among them is the Qur'an, God's final written word.

The Qur'an is believed to be a sacred text, perfectly inspired by God and thus free from any mistakes or distortion. However, Muslims do believe that God revealed his laws in stages, through his prophets. Muslims have respect for all previous scriptures from the messengers of God, but they see the Qur'an as the completion of these earlier books.

God's perfect revelation

Muslims believe that the Qur'an is the direct and perfect word of God. Sunni Muslims say that it has always existed and is with God in heaven, written in Arabic on a tablet of stone. The Qur'an introduces itself as being 'the guidance for the worlds' (3:96) and Muslims believe that God has sent down this guidance in the form of a book to give a solution to any human problem.

'We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims.'

Qur'an 16:89



The Qur'an is the perfect and direct word of God as revealed to Muhammad

Tasks

- 1 The Qur'an is a uniquely holy book in Islam. What other books that are sacred to Muslims?
- 2 Can you explain why do these books have special status?
- 3 Why do they have less significance than the Qur'an?

A guide to life

Muslims respect and honour the Qur'an and use it as a guide for their lives. It teaches them how to worship, how to treat other people and how to live good lives. They learn it by heart in Arabic, reading and reciting it daily; they take immense care in writing it out; they allow it to guide every action and thought.

Kutub: holy books

The Qur'an names four other holy books, known in Arabic as kutub. These are from the Jewish and Christians traditions and, according to Islam, in their original form, they were true revelations from God. However, because they were not properly written down or preserved they are now believed to be corrupted. So, unlike the perfect Qur'an, they cannot be trusted as the true word of God.

- Sahifah: the Scrolls of Ibrahim, now lost
- Tawrat (Torah): the revelation given to Musa (Moses)
- Zabur (Psalms): given to Dawud (David)
- Injil (Gospel): the teaching given to Isa (Jesus)

The Hadith: the sayings of Muhammad

There are collections of thousands of Muhammad's sayings, called hadiths, which form part of what Muslims called the Hadith. These are not revelations, because they are the words of the prophet, not the words of God. However, they have enormous significance for Muslims, because the whole of Muhammad's life is considered to be a 'living Qur'an'. As his third wife, Aisha, said of him: 'His way of life is the Qur'an'.

Akhirah, the afterlife

For Muslims, this world, here on earth, is not all that there is. Our human existence will continue after death; our earthly life is just a preparation for the eternal life to come (Akhirah). Our mortal lives are a test and we will be judged according to how we have lived. As humans, we have been given free will, so we are able to make choices about what to believe and how to treat others. We will be held responsible for these thoughts and actions when God comes to judge us on the last day.

'Every soul shall have a taste of death.'

Qur'an 3:185

The Angel Israfil will blow a trumpet to announce the Day of Judgement. The trumpet is constantly on his lips, awaiting the command from God.

► Signs of the end of the world

Mahdi the long-awaited saviour who will come to rescue the world.

Islam teaches that there will be many signs to mark the end of the world, but the most important event will be the appearance of the man called the **Mahdi**. His return will coincide with the second coming of Isa (Jesus). A false messiah will also attempt to deceive the people. Other signs include: abundance of earthquakes, the spreading of killing, rejection of Islam, increase in dishonesty, drunkenness, obscenity, nakedness and fornication. Society will be full of terrible corruption and chaos.

► Day of Judgement: the test

Islam teaches that, on the Day of Judgement, the dead will be raised from their graves and all people will stand before God to be sentenced according to the way they have lived their lives. A book which represents everything an individual has done, is presented to each of them. If the person's good deeds outweigh the bad, then they will receive the book in their right hand and pass into heaven. If it is placed into their left hand, they will be among the damned.

On the Day of Judgement the Book of Deeds will be read, in which 'every small and great thing is recorded'. (Qur'an 54:52)

How are people judged?

The Qur'an gives many warnings about the Day of Judgement and Muslims are encouraged to question themselves: Am I ready to face death? What have I done to prepare for that day?

'The challenge for me is the future, really, because I don't really know what's ahead for me and I can't prepare for it. The only thing I can prepare for is the Day of Judgement. No-one knows when the Day of Judgement is going to come. At any moment, we could find ourselves in front of Allah, answering for our actions, for what we've done. So I've got to be prepared for that every minute of my life.'

Andleeb S



Muslims believe that God will weigh up our good and bad deeds and this will determine what happens to us after death.

The three questions the angels Munkar and Nakir will ask are: 'Who is your Lord?' 'Who is your prophet?' 'What is your religion?'

Barzakh a place of waiting, after death until the Day of Judgement.

Niyyah the honest intention to worship God.

The Qur'an describes heaven as a place of contentment, using images of a green garden, full of flowers, fruits and fountains.

'In paradise, I prepare for the righteous believers what no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and what the deepest mind could never imagine.'

Hadith

Judgement: heaven and hell

God weighs our deeds

God judges each person's actions, but intentions (**niyyah**) are also taken into consideration.

- If the person has the intention to do a good deed, but was unable to carry it out, this is counted as a good deed.
- If they intended and carried out a good deed, this is counted as ten good deeds.
- If the person intended a bad deed, but did not do it, that is counted as a good deed.
- If they intended and carried out a bad deed, God records that as one bad deed.

God tests people's faith

The two terrifying judging angels, Munkar and Nakir, will question each person, testing their faith. In order to give the correct answer to their questions, it is not enough just to learn to recite the Shahadah. If the person has not truly lived a life of submission to God, following the Five Pillars, they will be incapable of giving the right response on the day.

Barzakh

Only God knows when the Day of Judgement will come. Muslims believe that, for those who die before that day, the angel of death, Azrail, will come to take their souls to await the day. They will be kept in a state of **barzakh** (waiting) until the sound of the final trumpet is heard.

Life beyond death

Islam provides the most graphic descriptions of what awaits after death. Heaven and hell are described as very real places, but some Muslims interpret these descriptions symbolically, since what exists beyond death must exist in a different dimension from our own world.

Heaven (Janna): a state of joy, happiness and peace

After judgement, people will pass over the very narrow Bridge of As-Sirat. Those who have been blessed by God will successfully cross to heaven (Janna) on the other side. This will include those who have lived faithful and moral lives, those who have been persecuted for their faith in God and those who have fought for God.

Muslims believe that heaven is a reward for living a good life, so everything that one longs for on earth will be found in paradise: beautiful gardens, delicious food, gently flowing rivers, lovely serving maidens and reclining couches.

Hell (Jahannam): a state of torment and suffering

The wicked, those whom God has damned, will fail to pass over the As-Sirat Bridge. In trying to cross they will fall into hell. Hell (Jahannam) is a place of terror, where the damned will face boiling

water, scorching fire and black smoke. As well as experiencing the physical torment, those condemned to hell will suffer because they are separated from God, without hope of return.

'These are two adversaries who have disputed over their Lord. But those who disbelieved will have cut out for them garments of fire. Poured upon their heads will be scalding water'

Qur'an 22:19

Task

Make a list of the following terms, adding a definition for each in your own words:

- Akhirah
- Mahdi
- Barzakh
- Janna
- Jahannam
- Bridge of As-Sirat
- Munkar and Nakir
- Day of Judgement



► Key questions about the afterlife

Does hell last forever?

Yes

Most Muslims believe that hell is forever. The Qur'an seems to teach that after judgement, those sent to hell will stay there forever.

'But whoever returns to [dealing in interest or usury] – those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein.'

Qur'an 2:275

No

Some Muslims today believe that for certain people hell may only be a temporary experience. Bad Muslims may only be sent to hell for a short period and those who repent may be pardoned.

'So whoever has received an admonition from his Lord and desists may have what is past, and his affair rests with God.'

Qur'an 2:275

Can a God of mercy condemn people to hell?

Yes

Islam teaches that God has set fair rules to live by and the wicked have been given many opportunities to repent. The Qur'an says that God punishes those who are disobedient according to 'what they have earnt' (so those who do good, earn a place in paradise; those who cause harm to others earn a place in hell). Only the most wicked and ruthless people will go to hell.

'So I have warned you of a Fire which is blazing. None will [enter to] burn therein except the most wretched one. Who had denied and turned away.'

Qur'an 92:14–16

No

Some Muslims find it hard to believe that a god of mercy would send people to an eternity of suffering. How can it be fair to give an infinite punishment for a finite sin?

Islam teaches that heaven is the reward Muslims will receive for following the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Task

Give your own answers to the questions on this and the previous page, commenting on what you think of the Muslim viewpoints.



Muslims say one of God's great names is '**Al-Alim**' meaning all-knowing one.

Predestination and free will: diversity in belief in Islam

Although both Sunnis and Shi'as believe God is all-powerful and has a masterplan for the universe, there are differences in the way they understand the extent to which he controls the lives of human beings. Sunnis tend to put more emphasis on the fact that everything is ordained by God. They believe that although humans have free will, nothing can happen without the will and knowledge of God.

Shi'as, on the other hand, allow more room for humans to use their own free will. Some Shi'as actually reject the idea of predestination. They say that God cannot be responsible for evil; humans must have free will to be independent of God's authority.

Al-Qadr 'destiny', nothing takes place purely by chance. God knows and wills all future events.

Do Muslims only follow Shari'ah rules because they are frightened of God's judgement?

Yes

Some might argue that Muslims are only obedient to God's divine laws because they are fearful of the threat of hell-fire.

No

Faithful believers happily live according to the Qur'an and the example set by Muhammad.

Is suffering really a test for the next life?

Yes

Many Muslims would agree that this life is just a test. If we pass the test we will have shown that we are worthy of paradise, to live for eternity in unimaginable splendour and luxury.

No

A person with a non-religious worldview would argue that there is no evidence for the existence of an afterlife. They might also say that it is not fair to view this world as a test, because some people are born better off than others. Some people have the privilege of wealth and good health. They will suffer less than others who are born into poverty or with a disability.



Some Muslims believe suffering is a test for the next life

► **Al-Qadr, God's divine plan**

God has eternal foreknowledge

Islam teaches that God is responsible for all things and that he has a divine plan for all of us (**al-Qadr**). God has a masterplan; everything that happens is predestined to take place; it is all part of his design. He is the cause of all things and the whole of creation is under his control. God knows all things in the greatest detail, with accuracy that we, as humans, could never imagine.

Everything is part of a larger plan

Muslims believe that we can never know the reasons behind the universe, but that it is all part of a larger picture. God is the all-knowing one; his knowledge is complete and perfect. He even knows the secrets of our hearts.

'He knows what is within the heavens and earth and knows what you conceal and what you declare. And God is Knowing of that within the breasts.'

Qur'an 64:4

'O God, who knows the inmost secrets of our hearts; lead us out of the darkness into the light.'

A prayer of Muhammad

Insha' Allah, if God is willing

Insha' Allah 'if God allows it'. It comes from joining the Arabic words: 'Allah' and 'his will'. It is a very common phrase, for example: 'I will get to school on time, insha' Allah!'

Muslims believe that things which some people might call coincidences are, in fact, part of God's plan. The word **insha' Allah** expresses the belief that all events are outside our own control; they are in the hands of God. When a Muslim says insha' Allah they are acknowledging that they are in submission to God. They will only succeed in their own plans if God is also willing to make it happen.

'And never say of anything, "Indeed, I will do that tomorrow," except [when adding], "If God wills." And remember your Lord when you forget [it] and say, "Perhaps my Lord will guide me to what is nearer than this to right conduct."

Qur'an 18:23–4

Can good come out of suffering?

If all things are part of the will of God, then that must include suffering, pain, diseases and disasters. It is easy to see how good can come out of things which cause us suffering, like training to run a marathon, but harder to understand how hurricanes and wars can be seen in a positive way. Islam teaches that painful experiences need to be viewed as opportunities for our own growth as human beings.



Free will

Islam teaches that we all have free will and God will hold us accountable for our decisions on the Day of Judgement. Humans are not puppets or robots; we have the ability to choose right from wrong. God wants us to follow the 'straight path', but it is up to us to make the right choices. Central to Islamic thought is the idea that life is a test and we need to learn how to turn away from evil.

'He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness]'

Qur'an 30:41

Tasks

- 1 Explain what Muslims mean when they say that God has a Divine plan.
- 2 How do Sunni and Shi'a beliefs differ?
- 3 Do you think humans can have free will to make their own decisions if God has a predestined plan for our lives?



► End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Halal
- Haram
- Prophethood
- Shari'ah
- Tawhid
- Ummah

Key teachings about:

- the nature of god
- angels
- the afterlife
- the six articles of faith in Sunni Islam
- the five roots in Usul ad-Din in Shi'a Islam

Knowledge check

- 1 Write a short paragraph (roughly three sentences) to explain what Muslims believe about God (Allah).
- 2 In your own words, explain the difference between Sunni and Shi'a Islam.
- 3 How might Muslims differ in their views about prophethood?

The Big Question

'Belief in God is the most important belief for Muslims.'

Your task

Respond to the statement above, showing that you have considered more than one point of view. Give reasoned judgements on the validity and strength of these views.

Skills Link



- 1 Explain Muslim teaching about the Tawhid (Oneness) of Allah.
- 2 'Belief in Allah is the most important Muslim belief.' Discuss this statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. (You must refer to religion and belief in your answer.)

Task



You need to explain in detail religious teachings about **life after death**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Islam. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Muslims believe that This comes from the teaching/Qur'an quote

This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Muslims such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Qur'an quote

This means that/Because of this they

Finally, Muslims such as believe that This means that/ Because of this they

Their beliefs do/do not differ because

► Exam focus

Islam: Beliefs and teachings

(a) questions

These are always the first questions in each unit. They ask you to explain what the key concept means. Your explanation can include an example. There are eight key concepts you need to know for Islam.

Remember there are only two marks for these questions so it is important you are able to give an accurate definition.

Helen was asked:

(a) What do Muslims mean by 'risalah'? (2)

Her response of 'Prophethood' was only awarded one mark. Why do you think that was? Rewrite her answer to gain two marks.

Remember it must be explained for two marks. A one word answer is not an explanation.

Using religious language

To gain higher marks religious language must be used in your answers. This includes the use of key concepts where relevant, as well as any particular language specific to the religions you are writing about.

Look at the answer below. Identify religious language you could include in the areas underlined.

(c) Explain why Muhammad is important in Islam. (8)

Muhammad is important in Islam as he received the Muslim special book which is used today in Muslim homes and their holy places of worship. Stories of Muhammad's life and sayings can be found in other Muslim books. It is considered that Muhammad will be the last special person.

8

Islam: Practices

The Five Pillars of Sunni Islam

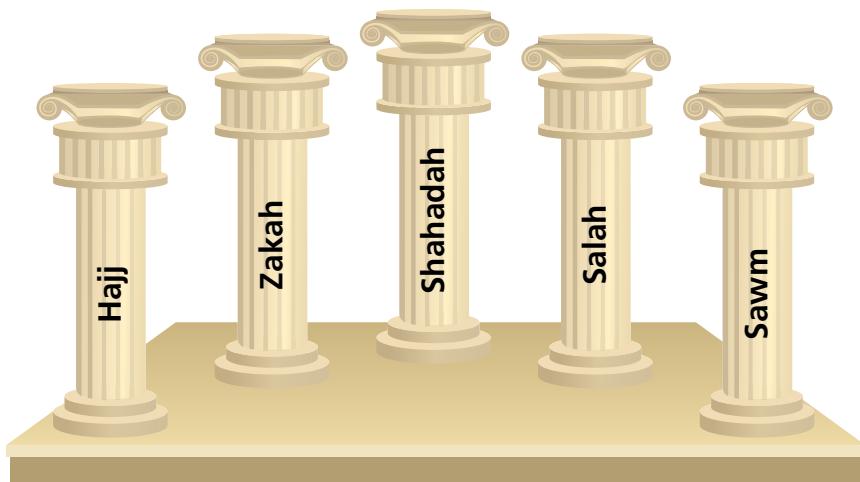
Ibadah: worship

Shi'a Muslims follow a similar set of rules (see the Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam on pages 273–74).

Ibadah acts of worship; any permissible action performed with the intention to obey God.

For Muslims, actions speak louder than words and it is not enough just to have faith in God; they believe it is necessary to show religious commitment through the way they live their entire lives. Every action is a form of worship; this is called **ibadah**. People in Western countries sometimes think that religions are just sets of beliefs, or a collection of optional faith-based activities. However, Muslims have always been very clear that Islam is a complete way of life; worship is a 24/7 reality, to be lived fully, not just as an after-thought to add on to our secular lives.

The Five Pillars



Sunni Islam teaches that all Muslims have a duty to worship God by following the Five Pillars. These actions are all ibadah, acts of worship carried out with the intention of obeying God. They are:

- ▶ **Shahadah:** the declaration of faith which says 'There is no god but God and Muhammad is his prophet'
- ▶ **Salah:** prayer, five times a day
- ▶ **Zakah:** charity, giving money to the poor
- ▶ **Sawm:** fasting during the month of Ramadan
- ▶ **Hajj:** pilgrimage to Makkah.

By following these rules Muslims believe that they can show their obedience to the will of God. The Shari'ah (Islamic law) sets out the Five Pillars as religious duties; they are seen as practical signs which demonstrate true submission to the divine creator.

They must be carried out with niyyah, the true intention to submit to the will of God.

Muslims say that there can be no doubt that they have been instructed by God to complete the Five Pillars: the Qur'an contains many references as to their importance and, in his last sermon, Prophet Muhammad makes clear mention of them.

'O People, listen to me in earnest, worship God, perform your five daily prayers, fast during the month of Ramadan, and offer Zakah. Perform Hajj if you have the means.'

Muhammad's last sermon (Hadith)

► Niyyah: intention

Niyyah means having the right intention to worship God. Muslims believe that it is important to have God consciousness (taqwa). They may not always be in the right mood to worship God, or they may feel unworthy to meet him, but when praying it is important to dedicate that time to being in his presence. Sometimes there may be a strong feeling that God is present and at other times he may seem distant, but God is merciful and judges the desire to communicate with him, even if we feel we do not succeed.

► Shahadah, the declaration of faith

The first pillar

The **Shahadah** sums up the religion of Islam: the belief in the one and only Almighty God and the acceptance of Muhammad as the final messenger, a man sent by God to reveal the divine path to life (the Shari'ah).

The first pillar of Islam is the **Shahadah**. It declares that 'there is no god but God, and Muhammad is the prophet of God'. This statement forms the central support for the 'House of Islam': the other four pillars are all outward expressions of this deeply held belief.

'God witnesses that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those of knowledge – [that He is] maintaining [creation] in justice. There is no deity except Him, the Exulted in Might, the Wise.'

Qur'an 3:18



Calligraphy of the Shahadah

A statement of faith

For Muslims, the words of the Shahadah are heard throughout the day in countless aspects of their lives. They are announced in the adhan (the call to prayer) from the minaret in the mosque and recited in each of the five daily prayers. These words are also known as the Kalimah prayer. They are the first words whispered into a new-born baby's ear and, if possible, they are the last words a dying Muslim hears on their death-bed. Muslim soldiers have these words on their lips as they go into battle.

Monotheism

The words of the Shahadah ('There is no god but God and Muhammad is the prophet of God') are sometimes referred to by Muslims as the Kalimah prayer.

The Shahadah states the existence of one God; this is called monotheism. This means that Muslims reject belief in many gods (polytheism) and they also oppose the atheist concept of a world without God. The Shahadah also denies the Christian belief in the Trinity (God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit). Muslims have deep respect for Jesus (Isa), but to them he is a great prophet, not a divine being. Islam (like Judaism and Sikhism) declares that God is one.

Conversion or reversion

There are no ceremonies or rituals to welcome new believers to Islam. All one needs to do to become a Muslim is to recite the Shahadah. Some refer to this as conversion, to change from one religion to another; others call it reversion. They say that, because God is our creator, we were all born as worshippers of the true God and so when we discover faith we return (revert) to our natural faith.

Famous converts

Famous people who are reported to have converted (or reverted) to Islam include: Yusuf Islam (Cat Stevens), Muhammad Ali, Shaquille O'Neal, Mike Tyson, Ellen Burstyn, Janet Jackson, Malcolm X.

'The Prophet said: "Whoever says: there is no god but God enters Paradise."

Hadith

Tasks

- 1 Find out about people who have converted to Islam.
- 2 Is it more accurate to call this conversion or reversion? Explain your views.



► Salah

The second pillar

Salah bowing or worship. There are over 700 verses in the Qur'an that refer to it.

'So exalt [God] with praise of your Lord and be of those who prostrate [to Him]. And worship your Lord until there comes to you a certainty [i.e. death].'

Qur'an 15:98–99

The second pillar of Islam is **Salah**, the practice of prayer.

For Muslims, prayer is the most important way to worship God. It is a duty for all Muslims to pray five times a day. Muhammad called prayer the 'pillar of religion' and it reminds them to give thanks for God's blessings and of the importance of submitting to God's will. It is a physical, mental and spiritual activity that draws believers close to God.

'Recite, [O Muhammad], what has been revealed to you of the book and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of God is greater. And God knows that which you do.'

Qur'an 29:45

Preparation for prayer

Preparation for prayer is vital because coming into the presence of God requires a deep sense of respect and reverence. Prayer begins with a declaration of intent (niyyah). It must be a deliberate act, to set aside a few minutes to focus on God and enter into a state of 'God consciousness'. This allows Muslims to concentrate on God's greatness, to thank and praise him and ask for his forgiveness.

Wudu: ablution (washing)

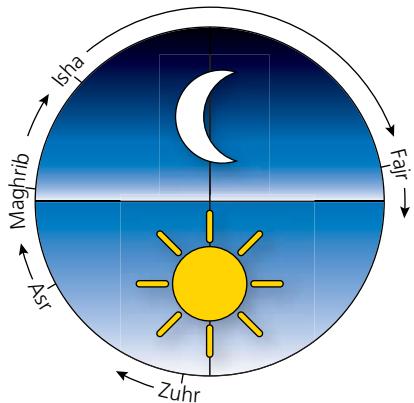
Before starting to pray, Muslims must practise wudu, washing specific parts of the body: hands, mouth, nose, face, arms, head and feet in a particular order. This is an outward sign of the inner cleanliness needed to face God.

How to pray

The Qur'an and the **Sunnah** give Muslims clear guidance on how and when to pray. Salah takes place five times a day:

- ▶ **Fajr** (just after at dawn)
- ▶ **Zuhr** (just after midday)
- ▶ **As'r** (late afternoon)
- ▶ **Maghrib** (just after sunset)
- ▶ **Isha** (after dark).

Muslims must find somewhere with room to stand, bow and prostrate themselves (kneeling with their face to the ground). This can be at the mosque, at home or anywhere safe and clean. Muslims pray facing Makkah; this direction is called **Qibla**.



Time given for each of the daily prayers

Sunnah the record of Muhammad's way of life.

Qibla the direction to face during prayer (towards Makkah).

Task

'Niyyah' means having the right intention (see page 251). Why is it important for a Muslim to be in the right frame of mind as they prepare for prayer?

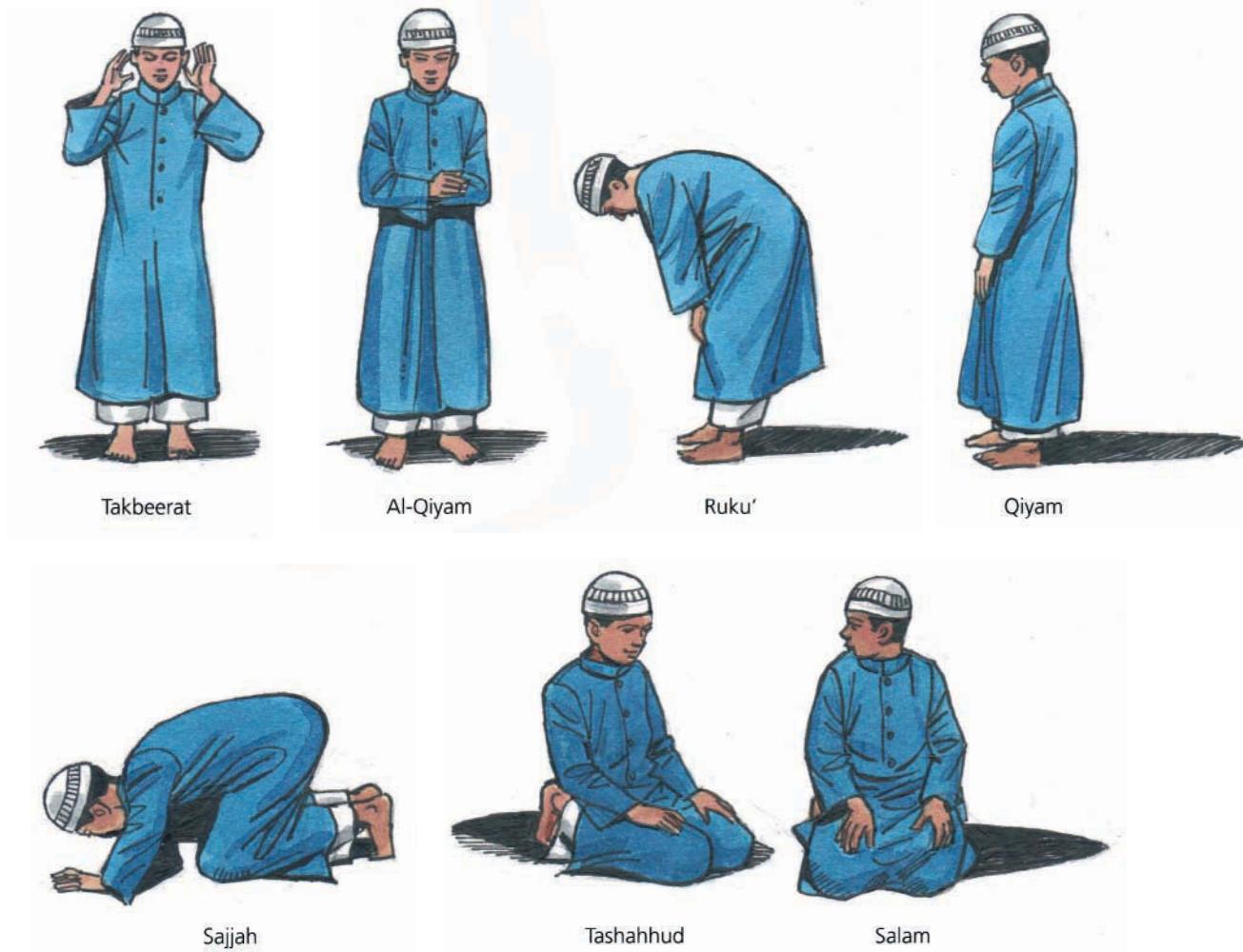


The rak'ahs

A **rak'ah** is a sequence of movements, following a set pattern, which make up the prayer routine. The different prayers during the day require different numbers of rak'ahs.

During worship the worshipper will:

- ▶ stand quietly, reciting prayers from the Qur'an
- ▶ bow low, with hands on knees
- ▶ prostrate on the floor, in submission to God
- ▶ kneel with feet folded under body
- ▶ stand, reciting 'Peace be upon you, and God's blessing', once facing to the right, once facing to the left.



The sequence of movements that make up a rak'ah

'And when you have completed the prayer, remember God standing, sitting, or [lying] on your sides. But when you become secure, re-establish [regular] prayer. Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times.'

Qur'an 4:103

The aims of prayer

The aims of prayer are:

- ▶ as a constant reminder of the presence of God
- ▶ to show submission to the will of God
- ▶ to cleanse away the corruption of the world
- ▶ to unite all Muslims
- ▶ to bring about peace in the world
- ▶ to remove sins, just as water removes dirt.

'Salah is the pillar of the Islamic religion and whoever abandons it, demolishes the very pillar of religion.'

Hadith

Congregational all together, praying as a whole community. This emphasises the ummah.
Du'a prayers personal prayers which may be said at any time of the day.



Salah is a duty for all Muslims

Jumu'ah (congregational) prayers

Key Concepts



Mosque or 'masjid' A 'place of prostration' for Muslims; it is a communal place of worship for a Muslim community.

In Islam, Friday is the day when Muslims come together at the **mosque** for Jumu'ah (**congregational**) prayers. Muslim men are expected to gather for the Friday midday (Zuhr) prayers. Women may attend these community prayers, but traditionally they pray at home. One of the main features of the Jumu'ah prayers is the sermon (khutbah) given by the imam. Unlike the Sabbath for Jews and Christians, Friday is not seen as a 'holy' day. In some Muslim countries it is a day of rest, but in Western countries it may well be a normal working day.

Du'a (personal) prayer

The Salah prayers are a duty for all Muslims, five times a day, but people who love God will often choose to find time to make their own, personal connection with God. There are no set times for **Du'a prayers**; they are spontaneous opportunities to spend time in the presence of God.

Missed prayers

Muslims should try to pray at the allocated times, set out clearly in the Islamic prayer schedule for every day of the year, but if they miss a prayer then it is acceptable to catch up later. However, it would be seen as a sin to miss prayers regularly without a valid reason.

'If one of you sleeps and misses a prayer, or forgets it, let him offer the prayer when he remembers.'

Hadith

Tasks



- 1 What are the key features of Jumu'ah prayers?
- 2 What are the key features of Du'a prayers?
- 3 What are the key differences between Jumu'ah prayers and Du'a prayers?
- 4 Explain which you think is the most important for a Muslim? Why?

► Why do Muslims pray five times a day?

The night journey

Tasks



- 1 Make a list of the Five Pillars.
- 2 Explain why you think Muslims believe it is so important to follow these religious duties?

Both the Qur'an and the Hadith contain Prophet Muhammad's night journey. In the story, Muhammad is woken from his sleep and taken on a winged horse to Jerusalem and then up through seven levels of heaven, to the very presence of God. Here, God reveals to Prophet Muhammad that Muslims must pray continuously, 50 times a day. Worship must be a constant presence throughout life. However, Moses intervenes and says this is too much and eventually it was agreed that there must be five prayer times each day.

► Zakah: charity, giving to the poor

The third pillar

The third pillar of Islam is Zakah, the practice of charity, giving money to the poor. All Muslims are expected to be charitable as a regular duty, giving 2.5 per cent of their wealth every year. They can be sure that God will reward them for their acts of giving. (See pages 158–59 for more on Muslim attitudes to wealth and poverty.)

Be generous and kind

The Qur'an makes a clear command: to give to those in need, to widows, orphans and travellers. It is an obligation and a form of worship, to be generous and kind for the benefit of humanity. Zakah is closely associated with prayer; what value is it to pray for others if you are not prepared to share with them?

Zakah is purity

Giving is a sign of cleansing and purity. The Qur'an teaches that money may have a corrupting influence; wealth can be an evil thing, because it may cut us off from each other and from God. Zakah is a purifying influence, giving us the opportunity to share our wealth and offering us a means of purification.

Wealth is not ours; it must be shared

According to Islam, our wealth and our property are not ours; wealth is given to us by God, for the benefit of all humans. It is our duty to share the good fortune that we have received, not to hoard it and spend it purely for selfish reasons. Islam disapproves of gambling. Money should be shared, not wasted for personal satisfaction. Gambling is seen as a great sin, because it makes people dependent on chance rather than relying on God to provide.

'O you who have believed, spend from that which We have provided for you before there comes a Day in which there is no exchange and no friendship and no intercession. And the disbelievers – they are the wrongdoers.'

Qur'an 2:254

Humans are khalifahs (stewards)

The Qur'an teaches that humans are khalifahs (God's representatives on earth). This means that we are stewards or trustees of the world; we do not own it, we are looking after it in trust, for God, to hand it on to our children and to future generations. Therefore, we should not view our possessions as our own; they are on loan to us from God, so we do not have the absolute right to spend our money as we choose.

Prophet Muhammad practised Zakah

The practice of giving Zakah began when Prophet Muhammad was the ruler in Madinah. After the first battles, there were many orphans and widows and the prophet instructed people to care for all those in need.

'The one who looks after and works for a widow and for a poor person is like a warrior fighting for God's cause.'

Hadith



How should Zakah be spent?

The Qur'an identifies a number of people who can receive Zakah: the poor, the needy and travellers. Today there are many Muslim aid agencies that distribute Zakah to support development in community projects in areas such as: water supply, sanitation, healthcare and education.

Sadaqah: giving from the heart

It is a duty for all Muslims to pay Zakah once a year, but Islam also teaches that voluntary giving is important too. Sadaqah is any good deed done out of compassion or generosity; it could be a gift of time, helping others or a donation to a charity.

Tasks



'A Muslim who plants a tree or sows a field, from which man, birds and animals can eat, is committing an act of charity.'

Hadith

- 1 Do you think it is a good attitude to think of our property as belonging to God, not us? Can you explain your views?
- 2 Why do you think Muslims disagree with gambling?
- 3 Do you agree that gambling is harmful?

► Sawm, fasting during Ramadan

The fourth pillar

The fourth pillar of Islam is Sawm, the practice of fasting during the month of Ramadan. For many Muslims, it is the holiest month of the year, being a time dedicated to self-discipline and spiritual reflection. Ramadan holds a special place in the Muslim calendar, because it is believed to be the month in which the Prophet Muhammad received the first verses of the Qur'an, revealed to him by God.

Fasting: self-control

Fasting is the deliberate control of the body and Muslims are expected to refrain from eating, drinking (including water), smoking and sexual intercourse from dawn to dusk for the period of 29/30 days. They must also abstain from evil thoughts, harmful actions and unkind speech.

When to fast?

The beginning of Ramadan is marked by the appearance of the new (crescent) moon in the sky, signalling the start of the new month. It ends 29/30 days later with the beginning of the tenth month, Shawwal, heralding the start of celebrations for Id-ul-Fitr (see p. 273).

According to the Qur'an, the fast must begin each day at first light and continue until dusk. At dawn, eating and drinking must cease at the moment when it becomes light enough to distinguish a black thread from a white one. Food and drink may only be consumed again at the end of the day, after dark.

A special meal, known as suhur, is eaten before dawn, and at dusk the fast is broken by the iftar meal, often consisting of dates and water, before a bigger meal is shared. These meals during Ramadan are often very social events, with family, neighbours and friends gathering in homes and mosques to provide for each other. In this way, Ramadan brings a very happy, community focus to Islamic society.



Breaking the fast at the end of each day of Ramadan is often a social occasion, shared with family and friends.

Tasks

- 1 (a) List the benefits that Muslims say fasting can bring.
 (b) For each one explain why it is a benefit.
 You could present this as a mind map.
- 2 Do you think GCSE and A-level exams should be arranged to take into account the fact that Muslim students may be fasting?

Celebrating the Qur'an

During Ramadan, Muslims gather at the mosque for extra night prayers. This includes the recitation of a section of the Qur'an each day, so that by the end of the month the whole Qur'an has been recited. All Muslims should try to attend the mosque on the 27th day of Ramadan to celebrate Laylat-ul-Qadr, the night of power. This is remembered as the date of the first revelation of the Qur'an, when the Angel Jibril first visited Prophet Muhammad.

Why do Muslims fast?

Muslims believe that the fast is important because it:

- is commanded in the Qur'an by God follows the example of the Prophet Muhammad (Sunnah)
- follows the example of the Prophet Muhammad (Sunnah)
- celebrates the fact that God has given humans the Qur'an
- brings people closer to God
- is a reminder of the mercy and blessings of God
- helps Muslims to identify with the poor
- promotes self control
- helps to recharge spiritual batteries
- unites Muslim communities (ummah).

Who should fast?

God has instructed all adult Muslims to fast during Ramadan. Children, from quite a young age, often begin to fast for just a few days in the month. According to the Qur'an, if someone is ill or travelling they are exempt from fasting, although they would be expected to make up the days at a later time.

'O those of you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous – [Fasting for] a limited number of days. So who ever among you is ill or on a journey [during them] – then an equal number of other days [are to be made up]. And upon those who are able [to fast, but with hardship] – a ransom [as substitute] of feeding a poor person [each day]. And whoever volunteers good [i.e. excess] it is better for him. But to fast is best for you, if you only knew'

Qur'an 2:183–184

**'RAMADAN FAST IN UK "SHOULD BE SHORTENED"
SAY SCHOLARS.'**

BBC news headline

Some Muslims argue that fasting times should be standardised. Muslims who live in the Middle East (nearer to the Equator) only ever have to fast for a maximum of 15 hours, whereas in an English summer Muslims might need to fast for up to 19 hours each day. This is especially difficult for school students who are doing exams in the summer months.

Task

Which of the Five Pillars would you argue to be the most important to Muslims? Explain why.

► The Hajj, pilgrimage to Makkah

The fifth pillar

The fifth pillar of Islam is Hajj, the pilgrimage to Makkah.

This is the only pillar of Islam that Muslims don't *have* to perform. It is compulsory for those who are able to make the journey, but the Qur'an only commands it as a duty for those who:

- ▶ have enough money to leave their homes for a lengthy period
- ▶ are physically and mentally fit enough to carry out this demanding ritual.

For most Muslims, to set out for the Hajj would be the ambition of a lifetime. Those who have succeeded in completing it often count it as the greatest achievement of their lives. Hajji (male) or Hajjah (female) is the special title given to someone who has successfully completed the Hajj pilgrimage. This is a great honour.

The importance of Makkah

Makkah is considered by Muslims to be the holiest city on earth. Because it is the city of God it has immense spiritual significance in Islam. Muslims believe that it is here that:

- ▶ Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) was commanded by God, in a dream, to sacrifice his son, Isma'il.
- ▶ Ibrahim overcame a test when the devil appeared, trying to trick him into denying God's word. Ibrahim threw stones to drive the devil away.
- ▶ Ibrahim's wife, Hajar, searched frantically for water in the desert. Miraculously an angel showed her the Zamzam well.
- ▶ Ibrahim built the Ka'ba as a place of worship to the one, true God.
- ▶ Prophet Muhammad was born.
- ▶ Prophet Muhammad received the first revelations from God.
- ▶ Prophet Muhammad returned before his death to reclaim the city for God.

The Qur'an instructs believers to go on Hajj, but it does not specify many details. The Sunnah describes the pilgrimages the Prophet Muhammad performed and how he worshipped in Makkah. This forms the pattern for today's pilgrimage.

Ihram is a sacred state of purity, symbolised by the white garments worn on Hajj. Muslims must make a special intention (niyyah) to dedicate themselves to worshipping God when they arrive in Makkah. Hajjis/Hajjahs are often buried in these white garments, at the end of their lives, to remind God of their dedication to worship him.

The route of the Hajj pilgrimage takes believers to the sacred sites where many of these events are said to have taken place.

Preparations: entering a state of ihram

On arriving in Makkah pilgrims enter a state of ihram (purity), where they dedicate themselves to humility and prayer. Normal clothing is put away and the pilgrims put on special garments: men must wear two sheets of white, unsewn cloth; women must put on a plain, ankle-length garment, but they can leave their faces uncovered, since no man will stare lustfully at a woman on Hajj.

British Muslims undertaking Hajj

Every year about three million Muslims from around the world converge on Makkah for the annual Hajj pilgrimage. Of these, perhaps up to 100,000 will be from Britain; some will be returning having made the pilgrimage before, others will be experiencing it for the first time. For many it will be a deeply spiritual experience. Read Saleena's description below:

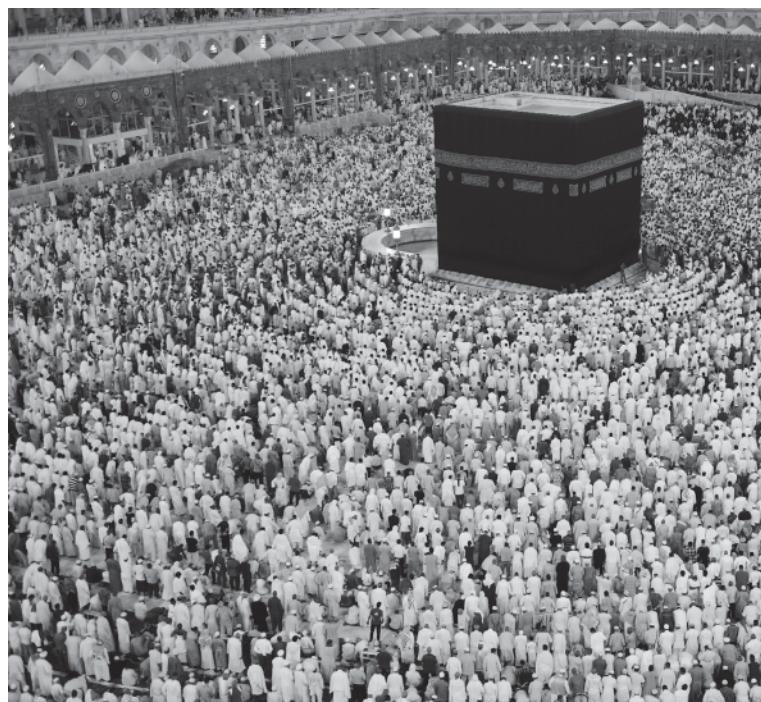
'I made my way inside cautiously, not wanting to set my eyes on the Ka'ba (House of God) until I was able to get a clear and unobstructed view, in order to properly savour the moment. I also wanted to pray for three things dear to me as prayers get granted when you first cast your eyes on the Ka'ba. Words cannot describe the emotions that are created when one looks at the Ka'ba, such a simple object structurally yet so majestic and awe-inspiring that it is difficult to take your eyes off it. After emotionally gathering myself, I started my Pilgrimage...'

Saleena Nurmohamed

Tasks

- 1 List three reasons why Muslims go on Hajj.
- 2 How and why do Muslims 'enter the state of ihram'?
- 3 What are the key features of Hajj? Copy the table below and complete the description/purpose column.

Event	Description/purpose
Doing the tawaf	
The wukuf	
Collecting pebbles at Muzdalafa	
Sacrificing an animal	
Repeating the tawaf	
At the Zam Zam well	
Standing on the Mount of Mercy	
The pillars at Mina	
Men shaving their heads	



Muslims circling the Ka'ba at Makkah

Tasks

- 1 Explore some of the other Hajj narratives on the British Museum Hajj exhibition website.
<http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/themes/hajj/narratives/modern.aspx>
- 2 Log onto the Association of British Hajjaj (Pilgrims) website to research the advice given to British people who are preparing to undertake Hajj.
<http://www.abhuk.com/preparation-of-hajj-and-umrah/>

The pilgrimage begins

With all their preparations complete, the pilgrims are now ready to begin the pilgrimage which will usually last for five days. Some of the most significant aspects of this unique physical, emotional and spiritual experience are:

- ▶ The tawaf: circling the Ka'ba seven times. If they can get close enough, pilgrims try to kiss the Black Stone.
- ▶ Walking seven times between two hills of Mawah and Safa, in memory of Hajar, Ibrahim's wife, in her frantic search for water for her son.
- ▶ Drinking from the Zam Zam well, remembering the spring of water revealed to Prophet Ibrahim's wife Hajar by the angel.
- ▶ The wukuf: standing before God on the Plain of Arafat, at the Mount of Mercy, remembering God's mercy and forgiveness. This is, perhaps, the most important part of the whole Hajj.
- ▶ Collecting pebbles at Muzdalafah.
- ▶ Hurling these pebbles at the pillars at Mina to show rejection of the devil, as Ibrahim did when faced with temptation.



Pilgrims throw pebbles at the pillars at Mina in remembrance of when Ibrahim threw stones at the devil when faced with temptation

- ▶ Camping at Mina, sacrificing an animal.
- ▶ Men shaving their heads when Hajj is complete.
- ▶ Returning to Makkah to repeat the tawaf (circling the Ka'ba).

The climax of the Hajj is the annual festival of Id-ul-Adha, the most important of all Muslim celebrations (see pages 269–70). This is a special time for the pilgrims, because this part of the Hajj is celebrated by all Muslims, whether they have made the joyful journey to Makkah or whether they have stayed at home. It is an opportunity for the Muslim community (the ummah) to join together in worship of God.

I haven't been on pilgrimage, but I do pray to God that I will have the chance. When God wants me to go, I will go.

Nazir A

Just laying my eyes on the Ka'ba and knowing that you are one of the blessed ones which God had called is overwhelming.

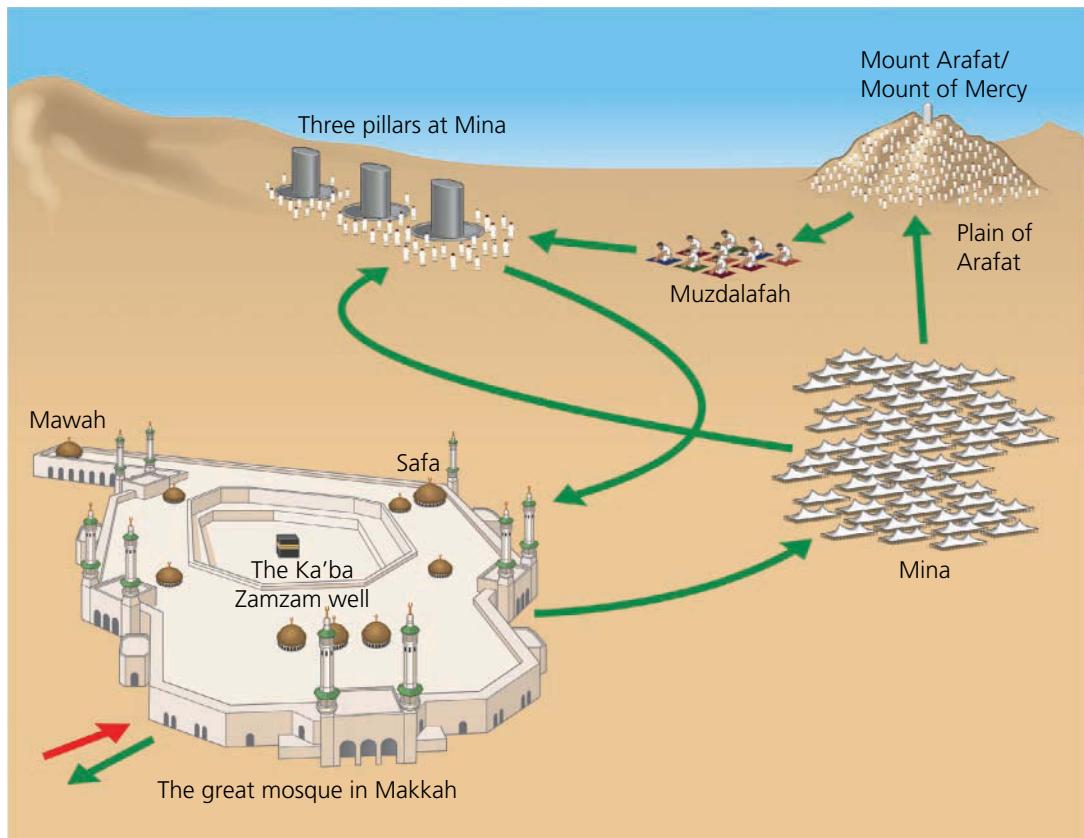
Abdul Muizz Ali

Being in Makkah and doing my Hajj was the most beautiful time of my life.

Farah Ahmed

It literally gives me the most spiritual inner peace a human can get.

Ashraf Badr



A map of Hajj

■ Jihad: striving for right

Key Concepts



Jihad Means ‘to strive’. There are two forms of jihad. The greater jihad is the daily struggle and inner spiritual striving to live as a Muslim. The lesser jihad is a physical struggle or ‘holy war’ in defence of Islam.

► What is jihad?

Jihad is the struggle to live according to God’s laws. It is one of the most misunderstood words in Islam, because to many people jihad simply means ‘holy war’, but in fact it has a deeper meaning than this.

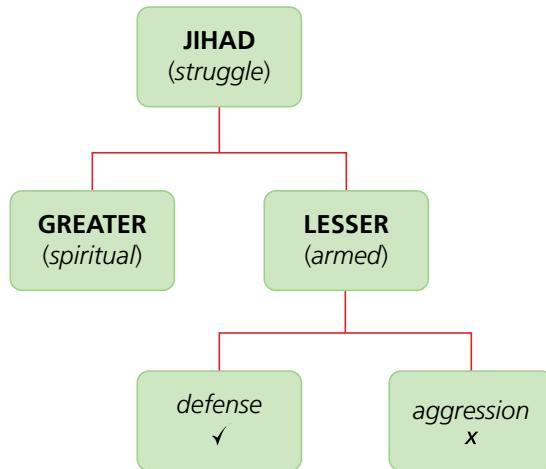
Jihad actually means ‘directed struggle’:

- ▶ striving to serve God
- ▶ making an effort to live a moral life
- ▶ actively trying to live in peace.

► The greater jihad and the lesser jihad

Many Muslims make a distinction between the greater jihad (the personal struggle for right) and the lesser jihad (the desire to remove evil from society). It is the duty of all Muslims to try to remove evil from society, but you can only fight for justice in the world when you have truly removed the evil in your own life.

The Prophet Muhammad said that the supreme jihad is against oneself.



► The greater jihad

The greater jihad is the spiritual struggle with oneself. It is the desire and commitment to live the perfect Muslim life:

- ▶ to perform the Five Pillars with devotion
- ▶ to practise the path set out by Prophet Muhammad (Sunnah)
- ▶ to seek justice and fairness for all
- ▶ to rise above one’s own greed and selfishness.

The need to control desires

Islam teaches that Muslims need to control their own desires and behaviour, to follow the Five Pillars and live a life that is pleasing to God. This will ensure that when the last day comes, and they are brought to judgement by God, they will be worthy to receive God's favour and thus to enter paradise.

The battle against laziness

There is a prayer of Prophet Muhammad which says: 'God, I seek thy protection against helplessness and laziness, and against cowardice . . . and miserliness.' This describes the greater jihad. It is the commitment to make the effort to be a better person and live as God has instructed.

The greater jihad is the spiritual fight against the tendency to be lazy: to get up for prayers before dawn, to only eat food that is halal (permitted), to show kindness and generosity towards other people.

Encourage what is right

The Qur'an urges Muslims to 'encourage what is right (ma'ruf), and forbid what is wrong' (3:104). This process is partly about removing evil from yourself, but also about making the world a better place.

Prophet Muhammad says:

'Whoever amongst you sees an evil, he must change it with his hand. If he is not able to do so, then with his tongue. And if he is not able to do so, then with his heart, and that is the weakest form of faith.'

Hadith

Respect for the beliefs of others

The Qur'an encourages Muslims to be tolerant and respectful towards the beliefs others: 'To you be your religion, and to me mine' (109:6). Muslims should live in peace and harmony in society, celebrating differences and obeying the law.

The Qur'an makes it clear that every single life is precious:

'If anyone slew a person . . . it would be as if he slew the whole people; and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people.'

Qur'an 5:32

Tasks

- 1 What struggles do you have to live in the right way? Do you have a battle with laziness or selfishness? Can you explain your thoughts?
- 2 What do you think it means to say: 'smiling in tough times is jihad'?
- 3 Why do you think this is called the greater jihad?



► The lesser jihad (holy war)

There are certain circumstances in which Islam accepts that force needs to be used, but only ever in self defence. While the greater jihad is the personal struggle against sin, the lesser jihad or holy war is the struggle to remove evil from society. This involves the whole community, rather than the individual, and there are strict rules for the use of force in jihad.

Lesser jihad or military jihad is sometimes known as 'jihad with the sword' or holy war.

'To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight, because they are wronged.'

Qur'an 22:39

The origin of lesser jihad

The concept of lesser jihad arose during the Prophet Muhammad's lifetime, when he gave his faithful followers authorisation to fight. Muhammad's enemies in Makkah planned to wipe out all Muslims and so they believed that there was no choice other than to engage in conflict.

'Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought, because they were wronged. And indeed, God is competent to give them victory.'

Qur'an 22:39

This passage from the Qur'an records the permission given by God for the Muslims to defend themselves against their enemies. Some argue that war with such a pure motive (to establish the principle of religious freedom) is a true jihad.

'Fight in the way of God those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, God does not like transgressors.'

Qur'an 2:190

Jihad must never be aggressive

The Qur'an lays down the condition that the Muslims must not be the first to attack; a war of aggression is prohibited. However, if it can be agreed that a war is a 'jihad', then it is a duty to fight back, but only against those who are attacking you, never to kill civilians.

Who can declare a jihad?

Muslim law is clear that jihad can only be declared by a Muslim leader who is holy and pure and who has the support of the whole Muslim community. Some Muslim communities do believe their leaders are able to declare jihad. However many Muslims today say that it is difficult to see how these conditions for jihad could be met, because there is no one, indisputable Muslim ruler who would be eligible to declare it.

The Crusades

Many Muslims would say that it was a jihad when Muslims fought against the Christian Crusaders in the Middle Ages.

The Crusades were military campaigns by Christians between 1095 CE and 1291 CE. Their aim was to win back the Holy Land for Christianity, from Muslim control, and in 1099 CE they succeeded in re-taking Jerusalem. Muslims vowed to wage jihad (holy war) against the invaders from Europe and the Muslim armies eventually defeated the Christian Crusaders.



Some jihadists claim that the Twin Towers in New York, attacked on 9/11, was a legitimate target. Moderate Muslims reject all forms of terrorism

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) speaks on behalf of British Muslims. The MCB have strongly condemned the actions of IS, saying that they are 'horrified' by the group's 'twisted message' and 'barbarous' behaviour. The '#notinmyname' hashtag has been widely used to make it clear that IS does not represent the views of British Muslims. Find out more about this campaign from <http://isisnotinmyname.com>

Jihad today

Today, most Muslims agree that a holy war can only be called against an aggressor that threatens Islam. Some Islamic extremist groups argue that the attack on the World Trade Center (the Twin Towers) in New York, on 11 September 2001, commanded by Osama Bin Laden, was an act of jihad. However, moderate Muslims reject this idea, arguing that this attack was an aggressive act, which targeted innocent civilians and so fails the test set by the Qur'an.

The rise of jihadist groups

There are a number of groups who have labelled themselves as jihadists in recent years (for example, Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, Islamic State/Daesh). They are prepared to use violence in order to create an Islamic State that would be governed in accordance with Islamic (Shari'ah) law. Western governments regard these groups as terrorist organisations and moderate Muslims reject this form of extreme Islam.

In 2014 jihadi fighters, saying they were loyal to Islam, captured large areas of Northern Syria and Iraq, setting up what they called a 'caliphate'. This is a state governed in accordance with Islamic (Shari'ah) law. Islamic State (IS) say they want to restore God's rule on earth and defend the ummah (Muslim community) against infidels (non-believers).



Jihadi fighters, from Islamic State in Northern Syria and Iraq

Tasks

- 1 Make a list of the reasons that a jihadist might give for declaring a military jihad.
- 2 Why would moderate Muslims say that violent jihad is almost always wrong?
- 3 Could the 9/11 attack on the Twin Towers be justified as a jihad? Explain your reasoning.

'Jihad and girl power: how ISIS lured three London girls.'

'Danger of foreign jihadists.' Increasing numbers of jihadists are being drawn to Syria to fight for ISIS.

'Who are the British jihadists?' Hundreds of people are believed to have travelled from the UK to Syria to fight for Islamic State. The British Government fear that some of them will try to return and create terrorist attacks here.

Festivals and commemoration

Feasts and festivals have always been part of human society. They are special because they mark times when families and communities can gather together to remember, celebrate and offer thanksgiving. They may be anniversaries of important events or re-enactments of ancient rituals. All Muslim festivals have special significance, often relating to events or stories from Islamic history. However, festivals in Islam are not just moments of joy and happiness, they are also occasions to worship and remember the presence of God.

Moderation not excess

Islam has relatively few holidays and Muslim festivals are usually quite restrained events. Islam is a religion of moderation: the Qur'an forbids indulgence and extravagance and Muslims are instructed not to eat so much as to fill the whole stomach. Prophet Muhammad urged his followers not to drink water greedily, in one gulp, but to pause and sip. The Prophet Muhammad said: "He is not a Muslim who goes to bed with a full stomach while his neighbour goes hungry."

One of the central features of Muslim festivals is the importance of sharing happiness with others and in particular giving to the needy and the poor.

Id the Muslim word for festival.
It means 'an event that returns every year'.

► Festivals in Islam

There are two main festivals in Islam: **Id-ul-Adha** and **Id-ul-Fitr**, but there are also other important days to be remembered.

Mawlid an-Nabi: the birth of the prophet

Mawlid an-Nabi is the celebration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. It is a public holiday in many countries. In Britain, Muslims celebrate this day with joyful processions through the streets, chanting stories in praise of his life.

Laylat-ul-Qadr: the Night of Power

Laylat-ul-Qadr is one of the holiest days in the Muslim calendar, marking the date when the Qur'an was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Islamic tradition is not certain of the exact day, so this event is remembered throughout the last ten days of the month of Ramadan. It is often celebrated on the 27th day of Ramadan.

During this time Muslims may stay up all night, reciting the Qur'an, praying and remembering God's mercy and forgiveness.

Laylat-ul-Miraj: the night journey

Laylat-ul-Miraj remembers Prophet Muhammad's miraculous journey on a winged horse to Jerusalem and then up through the heavens into the presence of God. Today Muslims commemorate these events at the mosque by saying particular prayers and at home by telling the story to their children and reciting special night-time prayers.

Laylat-ul-Bara'at

Laylat-ul-Bara'at is the night of the full moon in the month before Ramadan. This is the night on which Muhammad used to begin his preparations for Ramadan and many Muslims stay up all night reciting the Qur'an.

Muharram

Muharram is the first month of the Islamic calendar and it remembers the Hijrah, when Muhammad and his followers fled from Makkah, to establish the first Muslim community in Madinah. Sunnis fast on the tenth day of Muharram. Shi'as observe Muharram as the month when Husayn (Prophet Muhammad's grandson) was martyred and so they refrain from joyous events in his memory.

Tasks

- 1 Many Muslim festivals have a focus on the Qur'an and the events in the life of Prophet Muhammad. Can you explain why this is so, using examples?
- 2 Why might it be important for young Muslims growing up in Britain today to take part in festivals like this?
- 3 Why do you think many festivals in Islam involve giving to the needy and the poor?



Laylat-ul-Qadr (the Night of Power) is described in the Qur'an as, 'better than a thousand months' [97:3]. Any action done on this night, such as reciting the Qur'an or remembering God, is better than acting in one thousand months which do not contain the night of Qadr.

► Id-ul-Adha: the festival of sacrifice

The 'Big Id'

Adha sacrifice.

Id-ul-Adha is the festival of sacrifice. It is the most important event in the Muslim calendar and, to many, it is known as the Greater Id or the 'Big Id'. It marks the end of the annual Hajj pilgrimage and it is a chance for all Muslims, across the world, to worship and celebrate together. For the Hajjis/Hajjahs, who have just completed Hajj, it is the culmination of five intense days of worship, but it is also special for those who have been unable to travel to Makkah, who will celebrate in their home communities.

'And complete the Hajj and 'Umrah for God. But if you are prevented, then [offer] what can be obtained with ease of sacrificial animals. And do not shave your heads until the sacrificial animal has reached its place of slaughter. And whoever among you is ill or has an ailment of the head [making shaving necessary must offer] a ransom of fasting [three days] or charity or sacrifice.'

Qur'an 2:196

Ibrahim's commitment to God

At this time Muslims remember the story of Ibrahim, told in the Qur'an. Ibrahim was willing to sacrifice his son, Ishma'il, to show his love for God. Just in time he heard a voice telling him to spare his son and sacrifice a sheep instead. Today an animal, such as a sheep or goat is killed at Id-ul-Adha as part of the commemoration. The meat is shared among family and friends, as well as being distributed to the poor.

In the story it tells how the devil came to tempt Ibrahim, but his faith was too strong. This symbolises how each individual has to struggle against sin and it shows the importance of total commitment to God.

True sacrifice

The Qur'an is very clear that it is not the physical act of killing an animal which is pleasing to God. What is truly valuable is the personal sacrifice that each individual makes in their heart, offering their life in service of God.

'Their meat will not reach God, nor will their blood, but what reaches Him is piety from you.'

Qur'an 22:37

Preparations for Id-ul-Adha

This is a very important occasion for Muslim families and communities, so preparations begin in good time:

- gifts are bought
- new clothes are made
- food is prepared in advance
- arrangements are made for the sacrifice.

Tasks

- 1 List some of the key events and activities that take place on Id-ul-Adha.
- 2 Why do you think Id-ul-Adha is such a popular festival for Muslims today?

Celebrations

Id-ul-Adha is a public holiday in some countries where there are Muslim majority populations, such as Indonesia, Turkey and Jordan. It is not an official holiday in the UK, but some Muslim organisations and businesses may close and Muslim children have the day off school. Celebrations include:

- ▶ going to the mosque to pray and listen to an Id prayer
- ▶ wearing new clothes
- ▶ visiting friends and relatives.



Muslims gathering for Eid celebrations in London (the word for festival 'Id' is often also translated as 'Eid')

Sacrificing an animal

It is traditional for each Muslim family or community to buy and sacrifice their own animal, but in Britain it is illegal to kill an animal without a licence and most families do not have the space and skills to keep and kill a sheep or a goat! People may ask a butcher to slaughter a sheep for them; they will then share it amongst family and neighbours as a communal meal. Giving some of this meat to the poor is a sacred duty.

My favourite festival is Id-ul-Adha, the 'Big Id'.

What do I do at Id? I cook! Food is important on these days. It's part of celebrating Id to offer clothes and hospitality. We visit each other: friends and relatives. We wear new clothes. We exchange gifts.

► Id-ul-Fitr, the festival of fast-breaking

Breaking the fast

Fitr means 'breaking the fast'. It shares the same root (ftr) as 'iftar' which is the light meal Muslims share when they break fast at the end of each day during Ramadan.

At Id-ul-Fitr Muslims greet each other with the phrase: 'Id Mubarak', meaning 'Happy Id'.

Id-ul-Fitr is a joyful three-day celebration which takes place at the end of Ramadan (see page 257), on the start of the new month of Shawwal. It is a well-deserved reward for the completion of a month of fasting, when Muslims thank God for giving them the strength and self-control needed to give up food and water over so many days. The festival begins with the new moon being observed in the sky, but in Britain, where the weather is often cloudy, Muslims often have to rely on getting the news from other countries.

A special day

In Muslim-majority countries, Id-ul-Fitr is a public holiday; in Britain, many Muslim businesses close and Muslim children are often given a day off school, especially in areas where there is a high Muslim population. It is an occasion when people feel a strong sense of generosity and gratitude towards each other and to God.

Celebrating Id-ul-Fitr in Britain

On the day of Id, Muslims will:

- ▶ decorate their houses with colourful lights, banners and flags
- ▶ dress in their finest, new clothes
- ▶ gather early in mosques or outdoors to perform congregational prayers and listen to a sermon, usually on the subject of sharing and community
- ▶ send 'Id Mubarak' greetings cards
- ▶ visit family and friends to share food and festivities
- ▶ visit the cemetery to remember loved ones who have been divided from the family through death
- ▶ give gifts and money to children
- ▶ share a delicious meal, where everyone joins in with the food preparation and organisation
- ▶ give generously to the poor.

In the Hadith, Muhammad instructs Muslims to make a donation of Zakat-ul-Fitr 'for the purpose of providing food for the needy'.

Task

Id-ul-Fitr is sometimes called the festival of fast-breaking.

Can you explain why you think Muslims would enjoy a special meal together at the end of Ramadan?

Unusual ways to celebrate Id-ul-Fitr

Around the world there are many different ways in which Muslims celebrate Id-ul-Fitr:

- ▶ Egypt: fish recipes form the centrepiece of the feast.
- ▶ Afghanistan: men gather in parks for egg fights. Armed with hard-boiled eggs, they try to break each other's eggs.
- ▶ Turkey: children are given sweets by neighbours and relatives.
- ▶ India: women beautify themselves, applying henna to their hands and feet.

Zakat-ul-Fitr: festival tax

Islam places a high value on the whole community (ummah) experiencing the blessings and mercy of God, so in addition to the duty to pay the annual 2.5 per cent Zakah tax, Muslims are expected to pay Zakat-ul-Fitr. This donation, given at the end of Ramadan, goes to the poor. It allows everyone, even those in poverty, to eat a generous meal at Id-ul-Fitr.

► Ashura: day of sorrow and inspiration

Ashura is an important festival for all Muslims, but it has enormous significance in Shi'a Islam. It is celebrated (or commemorated) on the tenth day of Muharram.

Ashura literally means 'tenth'. It falls on the tenth day of the month of Muharram, the first month of the Islamic calendar.

Sunni Islam: day of fasting

Many Muslims today fast on the day of **Ashura**. The Prophet Muhammad established Ashura as a day of fasting, based on the Jewish day of atonement, when sacrifices are made for the sins of the people. Ashura is an occasion to thank God for saving the Israelites from the Pharaoh. Sunni Muslims remember how Musa (Moses) fasted in gratitude to God for opening up the Red Sea to allow his people to escape from the Egyptian chariots.

Shi'a Islam: the martyrdom of Husayn

Ashura is of particular importance to the Shi'a Muslim community, because it remembers the death of Husayn in battle at Karbala in 680 CE. This event triggered a split between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims that continues to divide Islam today. Shi'as believe that Husayn was the rightful successor to the Prophet Muhammad, so the massacre of Husayn and his followers carries great significance. They refer to Husayn as the third Imam, following his father Ali as his older brother Hasan. Still today they remember his betrayal and death with a deep sense of injustice.

Shi'a celebration of Ashura today

For Shi'as, Ashura is an emotionally charged day, remembering the martyrdom of Husayn, the grandson of Muhammad and it is celebrated with processions, plays and public displays of grief in the streets. Blood is often spilled and people cry and wail.

How is Ashura celebrated around the world?

The death of Husayn gave rise to the Shi'a cult of martyrdom and to a sense of betrayal and struggle against injustice and oppression. Ashura is a day of great sorrow, mourning and self-mutilation, where much public grief is expressed. Central to the events is the need to share in the sufferings of Husayn. Ashura is celebrated in communities across the Shi'a world (for example, in Iran and Iraq), but many Shi'a Muslims feel the need to make the pilgrimage to Karbala every year to take part:

- ▶ Men and women dress in black and march through the streets, slapping their chests and chanting.
- ▶ There are processions and religious gatherings.
- ▶ Plays re-enact the martyrdom.
- ▶ Fervent men beat themselves with chains and cut their heads with swords.



Shi'a street processions

Task

What elements of the celebration show that Shi'a Muslims are committed to remembering the martyrdom of Husayn?

Ashura in Britain today

Ashura is not a public holiday in Britain, but Shi'a Muslim children can be given permission to have the day off school. Many people will fast and pray on this day. In cities such as Manchester and London Shi'as gather in large crowds and take part in public marches. The men often slap their chests violently, in time to their chanting, but

it is uncommon to see them drawing blood through whipping and beating themselves, as happens in many countries in the Middle East. Those who feel that they should lose blood may be encouraged, by Shi'a leaders, to donate to the blood transfusion service.

The Ten Obligatory Acts (Furu ad-Din) of Shi'a Islam

Five roots and ten branches of Shi'a belief

For Shi'a Muslims, Islam is often pictured as a bountiful tree. The five roots of religion (see pages 227–28) act as the source of strength for the Muslim life of faith. These are the central beliefs, with the trunk and branches growing up from these roots. There are ten branches or obligatory acts which form the key features of religious life.

The Ten Obligatory Acts (Furu ad-Din)

The Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam are known as Furu ad-Din. They are: Salah, Sawm, Hajj, zakah, Khums, Jihad, Amr bil-Maroor, Nahil Anril Munkar, Tawalia and Tabarra.

1 Salah (prayer)

There are five daily prayers (Salah), where Muslims face towards the Ka'ba in Makkah (Qibla), but many Shi'as combine these into three. These prayer times are:

- ▶ between dawn and sunrise
- ▶ just after noon
- ▶ at dusk, just after sunset.

They do this because they say that that Muhammad allowed the combination of prayers: Zuhr with As'r and Maghrib with Isha.

2 Sawm (fasting)

Like Sunnis, Shi'as practise fasting (Sawm) during the month of Ramadan, but from the 20th day of Ramadan they remember the death of Ali (son-in-law of the prophet) spending three days in mourning.

3 Hajj (pilgrimage)

Like Sunnis, Shi'as go on the annual pilgrimage to Makkah (Hajj) in the 12th month of the Muslim calendar (Dhul Hijjah). In addition to Hajj, they also make pilgrimages to Shi'a shrines and graves, in particular visiting the grave of Husayn in Karbala (in modern-day Iraq).

4 Zakah (charity)

Like Sunnis, Shi'as make a charity (Zakah) payment of 2.5 per cent of their wealth every year. This goes to support the poor and those in need.

5 Khums (wealth tax)

In addition to Zakah, Shi'as are expected to pay Khums, a wealth tax of 20 per cent of their savings. This money is paid to Muslim scholars and community leaders for the welfare of the community.

An obligation is a duty. The obligatory acts are practices that Muslims believe God has made compulsory.

'And know that anything you obtain of war booty – then indeed, for God is one fifth of it and for the Messenger and for [his] near relatives and the orphans, the needy, and the [stranded] traveler...'

Qur'an 8:41

6 Jihad (struggle)

Jihad is the duty to struggle against sin. For the sake of God, Muslims should fight against injustice, removing any obstacles that might prevent people being able to worship God.

7 Amr-bil-Maroor (encouraging others to do good)

The central purpose of Islam is to create a society where people can live in peace and harmony. Therefore, it is the duty of all Muslims to encourage others to do good, for the sake of God. In the Hadith Muhammad promises that the person who persuades someone else to do a good deed will get the same reward as the person he persuaded.

'And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful.'

Qur'an 3:104

8 Nahil Anril Munkar (discouraging the bad)

It is the duty of all Muslims to forbid evil; when someone sees a wrong, they should correct it. It is the responsibility of the whole Muslim community (the ummah) to discourage others from harmful actions, such as bribery, corruption and dishonesty. This applies to individuals, families and the whole society.

'Whoever among you sees an evil should change it with his hand. If he is unable to do that then with his tongue. If he is unable to do that, then with his heart, and this is the weakest level of faith.'

Hadith

9 Tawalia (to love the friends of God)

Tawalia means having love for God and for the Prophet Muhammad. We should love all those who are friends of God: people who are truthful and kind, honest and fair. We should try to associate ourselves with people who are kind and trustworthy. For Shi'a Muslims it also means having love for the 'Ahl al-Bayt', the 12 infallible Imams who are the descendants of Prophet Muhammad.

10 Tabarra (to hate the evil-doers)

Muslims believe that it is important to dissociate themselves from the enemies of God. We should hate, and separate ourselves from, people who are impure and those who oppress others. However, Muslims often disagree on exactly who are the enemies of God.

Task

Copy and complete the table below.

Write each of the Ten Obligatory Acts (Furu ad-Din) in the first column. In the centre column write a definition for each term, in your own words. In the third column comment on whether the Shi'a beliefs differ from Sunni beliefs.

Obligatory act	Definition	Do Sunni and Shi'a Muslims have different views?

► Key differences between Sunni and Shi'a beliefs and practices

	Sunni	Shi'a
Qur'an	Sunnis believe that the Qur'an is an earthly copy of a heavenly original. Sunnis usually interpret the Qur'an literally, as it is read. They don't look for hidden meanings.	Shi'as say the Qur'an is not eternal, but was created by God as a guide for human beings. They believe that everything in it has a hidden meaning, which must be interpreted by special religious leaders (Imams).
Shahadah (statement of belief)	'I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Prophet of God.'	Shi'as say the same Shahadah as Sunnis, but they add the phrase: 'and I bear witness that Ali was the friend of God'.
Salah (prayer)	Five prayer times every day.	Many Shi'as pray three times a day.
Zakah (giving)	Sunnis often pay Zakah to the state (government).	Shi'as pay Zakah to religious leaders. They also pay an additional Khums tax.
Sawm (fasting)	Fasting during Ramadan.	Shi'as fast in the same way, but they also spend three days during Ramadan mourning the death of Ali.
Hajj (pilgrimage)	Pilgrimage to Makkah.	Shi'as are expected to go on Hajj, but they also go on pilgrimage to other sites sacred to the Shi'a tradition (e.g. Karbala).
Prophethood	Risalah: Sunnis believe that Muhammad was the final prophet.	Nubuwwah: Like Sunnis, Shi'as believe that Muhammad was the last prophet, but they also believe that there have been 12 infallible Imams since Muhammad's death.
The appearance of the Mahdi	The Mahdi is the 'guided one' who will come on the Day of Judgement. Sunnis believe that he will appear in the end times, with Isa (Jesus), to rid the world of evil.	Shi'as too are awaiting the Mahdi, who will come on the last day, but they believe his identity will be revealed as the Hidden (or 12th) Imam.
Festivals	Sunnis celebrate Id-ul-Adha and Id-ul-Fitr.	In addition, Shi'as celebrate Ashura.
al-Qadr (predestination)	Sunnis believe that God has set out a plan or destiny for all things.	Many Shi'as reject predestination, saying that God cannot be responsible for evil. Humans have free will and are independent of God's authority in this life.
Imam (leadership)	For Sunnis, an Imam is a leader chosen by the community. He is an ordinary man.	For Shi'as an Imam is a holy figure. Most Shi'as believe that there have been 12 Imams who are all descendants of Muhammad. The first Imam was Ali, who was followed by his sons Hasan and then Husayn and passed on down through the generations.
Successors to Muhammad	Sunnis believe in the 'rightly guided' khalifahs, the four leaders who followed the death of Muhammad: Bak'r, Umar, Uthman and Ali.	Shi'as reject the 'rightly guided' khalifahs, seeing them as traitors of Islam. They believe that, Muhammad named Ali as the first Imam, not Abu Bakr.

► End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Jihad
- Mosque

Key teachings about:

- the Five Pillars of Sunni Islam
- the Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam
- Id-ul-Adha
- Id-ul-Fitr
- Ashura

Knowledge check

- 1 Write a short paragraph (roughly three sentences) to explain what Muslims do on Hajj.
- 2 In your own words, explain why Muslims have different views about which festival is the most important.
- 3 Explain the importance of Zakah to Muslims.
- 4 How might Muslims differ in their views about what times fasting should start and finish during Ramadan?

Skills Link

- 1 What do Muslims mean by 'salah'?
- 2 Describe how Muslims perform Hajj.

The Big Question

'Muslims should always pray five times a day.'

Your Task

Respond to the statement above, showing that you have considered more than one point of view. Give reasoned judgements on the validity and strength of these views.

Task

You need to explain in detail religious teachings about **jihad**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Islam. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Muslims believe that This comes from the teaching/Qur'an quote

This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Muslims such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Qur'an quote This means that/Because of this they.....

Finally, Muslims such as believe that This means that/Because of this they

Their beliefs do/do not differ because



► Exam focus

Islam: Practices

(c) questions

These questions expect you to ‘explain’ a key practice, belief or issue in the religions you have studied. There is a maximum of eight marks for this type of question. You need to use appropriate religious terms and relevant sources of wisdom or sacred texts. Look at the question below:

(c) Explain the importance of Zakah to Muslims. (8)

The question is asking you to explain the importance of Zakah. It is important that you don’t just give a description of what Zakah is. Eight marks are available, so it is important that your answer is detailed, using religious language/texts and referring to different beliefs or practices within Islam.

Draft an answer which focuses on the importance of Zakah. Remember to show the impact that Zakah might have on individuals and communities.

(d) questions

These are very important questions as they are worth 15 marks. The questions requires you to:

- ▶ read and understand a statement
- ▶ discuss this statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. (You must refer to religion and belief in your answer.)

In your answers you are expected to apply your knowledge and understanding from the whole of your study to the question.

Take for example the following question:

(d) Discuss the view that for Muslims pilgrimage is out of date in the twenty-first century. (15)

(You must refer to religion and belief in your answer.)

The evidence could come from any relevant part of your study.

For example, you might refer to your study about the importance of Muhammad and argue that pilgrimage is important because Muslims can go and see places where the Prophet lived and taught.

Look at the following four areas of your study. For each consider how this might be used as evidence in your answer:

- ▶ Ummah
- ▶ How Sunni Muslims make pilgrimage to Makkah
- ▶ Pilgrimage to Shi'a shrines
- ▶ Issues relating to Muslims in Britain

Judaism

The Big Picture

Key Concepts



Synagogue House of assembly; building for Jewish public prayer, study and assembly.

Shekhinah The place where God's presence rests and can be felt.

Shabbat Day of spiritual renewal and rest. Beginning at sunset on Friday and closing at nightfall on Saturday.

Kosher Means 'fit' or 'proper'. Foods that are permitted to be eaten according to Leviticus 11. It is also used to refer to the purity of ritual objects such as Torah scrolls.

Torah The five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). Regarded as the holiest books of the Tanakh.

Mitzvot The term has a mix of meanings. It is often used to refer to duties (such as the 613 in the Torah) and good deeds.

Messiah The anointed one who Jews believe will bring in a new era or age for humankind. This will include rebuilding the Temple and bringing in an age of universal peace.

Covenant A promise or agreement between two parties. Covenants were made between God with Noah, Abraham and Moses.

Core Questions



What is God like?

What do Jews believe about the Messiah?

Why are Abraham and Moses important to many Jews today?

Do Jews have free will?

Why is life so special?

What do Jews believe about the afterlife?

Which is more important: the home or the synagogue?

Is keeping kosher still important for Jews today?

Why does a Jewish burial happen as soon as possible after death?

What does Pesach celebrate?

Do all Jews celebrate Shabbat in the same way?

► Overview

The section on beliefs and teachings explores the nature of God in Judaism and how Jews' relationship with God influences their beliefs and daily life in twenty-first-century Britain. Throughout the chapter you will see that there are many different Jewish beliefs and practices. From a consideration of the nature of God you will then move on to explore different beliefs about the Messiah. You will consider the importance of covenants and the impact that God's covenant with Abraham and Moses has on twenty-first-century Jewish belief and practice. You will then move on to consider the importance of life in Judaism and the relationship between free will and mitzvot.

Finally, in beliefs and teachings, you will explore the different beliefs and teachings about life after death and different beliefs concerning judgement and resurrection.

As you move on to Jewish practices you will explore Jewish practices and worship in twenty-first-century Britain. You will firstly consider the importance of the worship of God in Judaism and how this happens both in the synagogue and at home. Important prayers and the role of items used for worship will be considered. You will then move on to recognise the importance of the synagogue as a place of worship, a place of study and a place for the community. Opportunities will be given for you to consider issues relevant to life in modern Britain.

Within Judaism there are many different rituals as part of the lifecycle. You will study the importance and meaning of practices connected with brit milah, bar mitzvah, bat mitzvah, marriage and mourning. The importance of the Tenakh will be considered – not only the practice of keeping kosher but also for the origins and celebrations of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Pesach and Sukkot.

Throughout this chapter you will see there are many differing views, which reflect not only the branches of Judaism, for example Reform and Orthodox, but also personal conviction and family tradition.



In the next two chapters you will look at Jewish beliefs, teachings and practices in modern Britain.

Task

Discuss some of the 'core questions' on page 278 in pairs. Write a brief answer to one of them, showing you have thought about different perspectives.



► What do Jews believe?

This is not an easy question to answer! As we will see there is a great diversity of beliefs and practices among Jews. In the twelfth century Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (known as Maimonides) put together 13 principle beliefs that were in the Torah. For many Orthodox Jews these remain central beliefs. Some principles are accepted by all Jews, such as the belief in one God. For some principles, such as a belief in a Messiah, there are many different views and interpretations.

Maimonides' 13 principles of faith

- 1 God exists, is perfect and created everything in existence
- 2 Belief in God's unity
- 3 God does not have a physical body and so is not affected by the same needs as humans
- 4 God is eternal
- 5 Only God should be worshipped
- 6 God communicates with people through prophets
- 7 Moses is the most important prophet
- 8 The Torah was given to Moses by God
- 9 The Torah is God's law and cannot be changed
- 10 God is all knowing and knows everything that is going to happen
- 11 God will reward good and punish evil
- 12 The belief that the Messiah will come
- 13 The dead will be resurrected

► Diversity of Judaism in Britain

As we will see throughout this chapter, Judaism is a worldwide religion with many different Jewish communities. Britain has the second largest Jewish population in Europe and the fifth largest worldwide. Often Jewish people are labelled as if they all share the same beliefs and practices, but they don't. Although you belong to a certain class in your school, each student in that class will have different views and practices, as well as similarities. Sometimes these views have been shaped by their family traditions or beliefs, sometimes from the area they come from and sometimes from their own reasoning.

This is the same with Judaism. As we will see, there are many different views, beliefs and practices, some of which change over time and some that don't. Throughout the chapter, key questions will be identified, about which there are many different views and considerations.

The main Jewish groups in the UK include:

- Orthodox Jews – the largest branch of Judaism in Britain. Orthodox Jews believe that God gave the Torah at Mount Sinai and Jews must follow it.
- Reform Jews – believe that Jewish practices have to be harmonised with modern life.

Within each of these there is a diversity of beliefs and practices.

There are also differences in practices based on country of origin including:

- ▶ Ashkenazi Jews who have descended from Jews from France, Germany and Eastern Europe.
- ▶ Sephardic Jews who have descended from Jews from Spain, Portugal, North Africa and the Middle East.

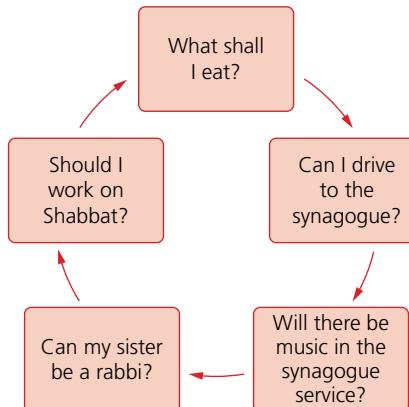
Key Concepts



Torah The five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). Regarded as the holiest books of the Tanakh.

Mitzvot The term has a mix of meanings. It is often used to refer to duties and good deeds.

There are many different views among Jews concerning the degree of observance that is paid to the teachings of the **Torah**. Each Jew must decide if they will follow it all as originally intended or whether they believe that religion should adapt and change. The decision will make a difference to the way in which they live their lives.



What Jewish people think on issues like these will be based on their interpretations of teachings from the Torah.

Orthodox Jews

Orthodox Jews try to live as close to the teachings of the Torah as possible. They believe it came from God and so it cannot be changed. God is the law-giver whose words must be obeyed rather than interpreted. They will try to observe the 613 **mitzvot**. They believe that God gave rules about how lives should be lived and those rules are constant. Any technological or scientific advances must be considered within Jewish teachings. Society may change but Jewish teachings don't.

It must be remembered that within the Orthodox community there are many different communities. A growing movement in Britain are the Charedi, sometimes known as ultra-orthodox, whose ideal lifestyle is dedication to the study and practice of the Torah.

Talmud commentary on the Mishnah, which includes teachings and stories. The term usually refers to the Babylonian Talmud, although there is also a Jerusalem Talmud which is older.

Reform Jews

It wasn't until the Reform movement that large numbers of Jews departed from more traditional Orthodox teachings. Most Reform Jews believe that only the ethical laws of the Torah are binding. Additionally, they believe that other laws, like those in the **Talmud**, were products of their time and place, and so it is not necessary to treat them as absolute. Jews from the Reform movement consider the Torah and its teachings important but they believe that religion should move with the times and do not take the teachings of the Torah literally. How far they interpret teachings depends upon their own reasoning and conscience.

Secular Jews

Some Jews do not believe in God and do not see that the teachings of the Torah are sacred. They are secular Jews who are born to Jewish parents but do not observe the religious practices or teachings of Judaism.

► Country of origin

Throughout history Jews have been forced to move between countries. This is one of the reasons why there are small communities of Jews throughout the world.

Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews are two distinct communities of Jews. Although they have some different practices and use some different terms in worship, they have the same basic beliefs.

- ▶ **Ashkenazi Jews** are the Jews of France, Germany, and Eastern Europe and their descendants. Most British Jews today are Ashkenazi and descend from Jews who emigrated from Germany and Eastern Europe from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s.
- ▶ **Sephardic Jews** are the Jews of Spain, Portugal, North Africa and the Middle East and their descendants. Sephardic Jews are often subdivided into Sephardim, from Spain and Portugal, and Mizrachim, from North Africa and the Middle East. In Britain there are about ten Sephardic synagogues with the oldest being Bevis Marks Synagogue in London, which was built in 1701.

Tasks

- 1 What is the Torah?
- 2 Consider the quotes below. Decide whether a Reform or Orthodox Jew is more likely to say one or the other. Copy and complete the table below.



Quote	Reform or Orthodox?
The Torah is important but we have to move with the times.	
The Torah came from God and must not be changed.	
God gave the rules to live by and those are eternal.	
We need to interpret the mitzvot of the Torah according to the circumstances in which we live.	

- 3 In your own words explain why there are different beliefs and practices among Jews.

9

Judaism: Beliefs and teachings

■ The nature of God

► God as one

A central belief in Judaism is that there is one God (monotheism) who is all knowing (omniscient), all powerful (omnipotent) and existing always (omnipresent).

Reverence deep respect and awe.

Shema a prayer declaring a belief in one God. It is found in the Torah.

Reverence is so important that some observant Jews use Hashem (the name) or write G-D instead of God to represent their respect. The Jewish philosopher Maimonides wrote in the twelfth century that no language exists to be able to describe the uniqueness of God. A similar view is expressed by the twelfth-century Spanish rabbi Judah ha-Levi: "if I understand Him I would be Him". The belief that God is unique runs throughout Jewish belief, worship and lifestyle. Nearly 2,000 years ago Rabbi Akiba said that God's uniqueness is shown by him knowing the character of every single creature and their minds.

The central prayer of Judaism, the **Shema**, affirms the belief that there is only one God. This prayer is made up of three passages from the Torah and is the most important prayer in Judaism. It is recited daily by many Jews. The first paragraph declares a belief in the one God and in his ruling over all creation.

'Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one.'

Deuteronomy 6:4

Task

The Shema is a part of my identity as a Jew.
Miriam

From the pictures and text on pages 294 and 302 identify and describe four examples that support Miriam's view.

Many Jews will say the Shema during their prayers in the morning and the evening. The importance of the prayer is also displayed in many other ways.

The belief that there is only one God is shown in the design of many synagogues. Although they may be very decorative, with colourful glass windows, synagogues do not have any statues or representations of human beings. It is God alone who should be worshipped.

The belief in monotheism (one God) is central to Judaism. However, throughout the Torah, God shows many different characteristics. These characteristics show the different natures of God and are often used as names when describing God. Three of these names are creator, law-giver and judge.

► God as creator

The creation story

The Torah begins by showing how God created the world:

'In the beginning God created heaven and earth.'

Genesis 1:1

It continues to describe how he made day and night, the earth, vegetation and animals.

'God said, "There shall be light," and light came into existence.'

God saw that the light was good, and God divided between the light and the darkness.

God named the light "Day", and the darkness He named "Night". It was evening and it was morning, one day.'

Genesis 1:3–5

Until on the sixth day he not only created human beings but gave them a special and individual role.

'God said, "Let us make man with our image and likeness. Let him dominate the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock animals, and all the earth – and every land animal that walks the earth."

God [thus] created man with His image. In the image of God, He created him, male and female He created them.

God blessed them. God said to them, "Be fertile and become many. Fill the land and conquer it. Dominate the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every beast that walks the land."

Genesis 1:26–28

Some Jews believe that every detail of the creation as told in the Torah is true, that God literally created the world in six days. Others believe the details are examples of what might have happened, but are not meant to be taken literally. For them the most important thing to understand from the creation story is that God is responsible for the creation of everything in existence. (See page 39 for more on creation.)

Jewish beliefs about creation

For many Jews the world is too wonderful and complex to have happened by chance. So it must have had a creator.

Celebrating God as the creator is an important part of Judaism. Prayers said in Orthodox services illustrate how God created the world:

'Blessed be He who spoke, and the world existed.'

Each week, Jews celebrate the festival of Shabbat. This is a day not only of rest but also of celebration of creation. Just as God rested on the seventh day, so observant Jews do not work on Shabbat.

A traditional story is told about a rabbi who wanted to show how the world was created. He turned a bottle of ink on its side so it poured onto a poem. 'Look,' he said, 'the wind knocked over the ink and spilled out a poem onto the paper.' The people laughed at him. 'Such an act is impossible. Look at the poem. It has too much design for it to have been composed by accident.' 'Ah,' said the rabbi, 'then how could you look at the world and think it was designed by accident?'

► God as law giver

Jews believe that God revealed to the prophet Moses laws and duties that are expected of all Jews. These are recorded in the Torah. The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1–17) that God gave to Moses are the framework of how a just society that is close to God could be established.

God judges how each Jew follows the laws. By obeying the laws, Jews are not only fulfilling what God wants but they are forming a close relationship with him.



God gave Moses the Ten Commandments

Justice what is fair or right. When everyone has equal rights and opportunities.

Tasks

- 1 Explain, in your own words, three different ways that Jews show they believe there is only one God.
- 2 Amal has to answer an (a) type exam question: 'What is meant by the Torah?' The answer is worth two marks. Look at the marking grid on page vii to give a mark for his answer: 'the Jewish Bible'. How could he gain full marks?

► God as judge

Judaism teaches that God is a God of both **justice** and mercy and that he will judge each person. Although God's ways may not be understandable by humans they are considered to be just. God has no pleasure in judging humans wrongly, so any judgements he makes will be just. As Psalm 5:4 states:

'You are not a God that has pleasure in wickedness.'

The Jewish festival of Rosh Hashanah celebrates the creation of the world. At this time it is believed God will judge every person. The Talmud describes how God brings out scales to weigh the deeds (mitzvot) of each person. On one side he places the good deeds and on the other the bad deeds.

As God is believed to be a God of mercy, ten days are given after Rosh Hashanah before Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement). During this time, humans can try to make up for any bad deeds and ask for forgiveness. After death it is impossible to repent so this time allows humans to reflect on their deeds and make amends.

When I light the candles and bring Shabbat into my home then I feel the presence of God.

► The nature and significance of Shekhinah – 'the divine presence'

Key Concepts



Shekhinah The place where God's presence rests and can be felt.

Shekhinah is sometimes used to refer to God himself but more usually to God's presence in the world. Shekhinah derives from the word 'shakan' which is used throughout the Torah to illustrate God's dwelling on the earth. There are different views regarding where the Shekhinah rested after the destruction of the Temple. Some believe the Shekhinah followed the Jews into exile. There is also the belief that the Shekhinah never fully left the Temple area and that is why Israel has special spiritual quality. These beliefs are not contradictory as the Shekhinah is not limited to just one place. In mystical Judaism it is often used to refer to the feminine characteristics of God and is referred to as 'she'.

If God is meant to be everywhere, what is special about the Shekhinah? For most Jews they would explain that the Shekhinah is not just where God is but where the presence can be felt – something that cannot be seen but can be experienced.

Leonard Nimoy, who acted the part of the Vulcan Mr Spock in *Star Trek*, wrote a book which included his interpretation of Shekhinah. He was asked to explain how the presence of Shekhinah felt.

'I think – I hope that most people at one time or another in their lives have a feeling of being in a state of grace for a moment or two, feeling that all has come together for them, that they're in a sense of harmony, a sense of inner peace, a sense of successful combining of instinct and will and the coincidence of events that makes one feel that you're in the right place at the right time and doing the right thing.'



Task



In your exam you may be asked to explain the nature and the significance of Shekhinah.

- [a] Select three points you would include to explain what the Shekhinah is [the nature].
- [b] Select three points to explain why the Shekhinah is important [the significance].

Messiah (Mashiach)

Key Concepts



Messiah The anointed one who Jews believe will bring in a new era or age for humankind. This will include rebuilding the Temple and bringing in an age of universal peace.

► The Messianic Age and the Messiah

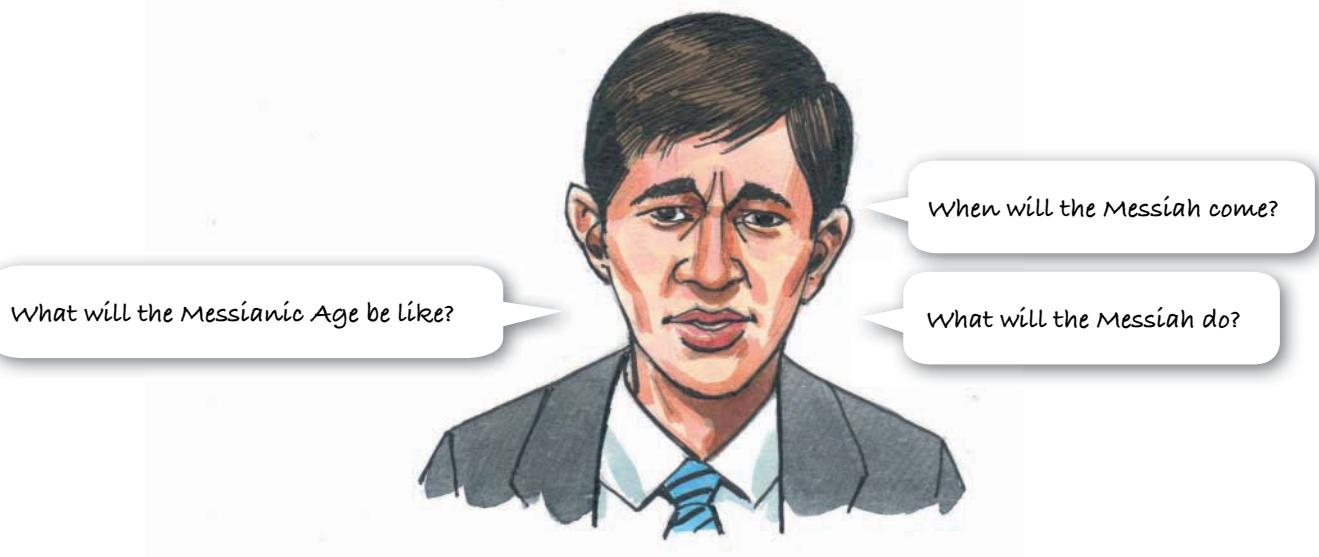
The Messianic Age is a term used for a future time of peace on earth when there will be no violence or hunger or crime. There are no direct references to the Messianic Age in the Torah but scriptures are interpreted to explain what the Messianic Age might be like. Isaiah (11:1–9) talks of it being a time in which the wolf shall live with the lamb, and in which the lion, like the ox, shall eat straw.

For many Jews the first step to this Messianic Age is the coming of the **Messiah** and the resurrection of the dead. The term ‘Messiah’ comes from the Hebrew ‘Mashiach’, which means ‘anointed’. ‘Anointed’ refers to the process of putting scented oil on the head of a king or queen during their coronation. It showed they were trusted by God to do a particular role.

For some Jews a belief in the Messiah is central to their faith. Maimonides, a Jewish philosopher from the twelfth century, said that a belief in the Messiah was one of the 13 Principles of Judaism. This view is not shared by Reform Jews who believe that it will be the good actions of humans that will bring a Messianic Age of peace.

In Judaism there are two main reasons why there are different views about the Messiah:

- ▶ There are no definite teachings about the Messiah in the Torah. This means that passages that Jews might think are relevant have to be interpreted.
- ▶ In Judaism there is a strong belief that humans should focus on the here and now. The world to come is beyond humans’ understanding.



An old Jewish story tells of a Russian Jew who was paid a ruble a month by the community council to stand at the outskirts of town so that he could be the first person to greet the Messiah upon his arrival. When a friend said to him, 'But the pay is so low', the man replied: 'True, but the job is permanent'.

► When might the Messiah come?

There are no references in the Torah as to when the Messiah may come. For some Jews this is because the Torah was written for people to understand and the idea of the Messianic Age is beyond understanding. Some rabbis have tried to calculate the exact arrival of the Messiah. Meir Loeb ben Yehiel, for example, said in 1868 that the Messiah would come in 1913. There have also been a number of false Messiahs, such as Shabbetai Tzvi in the seventeenth century who convinced many thousands of Jews he was the Messiah until under the threat of death he converted to Islam.

The focus for most Jews is not on a date that the Messiah may come but the particular actions that will bring about the Messiah. Although some Orthodox Jews believe that God has a specific date for the coming of the Messiah, most believe that the coming of the Messiah will depend upon when he is most needed. This could be because of the sins of the world or because the world is so good.

For Reform Jews there is little focus about the coming of the Messiah. The main focus is on Jews looking forward to a better society and working towards that goal.

► What will the Messiah do?

There are many different beliefs about the nature of the Messiah and what he will actually do. The traditional belief is that the Messiah will be a great political leader and judge who will bring the world to an end. Some Jews believe he will not be a supernatural being but a human who is descended from **King David** and an inspiration to others.

Many Jews believe that in every generation a person is born with the potential to be the Messiah.

In the **Tenakh**, three actions of the Messiah are referred to:

- ▶ He will bring Jews back to Israel and restore Jerusalem.
- ▶ He will rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. This was the most important place of Jewish worship which was destroyed in 70 CE.
- ▶ He will bring about a time of peace when people will live together without fighting.

King David a successful king of the Israelites. Believed by many to have written the Psalms.

Tenakh the Jewish Bible. The word 'Tenakh' is made up of the first Hebrew letters of the Torah (five books of Moses), Neviim (books of the Prophets) and Ketuvim (holy writings).

One Day

The reggae singer Matisyahu is an American Orthodox Jewish rap artist. His song 'One Day' expresses the peace that Jews hope for in the Messianic Age.

I've been praying for
For the people to say
That we don't wanna fight no more
There'll be no more wars
And our children will play
One day (one day), One day (one day)
One day this all will change

Treat people the same
Stop with the violence
Down with the hate
One day we'll all be free
And proud to be
Under the same sun.



I don't really think about the Messiah as it is important to focus on what is happening in the world today.

Although I am Jewish and go to synagogue every week I don't believe in a being that is called the Messiah.

There is no mention of the Messiah in the Torah and although throughout history people have claimed to be the Jewish Messiah they have always been false. I long for a Messianic Age of peace but don't believe that will come about by someone leading us. I believe it is far more important to live the best life I can to help other people. It is those actions that would bring about peace in the world.

Sophie



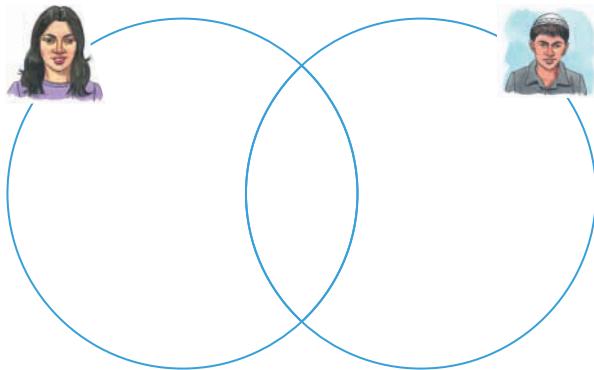
Although I believe that the Messiah will come and each day I pray he will bring about the Messianic Age, I think more about the actions I should be doing to make the world a better place. In Isaiah 9:5-6 there is a description of what the Messiah will be like. He will be a peaceful ruler and introduce a peaceful time forever. He will sit on the throne of King David, rebuild the Temple and rule justly. My rabbi tells me not to try and work out when the Messiah will come as the important thing is to live a good life.

Harry

Tasks

- 1 In your own words explain what the term 'Messiah' means.
- 2 Create a Venn diagram.

In one ring make a note of three of Sophie's beliefs and in the other ring a note of three of Harry's beliefs. In the middle note any beliefs that they both hold.



- 3 Do you think Harry and Sophie are Orthodox or Reform Jews? Give two reasons for your decision.
- 4 'It doesn't matter if the Messiah never comes.' Explain two reasons for and against this view.



Covenant

Key Concepts



Covenant A promise or agreement between two parties. Covenants were made between God with Noah, Abraham and Moses.



God's covenants with humankind are often marked by a special sign. His covenant with Noah was marked by a rainbow.

Midrash collections of various Rabbinic commentaries on the Tanakh.

A **covenant** is an agreement between two people or groups of people. As part of the agreement, conditions are made so each of the groups benefit. It is similar to a contract when a promise is made.

In Judaism the relationship with God is seen as a covenant. In the Torah, God makes relationships with individuals or groups through a covenant. Often the making of the covenant is marked by a special sign.

Each covenant marks a special time in God's relationship with the Jewish people.

► Covenant with Abraham

Abraham is regarded as the founder of the Jewish people and is often called 'father'. He was the first person to teach that there was only one God; before then, people believed in many gods. He was originally called Abram but was given the name Abraham by God as it means 'father of many nations'.

He was a shepherd and came from Ur in Mesopotamia (in modern-day Iraq/Syria). His father made statues (or 'idols') for people to worship. In the **Midrash**, there are a number of stories about Abraham smashing his father's idols when he realises that there can be only one God of heaven and earth. The scriptures state that because of Abraham's purity, God called out to him, commanding him to leave his homeland behind for a new life. Abraham accepted this, and took his wife Sarah with him.

There are three main parts of the Abrahamic Covenant.

The Promised Land (Genesis 12:1)

God called Abraham from Ur to a land that he would give him (Genesis 12:1). Abraham and his descendants found their new home in the land of Canaan (Genesis 12). This land is now known as Israel, named after Abraham's grandson, whose descendants are the Jewish people.

The land is often referred to as the 'Promised Land' because of God's repeated promise (Genesis 12:7, 13:15, 15:18, 17:8) to give the land to the descendants of Abraham. Jews have lived in this land continuously from the time of its original conquest by Joshua more than 3,200 years ago until the present day, though Jews were not always in political control of the land, and Jews were not always the majority of the land's population.

The promise of descendants (Genesis 12:2)

God promised Abraham that he would make a great nation out of him. That is why God changed his name from Abram to Abraham, meaning ‘father of many nations’. This promise is shown in Genesis 17:6–8 where God promises that nations and kings will descend from Abraham:

‘I will increase your numbers very, very much, and I will make you into nations – kings will be your descendants.

I will sustain My covenant between Me and between you and your descendants after you throughout their generations, an eternal covenant; I will be a God to you and to your offspring after you.

To you and your offspring I will give the land where you are now living as a foreigner. The whole land of Canaan shall be [your] eternal heritage, and I will be a God to [your descendants].’

Genesis 17:6–8

The promise of blessing and redemption (Genesis 12:1–3)

God promised to bless Abraham and the families of the earth through him.

God said to Abram, “Go away from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father’s house, to the land that I will show you.

I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you great. You shall become a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you, and he who curses you, I will curse. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you.”

Genesis 12:1–3

As a part of this covenant God gave Abraham the rite of circumcision as the specific sign of the Abrahamic Covenant. Circumcision involves the removal of a boy’s foreskin on the eighth day after birth. It is performed in front of a minyan (ten Jewish males). Boys are named at the same time. All males were to be circumcised and so carry a lifelong mark in their flesh of their relationship with God.

‘You shall be circumcised through the flesh of your foreskin. This shall be the mark of the covenant between Me and you.

Throughout all generations, every male shall be circumcised when he is eight days old. [This shall include] those born in your house, as well as [slaves] bought with cash from an outsider, who is not your descendant.

[All slaves,] both houseborn and purchased with your money must be circumcised. This shall be My covenant in your flesh, an eternal covenant.

The uncircumcised male whose foreskin has not been circumcised, shall have his soul cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.’

Genesis 17:11–14

Task

Explain how each of the words below is connected with Abraham:

COVENANT
OBEEDIENCE
CIRCUMCISION
ABRAM
FAITH
FATHER
PROMISED LAND



‘You shall be circumcised through the flesh of your foreskin. This shall be the mark of the covenant between Me and you.

Throughout all generations, every male shall be circumcised when he is eight days old. [This shall include] those born in your house, as well as [slaves] bought with cash from an outsider, who is not your descendant.

[All slaves,] both houseborn and purchased with your money must be circumcised. This shall be My covenant in your flesh, an eternal covenant.

The uncircumcised male whose foreskin has not been circumcised, shall have his soul cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.’



Covenant with Moses

Another important covenant was the one made between God and Moses. Moses is regarded by Jews as the greatest of the prophets and some refer to him as Moshe Rabbenu (our teacher Moses). Maimonides in the 13 Principles describes Moses as the father of all prophets. Moses had a special relationship with God and is believed to be the only person who has seen God face to face. Moses was a great leader and teacher and is considered by many Jews as the first rabbi. He is the deliverer of God's words and the receiver of miracles sent by God. It is through him that God acts.

There are many parts of Moses' life that are important in Judaism. Many Jewish people were living in slavery in Egypt but Moses, who had been born an Israelite but brought up at the Egyptian court, was called by God to rescue them. When the pharaoh refused to let them leave Egypt, God sent ten plagues on the Egyptian people. The pharaoh did eventually agree to let them go, but then sent his army after them – God then parted the Red Sea for the Jews to cross but brought it crashing back down on the Egyptian army. The story of the ten plagues and crossing the Red Sea is celebrated each year at the festival of Passover (Pesach).

“Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?” said Moses to God. “And how can I possibly get the Israelites out of Egypt?”

“Because I will be with you,” replied [God]. “Proof that I have sent you will come when you get the people out of Egypt. All of you will then become God’s servants on this mountain.”

Moses said to God, “So I will go to the Israelites and say, ‘Your fathers’ God sent me to you.’ They will immediately ask me what His name is. What shall I say to them?”

“I Will Be Who I Will Be,” replied God to Moses.

[God then] explained, “This is what you must say to the Israelites: ‘I Will Be sent me to you.’”

God then said to Moses, “You must [then] say to the Israelites, ‘YHVH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, sent me to you.’ This is My eternal name, and this is how I am to be recalled for all generations.”

Exodus 3:11–15

Tasks

Pages 336–37 tell you about the important festival of Pesach. Read the pages carefully and then answer the following questions:

- 1 In your own words explain how Moses and Pesach are connected.
- 2 On page 336 there is a Pesach card showing how Moses led the Jews out of slavery in Egypt. Look closely at the card as there are clues there to help your answer.
 - (a) How did the Israelites escape from Egypt?
 - (b) Why is Moses considered a great leader?
 - (c) What was God's role in the escape from Egypt?



Key Concepts



Mitzvot The term has a mix of meanings. It is often used to refer to duties (such as the 613 in the Torah) and good deeds.

Oral Torah the whole commentary that discusses the Written Torah.

The Oral Torah

The Oral Torah is all the traditions that have been passed down to explain and interpret the written Torah.

For Orthodox Jews the Written and the Oral Torah are God's words which are revealed to Moses which Moses then passed on to his successors. The Reform movement tend to see only the Written Torah as divinely inspired. The Oral Torah is not regarded as a source of authority, although it may be considered when, for example, decisions need to be made.

Tasks



- Look back at the word association of Abraham on page 291. What words would you select to show the importance of Moses with the letters MOSES running through them?

M
O
S
E
S

- Give a reason why you have selected each word.

Moses and the mitzvot

After taking the Israelites out of Egypt Moses led them through the desert near Mount Sinai. Here Moses went up the mountain and disappeared in the thick cloud. During this time Moses was learning the commandments that God wanted him to teach the Israelites – these make up the Torah. In the Torah there are 613 **mitzvot**, which explain how Jews should live their lives. Some of the mitzvot are no longer relevant now as they relate to practices in the Temple in Jerusalem, which has been destroyed. Ten of the mitzvot are the Ten Commandments. Moses is also believed to have been given the **Oral Torah** by some Jews. This is the whole commentary that discusses the Written Torah.

For example in the written Torah it states:

'Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy.'

You can work during the six weekdays and do all your tasks.'

Exodus 20:8–9

But many questions might be asked about what keeping Shabbat holy actually means. Such questions are discussed through the Oral Torah:

- How should Shabbat be remembered?
- How should Shabbat be kept?
- What sort of work can and can't be done?
- Does this mean that you *have* to work six days?

The importance of Moses is shown in many ways:

- Moses was chosen by God to lead the Israelites out of slavery to the Promised Land (Israel).

'Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit[s] of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. The Israelites therefore listened to him, doing as God has commanded Moses.'

No other prophet like Moses has arisen in Israel, who knew God face to face.'

Deuteronomy 34:9–10

- God worked many miracles through Moses, such as the sending of the plagues in Egypt.
- Moses spoke face to face with God.
- God chose Moses.
- God gave the Torah to Moses. This included the Ten Commandments.
- Moses established a covenant with God. As God's chosen people the Israelites would keep the commandments.
- Moses was given both the Written and Oral Torah.
- Without Moses, the Jews would never have become a people.
- Moses was the first rabbi.

► The importance of the Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments are in the Torah in Exodus 20:2–14. Jews consider the Ten Commandments as special for two reasons.

Firstly, they should be kept by every Jew. It doesn't matter whether they are young or old, rich or poor, male or female, all the commandments should be obeyed.

Secondly, they are central to Jewish beliefs and practices. The Ten Commandments were written on two different tablets because they have different concerns. The first four commandments are duties concerning humans and God, their creator. The second six all deal with relationships between people. So the commandments show that Judaism isn't restricted to how people relate to God but also relates to relationships between each other. Throughout this chapter there are examples of where the Ten Commandments are reflected in Jewish practice and worship.

The first four commandments refer to Jews' relationship with God

The festival of Pesach (see page 336) celebrates the deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

- 1 I am God your Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, from the place of slavery.

The Shema (prayer) shows the importance in Judaism of there being only one God (see page 283). In synagogues there are no statues or representation of the human form that could be used for worship (see page 283).

- 2 Do not have any other gods before Me.

God is considered so holy that his name must always be respected. Some Orthodox Jews prefer to write G-d or Hashem (see page 283).

- 3 Do not take the name of God your Lord in vain. God will not allow the one who takes His name in vain to go unpunished.

Both Orthodox and Reform Jews consider the Sabbath or Shabbat as a very holy time and a time for rest. There are differences between how Shabbat is kept 'holy' but for many Jews it will involve special ceremonies in the home, attending the synagogue and doing no work.

- 4 Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy.

The next six commandments relate to people's relationships with each other

Respect for family members and particularly the old is an important practice in Judaism. A respectful parent/children relationship is shown each week through the 'blessing of the children' ceremony which is done by the mother or father on Shabbat (see page 310).

- 5 Honour your father and mother. You will then live long on the land that God your Lord is giving you.

Within marriage, sex is seen as important in Judaism. In Genesis 1:22 God commands men and women to populate the earth and make it holy. Adultery is seen as wrong and this is one of the three mitzvot that cannot be broken even in order to save a life (see page 298).

- 6 Do not commit adultery.

Honesty and trust are seen as important for any civilised society.

- 7 Do not steal.

The saving of life (Pikuach Nefesh) is an important belief in Judaism (see page 297). Jewish practice allows mitzvot to be broken in order to save a life. All life is believed to be created by God. Therefore murder is completely wrong.

- 8 Do not commit murder.

Tzedakah, or justice, is important in Judaism (see page 131). This includes being fair to others in words and deeds.

- 9 Do not testify as a false witness against your neighbour.

An important teaching in Judaism is that you should always be content with what you have. In the Talmud, envy is called an 'evil eye' while a 'good eye' is happy at other people's successes.

- 10 Do not be envious of your neighbour's wife, his slave, his maid, his ox, his donkey, or anything else that is your neighbour's.

Tasks

- Kaz is preparing for a (d) type question, which is worth 15 marks.
'Keeping the Ten Commandments is the most important part of Judaism.' Discuss the statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. She has looked at the level descriptors (pages ix and x) and is now planning her answer.
 - What four arguments do you think could be included in her response?
 - How could each of these arguments show the impact of the Ten Commandments on individuals, communities or society?
 - What five religious terms or key concepts could be used in the answer?
 - What religious teachings could be referred to?
- 'The Ten Commandments are out of date.' Discuss, giving reasons for your answer.



Task

Using this page as evidence, answer the following question:
How is human life shown as important in Jewish belief and lifestyle?

'My God, the soul you placed within me is pure. You created it, you fashioned it, you breathed it into me.'

A prayer said by many Jews in the morning

'it is we who extol the Lord, both now and forevermore. Praise the Lord.'

Psalm 115:18

'Before you I have placed life and death, the blessing and the curse. You must choose life, so that you and your descendants will survive.'

Deuteronomy 30:19

'Whoever destroys a single life is considered as if he had destroyed the whole world, and whoever saves a single life as if he had saved the whole world.'

Talmud

Life on earth**Choose life!**

In Judaism the emphasis is on life not on death. God is the creator who has given life.

'God said, "Let us make man with our image and likeness. Let him dominate the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock animals, and all the earth – and every land animal that walks the earth."

God [thus] created man with His image. In the image of God, He created him, male and female He created them.'

Genesis 1: 26–27

Not only should humans respect their life but they should live it to the full. It is the way that they live their life that will be judged. The Torah is described as the 'tree of life' as its mitzvot can only be followed in this world. Good deeds, like a tree, take root and sprout into other good deeds.

'It is a tree of life for those who grasp it, and all who uphold it are blessed.'

Proverbs 3:18

The importance of life can be seen throughout Jewish worship and lifestyle:

- ▶ During celebrations, especially at weddings, 'L'Chaim' is said, meaning 'to life'. The word 'Chaim' is plural which some authorities say shows that life alone is impossible. It can only be when life is shared that it is truly lived.
- ▶ When someone has died, the relatives are wished 'long life'.

Extract from My Name is Asher Lev by Chaim Potok

On his way home from synagogue with his father, Asher sees a dead bird lying near their house.

'Is it dead, Papa?' I was six and could not bring myself to look at it.

'Yes,' I heard him say in a sad and distant way.

'Why did it die?'

'Everything that lives must die.'

'Everything?'

'Yes.'

'You too, Papa? And Mama?'

'Yes.'

'And me?'

'Yes,' he said. Then he added, 'But may it be only after you live a long and good life, my Asher.'

I could not grasp it. I forced myself to look at the bird. Everything alive would one day be as still as that bird?

'Why?' I asked

'That's the way God made His world, Asher.'

'Why?'

'So life would be precious, Asher. Something that is yours forever is never precious.'

'God said, "Let us make man with our image and likeness. Let him dominate the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock animals, and all the earth – and every land animal that walks the earth." God [thus] created man with His image. In the image of God, He created him, male and female He created them.'

Genesis 1:26–27

'For You created my veins, You covered me in my mother's womb. I shall thank You for in an awesome, wondrous way I was fashioned; Your works are wondrous, and my soul knows it very well. My essence was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, I was formed in the lowest parts of the earth.'

Psalm 139:13–15

**God is the one creator of life and therefore life is sacred.
Only he can give and preserve life.**

'When I had not yet formed you in the womb, I knew you, and when you had not yet emerged from the womb, I had appointed you; a prophet to the nations I made you.'

Jeremiah 1:5

Saving of life should take priority over everything – even if this means breaking some of the mitzvot in the Torah. In the Talmud God says his people will 'live by' the Torah – as opposed to 'dying by' it. In Babylonian Yoma 84b descriptions are given as to how the observance of Shabbat as a rest day can be broken if someone is ill. So, the Torah is designed to promote life, and the saving of human life is more important than the observance of the law.

'Pikuach Nefesh' is the term used to describe the setting aside of certain mitzvot in order to save a life. To support life, all but three of the 613 mitzvot can be broken – idolatry, incest and adultery. This means, for example, that doctors are permitted to answer emergency calls on Shabbat, even though one of the Ten Commandments requires Jews to rest on Shabbat.

To preserve a life, it is permissible to remove organs from a dead body (otherwise, Jews are forbidden to disturb a body except to wash it, clothe it decently and bury it). To preserve a life one may travel on Shabbat or even break the fast on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement).

Task

Look at the contents list for the Religious, philosophical and ethical units (page iii). Which issues do you think might be affected by the practice of Pikuach Nefesh?

Once there was a dreadful plague which had made many people ill and weak.

The day of Yom Kippur was approaching – a most holy day in the Jewish calendar when Jews are expected to fast and take no food or water.

The rabbi knew that the congregation needed their strength if they were to survive so he took food and wine into the synagogue and ate that day so that the congregation would know they could break their fast to preserve their life.



The 613 mitzvot



The 613 Mitzvot are represented by the knots on a Tallit

Tallit four-cornered garment with fringes.

Hillel a great rabbi and teacher who lived in the first century.

It is difficult to find a word in English that really translates 'mitzvot' as it has more than one meaning:

- Keeping the duties given by God to Moses
- Doing good deeds
- Being given an honour such as reading from the Torah.

The Talmud refers to the 613 mitzvot in the Torah. This number is represented by the number of knots on the **tallit**, which is worn by many Jews during worship.

Today it is impossible to keep all 613 mitzvot as many were connected with religious practices in the Temple, which has been destroyed. For Orthodox Jews, keeping the mitzvot is an important principle of Judaism. Although many Reform Jews also try to keep the mitzvot many consider that some are no longer compatible to twenty-first-century life. Decisions about which ones to observe are often based upon individual choices.

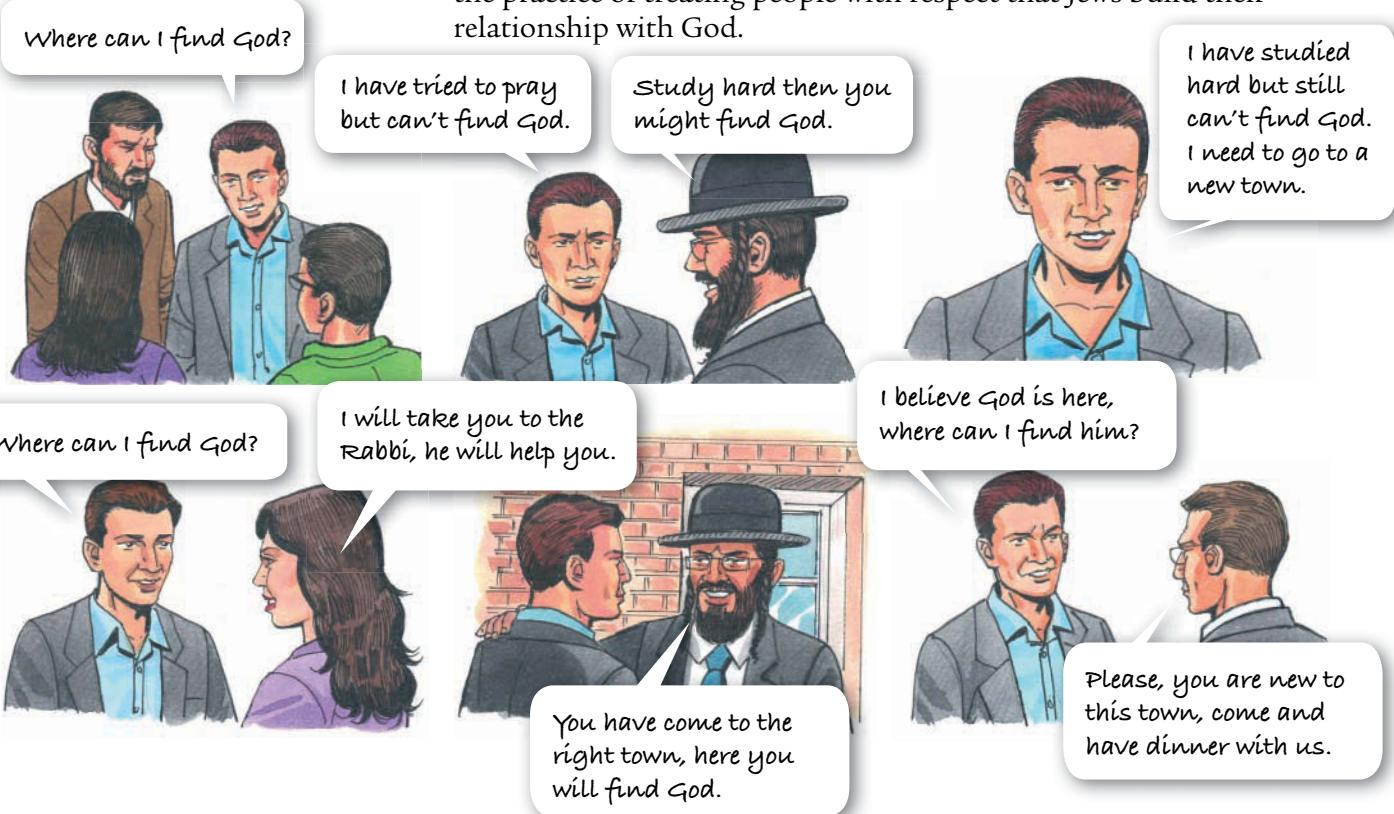
Just as with the Ten Commandments, the mitzvot either show how people should relate to God or how they should relate to other people.

Through both types of actions Jews believe they build a relationship with God. The Torah explains that the purpose of human existence is to achieve closeness to God. This is attained through observing the mitzvot as each is believed in its own unique way to build a relationship with God.

Is any one of the 613 mitzvot more important than another? A story in the Talmud story (Shabbat 31a) tells how **Hillel** was asked what was the central duty of the Torah. He replied:

'That which is hateful unto you do not do to your neighbour. This is the whole of the Torah, The rest is commentary. Go forth and study.'

This meant that although there are many mitzvot, it is through the practice of treating people with respect that Jews build their relationship with God.



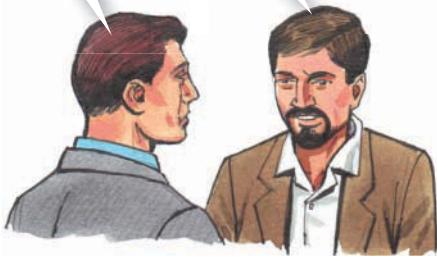
Where is God in this town?

You look tired, come and stay with us tonight.

The next morning the man sees an old lady being helped with her shopping by another; a man helping a trapped animal; and someone helping a man who has fallen.

You are no longer asking where God is.

I think I have now found God.



Although most Jews would consider the actual mitzvot in the Torah as important, how each mitzvah relates to modern-day developments may be interpreted differently. For example, one of the mitzvot states 'thou shall not kill', but this involves a number of issues:

- ▶ abortion?
- ▶ contraception?
- ▶ self defence?
- ▶ nuclear attacks?
- ▶ turning off life-support machines?
- ▶ killing animals?

► Mitzvah Day

Mitzvah Day was started in Britain in 2008 and has now spread across the world. It encourages people to join together to make a positive impact on their community.

Jews and non-Jews work together to try to:

- ▶ reduce poverty
- ▶ care for the environment
- ▶ care for others.

The day is rooted in the values of the 613 mitzvot that are important in Judaism and treating people with the respect that they would want for themselves. Mitzvah Day also reflects another meaning of mitzvah – that of doing a good deed for someone. The deed is done, not because it is one of the 613 mitzvot, but because it is a kind action.

There are three Jewish concepts that are particularly important on Mitzvah Day:

- ▶ **Tikkun olam** – 'healing' or 'perfecting' the world. It shows a shared responsibility for making the world better by helping others, looking after the environment and supporting human rights. One of Mitzvah Day's achievements has been to create partnership and inter-faith dialogue. Projects have included Sunshine to Seniors which provides care to the elderly and Plant a Tree on Mitzvah Day which involves planting trees in the local area.

Task

Look through this textbook. If you had to select pictures to show tikkun olam, gemilut hasidim and tzedakah which three pictures would you select? For each you must explain your choice.



► **Gemilut hasadim** – the ‘giving of loving-kindness’ which expects nothing in return. Every year on Mitzvah Day, over 37,000 participants do just that, through many projects based on the principle of doing acts of kindness.

► **Tzedakah** – the ‘righteousness’ and ‘justice’ that is shown through social action and acts of loving-kindness; not because it feels good but because the Jewish faith educates that it is the right thing to do.

Free will

Judaism teaches that God is the creator of all life and he alone decides when people are born and when they die:

‘Without your consent you were born, and without your consent you live, and without your consent you die.’

From the Sayings of the Fathers 4:29

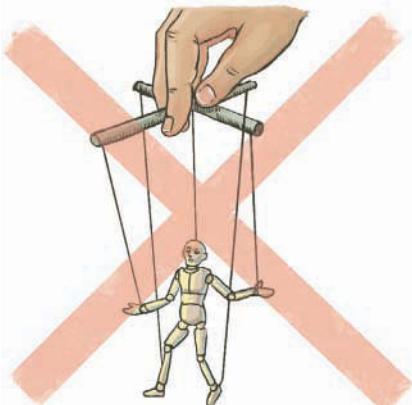
There are also many references to God continuing to watch over all creation and provide care.

‘From his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth.’

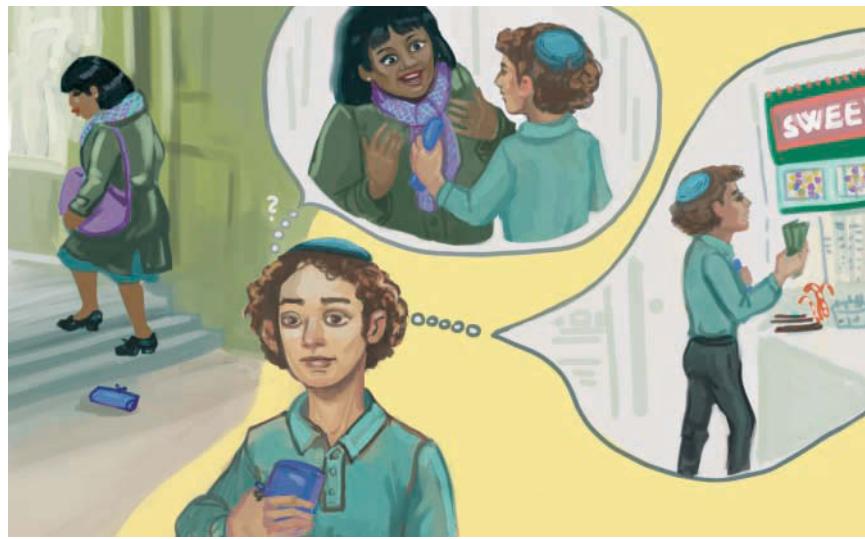
Psalms 33:14

For many centuries people have discussed how far God intervenes in human lives and events, and how far humans have free will – that is, the ability to make their own choices. Many questions are discussed, such as:

- Are the mitzvot a path that Jews should follow – a sort of guide-line?
- Are the mitzvot a path that must be followed or people will be punished?
- Do people have free will to act and behave as they want without any intervention by God?



Do humans make their own choices or are they controlled by God?



Each individual has been born with two ways to act. Firstly Yetzer ha tov (urge to do good actions) and secondly Yetzer ha ra (urge to do evil actions)

The Torah teaches that God has given Jews a choice – the choice whether to keep the mitzvot or not. As humans they were made in the ‘image of God’, and it is believed they have the mind and the soul to help with that choice.

Judaism does not teach that people are born sinful but that each individual has been born with two inclinations or natural ways to act:

- ▶ Yetzer ha tov – is the inclination or natural urge to do good actions.
- ▶ Yetzer ha ra – is the inclination or natural urge to do evil actions.

In Judaism it is believed that people are born with yetzer ha tov and yetzer ha ra as a balance but as the person does more good or bad actions so the balance changes. There is no belief in evil beings, such as the devil, as the yetzer ha ra that is within everyone creates the evil in the world – not another being.

There is a traditional story in which a Jew asks a Rabbi to drive out the negative thoughts in his mind. The Rabbi says he cannot do this but recommends another person some distance away. Eagerly the man sets out on the long journey. When he arrives at the house he sees a light on. With great relief he thinks he will be welcomed into the house and given food and a bed for the night. He bangs on the door. No response. He bangs again on the door and on the windows. Still no

response. Eventually he sits down by the house and falls asleep.

The next morning the master of the house appears and welcomes the traveller inside. Confused the traveller asks why he had not been allowed into the house the night before. ‘Well’ said the Rabbi, ‘I wanted to teach you a lesson. The lesson is you are the master of your own house and of your own actions. You can choose to resist pressure or to give in.’

Tasks

- 1 What is the connection between free will, yetzer ha ra and yetzer ha tov?
- 2 What is the connection between free will and Yom Kippur?
- 3 What is the connection between God as Creator, free will, yetzer ha tov and yetzer ha ra?

Although humans are given free will, Judaism teaches that it is not possible to hide acts of evil from God. Nor is it believed that doing one good action will suddenly make someone a good person. Each is considered separately by God on the Ten Days of Repentance between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Sins against God can be atoned for through showing repentance, prayer and giving to charity. Any harm done to other human beings must be forgiven by them before God can forgive.

The problem of evil and suffering

At times of great tragedy and disaster people of all religions often question why God could allow such events to occur.

The Talmud tells of a rabbi who was also an excellent healer. One day someone came to him and said that if God wanted the man to be well, God wouldn’t let him be ill. The rabbi replied that if God wanted people to be ill, then he wouldn’t have created the medicines to help people become well.

If God is all-powerful and all-knowing, then God must have the ability to foresee the future. If so, then why doesn’t he intervene or stop tragedies happening? However, to do so would mean that people don’t have free will to act as they want. Such questions have been asked through the centuries and particularly at times of great tragedy and suffering such as the Holocaust.

The afterlife

The nature of the afterlife is not frequently considered in Judaism. There are two main reasons for this:

- What is important is living a good life now in preparation for the world to come – whatever that world might be.
- The ways of God are not for humans to understand so there is no point trying to do so.



Tasks

Complete the following:

- 1 The Torah is ...
- 2 The Talmud is ...
- 3 A difference between the Torah and Talmud is ...
- 4 From what you have learnt about Judaism give two explanations why Jews might believe the following:

The Talmud teaches that the Torah is like a plaster – it protects human beings from any evil.

In your answer you must refer to two of the following: the Shema; mitzvot; Moses; shekhinah.

The afterlife in Judaism is called Olam Ha-Ba (the world to come). This term is used to refer to a person's afterlife and also the Messianic Age in which some Jews believe. There are many different views about the nature of the world to come but a belief shared by all Jews is that the focus should be on this life and how it is lived in preparation for the life to come.

'This world is like a lobby before the Olam Ha-Ba. Prepare yourself in the lobby so that you may enter the banquet hall.'

Mishnah

'This world is like the eve of Shabbat, and the Olam Ha-Ba is like Shabbat. He who prepares on the eve of Shabbat will have food to eat on Shabbat.'

Talmud

For many Jews this will include studying the Torah and observing the mitzvot. This doesn't mean, however, that people earn a better afterlife. Judaism is not focused on the question of how to get a better afterlife but on how to live a good life now. As the Mishnah and Talmud state:

There are no specific teachings about the afterlife in the Torah. There are references to a physical place, called Sheol, to which one 'goes down' following this life, but the nature of this place and who goes there is unclear. This means that many Jews' beliefs about the afterlife are their own interpretations of sacred texts.

Jewish beliefs about resurrection

Most Jewish ideas about the afterlife developed in post-biblical times. Throughout the centuries different scholars and rabbis have discussed interpretations of passages from the Torah and found different answers. For example:

- ▶ Nahmanides, a twelfth-century Sephardic rabbi, taught that Olam Ha-Ba would come after the resurrection of the dead. Those who had lived good lives would be given an additional life.
- ▶ Maimonides, however, believed that Olam Ha-Ba referred to a time even beyond the world of the resurrected. He believed that the resurrected will eventually die a second death, at which point the souls of those who had been good would enjoy a spiritual, bodiless existence in the presence of God.
- ▶ Some rabbis argue that the resurrection of the dead will occur during the Messianic Age.
- ▶ Others argue that resurrection will follow the Messianic Age.
- ▶ Some argue that only the righteous will be resurrected, while others that everyone will be resurrected and then a Day of Judgement will follow.
- ▶ Some rabbis argue, however, that there is no need of a Day of Judgement after death as judgement happens every year on the festival of Rosh Hashanah.

Many Orthodox Jews believe in some form of resurrection. This is stated in daily prayers and at funerals. However, there are also some prayers which refer to the soul being at rest under the wings of the Shekhinah (divine presence of God).

Some Orthodox Jews believe in a resurrection that includes the body as well as the soul being raised. This influences Jewish attitudes to cremation, organ transplants and autopsies as they believe they must be buried complete so they can be resurrected whole.

Reform Judaism has rejected a belief in resurrection and references have been taken out of prayer books and worship. Some Reform Jews believe that the memories of people live on through their actions and good deeds. Other Reform Jews believe the soul lives on after death but there are different opinions about where.

Although it is not a central belief in Judaism, some Jews believe in reincarnation. By this they mean that in some form the soul of the person will take on a different body to live again on earth. This is a historic belief, with some rabbis in the Middle Ages discussing how this happened. Some Jews believe that if the mitzvot of the Torah have not been completed then a soul may be allowed a second chance through reincarnation.

As we have seen, it is difficult to explain what Jews believe about the afterlife. There are so many different views.

What all Jews share is a belief that doing good actions in this life is more important than spending time thinking about what might happen after death.

► End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Covenant
- Messiah
- Mitzvot
- Shekinah
- Torah

Key teachings about:

- the nature of God
- the Messiah
- covenants
- life on earth
- the afterlife

Knowledge check

- 1 What does the term 'covenant' mean?
- 2 In your own words, explain what is meant by the Pikuach Nefesh.
- 3 Draw a Venn diagram. In the middle write three beliefs that Orthodox and Reform Jews share. In the outer rings write two beliefs on which they have different views.
- 4 Explain what Jews believe about the afterlife. Remember there are different views.

The Big Question

'It's more important to think about what you do today than spend time thinking about the afterlife.'

Your task

How do you think someone who is Jewish might respond to this statement?

- Write a minimum of two developed paragraphs.
- You must include two references to sacred texts and references to Pikuach Nefesh, the Messianic Age, and God as judge.

Skills link



- 1 Explain different Jewish beliefs about resurrection.
- 2 'Keeping the Ten Commandments is the most important part of Judaism.' Discuss the statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. (You must refer to religion and belief in your answer.)

Task

You need to explain in detail religious teachings about the **Messiah**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a  **developed explanation** for Judaism. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Jews believe that This comes from the teaching/Torah quote This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Jews such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Torah quote This means that/Because of this they

Finally, Jews such as believe that This means that/Because of this they Their beliefs do/do not differ because

► Exam focus

Judaism: Beliefs and teachings

(a) questions

These are always the first question in each unit. They ask you to explain what the key concept means. Your explanation can include an example. There are eight key concepts you need to know for Judaism.

Remember there are only two marks for these questions so it important you are able to give an accurate definition which is to the point.

Helen was asked:

(a) What is the Shekhinah? (2)

Her response of 'God's presence' was only awarded one mark.
Why do you think that was?

Rewrite her answer to gain two marks.

Using religious language

To gain higher marks religious language must be used in your answers. This includes using the key concepts where relevant as well any particular language specific to the religions you are writing about.

Look at the answer to the question below and identify six places where you would have included some specific religious language.

(a) Why is Moses important in Judaism? (2)

Moses is important in Judaism as he led people into a desert out of slavery. Each year Jews remember how this happened through an important festival. He was told to do this and later he went onto a mountain and was told certain duties and laws that Jews should live by. He led the Jews through the desert to another country. The time when they did this is celebrated each year through a special festival.

10

Judaism: Practices

Worship

Judaism teaches that we should connect with God every day. This takes many forms:



Prayer



Worship in the synagogue



Celebrating festivals



Helping others

Key Concepts



Synagogue a house of assembly; building for Jewish public prayer, study and assembly.

Shabbat a day of spiritual renewal and rest. Beginning at sunset on Friday and closing at nightfall on Saturday.

Haftorah a passage from one of the books of the Neviim (prophets) which is read after the Torah reading.

► Orthodox and Reform synagogue services

Prayers may be said anywhere in Judaism. For many Jews, however, it is important to join with others for communal prayers. In order for this to happen, a minyan (ten men) have to be present. This is to create a more spiritual experience than people can have on their own. It is believed that communal prayers are less selfish than individual prayers. When praying with others there is a communal responsibility, and prayers are said for the whole community.

Although each **synagogue** usually has daily prayers, the time when the community comes together is for the **Shabbat** service.

Shabbat service in the synagogue

Although it is very important for Jews to have a private relationship with God it is also important to unite the community through worship. Important ceremonies happen at festival times but each week the Shabbat service brings the community together. Many Jews attend synagogue services on Shabbat even if they do not do so during the week. Services are held on Shabbat eve (Friday night), Shabbat morning (Saturday morning), and late Shabbat afternoon (Saturday afternoon). Fixed periods of prayer correspond with the time when sacrifices were offered in the Temple.

The Shabbat morning service is the longest of the week and can last between two to three hours. The service will include important prayers such as the Shema, Amidah and Kaddish. At each service selected portions of the Torah and **haftorah** are read. It is common for rabbis to deliver a weekly sermon which draws upon the meaning of the readings from the Torah and haftorah.

After the service a Kiddush is usually held. This is the special blessing recited over a cup of wine or Shabbat wine before Friday night dinner.

The service in a Reform synagogue is based on traditional elements, but contains more use of the language of the country in which the service is taking place and far less Hebrew. Reform Judaism has made changes to services to reflect the differences in their beliefs from those of Orthodox Judaism. Prayers and readings usually leave out beliefs about bodily resurrection, a personal Jewish Messiah, and references to angels. Reform services often play instrumental or recorded music while Orthodox synagogues will have unaccompanied singing.

► Prayer

For an observant Jew, prayer is not simply something that happens in the synagogue once a week but is a part of everyday life. Jews can communicate with God through prayer individually or collectively at home, in a synagogue or as they go about their daily life. For many centuries rabbis have taught that prayer is one of the best ways of communicating a love of God. It forms the bridge between humans on earth and God.

Prayer is so important that a whole area of the Talmud, called Berachot, is based on prayer.

Historically there were no special prayers but as time progressed many set prayers were established. Observant Jews will pray before performing mitzvot, upon seeing unusual things like a rainbow, when good or bad things happen, and before going to bed at night. All of these prayers are in addition to formal prayer services, which

Tasks

- Choose three different features of a Shabbat service in a synagogue. Explain why each is important.
- Read about the importance of the Shema on page 283 and about the Amidah above and then create and complete a table like the one below.

	Shema	Amidah
What is it?		
Why is it important?		
How is the prayer shown to be important?		

- A famous Rabbi once said:

'Prayer is for the soul what food is for the body.'

Rabbi Halevi (1095–1150)

Explain in your own words what you think he meant.



are performed by some Jews three times a day every weekday and at additional times on Shabbat and other festivals.

There are different types of prayer:

- ▶ Praising God – This involves praising God for his qualities. By thinking of specific qualities of God such as justice, Jews think about the qualities they should aim for.
- ▶ Requests of God – These aren't just requests for what people want but what God thinks is best for them.
- ▶ Thanksgiving – These show gratitude for the life God has given and the blessings granted.

Examples of these prayers can be found in the prayer book (siddur), which contains many of the prayers used in daily life and festivals.

Some Jews prefer to recite their prayers in Hebrew as they argue this is a holy language and it connects all Jews worldwide. Other Jews consider it more important to understand what is being said. Orthodox services normally include many prayers in Hebrew while Reform services have a mixture of prayers in Hebrew and in the language of the country.

Although all prayers are important in Judaism, the Amidah and the Shema (see page 283) are considered two of the most important.

► The Amidah

The Amidah is the core of every Jewish worship service, and is therefore also referred to as HaTefillah, or 'The prayer'. Amidah literally means 'standing' and people stand throughout the prayer to show they are in God's presence. The Amidah consists of 18 blessings and can be divided into three sections, each of which reflects a type of prayer. The Amidah contains the three types of prayer: praise of God, requests of God and thanksgiving.

The Amidah is recited silently by all members of a congregation or by individuals praying alone – and then, in communal settings, repeated aloud by the prayer leader or cantor, with the congregation reciting 'Amen' to all the blessings of the Amidah.

The Amidah formally concludes with the recitation of the line:

'May God who brings peace to the universe, bring peace to us and all of the people, Israel. Amen.'

This is recited while taking three steps backward, bowing to both sides, and taking three steps forward again, formally retreating from God's symbolic presence.

► Worship in the home

The importance of the family home is greatly valued by many Jews who consider it a sanctuary. It is a place where the values and beliefs of Judaism are learnt and reinforced.

Continuity of practice and values

The home is also a place where Jewish practices and values are taught. In his book *Faith in the Future*, the former Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks shows the importance of the home for future generations:

'Its effects stay with us for a lifetime. It is where one generation passes on its values to the next and ensures the continuity of a civilisation.'

In most Jewish homes there will be a pushke box in which money is collected for charity. In Judaism giving to the poor is not considered an act of charity but an act of justice or tzedakah (see page 131).

Prayers

The home is a place of worship and prayers; they are an important part of daily life. For many Orthodox Jews on waking up in the morning they will thank God by saying the modeh ani while still in bed; 'I offer thanks before you, living and eternal king, for you have mercifully restored my soul within me. Your faithfulness is great.' The shema is a declaration of faith recited three times throughout the day at prayer but also during the day.

Mezuzah



Touching the mezuzah case is a reminder to live by the words of the Shema

Many Jewish families will have a mezuzah on the front door post of their house and each of the door posts inside, apart from the bathroom. The mezuzah is a parchment scroll which is placed inside a case. On the scroll is written the Shema prayer (see page 78). The parchment is prepared and written by a scribe, called a sofer, in indelible black ink with a special quill pen. It must be written on parchment made from the skin of a kosher animal, such as a cow, sheep or goat.

Usually on the back of the parchment the word 'Shaddai' is written. This means 'almighty' and is one of the many names for God. The mezuzah case is affixed on the right-hand side of the door as you enter the room. It should be placed at a slight angle, with the top of the mezuzah pointing toward the inside of the room and the bottom pointing toward the outside. Often Jews will touch the case as they pass through the door and then kiss their fingers as a reminder that the family should live according to the words of the Shema. For many, the mezuzah symbolises God's protection of the house.

Siddur

The siddur is an important part of Judaism that guides Jews through daily prayers both in the synagogue and at home. It begins with the modeh ani and contains prayers for daily services as well as those for Shabbat and other holidays. Just as the Torah is considered a gift from God, so the siddur is considered a gift to God. The siddur is considered holy and as such if it falls to the ground it will be picked up as quickly as possible and kissed.

► Shabbat

Key Concept



Shabbat Day of spiritual renewal and rest. Beginning at sunset on Friday and closing at nightfall on Saturday.

As the Jews were being taken in crowded trucks to concentration camps.

One elderly woman had a small bundle with her and with a lot of effort slowly managed to open it. She drew out two candlesticks and two hallot. She had just prepared them for Sabbath when she was dragged from her home that morning. They were the only things she had thought worth taking with her. Soon the Sabbath candles lit up the faces of the tortured Jews and the song of Lekhah Dodi transformed the scene. Sabbath with its atmosphere of peace had descended upon them all.

Extract from *The Sabbath* by Dayan Grunfeld, 1981

Shabbat is the weekly festival that is celebrated from sunset on a Friday to sunset on a Saturday. The keeping of Shabbat obeys the mitzvot contained in the Torah. Shabbat involves two interrelated commandments.

'The Sabbath to remember and to keep it holy.'

Exodus 20:8

Remembering Shabbat means remembering the importance of it as a celebration of creation and also of the freedom of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Keeping Shabbat means showing it is holy through worship in the home and synagogue. For many Jews observing Shabbat means recognising the types of activities and work that are not allowed.

Shabbat is considered by many Jews as the most important festival. It is seen by many as a gift from God when weekday worries can be forgotten. Throughout history Shabbat has been an important festival for Jews. Even in times of persecution Jews tried to celebrate Shabbat.

There are many different opinions among Jews regarding what can and cannot be done on Shabbat. For many observant Orthodox Jews all forms of work must be avoided unless it is a matter of life and death. Also articles should not be carried between private and public places. In some areas this has led to Orthodox Jews creating a special enclosure (*eruv*) in their neighbourhoods. This allows Jewish residents or visitors to carry objects from one place to another inside the *eruv* on Shabbat.

Eruv makes a difference in Manchester

Observant Jews are prohibited from pushing or carrying everyday items between sundown on Fridays and sundown on Saturdays unless they are in a special area known as an *eruv*. This includes pushchairs, wheelchairs, house keys or mobile phones. In some parts of Britain, like Manchester, an *eruv* is created using physical features, like walls and hedges, railway lines and roads, to completely enclose an area of land and so create one area. To be accepted, it must satisfy strict laws, including being 'completely enclosed' by existing natural boundaries or by wires from the top of posts.

► Shabbat in the home

Each family celebrates Shabbat in their own way, although there are some features which are common to most Shabbat celebrations.

Shabbat starts a few minutes before sunset on Friday night. There will be different timings depending upon the location and the time of the year.

	Shabbat times 15 April	Shabbat times 25 December
London	Begins Friday 7.43 p.m. ends Saturday 8.49 p.m.	Begins Friday 3.41 p.m. ends Saturday 4.51 p.m.
Leeds	Begins Friday 7.48 p.m. ends Saturday 9.02 p.m.	Begins Friday 3.29 p.m. ends Saturday 4.48 p.m.
Glasgow	Begins Friday 8.09 p.m. ends Saturday 9.24 p.m.	Begins Friday 3.37 p.m. ends Saturday 4.52 p.m.
Bournemouth	Begins Friday 7.42 p.m. ends Saturday 8.57 p.m.	Begins Friday 3.47 p.m. ends Saturday 5.05 p.m.

Examples of the variation in Shabbat times around the country at different times of year.

Task

Look at the difference in times for Shabbat between December and April. What differences to someone's lifestyle might this make?



The woman of the family lights two candles to bring the presence of Shabbat into the home. This is a ritual that happens worldwide at the same time.

In many families the father welcomes Shabbat in the synagogue and when he returns home the family sits down to a special meal. All the preparation will have taken place before Shabbat begins.

Meals begin with a blessing over two loaves of bread, usually braided loaves (challah). These two loaves symbolise the double portion of manna, which were eaten by the Israelites in the desert after the Exodus from Egypt.

The Kiddush prayer is recited over a cup of wine at the beginning of Shabbat meals. The meal is a time of happiness and relaxation with all the family, if possible.



Candles are lit, loaves are blessed and the Kiddush prayer is said over a glass of wine at the start of the Shabbat meal

Shabbat continues as a day of rest until sunset the next day. On the Saturday morning the family usually goes to the synagogue for the Shabbat service. For Orthodox Jews it is important that they walk to synagogue as driving a car would be considered as work, which is forbidden. After the synagogue service most families relax and enjoy the day. For Orthodox families it is important that anything that could be considered work is avoided. This might include turning on electricity, cooking or driving.

Shabbat unplugged

Having a day off from technology is becoming increasingly common for non-Jews as well as Jews. An increasing number of people now close down computers and phones for a day so they can focus on friends and family.

For the past six years, Shlain and her family have observed Technology Shabbat, a modernised version of the Jewish day of rest. They turn off every screen in sight—phones, laptops, TVs—before dinner on Friday night and do not reconnect for 24 hours.

At sunset on Saturday the importance of Shabbat is shown again as the family joins together to say ‘goodbye’ to Shabbat. This is shown through the lighting of the havdallah candle – a plaited candle. Havdallah means separation and symbolises that the distinction between Shabbat and the rest of the week is now over. A glass of wine is also passed around for the family community to take a sip from and a sweet-smelling spice box is sniffed to symbolise the hope of a sweet week ahead.

Shabbat is celebrated through many rituals in both the home and the synagogue. What is most important is people’s intention during Shabbat. Their behaviour shows that Shabbat is a special day and God is worshipped by people being kind to each other.

The Chief Rabbi's Shabbat UK



Each year there is a special Shabbat when Jews celebrate Shabbat regardless of their level of religious observance.

The weekend's festivities usually commence on the Thursday with mass 'Challah (plaited loaves) Makes' in various locations and communal meals, and culminates in a huge Havdallah concert to welcome in the new week. Synagogues, Jewish schools and other Jewish organisations across the UK organise series of events to mark the weekend. Everybody can participate in Shabbat UK, from the most observant Jews to those who may have never experienced the beauty of a Shabbat.

Tasks

- 1 Select three words from the word puzzle below. Explain why each is important.



- 2 Look back at page 297 where Pikuach Nefesh (saving a life) is explained. Identify which of the following statements you think are likely to be said by an Orthodox or Reform Jew or both.

Statement	Orthodox	Reform	Reform and Orthodox
It is not up to us to question the ways of God. The Shabbat laws are to be obeyed.			
By keeping the Shabbat we are showing our thanks to God.			
If we can't work then how can rabbis lead the Shabbat services?			
We have to act on our conscience and remember we live in modern times.			
The duties given to us by God do not change over time. They are eternal.			
Practising a religion is not picking the bits of a religion you want to obey and ignoring those you don't.			

- 3 Complete the following mnemonic, adding in a relevant statement about Shabbat that begins with the first letter of each line. Three examples have been completed for you.

Sunset on Friday starts Shabbat

H

All the family together at home

B

B

A

Time for rest, family and reflection



A Jewish man prepared for worship

The kippah has become a source of identity for Jews so I wear mine with pride.

As I believe the whole of my life is worship to God I wear a kippah all the time as a symbol of my respect.

I only wear a kippah in the synagogue as I don't always feel safe to wear it in the streets where I live.

► Items worn for worship

Many Jews consider it a duty to wear special clothing for worship. There are many views regarding when such items are worn and by whom.

Kippah (plural kippot)

The exact meaning of the kippah is unknown but for most Jews it is a symbol of identity and a sign of respect to God. Throughout Jewish history the attitude toward head covering has varied.

Drawings from the third century depict Jews without hats but in the Middle Ages many Jews wore hats during prayer and study. Today there is much debate regarding why the kippah is worn and whether it is a duty to wear the kippah all the time or just at worship.

The shape and size of the kippah also differs depending upon the community.

Tallit

The tallit is a four-cornered garment which has fringes (tzizit) attached. The tzizit relates to the duty in Numbers 15:37–41 to wear fringes in the corners of clothes. Originally clothes were worn with fringes at each corner but later the practice was introduced of wearing a garment which had fringes to represent the 613 mitzvot.

There are two types of tallit:

- The tallit gadol (large) is a large garment made of wool or silk. It is worn across the back and draped over the arms. It is often called a prayer shawl as it is only worn during prayers and worship. After death the tallit is sometimes wrapped around the body like a shroud.
- The tallit katan (small). Many observant Jewish males wear a tallit katan under their everyday clothes throughout the day. It has a central hole that goes over the head and covers the front and back of the body with the tzizit hanging down from the corners.

Tefillin

Tefillin are worn by Orthodox Jewish males at morning prayer each day, apart from on Shabbat and festivals. The tefillin is made up of two leather boxes. The tefillah shel rosh is bound to the head with a strap. In each of its four compartments there is a small handwritten scroll containing the first two paragraphs of the Shema. The tefillah shel rosh is a reminder that the wearer must serve God with his mind by developing good thoughts. The second box is called the tefillah shel yad. It is bound with a strap to the upper arm and leans slightly towards the heart. It has one compartment which contains a single scroll of the same passages from the Shema. It is a reminder that the wearer must serve God with his heart through acts of compassion.

When the tefillin is in place then a special prayer is said:

'Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments as to wear tefillin.'

Usually tefillin are only worn by males on weekday mornings during morning prayers.

There are, however, an increasing number of women who want to wear tefillin and tallit for worship. This has resulted in many different views being expressed.



Tasks

- 1 What is the difference between a tallit katan and a tallit gadol?
- 2 'A kippah is just a hat.' How might someone who is Jewish respond to this?
- 3 For his homework Henry has to write an answer to the following statement:
'Jewish women shouldn't wear tallit and tefillin.'

His teacher has told him he must include arguments for and against and references to sacred texts.

- [a] Look at the arguments above and decide which are for and which are against the argument.
- [b] Henry needs to develop each of his arguments so he is only going to select four that he thinks are the strongest. Which four would you select? Give reasons for your answer.



The synagogue

Key Concept



Synagogue House of assembly; building for Jewish public prayer, study and assembly.

► Worship, social and community functions in Britain

The **synagogue** is the central focus of Jewish life. In Hebrew it is called Beth ha Knesset which means 'house of assembly'.

Most synagogues have three main functions:

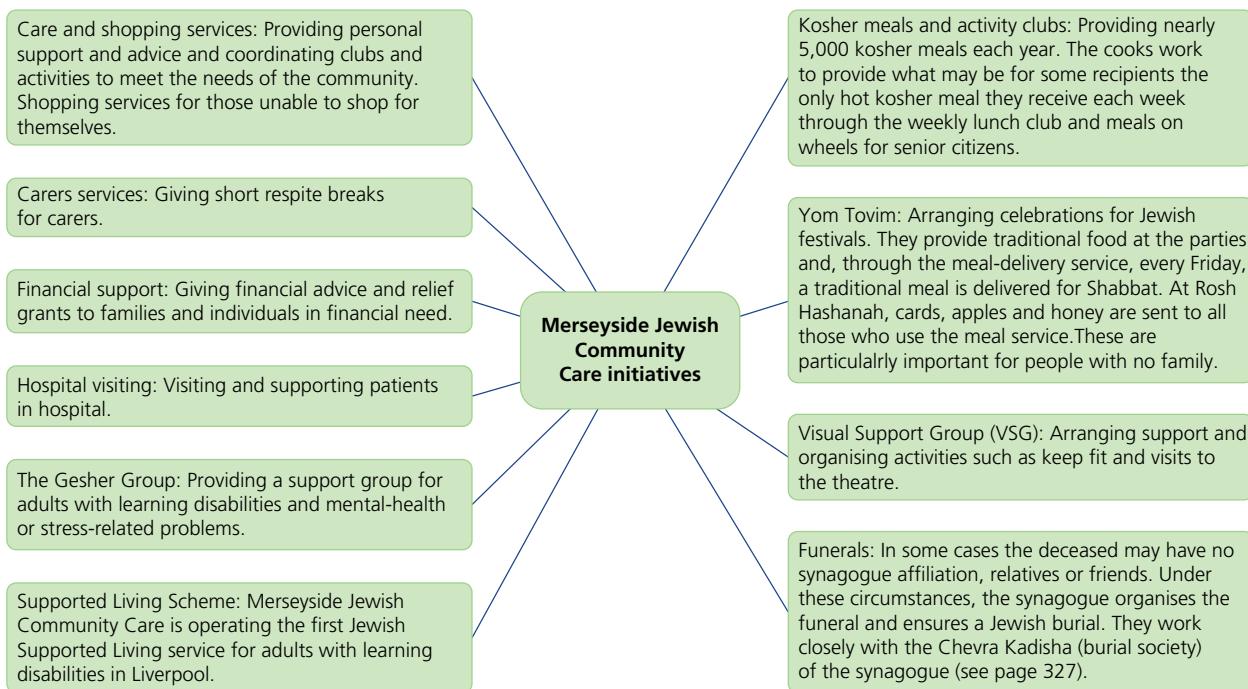
- ▶ As a *beit tefilah*, a house of prayer. It is the place where Jews come together for community prayer services. Although Jews can pray anywhere there are certain prayers that can only be said in the presence of a *minyan* (ten adult men, although some traditions include women).
- ▶ It is for this reason that many observant Jews will go to the synagogue each evening.
- ▶ As a *beit midrash*, a house of study. Indeed many Ashkenazi Jews refer to their synagogue as 'shul' from the Yiddish word for school. For the observant Jew, the study of sacred texts is a life-long task. Thus, a synagogue normally has a well-stocked library of sacred Jewish texts for members of the community to study. It is also the place where children receive their basic religious education.
- ▶ As a social hall for religious and non-religious activities. The synagogue often functions as a sort of town hall where matters of importance to the community can be discussed. Each synagogue normally has a programme of social events, which will include opportunities to learn more about religious and cultural issues. An important role of the synagogue is its function as a social welfare agency, collecting and dispensing money and other items for the aid of the poor and needy within the community. Many are connected with Jewish Care agencies.

Tasks



- 1 What is a synagogue?
- 2 Explain, with examples, two challenges for synagogues in Britain.
- 3 Draw a table like the one below. Under each heading list the relevant activities that take place in the synagogue.

A place of worship	A place of study	A place for social and community events



Although the synagogue is important for worship, learning and community activities there are many challenges synagogues face in modern Britain.

There has been a decline in the number of practising Jews and many synagogues have very small memberships. This is a situation also relevant to many churches but the issue with synagogues is more difficult because Orthodox Jewish law prohibits travelling on Shabbat, so synagogues need to be situated within the Jewish neighbourhood and accessible on foot. Many Jewish communities need to make decisions regarding the upkeep and role of the synagogue.

WANTED: A RABBI

Synagogue has been without a Rabbi for two years!

There are few people who are willing to take on the role of and be trained as a rabbi; sometimes small communities can only afford to pay a rabbi a low wage; areas where there are small Jewish communities find it difficult to attract a rabbi; some rabbis disapprove of some of the customs that the community have adopted such as driving to synagogues.

SECURITY ALERT AT LOCAL SYNAGOGUE

The Community Security Trust provide security and vigilance at times of worship and when the building is empty; synagogues are often vandalised sometimes with anti-Semitic graffiti. In some countries there have been terrorist attacks on synagogues.

DECREASING NUMBER OF WORSHIPPERS

Many synagogues were built in the 1900s and are often larger than needed today. There are changing patterns of residence as Jews move out of areas to other locations and there is an increase in the number of elderly Jews who are unable to attend places of worship.

CARDIFF SYNAGOGUE TURNED INTO OFFICES

Some synagogues have been converted into houses and even a spa. Other uses have included becoming a museum.

► Features of a synagogue

There are many different designs of synagogues. Often they reflect the architecture of the country they are in.

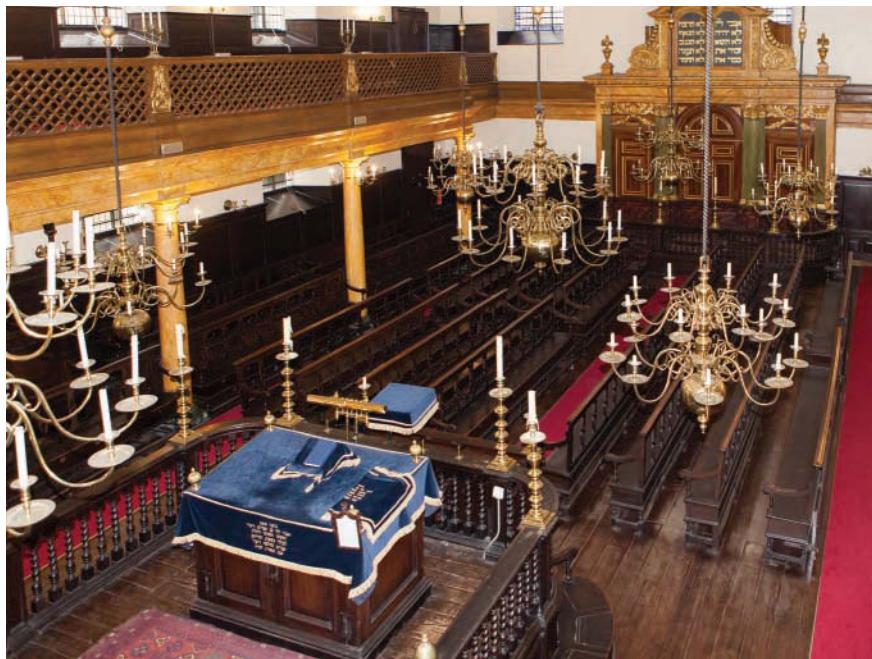


A synagogue in China



The Jubilee Synagogue in Prague

Older synagogues are often large so that they can hold a large number of worshippers. Today when synagogues are built they are often smaller and easily accessible for older and disabled people.



A Sephardi synagogue

All of the synagogue is considered a place of sanctuary and holiness. Although there are many differences in design, one common feature of all synagogues is a lack of statues or representations of living beings.

'Do not represent [such] gods by any carved statue or picture of anything in the heaven above, on the earth below, or in the water below the land. Do not bow down to [such gods] or worship them. I am God your Lord, a God who demands exclusive worship. Where my enemies are concerned, I keep in mind the sin of the fathers for [their] descendants, to the third and fourth [generation].'

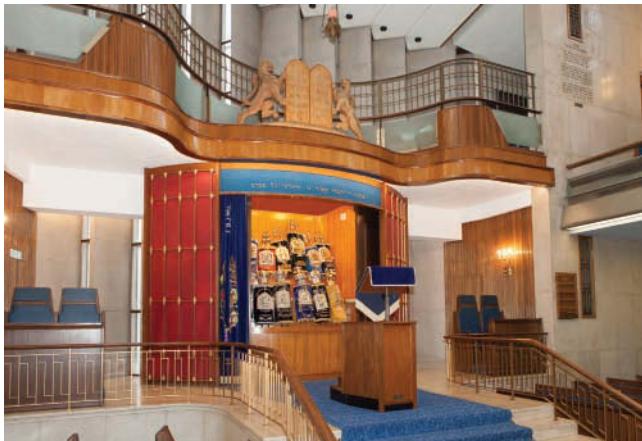
In the next two pages each main area will be explained. There are references to the specific differences between Reform and Orthodox communities. The tasks on page 320 will require you to be able to identify and explain those differences.

Aron Hakodesh

The aron hakodesh or ark is the most important place in a synagogue as it is here the Torah scrolls are kept. It is permissible to sell the seats or the reading desk and apply the proceeds to the purchase of an ark, because they have a lesser holiness, but it is forbidden to sell an ark even in order to build a synagogue. In the Sephardic tradition the ark is called herkal or sanctuary.

During certain prayers the doors and curtain of the ark may be opened or closed. Many have a curtain either outside the doors of the ark (Ashkenazi custom) or inside the doors of the ark (Sephardi custom).

There are several customs connected with the ark. It is opened for certain prayers and during the Ten Days of Penitence between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Opening the ark emphasises the importance of the prayer. In Britain there are many different designs of arks, with some being made from glass and concrete.



An open ark



The Torah scroll being read with a yad (often referred to as a Torah pointer)

The Torah scrolls

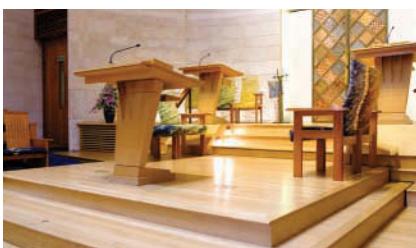
The Torah scrolls are the most sacred part of any synagogue. They are made from animal skins and are handwritten. Each scroll is one continuous Torah written in columns. Each end is stitched to a pole, called the 'tree of life'. Each scroll is wrapped in silk or velvet when not used and often decorated with silver. The scrolls are carried carefully to the bimah during a service where the weekly portion of text is read.



The ner tamid

The ner tamid

In front of and slightly above the aron hakodesh, is the ner tamid, often called the eternal lamp. This is kept continually burning and should never be extinguished. This lamp symbolises the menorah (seven-branched lamp) which was kept burning in the Temple. Many Jews consider it as a symbol of God's eternal presence. The ner tamid used to be an oil lamp but now most are fuelled by gas, electric lightbulbs or solar power.



The bimah

The bimah

The bimah is a central platform in the synagogue on which stands the desk from which the Torah scrolls are read. In Orthodox synagogues the bimah is usually in the middle so the rabbi faces the congregation. In Reform synagogues everyone sits together and the bimah is at the front, combined with the ark, rather than in the middle.

Women's seating



Women sitting in a Reform synagogue



Women sitting in an Orthodox synagogue

Tasks

- 1 What is the difference between Sefer Torah and the Torah?
- 2 Create a leaflet for Year 6 pupils that explains the structure of either a Reform or an Orthodox Synagogue. You will need to include three pictures showing either Reform or Orthodox features.
- 3 Answer the following question with between 30–35 words.
Why don't synagogues have statues or pictures in them?
In your answer you need to include the following: Shema, idolatry, monotheism.
Page 283 will help you.



The seating for women is one of the main differences between Orthodox and Reform synagogues. In Orthodox synagogues there is a separate area where women are seated. This might be an upper-floor balcony or an area separated by a wall or curtain. The Talmud argues that men and women can concentrate more on their worship if they are separated. There are different practices among Orthodox synagogues. Some argue that, although men and women should be separated, they should each be close to the ark. For some synagogues it is important to have an opaque curtain separating the women's gallery so that the male worshippers cannot see the women's gallery.

In Reform synagogues there is no partition between males and females and they may sit together throughout the worship.

worshipping at home and worshipping in the synagogue cannot be separated. The way I celebrate Shabbat shows the link between home and synagogue.

Rituals

► Birth ceremonies

The birth of a baby is considered a happy occasion in Judaism. As in some other religions, Jewish baby rites differ for male and female babies.

► Naming of babies

It is traditional for the child to receive his or her name at the first public gathering after their birth. Girl babies are named at the first public reading of the Torah at the synagogue after their birth. Traditionally, fathers are given the honour of reciting the blessing before and after a section of the Torah. The child receives her Hebrew name at the same time. After the service, both mother and father are honoured at a congregational **hiddush**.

Originally, Judaism had no special home celebration to welcome female babies into the covenant. For some Reform Jews it is considered important to have a special service at home (**brit bat**). These ceremonies are created by the families and often include singing, blessings and thanksgiving to God as creator.

Boys are usually named at a special ceremony called **brit milah**.

Brit milah is the Hebrew term used to describe the religious circumcision of boys at eight days old or of males converting to Judaism. It can be carried out in a hospital, home or synagogue, and is carried out by a mohel (male) or in some Reform communities a mohelet (female). Circumcision involves the removal of the foreskin on the 8th day after birth. It is performed in front of a minyan. The baby is placed on a cushion on an empty chair that is known as Elijah's chair. This represents an ancient belief that the spirit of Elijah (a prophet) visits every circumcision. The child is then placed on the lap of the sandek. A sandek is someone chosen by the parents as a great honour. After the circumcision, the father recites a blessing.

Relationship with God is shown through the circumcision. It represents the covenant made with Abraham (see page 290). Brit milah, literally translated, means 'the covenant of circumcision'. As a part of this covenant God gave Abraham the rite of circumcision as the specific sign of the Abrahamic covenant.

During the Brit a prayer is said which shows the importance of the ceremony in a child's relationship with God:

'That as this child has entered into the covenant, so may he enter into the Torah, the marriage canopy and into good deeds.'

Identity is reinforced through the ceremony. During the Brit the boy is given his Hebrew name. This is the one that will be used in the synagogue and on formal occasions. The ceremony does not make the child a Jew, but it is a symbol that the baby has entered into the covenant. The importance of this is shown by the

fact that adult males who are wishing to convert to Judaism must have a circumcision in Orthodox Judaism.

While the Reform movement does not require that converts to Judaism become circumcised, it is increasingly recognised and practiced as an important aspect of becoming a full member of the Jewish people.

 Today brit milah is a traditional ritual which is celebrated by most Jewish families. Traditionally, only men attend the ceremony. Liberal and Reform communities encourage all to be present regardless of gender, but this is an individual's choice. Within the Reform movement the circumcision can be carried out by a mohelet (a female circumciser).

Within and outside the Jewish community there are some people who object to the brit milah ceremony as they believe the child is unable to give consent and therefore it goes against human rights. In Britain an organisation has been formed (Milah UK) to explain the reasons and practices of Jewish circumcision. The organisation represents all members of the Jewish community. They argue that parents make many decisions about their children, such as if they should have vaccinations or have their ears pierced.

Tasks

- 1 What is the Abrahamic covenant?
- 2 In your own words explain three important features of Brit Milah.
- 3 Explain the connection between identity and Brit Milah.



► Bar mitzvah

What is a bar mitzvah?

At the age of 13 a boy becomes bar mitzvah – he enters into Jewish adulthood. From this time on he will be able to form part of the minyan (the minimum group of ten needed for certain prayers). According to Jewish law, at the age of 13 a boy is considered responsible to fulfil the mitzvot in the Torah. The term 'bar mitzvah' means 'son of the mitzvah'. At this age it is believed that a young male can enter into a covenant relationship with God.

In the years before his bar mitzvah ceremony a boy learns Hebrew so he can read a portion from the Torah in the synagogue. A rabbi teaches him about religious duties and the importance of prayer.

How is a bar mitzvah celebrated?

The bar mitzvah ceremony varies between communities. Traditionally the Jewish custom has been to mark this important event with a synagogue ceremony on the Shabbat after the 13th birthday. This includes the boy being called up to the bimah to recite a blessing on the Torah and reading a part of the Torah



A boy putting on Tefillin after his Bar Mitzvah

in Hebrew. Friends and relatives watch in the synagogue. After the boy has read his passage from the Torah his father recites a statement in which he thanks God.

Although young boys are trained to keep all the mitzvot even before their bar mitzvah, tefillin are the exception. A boy does not put on tefillin until he approaches the age of 13.

Bat mitzvah and bat chayil

Traditionally girls did not have such large ceremonies as bar mitzvahs because they do not have the same religious duties to fulfil. Orthodox Jewish girls have a ceremony called a bat chayil (daughter of worth) when they are 12. Usually this includes a special service in the synagogue followed by the girl giving a presentation of some of the things she has learnt in her study of Judaism.

Reform Jewish girls become bat mitzvah at the age of 12 and can also form part of a minyan (the minimum group of ten needed for certain prayers). There are different customs among Reform synagogues but often there is a ceremony at her synagogue during the Shabbat morning service. She may lead prayers and read from the Torah scroll. The bat mitzvah demonstrates that she is taking on these additional privileges and responsibilities.

► Bar and bat mitzvahs today

For most Jews bar mitzvahs remain an important celebration and occasion. For some families these include parties after the ceremony in the synagogue for family and friends to enjoy. What remains most important is the beginning of a deeper relationship with Judaism and an increased involvement in the Jewish community. Many boys and girls show this responsibility by focusing on charity events as a way of celebration.

Jonah Jayson, Toby Onona, James Levy, Joseph Henley, Jonah Lazarus and Elijah Djanogly wanted to help other people as part of their bar mitzvah celebrations. They decided to complete a sponsored challenge of climbing Mount Snowdon. As a part of the climb they walked 18 kilometres and experienced temperatures of -6°C (wind chill factor) with wind speeds of 45 mph. Jonah Jayson said 'This may feel tough for us climbing Mount Snowdon but just think how tough it is for the lonely, elderly people and the homeless teenagers who are the same age as us. It makes me very grateful for what I have.'

Although most boys and girls have their bar and bat mitzvah ceremonies at 13 there are some people who were unable to celebrate their special event. The ceremony is considered such an important event that it is never too late to celebrate.

When I was 13 I was in the Auschwitz concentration camp. There was no one I could talk to about my bar mitzvah. I survived alone in the world, and I am excited by my bar mitzvah because I couldn't celebrate in real time, and I didn't have parents anymore to consider a celebration.



Holocaust survivors celebrating becoming bar mitzvah



People can become Bar or Bat Mitzvah at any time of their life

I grew up thinking my mother was Christian. It wasn't until I was 21 that I found out she was Jewish.

When I was 13 my synagogue didn't have any bat mitzvah celebrations. Although I am 80 now I wanted a special ceremony to show my relationship with God.

Tasks

- 1 In your own words explain what you think being a 'son of the mitzvah' means.
- 2 There are many different considerations families make regarding celebrations. Read the letter below from a father to a rabbi about his son's bar mitzvah.

Dear Rabbi

My son is having his bar mitzvah ceremony at the Reform synagogue. We want to invite a relative who is an Orthodox Jew. Will they be able to attend?

Sam

In the rabbi's response below he mentions some things to consider but doesn't give any details. For each of the areas explain what the father might need to consider. Pages 322–24 will help you.

Dear Sam

Yes, definitely invite them! But you must keep in mind some of the differences between Reform and Orthodox practices.

You need to think about:

- ▶ Seating in the synagogue
- ▶ Food at the Bar Mitzvah Celebration.

The best way forward is to explain to your relative what will be happening and then let them decide.

Rabbi

► Marriage

Marriage is seen as an important religious and spiritual ceremony in Judaism. It allows procreation, fulfilling the duty to 'be fruitful and multiply' and the bonding referred to in the Torah.

'A man shall therefore leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and they shall become one flesh.'

Genesis 2:24

Marriage is considered as God-given, which can be seen by the word kiddushin (holy or sanctified) which is used for the betrothal ceremony and the first part of the ceremony. The second part of the ceremony is called nisuin which finalises the marriage. There are many different features in each wedding ceremony.

Ketubah – This is the marriage contract made between bride and groom. It is a legal document in which traditionally the husband promises to support his wife. Traditionally these were written in Aramaic but they are written in many languages today. The ketubah remains the property of the wife throughout the marriage.

Intentions – Entering into marriage both partners must have the right intentions. It is considered a meeting of soul mates and a spiritual experience in which respect and faithfulness to each other are expected.

Down the aisle – Although a wedding can happen in a synagogue, home or other suitable place, the bride will usually walk down the aisle and join the groom and bridesmaids under the chuppah where the rabbi conducts the main parts of the ceremony.

Declaration in front of witnesses as a ring is placed on the bride's finger. The groom will declare 'Behold you are consecrated to me by means of this ring according to the rituals of Moses and Israel'. He also reads out the promises made in the ketubah. In the Sephardic community this is read to the groom before the ceremony begins.

Under the chuppah – The main part of the ceremony takes place under the chuppah. This is a shelter with four sides open and symbolises the Jewish home. Across the chuppah there will often be a blessing written in Hebrew. Two blessings are said in the kiddushin – one for the wine and the second for the commitment that the bride and groom are making to each other.

Stamping of glass. At the end of the ceremony a glass is stamped on by the groom. Many reasons are given for this custom such as a reminder that marriage is fragile (like glass) or a reminder of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Happiness in Judaism is considered an important value, especially in the context of the service of God. Marriage is seen as a blessing and a joyous occasion. It is referred to as a simcha, meaning a joyous celebration.

Index finger. The ring is after placed on the bride's index or forefinger on her right hand. It's believed that that is the finger connected to the heart. The round ring is a symbol of eternity.

Nisuin is the second part of the ceremony in which seven further blessings are said to finalise the marriage. These blessings praise God for creating the human race and bringing happiness to the couple.

'When two souls destined to be together find each other, their streams of light flow together, and a single brighter light goes forth from their united being.'

Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Hasidic movement, 1700–1760

'Any man who has no wife lives without joy, without blessing, and without goodness.'

Talmud, Tractate Yevamoth, 62a

'Be thou consecrated unto me with this ring according to the Law of Moses and Israel.'

In twenty-first-century Britain there are many different types of marriage services for Jews but most will try to include the main features.



A Jewish wedding ceremony in the UK

Differences might occur because Jews are Orthodox or Reform or Ashkenazi or Sephardic. There are also differences if it is a same-sex wedding, as allowed in some synagogues.



Sephardic weddings will often include a henna ceremony



A same-sex wedding of Reform Jews

Tasks

- 1 What is a chuppah?
- 2 Explain, in your own words, the importance of a ketubah.
- 3 Explain why you think weddings are called simchas (joyous occasions). Refer to sacred texts in your answer.



► Mourning rituals

There is a pattern of rituals that takes place when someone has died in the Jewish community. How far the pattern is followed depends on the individual and the branch of Judaism they practise.

At death

If possible, a person's last moments should be spent reciting the Shema.

Chevra Kadisha

The burial society (Chevra Kadisha) attached to the synagogue prepare the body for burial. This includes washing the body and putting the body in plain white gowns. Great care is taken by these volunteers as it is believed the body is the earthly container for the soul and so should be treated with dignity.

After death

The funeral is arranged by the onan (main mourner). The onan will take charge of the burial. They are exempt from all mitzvot apart from preparing for the burial. A dead person should not be left alone and someone will stay with the body until the burial. This is an act of respect for the body created in God's image as the earthly vessel for the soul.



A Jewish grave

Burial

For most Jews the body will be buried rather than cremated and this should be done as quickly as possible.

The funeral is simple, and psalms are often read. The funeral should be kept as plain as possible and the coffin should be an unpolished box with no brass handles to show that rich and poor are alike in death. Once the grave is filled the mourners pray, and the kaddish is recited with a memorial prayer as the service concludes. Sephardic Jews will often walk around the coffin seven times and recite prayers for the angel of mercy to accompany the coffin.

After the burial the main mourner is no longer an onan but continues to follow a pattern of mourning.

Shiva

There are set rituals after the funeral, which represents the fact that life cannot immediately carry on as before after a loved one has died. The first week is known as shiva (meaning seven). During this time most mourners will stay in their homes and be visited by relatives and members of the synagogue. Male mourners will recite kaddish which is a prayer declaring God's greatness and a prayer for the coming age of peace.

Tasks

- 1** Explain the meaning of each of the following:
 - onan
 - kaddish
- 2** Read the teachings about the afterlife on pages 71–80.
In the poem by Rabbi Allen S. Maller, what does he say is the most important way to remember someone who has died?
- 3** How does the poem reflect the teachings of Judaism about the importance of life?



Some mourners sit on low stools during the shiva, except on Shabbat when no mourning should take place. Mirrors are often covered and music is not played in the house.

A candle is kept burning day and night to represent the person's soul:

'A person's soul is the candle of the Lord.'

Proverbs 20:27

Once the shiva ends there are many other rituals to remember the dead.

For the first four weeks of mourning (the shloshim) parties and the cutting of hair are avoided and throughout the year after the death kaddish prayers are said.

Tombstone and consecration

Before the end of the first year after the death the tombstone is erected. This ceremony is called the unveiling and the kaddish is recited. It is seen important to visit the grave and to leave stones not flowers as a mark of respect. Some believe this custom originated because Abraham used a pebble to mark the spot where his wife Sarah was buried.

A yahrzeit ceremony is held each year to mark the death. Prayers are said and a candle burns for 24 hours to symbolise the departed soul.

'When All That's Left Is Love' by Rabbi Allen S. Maller

When I die
If you need to weep
Cry for someone
Walking the street beside you.
You can love me most by letting
Hands touch hands, and souls touch souls.
You can love me most by
Sharing your Simchas [joys] and
Multiplying your Mitzvot [good deeds]
You can love me most by
Letting me live in your eyes
And not on your mind.
And when you say Kaddish for me
Remember what our
Torah teaches,
Love doesn't die, people do.
So when all that's left of me is love
Give me away.

Daily life

Tasks

Answer the questions below. If you need help then reread pages 293.

- 1 What is the Torah?
- 2 What is the Oral Torah?
- 3 What is the Tenakh?
- 4 What is the connection between the Torah and the 613 mitzvot?
- 5 What are the differences in attitudes to the Torah and the Oral Torah between Reform and Orthodox Jews?

For many Jews their religion is a way of life and reflects the teachings of the Torah. In Chapter 9 we learnt about the giving of the Torah and the importance of it for Jews today.

For centuries Jews have copied the Torah onto parchment scrolls, studied it and meditated on it. It influences the way they worship, their home and their values. The teachings of the Torah are central to all. Although most Jews would not have a Sefer Torah at home they would often have a Chumash. This is a copy of the Torah that shows the passage that should be read each day.

The Tenakh is made up of the Torah, Neviim and Ketuvim. Although the Neviim and Ketuvim are not seen as having the same authority as the Torah they are still very important for Jewish daily life.

- ▶ Neviim (books of the prophets) – The Neviim are written as a history with a main purpose to teach about the history of the religion. They show the covenant relationship, which is shown in the Shema.
- ▶ Ketuvim (holy writings) – The purpose is to record how the Jews behaved towards God and how that has affected their own history. It includes the Psalms, which is a collection of praises to God.

Jews read and reflect upon the meaning of these stories for their own lives. Some of them are also used in personal and communal worship, such as Psalm 121 or 130 which is often said before praying for someone who is ill. Extracts from the Neviim are read in the synagogue at the end of the Torah readings.

The Talmud is a combination of the Mishnah and Gemara.

- ▶ Mishnah – For hundreds of years the leaders of Judaism handed down the Oral Torah by word of mouth. By about 200 CE Jews were moving around the Roman Empire, often because of persecution. People feared that as Jews became dispersed they would forget the oral traditions. Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi wrote down the oral traditions so that Jews did not grow apart but had a central text to follow for their daily life. The Mishnah also contains the Halakhah (teachings on issues of Law) and the Haggadah (guidance on teaching).
- ▶ Gemara – This is the commentary on the Mishnah, giving further details on many issues of law and worship.

Extracts from the Talmud are used in public and private worship and also in the siddur. When extracts from the Torah are unclear then explanations will be given from the Talmud.

Today there are many colleges throughout the world where Jews continue to study the Torah and Talmud. These are called yeshiva. Historically, they were attended only by males. Today, all non-Orthodox and a few Orthodox yeshivas are open to females.



The Yeshiva in Gateshead

► Dietary laws and keeping kosher in Britain

Key Concept



Kosher Means 'fit' or 'proper'. Foods that are permitted to be eaten according to Leviticus Chapter 11. It is also used to refer to the purity of ritual objects such as Torah scrolls.

Kosher means something that is fitting or proper according to Jewish law. Although it can be used to describe certain actions it is more often used to describe foods that can and cannot be eaten by observant Jews. The opposite of kosher is treifah, which is used to describe actions and food that are forbidden.

The laws concerning kosher food date back to the Torah. There are many references about not only what can and cannot be eaten but also the way foods should be prepared. According to Genesis 1:29 the first humans were vegetarians. It was only after the flood that God allowed Noah and his family to eat meat.

Leviticus 11:1–23 refers to many issues of keeping kosher that influence the lifestyle of many Jews today. In this passage God gives to Moses instructions regarding what the Israelites can and cannot eat. Forbidden are:

- ▶ many types of birds
- ▶ shellfish
- ▶ fish without fins and scales
- ▶ animals that don't chew the cud or have hooves completely parted.

Animals that are allowed to be eaten are only considered kosher if they are killed in a certain way. Causing pain to any living creature is strictly forbidden in Jewish law and so a method is used called shechitah, which is supposed to cause less pain to animals. The animal's throat is cut with a razor-sharp knife, causing immediate loss of consciousness and death. The slaughter of animals for meat is carried out by a person called a shochet. The role of a shochet is very important and a shochet must live a good ethical life. They must be Jewish as they are killing the animal as a form of dedication to God. The Torah commands Jews not to eat the blood of animals and birds so meat is then laid out to let the blood drain away before rinsing.

Keeping a kosher diet doesn't just mean selecting the right animals to be eaten and preparing them in a fit way. There are certain combinations that are forbidden. Exodus 23:19 states:

'Bring the best of the first fruits of your soil to the house of the Lord your God. Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk.'

For Jews who keep kosher homes this means that meat and dairy products must be kept separately as they should not be eaten in the same meal. Although meat and milk dishes should be kept separately there are foods that can be eaten in any meal. These are called parev and include vegetables, eggs and plants.

There are many different decisions that families have to make regarding how far to keep kosher. Both religious and practical considerations can impact upon their practice.



Sara

Here's the menu – don't look so worried.



Tanya

But how will I know what to eat. I know there are many things you can't eat and I don't want to offend you.

This is a kosher restaurant. Did you see the certificate on the shop window that shows that it has been inspected and all the preparations of the food are fit and proper.

Well yes. But it's more than that. This is a 'meaty' restaurant so there will be no dishes here with milk and all the meat will have been killed according to certain rules.

Exactly. At home we have a set of plates for our meaty dishes and a set for our milky dishes. They are all kept in separate areas of the kitchen.

It is. To buy kosher food can be really expensive. Especially where there are no Jewish shops. I know some people who have had to give up keeping kosher because they can't afford it.

What do you mean? Do you think they would be struck down by thunder and lightning! Well, each individual has to make their choice and then live by it. I consider it a blessing to keep a kosher lifestyle. It helps my relationship with God. He gave us the duties we should follow.

That's what some of my Jewish friends say as they are eating their bacon sandwich! It has to be an individual choice as our relationship with God is individual. For me I keep kosher and hope I always will. It binds us together as a family. I also think that God made those rules for all time and I shouldn't change them just because it is difficult.

It's natural to me now. It's just like people who have gluten free diets know what they can and can't eat. I look at the food labels and there will be signs that tell me if it is kosher or treifah. Also technology helps. My friend has a device, which lets them know what they can eat. It's really useful when she is travelling.

What do you mean 'fit and proper'? Do you mean they are clean?

Is that why I don't see cheeseburger on the menu?

But that must be really expensive.

What happens to them?

But those rules come from ages ago. They can't be relevant to today.

But how do you know what to eat? Here it's easy as all the menu is kosher but what about if you are somewhere else?

All this talk of food is making me hungry – let's order.

Tasks

- 1 What does 'kosher' mean?
- 2 Kieran has been asked to consider the following statement: 'Keeping kosher is not important anymore.' From Sara and Tanya's discussion, identify six different points he could make in his answer.



Festivals

In the Jewish calendar there are many festivals. Although they may be celebrated differently by Jewish communities they all share two features.

- They remember a great event in Jewish history.
- They provide an opportunity to stop thinking about day-to-day life and build a relationship with God. Festivals are often called ‘moed’ in Hebrew. Moed means ‘date’. So, for many Jews, a festival is a time to have ‘a date with God’.

I often go to Sephardic celebration festivals. There will be different foods and music which remind me how Judaism is a global religion.

Since my husband died I go to a hotel in Bournemouth to celebrate Pesach. Although I don't know other people it reminds me we are one Jewish community.

There are many different ways Jews celebrate festivals in Britain. This may depend upon:

- how observant they are
- whether they are Ashkenazi or Sephardic
- family traditions
- personal circumstances
- impact of religious beliefs.

My daughter is vegetarian so we don't have a lamb's bone on our sedar plate.

This year the London Marathon was run on the second day of Pesach. My two daughters were due to run. One decided not to run but observe Pesach. The other decided to run and raise money for charity. They were tough decisions.

► Rosh hashanah (new year)

Rosh Hashanah (New Year) and ten days later Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) are known as the Days of Awe. For many Jews the two days are connected in a process of judgement and atonement.

Many Jews believe that on Rosh Hashanah God judges all people for their deeds for the past year and that on this day these decisions are written down by God. On Yom Kippur that book is then sealed.

Origins and meaning

Traditionally Rosh Hashanah is the celebration of the day when God created the world and marks the New Year. Rosh means the ‘head’ or beginning. In Jewish tradition the head reflects not just the start of the year but its future direction. It is also called the Day of Remembering when Jews think about God and the creation of the world. Sometimes it is called the Day of Judgement as it prepares people to think about their deeds over the last year.

Rosh Hashanah is a happy and serious festival. It is a happy time when the new year is celebrated with many family celebrations. It is also a serious time when Jews consider their actions over the past year and how they could have done better.



Front and inside of a Rosh Hashanah card

Celebration

The eve of Rosh Hashanah is the last day of the old year and special services are held at the synagogue. The shofar will not be blown. Special fruits such as pomegranates are bought. The evening prayers address God as a king sitting in judgement over the world. As people leave the synagogue they will wish each other: 'May you be written down for a good year'.

At home, kiddush is made and slices of apple dipped in honey are eaten. The challah (plaited bread loaf) eaten is a different shape from that eaten at Shabbat. At Rosh Hashanah the challah is round as a reminder of the cycle of the year. At the morning service the shofar is blown 100 times with notes sounding like crying. This is meant to represent the crying of the soul asking to be reunited with God.

Later after the service many Jews will recite a special prayer at a running stream or river. This is called tashlikh ('casting away'), when crumbs from pockets are thrown, with the hope that sins are cast away (into the water) and that God will overlook them and allow New Year.

► Ten days of returning

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are the 'ten days of returning'. During this time Jews consider their deeds over the past year. They try to make amends and plan ways to do better in the next year. Judaism teaches that God does not forgive a wrong done to another person unless that person has already been asked for forgiveness.

► Yom kippur (Day of Atonement)

Origins and meaning

This is the holiest day of the year when many people will attend the synagogue. It is the end of the ten days of repentance and is a day of forgiveness.

It is a day of self-denial in five areas; food, wearing of perfumes, drink, sex and wearing of leather shoes.

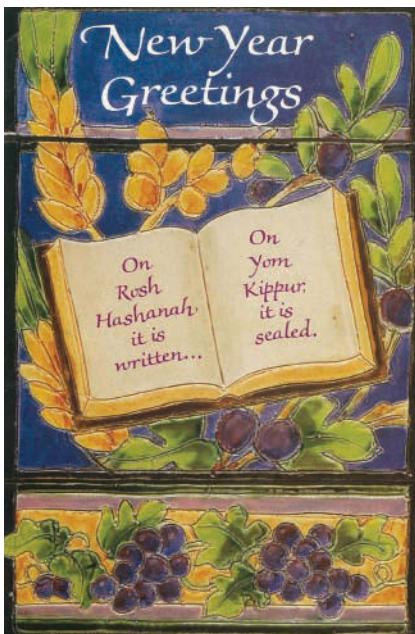
Celebration

The day before Yom Kippur is a time of preparation. Some Jews traditionally take chickens to the poor or give money to charities to help the poor. Some Jews will visit the mikveh (pool of natural water) for a spiritual cleaning. Yom Kippur begins in the home. An early dinner is eaten to allow arrival at the synagogue before sundown. After the meal, the table is often covered with Jewish books to show Yom Kippur is celebrated not by eating but by fasting and prayer.

Yom Kippur is a 25-hour fast during which many Jews take no food or water. Because of the importance of life in Judaism (see Pikuach Nefesh, page 297) people who are ill and too young do not have to fast. Although it is a very solemn day, many Jews look forward to the day as it gives them a chance to atone for their wrongdoings.

There are five prayer services throughout Yom Kippur. At the heart of each is the confessional prayer made to God.

Before the service in the synagogue begins the Kol Nidrei (All vows) is sung. The story of Jonah is told in the afternoon service of Yom Kippur. The story is particularly relevant as it teaches of God's



A festive card for Yom Kippur

Cantor leader of reading and singing in the services of some synagogues.

Tasks

- 1 Explain in your own words the connection between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.
- 2 Look at the greeting card for Rosh Hashanah on page 332. Identify and explain the meaning of the symbols on the card.
- 3 Why do you think Yom Kippur is such an important day in the Jewish year?



willingness to forgive those who fully repent. Rabbis and **cantors** will often be dressed in kittels (white robes) and the Torah scrolls will be dressed in white as white symbolises forgiveness. During the prayers Jews will confess their sins and ask for forgiveness. Throughout the service the doors of the ark are open to symbolise that the gates of heaven are open. Confessions can only be made to God not to a person. They are always said quietly so no one can hear them.

An important part of Yom Kippur is the Yizkor (memorial service) when family and friends who have died are remembered and charity is given in their honour. There are five prayers during the day, ending with the Neilah (the closing of the gates). The service is ended by reciting the Shema.

After nightfall a single blast of the shofar announces the fast is over. Back at home, families make havdallah (see Shabbat, page 310) and break their fasts. It is a custom that during the evening children will start building their sukkah (booth or hut) ready for the festival of Sukkot.



Sukkot

Origins

Sukkot begins on Tishri 15, the fifth day after Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement). It is an important festival and is counted as one of the mitzvot that Jews should keep. It is a harvest festival to thank God.

It commemorates the 40-year period during which the children of Israel were in the desert, living in temporary shelters:

'During [these] seven days you must live in thatched huts. Everyone included in Israel must live in such thatched huts.'

Leviticus 23:42

Meaning

Sukkot celebrates the Israelites' journey through the desert on their way to the Promised Land. The sukkah represents the temporary shelter that many Jews used in the desert. As a makeshift booth it represents humans vulnerability before God.

There are many different interpretations of the meaning of the four species. One version says they represent parts of the body.

In Leviticus reference is also made to two special objects associated with Sukkot:

- the lulav (palm, myrtle and willow placed in a woven palm holder)
- the etrog (a citrus fruit).

Palm, myrtle, willow and etrog have come to be known as the four species:

- the lulav represents the spine – your actions (long and straight)
- the myrtle represents the eye – how you see life (small and oval)
- the willow represents the mouth – your speech (long and oval)
- the etrog represents the heart – your emotions.

'On the first day, you must take for yourself a fruit of the citron tree, an unopened palm frond, myrtle branches, and willows [that grow near] the brook. You shall rejoice before God for seven days.'

Leviticus 23:40



For an etrog to be considered kosher it must have a hard piece of the skin at the end of the fruit

All of these parts have the potential to sin, but should join together to perform the mitzvot (commandments).

The second version says the four species represent different types of Jews:

- ▶ The etrog represents Jews who have knowledge of the Torah and perform mitzvot (it has a pleasing taste and smell).
 - ▶ The palm represents Jews who have knowledge of the Torah but lack in mitzvot (it produces tasty fruit but has no smell).
 - ▶ The myrtle represents Jews who perform mitzvot but have little knowledge of the Torah (it has a strong smell but no taste).
 - ▶ The willow represents Jews who have no knowledge of the Torah and do not perform mitzvot (it has no taste or smell).

Bringing the four species together is a reminder that all kinds of Jews are important and should all be united.

Celebration

Sukkot lasts for seven days and no work is permitted on the first and second day of the holiday.

During the festival, Jewish families build a sukkah, a temporary shelter such as those lived in by their ancestors during the 40 years in the desert. The roof of a sukkah is called a sekhakh and must be made of something that has grown in the ground (for example bamboo). The sukkah must have three walls and the roof must be sparse enough that the rain can get through and that stars can be seen through it.



A Sukkah is a temporary shelter built by Jewish families during Sukkot to remember those their ancestors lived in whilst in the desert.

and etrog are waved in six directions, front (towards Jerusalem), right, back, left, up and down. This indicates that God's power is everywhere.

Many synagogues have a sukkah.

Task

In the previous chapter we learnt about the importance of Moses.

Test yourself with these questions:

- 1 Why is Moses important in Judaism?
 - 2 How did he lead the Israelites out of Egypt?



Pesach

Origins and meaning

Pesach celebrates the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt, led by Moses. Jewish tradition teaches that the festival is known as Pesach (Passover) as God passed over the houses of the Israelites during the tenth and final plague – death of the Egyptian firstborn.

God commanded that the Israelites should celebrate this festival each year as a mark of freedom.

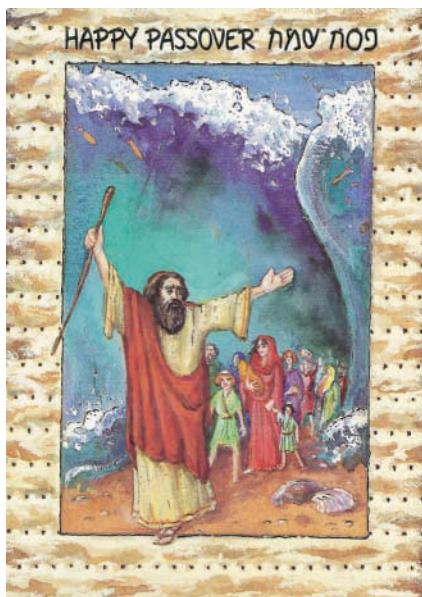
'This day must be one that you will remember. You must keep it as a festival to God for all generations. It is a law for all time that you must celebrate it.'

Exodus 12:14

The festival is often called the Festival of Freedom. Each year prayers are said for those who aren't free.

Preparation and celebrations

Leavened made light by aerating, as with yeast or baking powder.



A festive card for Pesach



Leavened goods are banned during Passover so Jews eat Matzah, which is unleavened flatbread

Many Jews remove all chametz (grain products that are swollen or capable of swelling) from their house and during the festival no chametz are eaten. As **leavened** goods, such as bread cooked with wheat, rye, barley, oats and spelt, and items made from yeast, such as beer, are banned during the holiday, the weeks leading up to Pesach are spent cleaning to get rid of even the tiniest forbidden crumb. There are different reasons given for this custom. Some Jews believe that chametz is a source of pride as it swells when it has water on it. For other Jews they believe having no chametz is important as when the Israelites left Egypt they didn't have the time to let the bread rise. The house is searched for chametz and any found is eaten or burnt before Pesach begins. Crockery that has been used for chametz will often be replaced by different crockery.

Pesach is welcomed into the house with the lighting of candles. Families often go to the synagogue and on their return there is a special meal. The seder meal is a central part of the festival and is eaten on the first and second nights of the festival. All the readings and instructions for the seder are in a book called the Haggadah (a book containing the service used at Pesach).

The meal begins with questions from the youngest child, asking about the Pesach rituals. The origins and symbolism are then explained.

On the table there are many symbolic foods served on a special dish. These include:

- ▶ a lamb bone – a symbol of sacrifice. On the first Passover, God ordered Jews to kill a lamb and mark their front doorposts with blood
- ▶ a roasted egg – a symbol of the new life Jews had after their escape of Egypt and of new life in general
- ▶ a green vegetable to dip in salt water – a sign of spring dipped in salt water to remember the tears when the Jews were in captivity
- ▶ bitter herbs made from horseradish – reflecting the bitterness of slavery
- ▶ a paste made of chopped apples, walnuts and wine called Charoset – representing the mortar the Jewish slaves had to use when building.

One of the main foods eaten over Pesach is unleavened bread called matzah. It is said that when the pharaoh finally freed the slaves, the Israelites were made to leave so quickly that they did not have time to let their bread rise, and took flat bread instead.

At the start of the dinner, three matzot are laid on top of each other, the middle matzah is broken and the largest piece is hidden. The children then hunt to find the bread, and the winner receives a prize.

The meal is accompanied by four small glasses of wine symbolising joy, happiness and the freedom of the Israelites. One glass is left by an open door to welcome the prophet Elijah, who Jewish people believe will return at the end of Passover to announce the coming of the Messiah.

Tasks

- 1 Explain why Passover is called the Festival of Freedom.
- 2 Each year the seder meal remembers people who aren't free. Which people would you select this year and why?



► End of section review

Knowledge check

- 1 What does the term 'Shabbat' mean?
- 2 Write a short paragraph (roughly three sentences) to explain what is meant by 'brit milah.'
- 3 In your own words, explain what is meant by 'keeping kosher'.

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Kosher
- Shabbat
- Synagogue

Key teachings about:

- worship
- the synagogue
- rituals
- daily life
- festivals

The Big Question

'Festivals in Judaism are just a time for friends and relatives to celebrate together.'

Your task

- How do you think someone who is Jewish might respond to this statement?
- Write a minimum of two developed paragraphs.
- You must include references to two Jewish festivals.

Skills Link



- 1 What are 'mitzvot'?
- 2 Describe how Jewish women might worship differently to men.

Task



You need to explain in detail religious teachings about the **Synagogue**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Judaism. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Jews believe that This comes from the teaching/Torah quote

This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Jews such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Torah quote

This means that/Because of this they

Finally, Jews such as believe that This means that/Because of this they

Their beliefs do/do not differ because

► Exam focus

Judaism: Practices

[c] questions

These questions expect you to ‘explain’ a key practice, belief or issue in the religions you have studied. There is a maximum of eight marks for this type of question. To gain full marks you should be able to show detailed knowledge which shows the impact on individuals and communities. You need to use appropriate religious terms and relevant sources of wisdom or sacred texts. Look at the question below:

(c) Explain why Shabbat is important in Judaism. (8)

The question is asking you to explain the importance of Shabbat. It is important that you don’t just give a description of what Shabbat is. 8 marks are available, so it is important that your answer is detailed, using religious language/texts and referring to different beliefs or practices within Judaism and the impact that Shabbat might have on the individual or community.

Draft an answer that focuses on the importance of Shabbat. Remember to show there are different beliefs and practices amongst Orthodox and Reform Jews.

[d] questions

These are very important questions as they are worth 15 marks. The questions requires you to:

- read and understand a statement
- discuss this statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. (You must refer to religion and belief in your answer.)

You are expected to apply your knowledge and understanding from the whole of your study to the question.

Take for example the following question:

‘You have to go to the synagogue to be a Jew.’

Discuss this statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. (15)

(You must refer to religion and belief in your answer.)

The evidence could come from any relevant part of your study. For example, you might refer to your study about the home and argue that many festivals are celebrated in the home.

Look at the following four areas. For each consider how this might be used as evidence in your answer:

- Shabbat service
- Minyans
- worship in the home
- synagogue as a place of worship, learning and social events.

Glossary

- Abortion** when a pregnancy is ended so that it does not result in the birth of a child.
- Absolute poverty** an acute state of deprivation, whereby a person cannot access the most basic of their human needs.
- Adha** sacrifice.
- Adultery** voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and a person who is not their spouse.
- Afterlife** life after death; the belief that existence continues after physical death.
- Agape** selfless, unconditional love; the highest of the four types of love in the Bible.
- Agnostic** unsure if there is a God.
- Akhirah** the Islamic term for the afterlife. There are many references to it, and warnings about it, in the Qur'an.
- Allah** the Arabic word meaning God. Muslims believe that they worship the same God that spoke through Musa (Moses) and Isa (Jesus).
- Al-Qadr** 'destiny'; nothing takes place purely by chance. God knows and wills all future events.
- Anti-Semitic** hostile or prejudiced towards Jews.
- Apartheid** a system of segregating people by races, which was used in South Africa.
- Ashura** literally means 'tenth'. It falls on the tenth day of the month of Muharram, the first month of the Islamic calendar.
- Atheist** believing there is no God.
- Atonement** the belief that Jesus' death on the cross healed the rift between humans and God.
- Authority** the idea that something or someone is in charge of what is right or wrong. We look to an authority to guide our own understanding and decision-making.
- Bal tashchit** referred to in the Torah. Literally, it means 'do not destroy'.
- Barzakh** a place of waiting after death until the Day of Judgement.
- Beatitudes** the blessings listed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.
- Beget** to bring a child into existence, or to create offspring.
- Bigamy** entering into a marriage with someone while still being legally married to another person.
- Blasphemy** showing a lack of respect to God or other holy things.
- Cantor** leader of reading and singing in the services of some synagogues.
- Censorship** the practice of suppressing and limiting access to materials considered obscene, offensive or a threat to security. People may also be restricted in their speech by censorship laws.
- Charismatic Christians** Christians who emphasise the presence and the work of the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts and miracles.
- Cohabitation** to live together in a sexual relationship, without being married, or in a civil partnership.
- Commitment** a sense of dedication and obligation to someone or something.
- Congregational** all together, praying as a whole community. This emphasises the ummah.
- Conscience** an inner voice which keeps a person on the right track; a sense of right and wrong; an instinct (some think given by God) to help us to make the right choices.
- Contraception** methods used to prevent a woman from becoming pregnant during or following sexual intercourse.
- Conversion** changing one's religion or beliefs.
- Covenant** a promise or agreement between two parties. Covenants were made between God with Noah, Abraham and Moses.
- Creation** the idea that the universe was planned and brought into being by a divine power (for example God).
- Creationism** the belief that all life was made by God.
- Creator** one who brings something into existence, in this case the world.
- Creed** a set statement of faith that all religious believers follow.
- Devout** having deep religious feeling or commitment.
- Dignity** being worthy of honour or respect.
- Discrimination** acts of treating groups of people, or individuals differently, based on prejudice.
- Divine** perfect or God-like.
- Divorce** to legally end a marriage.
- Du'a prayers** personal prayers which may be said at any time of the day.
- Ecumenical** representing or promoting unity within the different Christian Churches.
- Empowerment** authority or power given to someone to do something.
- Ensoulment** the moment when the human soul is said to enter the baby's body (usually thought to happen in the womb, at an early point in the pregnancy).
- Environmental sustainability** ensuring that the demands placed on natural resources can be met without reducing capacity to allow all people and other species of animals, as well as plant life, to live well, now and in the future.
- Euthanasia** from Greek, eu 'good' + thanatos 'death'. Sometimes referred to as 'mercy killing'. The act of killing or permitting the death of a person who is suffering from a serious illness.
- Evangelise** to try to convert someone to a different religion (usually Christianity).
- Evangelism** preaching of the gospel to others with the intention of converting others to the Christian faith.
- Evil** that which is considered extremely immoral, wicked and wrong.
- Evolution** by natural selection the idea that the species that flourish are those which are best suited to their environment.
- Exoneration** means that a conviction for a crime is reversed, either because the prisoner is innocent or there was an error with the trial that led to conviction.
- Extremism** believing in and supporting ideas that are very far from what most people consider correct or reasonable.
- Fate** a power or force that determines the future. The idea that the outcome is predetermined or unchangeable – inevitable and irresistible.
- Fidelity** two people being sexually faithful to each other.
- Fitrah** the natural instinct all humans have, from birth, to know and worship God.
- Forgiveness** to grant pardon for a wrongdoing; to give up resentment and the desire seek revenge against a wrongdoer.
- Free will** a person's ability to make free choices in life.

Gemilut hasadim making ‘acts of loving kindness’. It emphasises the need to be charitable, caring for others and for the world.

Gender equality people of all genders enjoying the same rights and opportunities in all aspects of their lives.

Global citizenship the idea that we should see ourselves as part of a world community. We should view the whole world as our home, not just the town where we live or our country of birth. We have a responsibility to care for the Amazonian rainforests and for global climate change as much as for pollution in our own local communities.

Good that which is considered morally right, beneficial and to our advantage.

Hadith an account describing the words and actions of the Prophet Muhammad; to ‘tell’ or ‘narrate’.

Hafiz someone who has been able to memorise the whole Qur'an in Arabic.

Haftorah a passage from one of the books of the Neviim (prophets) which is read after the Torah reading.

Halah (permitted) actions or things which are permitted within Islam, such as eating permitted foods.

Hanifs people who lived in Arabia before the Prophet Muhammad and who believed in one God.

Haram (forbidden) any actions or things which are forbidden within Islam, such as eating forbidden foods.

Hillel a great rabbi and teacher who lived in the first century.

Hospice a place where people with terminal illnesses can go to die with dignity. A hospice focuses on relieving the symptoms and pain of a terminal illness. Unlike a hospital, a hospice does not try to treat an illness or cure a patient. Hospices also offer a type of pastoral care, for both the patient and their family, not available in a standard hospital.

Human rights the basic entitlements of all human beings, afforded to them simply because they are human.

Humane showing kindness and compassion.

Ibadah acts of worship; any permissible action performed with the intention to obey God.

Id the Muslim word for festival. It means ‘an event that returns every year’.

Imam a leader, but Sunnis and Shi'a differ in the way they understand the term. In Sunni Islam an imam is the leader in a local mosque, where he has been chosen by the local Muslim community to lead worship. In Shi'a Islam there were only twelve Imams. They are seen as holy figures who were all divinely appointed members of Muhammad's descendants.

Incarnation the way in which God becomes ‘flesh’ or human in the form of Jesus.

Insha' Allah ‘if God allows it’. It comes from joining the Arabic words ‘Allah’ and ‘his will’. It is a very common phrase: for example, ‘I will get to school on time, Insha' Allah!'

Intelligent design the idea that certain features of life are best explained by an intelligent cause, rather than an undirected process, such as natural selection.

Islam submission or peace.

Islamophobic hostile or prejudiced towards Muslims.

Jihad striving to do what is right, for God. The greater jihad is the struggle that each person has, as an individual, to follow God's will in their life. The lesser jihad is the fight to defend Islam (holy war).

Justice fairness; where everyone is treated equally by the law.

Ka'ba known as the House of God, the black covered, cube-shaped building at the centre of Islam's holiest mosque in Makkah.

Kalimah the statement: ‘There is no god but God, and Muhammad is his prophet’.

Karma the ‘energy’ stored in your soul reflecting good and bad deeds.

Kashrut Jewish dietary laws.

Kiddush a prayer sanctifying Shabbat and many holy days, usually said over wine.

King David a successful King of the Israelites. Believed by many to have written the Psalms.

Kosher (‘fit’ or ‘proper’) Foods that are permitted to be eaten according to Leviticus Chapter 11. It is also used to refer to the purity of ritual objects such as Torah scrolls.

Lay person a person who is not a member of the clergy.

Leavened made light by aerating, as with yeast or baking powder.

Liberal free thinking, challenging traditional views.

Literal understanding something exactly as it is written.

Lutheranism a Protestant denomination that follows the religious doctrines of Martin Luther (1483–1586).

Mahdi the long-awaited saviour who will come to rescue the world.

Marginalised put in a place of little importance.

Martyr a person who is put to death for not renouncing their religion.

Medical ethics the process of deciding what is good and acceptable in medicine.

Messiah (Mashiach) the one who will be anointed as king to rule in the world to come.

Midrash collections of various Rabbinic commentaries on the Tenakh.

Mishnah the Oral Torah.

Mission calling of a religious organisation, especially a Christian one, to go out into the world and spread its faith.

Mitzvah although usually translated as duty or commandment, it can also refer to kind deeds.

Mitzvot the term has a mix of meanings. It is often used to refer to duties (such as the 613 in the Torah) and good deeds.

Monotheism belief in one true God.

Morality principles and standards determining which actions are right or wrong.

Mosque (‘masjid’ in Arabic), a ‘place of prostration’ for Muslims; it is a communal place of worship for a Muslim community.

Muezzin the person who calls Muslims to the mosque to pray.

Nativity the accounts of Jesus' birth in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew.

Nicene Creed a statement of Christian faith from 325 CE.

Niyyah the honest intention to worship God.

Olam Ha-Ba the afterlife. It means ‘the world to come’.

Omnibenevolent the state of being all-loving and infinitely good – a characteristic often attributed to God.

Omnipotent the all-powerful, almighty and unlimited nature of God.

Oppressed governed or treated with cruelty or injustice.

Oral Torah the whole commentary that discusses the Written Torah.

Original sin the first sin ever committed – when Eve ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. The action that brought sin and evil into the world.

- Palliative care** care that focuses on relieving pain and suffering.
- Parable** a short, often simple story which contains a deeper meaning.
- Parole officer** a person who supports a prisoner on their release from prison and their return to the community.
- Patriarchal** a family or society controlled by men.
- Persecution** persistently cruel treatment, often due to religion or belief.
- Personal conviction** when someone strongly believes in someone or something.
- Pluralism** the existence of different groups and beliefs within society.
- Pluralist** a society where a number of religions and beliefs are followed alongside each other.
- Polytheism** belief in many gods.
- Predestination** the belief that all events have been willed by God. The idea that God has already chosen who will receive salvation and enter heaven.
- Prejudice** pre-judging; judging people to be inferior or superior without cause.
- Procreation** reproduction.
- Promiscuity** having a number of casual sexual relationships.
- Prophecy ('risalah' in Arabic)** the term used of the messengers of Allah, beginning with Adam and ending with the Prophet Muhammad.
- Punishment** a penalty given to someone for a crime or wrong they have done.
- Pushke box** money boxes displayed in Jewish homes to encourage charitable giving.
- Qibla** the direction to face during prayer (towards Makkah).
- Quaker** also known as the Society of Friends; a Christian denomination whose central belief is that every human being contains a reflection of the image of God.
- Quality of life** the extent to which life is meaningful and pleasurable.
- Qur'an** means 'reading' or 'recitation'. The Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad as a 'living sound' and it must be spoken to reveal its beauty and truth.
- Rasal** a prophet. 'Risalah' means bringing prophecy from God.
- Reconciliation** accepting an apology, forgiving and moving forward together in harmony.
- Reformation** when Henry VIII split with the Catholic Church and established the Church of England. He destroyed many of the monasteries in Britain.
- Reformer** someone who lobbies or pressurises for change.
- Relative poverty** a standard of poverty measured in relation to the standards of a society in which a person lives, e.g. living on less than x% of average UK income.
- Responsibility** humans have a responsibility to care for the planet.
- Restorative justice** a system of justice that enables criminals to make amends for their behaviour by meeting with their victim and apologising.
- Resurrection** the belief that Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday, conquering death.
- Revelation** a message sent by God and 'revealed' or 'shown' to the human mind.
- Reverence** deep respect and awe.
- Rite** a ritual or series of ritual practices which often have symbolic meaning.
- Roles** position, status or function of a person in society, as well as the characteristics and social behaviour expected of them.
- Sacraments** an outward sign of an invisible and inward blessing by God: for example, Baptism, or the Eucharist.
- Sadaqah** the generous giving or charity driven by compassion for others.
- Salah** bowing or worship. There are over 700 verses in the Qur'an that refer to it.
- Sanctity of life** the belief that life is precious, or sacred. For many religious believers, only human life holds this special status.
- Sanhedrin** a council or assembly of men appointed in every city in the Land of Israel.
- Secular** a society that is not subject to or bound by religious rule.
- Shabbat** day of spiritual renewal and rest. Beginning at sunset on Friday and closing at nightfall on Saturday.
- Shari'ah (straight life)** A way of life; Muslims believe Allah has set out a clear path for how Muslims should live. Shari'ah law is the set of moral and religious rules that put the principles set out by the Qur'an and the Hadith into practice.
- Shari'ah law** Muslim law based upon the Qur'an.
- Shaytan** Satan or the devil.
- Shekinah** the place where God's presence rests and can be felt.
- Shema** a prayer declaring a belief in one God. It is found in the Torah.
- Shi'a** 'from the House of Ali'. (Ali was a close relative to Muhammad.)
- Shirk** associating other beings or things with God.
- Sin** deliberate immoral action; breaking a religious or moral law.
- Situation ethics** judging the rightness or wrongness of an act on a case-by-case basis.
- Social justice** promoting a fair society by challenging injustice and valuing diversity. Ensuring that everyone has equal access to provisions, equal opportunities and rights.
- Soul** the spiritual aspect of a being; that which connects someone to God. The soul is often regarded as non-physical and as living on after physical death, in an afterlife.
- Speaking in tongues** most often found in Charismatic and Pentecostal churches where the belief is that someone is filled with the Holy Spirit during worship and is able to talk in an unknown language.
- Submission to the will of God** Islam means 'submission'; following the Five Pillars and the rules of Shari'ah law are a sign of being a true Muslim.
- Suffering** pain or distress caused by injury, illness or loss. Suffering can be physical, emotional, psychological or spiritual.
- Sunnah** the record of Muhammad's way of life.
- Sunni** 'one who follows the Sunnah'. (The Sunnah is the book which describes the way the Prophet Muhammad lived.)
- Synagogue** house of assembly; building for Jewish public prayer, study and assembly.
- Tallit** four-cornered garment with fringes.
- Talmud** commentary on the Mishnah, which includes teachings and stories. The term usually refers to the Babylonian Talmud, although there is also a Jerusalem Talmud which is older.
- Taqwa** having an awareness of God in every aspect of life.
- Tawhid** 'oneness' in reference to God; the basic Muslim belief in the oneness of Allah.

Tenakh the Jewish Bible. The word ‘Tenakh’ is made up of the first Hebrew letters of the Torah (five books of Moses), Neviim (books of the Prophets) and Ketuvim (holy writings).

Tikkun olam means ‘repair the world’. Jewish people believe it is important to work to make the world a better place for everyone.

Torah the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). Regarded as the holiest books of the Tenakh.

Trinity the three persons of God – God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Ummah means ‘community’ and refers to the worldwide community of Muslims who share a common religious identity.

Utilitarianism the belief that a good act is one that brings the greatest good for the greatest number. Also known as the principle of the greatest happiness.

Zakah One of the pillars of Islam – the compulsory payment of money or possessions to help the poor and needy. It is considered an act of worship (ibadah). Each year a Muslim will give about 2.5 per cent of savings to support the needs of others. Each mosque will have a collecting box and a committee to decide how the money should be spent. Through this system the whole ummah is made more equal.

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