

Finham Park School RE Department



Religion and Life

GCSE RS Revision Guide

Believing in God

Christian Beliefs about God

- There is only one God who wishes good for everyone. God is **BENEVOLENT**.
- God is more powerful than anything else. God is **OMNIPOTENT**
- Christians believe that God has knowledge and knows everything that is going on at the moment, in the past and what will happen in the future. God is **OMNISCIENT**.
- Christians believe that God has given humans **FREE WILL** to behave as they choose.

Outline the main features of a religious upbringing in one religion

- Some Christians baptise their children at a young age
- Godparents promise to bring the child up as a Christian
- The child is usually taught to pray and take part in worship
- Families usually celebrate Christmas and Easter (and the meaning of those festivals and stories around them)
- Some Christian parents arrange for their children to attend a 'Sunday School' where there is encouragement to be a good Christian and lead a Christian life.

Explain how a religious upbringing could lead to, or support a belief in God

- Being born into a Christian family might support someone's belief in God because they are surrounded by others who are convinced of the existence of God.
- If the religion has been handed down through generations it may seem perfectly natural to members of that family to believe in God.
- Learning about God at home, school and in the church could lead some people to decide that God must exist.

Explain how religious experiences could lead to, or support a belief in God

Sometimes religious experiences can convince people that God exists without the religious upbringing some others have.

- For some this is the 'wow' factor and they see something that takes their breath away and gives feelings of awe and wonder. This is called **numinous** and could be felt by looking up at a starry sky or a wonderful sunset and convinced that God is behind it all.
- **Prayer** is an important and personal way for some people to communicate with God. If a prayer is answered then it can strengthen a person's faith in God. **However**, when a prayer is not answered their faith can be challenged. Although some people argue that God does listen and responds in the way He sees fit. Humans cannot understand the mind of God.
- **Miracles** can also convince people that God exists yet can also be disproved by science according to some people.

Explain how the appearance of design in the world may lead to, or support, belief in God

Several hundred years ago **WILLIAM PALEY** put forward the design argument. He said that if somebody happened to find a watch and had never ever seen one before, they would be astounded. The fact that finding something so tiny with lots of mechanisms inside it would convince a person that it had been made by someone very clever and it could **NOT** have been made by accident. Paley said that the same argument could be said about the universe which is even more complicated than a watch! **The universe must have been designed by an extremely clever being, not by accident.** The only possible **designer of the universe must be God - therefore God exists.** We all have unique fingerprints to prove this!

CAUSATION ARGUMENT

If something happens we always try to see what caused it. Things do not happen by themselves; for example, if we drop an egg it may smash (the **cause** would be us dropping it - the **effect** would be the smashing of the egg) the causation argument says that the existence of the universe proves that God exists. **If the universe has a beginning then something must have caused it, it did not happen by accident so something caused it and brought it into existence** - this is God, and so this proves that God exists.

Outline Christian views on Evil and Suffering

Christians have different viewpoints about the causes of evil and suffering:

- Some believe that God created a perfect world for humans but He also gave humans **FREE WILL**, which they used to disobey God. Their punishment resulted in humans being separated from God and this has led to suffering and evil. God sent Jesus to die for the sins of humans.
- **Others believe 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.
- **To some Christian's life is a test.** The way people react to suffering and evil determines whether they go to heaven or hell in the afterlife.
- **Others 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.

How do Christians respond to evil and suffering?

In responding to the problems of evil and suffering, Christians follow the teachings and actions of Jesus, who taught his followers to:

- **PRAYER:** (asking God to help those who are suffering - this type of prayer is called intercession and is found in nearly all types of Christian worship).
- **SERVICE:** (Actively helping those who suffer) many Christians help in hospitals and hospices, organise food and clothing for homeless in the UK, raise money to help less developed countries, etc. Some set up charities such as the 'Children's Society' to help children from broken homes.

Key words:

Agnosticism- not being sure whether God exists

Atheism- believing that God does not exist

Theism- believing that God does exist

Prayer- an attempt to contact God, usually through words

Benevolent- the belief that God is good or kind

Omnipotent- the belief that God is all powerful

Omniscient- the belief that God knows everything that has happened and everything that is going to happen

Conversion- when your life is changed by giving yourself to God

Miracle- something which seems to break the law of science and makes you think that only God could have done it

Numinous- the feeling of presence of something greater than you, e.g. in a Church or looking up at the stars

Moral evil- actions done by humans which cause suffering

Natural evil- things which cause suffering but have nothing to do with humans, e.g. earthquakes

Matters of Life and Death

Life after Death

Outline why some non-religious people may believe in life after death

Paranormal experiences

- Near-death experiences- people who have had these say that they were travelling through a tunnel or toward a light.
- Existence of Ghosts- who are thought to be the spirits of the dead that are sometimes visible to the living.

The case for life after death

- People have experienced **paranormal** activities.
- The mind can make the body do impossible things, such as heal itself of an 'incurable' disease.
- The brain is separate from the body.
- People all over the world, both religious and non-religious have believed in life after death since the earliest times.

The case against life after death

- Scientific evidence shows that when the body dies, everything decays.
- No one has returned from the dead to tell us.
- The end of life means exactly that, it is illogical to speak about life after death.
- Life-support machines prove the brain dies before the body

Explain why Christians believe in Life after Death

- The **resurrection** of Jesus for Christians proves that there is life after death.
- Jesus tells Christians they will be brought back to life in John 11:25.
- Jesus teaches that he is the key to eternal life. (John 3:16-17)
- St.Paul teaches about life after death and how the body will be transformed from a physical body to a spiritual one when it is raised. (1 Corinthians 15:20, 35-8, 42-4)

Outline different Christian views on Life after Death

- Some Christians believe that after death the body will stay in the grave, but the soul will be taken straight to God. This is known as **Immortality of the Soul**.
- Some Christians believe in the **Resurrection**, that after death the body stays in the grave til the **Day of Judgement**. When everyone will be raised from the dead and be judged by God.

Choose one religion other than Christianity and explain why its followers believe in Life after Death

- Muslims believe in Life after Death because
 1. The Qur'an teaches that there is life after death. Muslims believe that the Qur'an is the word of God.
 2. Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) taught there is life after death. Muslims believe Muhammad is the final messenger of God. Therefore they must believe whatever he taught.

3. Belief in the Life after Death is one of the six **Articles of Faith** Muslims must believe in.
4. Many Muslims believe in life after death because it gives their life meaning and purpose.

Choose one religion other than Christianity and outline its teachings about life after death

- Many Muslims believe that the soul stays with the body until the Last Day.
- Many Muslims believe that the soul will be questioned by angels and either rewarded or punished in the grave.
- Muslims believe that people will be questioned on the Day of Judgement. They will then will then enter wither heaven or hell.
- Some Muslims also believe that the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) will also enter heaven.

Abortion

Outline British Law on abortion

The 1967 Abortion Act states that an abortion can be carried out if two doctors agree that:

1. The mothers life is at risk
2. There is a risk of injury to the mother's physical or mental state
3. There is a risk that the child might be born seriously handicapped

The 1990 Act states that abortion cannot take place after 24 weeks, unless the mother's life is at risk.

Non-religious arguments in favour

- A woman has the right to chose.
- A child's quality of life is important.
- A mother's health and welfare are more important then that of her unborn child.
- There are too many people on the planet.

Non-religious arguments against

- It's a form of murder.
- Everyone has the right to be born so they can reach their full potential.
- All life has value,

Explain why there are different attitudes to abortion in Christianity

- **Roman Catholics** and some **Evangelical** Christians believe that life begins at conception so abortion is murder and a a serious sin.
- Christian teachings on the **Sanctity of life** means every human has the right to a life (even a foetus).
- **Some** Christians believe that abortion in certain circumstances may be the kindest and most loving action. They refer to **Jesus'** teaching that love is the most important thing.

Outline the different attitudes to abortion in one religion other than Christianity

1. All Muslims believe abortion is wrong and should be avoided. However, it is permitted up to 120 days in extreme circumstances. For example when the mother's life or health is at risk or if the health of the child is at risk.
 - **Muslims believe this because the Hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad say the foetus receives the soul after 120 days and only then becomes a human being.**
2. Some Muslims believe that abortion is never acceptable.

- They say this because they say that life begins at conception.
3. Some Muslims believe that abortion is only correct if the mother's life is at risk.

Euthanasia

Non- religious arguments in favour

- Suicide is legal, so why not help someone who cannot commit suicide themselves,
- If animal were suffering, we have it put down as its the most humane thing to do.
- It is their life they have should have the right to end it if they want to.
- Its not fair for the relatives to have to watch their loved one dying painfully.

Non- religious arguments against

- Drugs can be used for pain control.
- **Euthanasia** is just a fancy word for murder.
- Doctor's take an oath to save life, it is wrong to ask them to kill people.
- People can better or medical science might find a cure for them.

Christian teachings

- Christians believe that God created everything and that humans were created in his image. So life is holy, this is known as the **Sanctity of Life**.
- Jesus accepted his suffering and death and never tried to escape from it, so Christians believe that this teaches them to preserve and cherish life.
- God tells us not to kill in the **Ten Commandments**.

Different attitudes to Euthanasia

- Some Christians accept that doctors can give drugs to relieve suffering even if this shortens a patient's life.
- Christians are divided over on the issue of switching off life-support machines. Many believe it is acceptable if the patient is brain dead.
- Some Christians believe that doctors should not carry out expensive treatments that only prolong a poor quality of life but do not aid recovery.
- There other Christians who say life is precious and everything should be done to prolong it.

Muslim Teachings

- All Muslims are against euthanasia. They believe this because the Qur'an says that "Only God gives and takes life." It also forbids murder.
- Most Muslims do not consider switching off the life machine the same as euthanasia.

Keywords:

Paranormal- unexplained things which are thought to have spiritual causes, e.g. ghosts and mediums

Heaven- a place of paradise where God rules

Hell-a place of horrors where Satan rules

Immortality of the soul- the idea that the soul lives on after the death of the body

Resurrection- the belief that, after death, the body stays in the grave until the end of the world when it is raised

Abortion- the removal of a foetus from the womb before it can survive

Assisted suicide- providing a seriously ill person with the means to commit suicide

Euthanasia- an easy and gentle death

Non-voluntary euthanasia- ending someone's life painlessly when they are unable to ask, but you have good reason for thinking they would want you to do so, e.g. switching of a life support machine

Voluntary euthanasia- the situation where someone dying in pain asks a doctor to end his/her life personally

Sanctity of life- the belief that life is holy and belongs to God

Contraception- preventing conception from occurring

Marriage and family life

Keywords

Cohabitation

Living together and not married

Marriage

Man and woman legally joined so they can have children

Pre-marital sex

Sex before marriage

Promiscuity

Sex with multiple partners but no relationship

Adultery

Sex with someone other than your marital partner

Faithfulness

Staying true to your marital partner and only having sex with them

Re-marriage

Marrying again after a divorce

Nuclear family

Mam, dad and children living together as a unit

Extended family

Children parents/ grandparents/aunts and uncles living as a unit or close by

Reconstituted family

Where two sets of children (stepbrother/sisters) become one family when their divorced parents marry each other.



Changing attitudes towards cohabitation and marriage

50 years ago most people only had sex in marriage, and they married in a church. Today, most people have sex before they marry, fewer people marry, cohabitating is acceptable and only a minority of marriages take place in a church

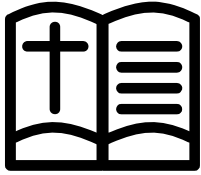
Christians and sex outside of marriage

* Remember that when you answer an exam question on this sex **OUTSIDE** of marriage refers to pre-marital sex **and** adultery

PRE-MARITAL SEX

Most Christians believe sex before marriage is wrong because

- Sex was given to humans by god for the purpose of having children. It should only happen between married couples
- The bible teaches that fornication (sex before marriage) is wrong
- All churches say sex before marriage is a sin



Some christens think that sex before marriage is alright as long as the couple love each other and are in a long term relationship and have the intention of getting married. They believe this because:

- Jesus taught that love is the most important thing
- The church has come to term with modern life

Extra-martial sex (adultery)

All Christians think adultery is wrong because

- It breaks the wedding vows
- It breaks one of the ten commandments



Islam and sex outside of marriage

Pr-marital sex

Islam does not allow any sex before marriage and boys and girls are separated at puberty. This is because

- Sex before marriage is condemned in the Qur'an
- The Qur'an says boys and girls should be separated after puberty
- Sex was given to humans by god for the purpose of having children. It should only happen between married couples so that children are born into a family

Extra-marital sex

All Muslims believe that adultery is wrong because:

- It is condemned by God in the Qur'an
- It breaks the marriage contract
- Islam says that family is very important, and adultery would damage it.



Purpose of marriage in Christianity

Christians regard marriage as a gift from god, but they do not have to marry

Live together in love



Have children



Purposes of marriage in Christianity

Create a Christian family

Comfort and companionship



Priest welcomes the couple and outlines the purposes of marriage

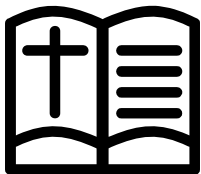


Exchanges of Vows



Main features of a Christian wedding

Bible readings and talk On the duties of Marriage



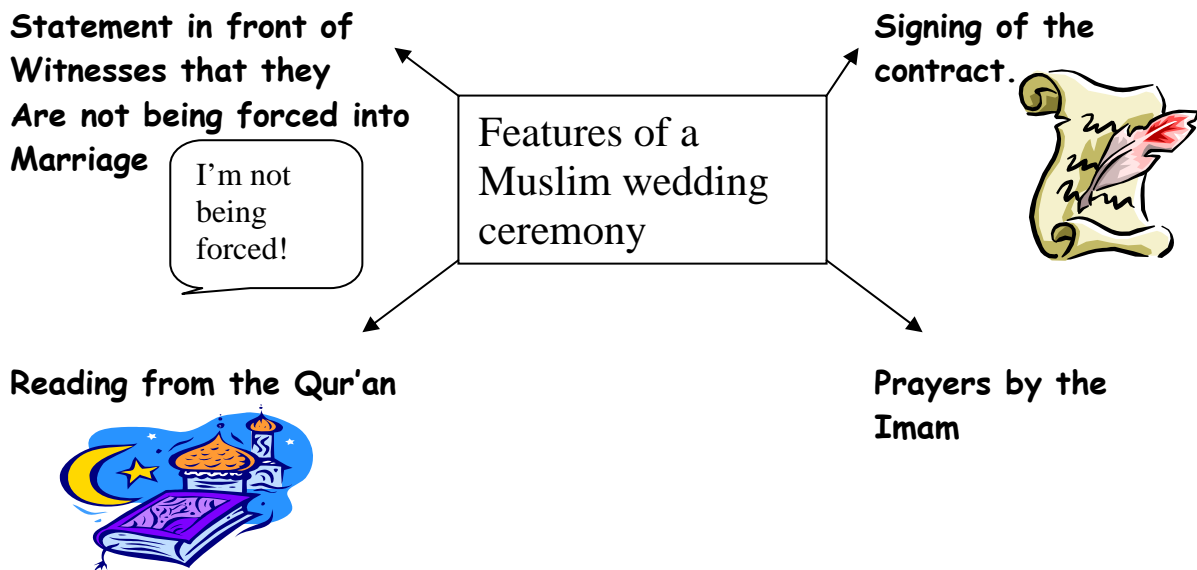
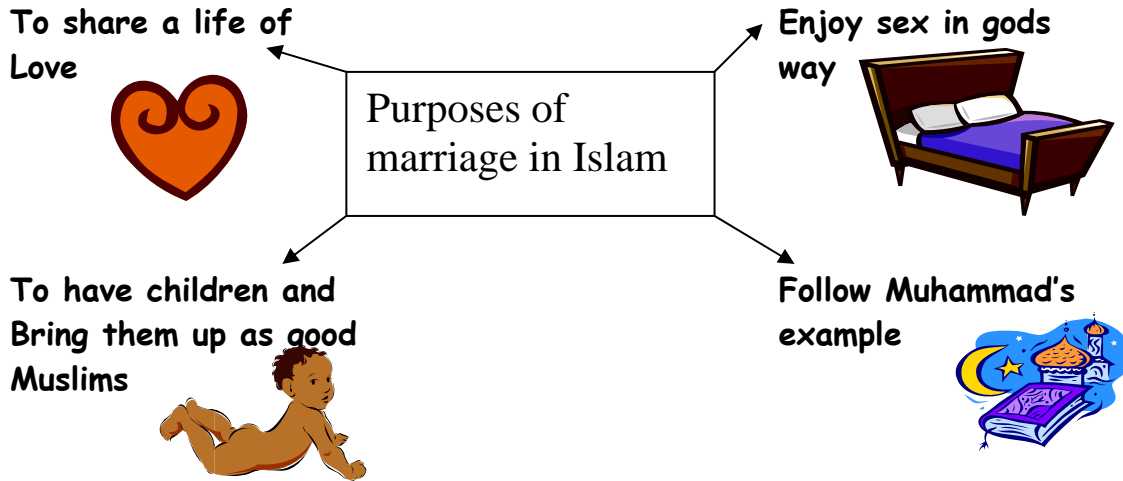
Exchange of rings



Prayers asking For gods help in The marriage

Purposes of marriage in Islam

All Muslims are expected to marry because the prophet Muhammad was married



Changing attitudes towards divorce

50 years ago there were few divorces, people were looked down on if they divorced and re-marriage was rare. Today divorce is accepted as normal, two in five marriages end in divorce and re-marriage is normal. The changes have happened because divorce is easier and cheaper and women have gained a more equal life.

Christian attitudes towards divorce

There are two different attitudes towards in divorce in Christianity

1. Some Christians (**Roman Catholics**) believe there can be no divorce because marriage is a sacrament where the couple promise to stay together until death
*Catholics do allow annulments if it can be shown that the marriage never really existed, but there can be no divorce. Catholics who have divorced are not allowed to remarry
2. Most **protestant** and **Orthodox** Christians disapprove of divorce but believe that if the marriage goes wrong and there is no chance of bringing the couple back together, then there can be divorce. These Christians allow remarriage of divorced people after a talk with the minister or priest about how they will make sure that the marriage works this time.

Christians have different attitudes towards divorce because they interpret the bible differently and disagree about whether marriage is a sacrament.

The **Catholic Church** does not allow divorce because:

- Jesus banned divorce
- When people marry they make a covenant with god which cannot be broken without gods consent, therefore a couple can never be divorced

Other Christians allow divorce because:

- God is always prepared to forgive sins
- In Matthews gospel Jesus allowed divorce for adultery

Islam and divorce

Islam allows divorce, but Muslims have different attitudes towards divorce

1. Some Muslims think that marriage is for life and divorce should not Happen
2. Most Muslims allow divorce but they believe there has to be a period of three months (iddah) when a couple try to restore their marriage. If this fails, they are divorced and can remarry.

There are different attitudes because of different interpretations of the hadith

Some Muslims disagree with divorce because:

- There is a hadith which says God does not like divorce
- Divorce causes family problems when marriage are arranged

Most Muslims agree with divorce because

- Marriage is a contract so it can be ended
- The Qur'an allows divorce and sets out regulations about it.

Changing nature of family life

Family life has changed as attitudes towards sex and divorce have changed. In the 1960's normal family life involved a nuclear family
But today

- There are many single parent families (because the mother has divorced)
- In some families the mother and father are not married
- There are more reconstituted families
- And as more women go out to work grandparents are involved in looking after the family

Christian teachings on family life

All Christians believe that children should be brought up in a family with a mother and a father. The main Christian teachings on family life are:

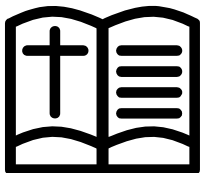


- Christian parents should love their children and provide them with food and clothes
- Christian parents should set their children a good example by going to church and encouraging them to be baptised.
- Christian children should obey and respect their parents
- Christian children should look after their parents if they are no longer able to look after themselves.



Why family life is important to Christians

- The bible has many references to the importance of family life
- Christian marriage services refer to founding a family and bringing children up in a Christian environment are major purposes of marriage
- Christians believe marriage was created by god to keep society together
- Christians see family as the basis of society



Islamic teaching on family life

Islam teaches that children should be brought up in a family with a mother and a father. The main Islamic teaching on family life are:

- Parents have a duty to look after their children
- Both parents have a duty to make sure children learn about Islam and become good Muslims
- Muslim parents must keep an Halal home
- Children must respect their parents
- children should look after their parents if they are no longer able to look after themselves



Why family life is important in Islam

- the family was created by god to keep society together
- It's the way god wants children to be brought up
- The family is the place where children learnt about Islam
- The Qur'an says children are a gift from God and parents will be judged on how well they bring their children up.
- Muhammad was married and had a family so Muslims should follow his example



Church schools provide
A Christian education

Sunday schools
where children
Can learn right
From wrong

Infant baptism where
Parents dedicate their
Children to god

Church helps with
the upbringing of
children

Marriage
guidance classes



Family services at Christmas and
Easter bringing families together

Youth clubs to get a
Christian social life



Madrasah so you read
And write Arabic

Separate clubs for
boys and girls

Mosque and the
upbringing of
children



Family committees which
Can help with family problems

Muslim schools
Learn even more
About Islam



Test yourself

5. a) What is an extended family? (2)
b) State Christian teachings about sex outside marriage. (6)
c) Explain why family life is important in *one religion other than Christianity*. (8)
d) 'Living together is better than getting married.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion, showing that you have considered another point of view. In your answer you should refer to at least one religion.

(4)

- 6.a) What is meant by 'cohabitation'? (2)
b) Outline attitudes to divorce in *one religion other than Christianity*
c) Explain how a Christian marriage ceremony may help a marriage to succeed. (8)
d) 'Without religion, family life would collapse.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion, showing that you have considered another point of view. In your answer you should refer to at least one religion.

(4)



Social Harmony

Keywords

Equality

The state of everyone having equal right regardless of age/race/gender

Sexism

Discriminating on the grounds of gender

Multi-ethnic society

Many different races and cultures living together in one society

Multi-faith society

Many different religions living together in one place

Prejudice

Believing some people are inferior or superior without even knowing them

Discrimination

Acting on your prejudice



Racism	The belief that some races are better than others
Racial harmony	Different ethnic groups living together peacefully
Religious freedom	the right to practice whatever religion you want
Religious pluralism	accepting all religion have equal rights

The growth of equal rights for women

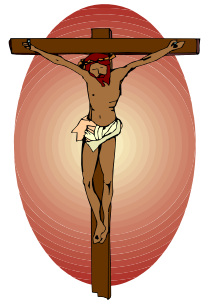
During the 20th century women gained the right to vote and to have equal pay with men. Men and women now have equal rights in the united Kingdom.

Christian attitudes towards the role of men and women

Traditional attitudes



- Many evangelical Protestants believe men and women have different roles. Men should be the head of the family and women should not speak in church or be priests. They believe this because:
- St Paul said women could not speak in church
- Genesis said Adam was created first
- All of Jesus' followers were male this because



Modern roles

Many protestants teach that men and women have equal roles in life and religion and they can be priests. They believe this because;

- Genesis 1 said men and women were created at the same time
- St Paul said men and women are equal
- Jesus treated men and women equally and he did have women followers
- Jesus women followers were the only people to stay with him for his crucifixion and women were the first ones to see him when he rose from the dead

Catholic roles

The Catholic Church teaches that men and women should have equal roles because men and women have equal status in the eyes of god. Women can be religious teachers and ministers but cannot be priests. They believe this because:

- Genesis 1 say that men and women were created at the same time
- The church teaches that men and women are equal
- Jesus only choose men to be his successors
- Jesus was a man and the priest represents Jesus at the Mass.



Islam and the roles of men and women

Traditional roles

Some Muslims believe men and women have different roles in life. Men should support the family, while women have children and bring them up. Both men and women have the duty to bring them up as good Muslims.

They believe this because:

- The Qur'an teaches that god made women to have children and made men stronger than women- so they should provide
- These are the roles shown in the Shari'ah



Modern roles

Some Muslims believe that men and women should have equal roles in religion and education and that women can have a career. However they believe family commitments must come first. They believe this because:

- The Qur'an teaches that men and women are equal in religion and education
- Muhammad would let women worship in the mosque

Britain as a multi-ethnic society

Britain is a multi-ethnic society where racial discrimination is banned. Multi-ethnic societies tend to advance more quickly because they have a greater variety of ideas. A multi-ethnic society needs equal opportunities and treatment to work and so prejudice and discrimination cause major problems. The UK has the race relations Act and the commission for racial equality to promote racial harmony.

Less chance of war
Because different races
Will get to know each
other

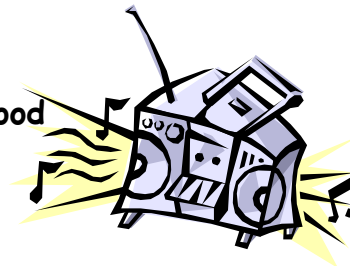


**Benefits of a
multi-ethnic
society**

More progress as
new people will
bring new ideas



Greater variety of food
Music and clothes



Christianity and racial harmony

The Christian church has members from every race. Over 50% of the world is Christian and 70% of Christians are non-white. Christians should try and promote racial harmony because:

- Jesus treated people of different races equally
- In the parable of the good Samaritan Jesus showed that races who hated each other should love each other as neighbours
- St Peter had a vision from god, telling him that God has no favourites among the races
- God created all races in his image



Islam and racial Harmony

Islam has members in most ethnic groups and teaches that all Muslims form one community, the UMMAH. It teaches that any form of racism is wrong and Muslims in the U>k should work to bring about racial harmony.

Muslims should promote racial harmony because:

- God made all races on earth and so people should give each other equal respect
- Muhammad said on his last sermon that no colour is superior to any other
- Muhammad told Muslims they are one community who should treat each other as brothers

How to Answer Exam Questions

(a) DEFINITION QUESTIONS – 2 marks

Write a complete sentence or two – give a brief example if needed.
Do not write any more than this.

(b) DESCRIBE/OUTLINE/STATE – 6 marks

Do not explain or debate. Do not give your opinion, just give a straightforward description. Read the question carefully – if it says outline attitudes it means more than one e.g. the Anglican and Roman Catholic views etc. You are telling the examiner WHAT someone does or believes – – that is all – it is very factual.

(c) EXPLANATION QUESTIONS – 8 marks

You must go beyond describing and explain your answer. Tell the examiner **WHO** you are talking about (e.g. Methodists, Roman Catholics), **WHAT** they believe or do (e.g. against abortion) and **WHY** they believe that (e.g. give a Bible quote to back up their beliefs). Do not include your own opinion. If the question asks why Christians have different opinions – start your answer with ‘There are different opinions because people interpret the Bible differently’. This will gain you marks even if you know nothing else!

(d) EVALUATION QUESTIONS – 4 marks

You should have 4 paragraphs with 4 different arguments.

Start with some people agree because ...

Other people agree because...

However, some people disagree because ...

I disagree – come to a personal conclusion

The agrees/disagrees can be changed around.

This is the **ONLY** question where the examiner is interested in what **YOU** think!

In all cases make sure you remember to use appropriate religious vocabulary (key words) wherever possible.

REMEMBER

- Read the question
- Think about what you are going to write
- Write for **no more than** 1 minute per mark
- Never generalise. **REMEMBER NOT ALL CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THE SAME THING ALL OF THE TIME!**