

**GCSE Religious Studies**  
**Thematic Studies**  
**Theme A: Relationships**  
**and families**



# Sex and contraception

## Christian beliefs on Sexual Relationships

Strict Christians such as Catholics believe that: There should be no sex before marriage because St. Paul taught the body is holy **“Your body is a temple of the holy spirit”** and by indulging in casual sex you are damaging your body.

They also believe that God ‘married’ Adam and Eve – he **“blessed them”** before he told them to multiply so sex before marriage is wrong.

**Sex within marriage** is for unitive, uniting the couple as **“one flesh”**. It is also for the purpose of creating children within a stable relationship.

Although some Christians think:

It is all right just to live together if it is a **permanent** commitment in loving and monogamous relationship.

## All Christians believe that:

**Adultery** is wrong because it breaks the 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment **“Do not commit adultery”** **Lust** is one of the 7 deadly sins and people should restrain themselves. St. Paul said if you cannot restrain your lustful thoughts you should get married – this is one of the purposes of marriage.

Muslims believe that:

It is the duty of ALL Muslims to marry and have children. The Prophet Muhammad spoke of sex being special within marriage; both as a source of pleasure and a way to make children.

The Quran has specific punishments for those who have sex outside before marriage such as flogging.

## Contraception

Catholics are **against** artificial **contraception** because:

- God told Adam and Eve to have children *“Go forth and multiply”*
- One of the purposes of marriage to have children & bring them up as Christians
- The Bible teaches about the sin of Onan – who was meant to have sex in order to have children but allowed his “seed to spill on the ground”. God was cross about this and so killed him.
- It is up to God whether you have a child or not so interfering with God’s plan would be wrong – a baby is a gift from God
- However Catholics will allow **Natural** contraception such as the Rhythm Method

**Other Christians** say contraception can be used if both parties agree in order to stop poverty through too many people in the world – a child should be wanted. But although contraception can prevent STD’s they also believe the use of contraception can encourage casual sex and so is wrong.

**For Muslims;** although all Islamic teachings encourage all Muslims to have children, contraception is seen as acceptable in certain circumstances. If pregnancy would harm the health of the mother, the couple has had children and agreed to have no more or if the parents simply feel they could not properly look after a child.



Comparison to modern British views: Generally sex before marriage is seen as acceptable provided it is above the age of consent. It is seen as a way of expressing love or getting to know a person better before making the commitment of marriage. Contraception as a way to avoid pregnancy or STIs is encouraged.

# Why marry?

Although the Bible contains the teaching “Do not pair up with an unbeliever” many Christians have no issue with marrying someone out of their faith.

The Bible teaches that the main reason to marry is because you love that person and want to begin a committed sexual relationship with them.

However, often people of faith try and marry someone with the same or very similar beliefs as otherwise there may be conflicts around religious rituals or sacraments such as Baptism or learning the Quran.

## Christianity - purpose/Reasons of Marriage

- **First** – to have children and bring them up to love God – this stresses the importance of the family.
- **Second** – to stop people having casual sex.
- **Third** – so that people can love and look after each other (mutual comfort – ‘*one flesh*’). Eve was created because Adam was lonely.
- Fourth - for God to bless your relationship or because it is believe to be a sacrament.

## Importance of Marriage for Christians.

- Marriage should be taken seriously and be a commitment for life.
- It should be monogamous (monogamy = one partner) and that the partners should be faithful.
- Marriage is important because God blessed (married) Adam and Eve before he told them to go and have children
- Marriage is the uniting of a couple as ‘*one flesh*’; this is the reason why God created Eve for Adam as a companion and for them to be together as a new family unit
- Marriage symbolises the relationship between Christ and Church
- Jesus showed that marriage was important when he said that no-one should come between a husband and wife “**let no man separate**”
- Jesus showed weddings to be important when he turned the water into wine at the wedding in Cana (his first miracle)

## For Muslims

For Muslims it is very important to marry someone of the same religion, especially men. This is because it is seen as the responsibility of the mother to teach children about their religion, and this would not happen if she is not a believer.

In Islam marriage is seen as a contract between two people. As such compatibility and agreement between two families is seen as better reason for marriage than love.

Comparison to modern British attitudes: The number of people getting married has been falling, this reflects the idea that marriage is not necessary for sex or commitment with many couples choosing to cohabit (live together) instead. However, it when people do marry the attitude is that it should be a public declaration of love.

# How to marry

## What about arrange marriage?

Many Muslims accept [arranged marriages](#), where parents are involved in the selection of a suitable marriage partner for their adult child, because: the family has a say in the choice of whom their son or daughter will marry the families can get to know each other and feel comfortable with the union

### Christian wedding ceremony.

- It is held in **church** (God's house) so that God can witness the special promises/the **vows** which are:
  - ❖ to be faithful,
  - ❖ follow God's wishes about marriage,
  - ❖ & to love each other forever.
- The vicar asks for the consent of the couple and also of the congregation (is there any lawful reason this couple should not be married)
- The rings are exchange and are a symbol of eternal love.
- The bride wears a white dress to show she has not had sex before marriage
- Sometimes a Mass or Eucharist is held at the end of the service to show that this ceremony is a **SACRAMENT**.
- The couple will sign a legal document called the marriage register for the ceremony to be recognised.



### Islam

- Traditionally Muslim wedding ceremonies last up to 5 days however the ceremony itself is only on one day.
- It is called the **“nikkah”** and performed by and Imam or religious teacher (in the UK this person would need to be able registered and licensed to perform the ceremony for the marriage to legally recognised).
- The groom has to declare a **“mahr”** – basically a payment given to the bride, and this can be anything she asks for such as money, clothes or a house. The groom can pay this over time but is not allowed to take it away.
- The ceremony is up to the couple although provided she consents the bride does not have to be there. The Imam will ask for any objections. The couple may make their own vows. The couple will have signed contracts in advance and these are exchanged. The Imam may give a short speech and/or readings from the Quran.
- The Bride will be asked to consent 3 times.
- At some point the couple will need to sign the marriage register for it to be legal.

Modern British weddings: While marriage in the Church is still popular you can get married anywhere which has a license to carry out the ceremony such as a beach, hotel or converted barn. Ceremonies are generally up to couples but many are influenced by the traditional Christian ceremony.

# The family

**The family is important for many reasons. There is evidence that societies that have stable families are happier, better educated and have less crime than societies where families are broken. Modern British Society views families as important for raising children and will accept a variety of different types of families, however polygamous marriages are still illegal and generally seen as unacceptable by many.**

## Religious views on the roles of the family

**Most Christians agree that** families are loving partnerships where all are respected. The bible teaches that children **“obey”** their parents, however parents are expected to give their child love and compassion. The Bible also teaches that children care for their parents “honour thy mother and father” so Christians will often provide care for elderly relatives.

**The Traditional view:** Men should be the ones who go to work to provide for family; while the wife stays at home to look after children. This is because men were considered be more important. Adam was created first and Eve was made as his **“helper”**. St. Paul taught wives should **“obey”** their husbands.

- **A more modern Christian view:** Men and women have different roles, it does not matter who goes out to work, because they are equally important because they are both made in the image of God.
- Jesus treated women the same as men (the story of Martha & Mary shows that Jesus was prepared to “teach” women).

## Roles of men and women in Islam

Islamic law and practice recognise the differences between the sexes, resulting in different roles and obligations for men and women. However, many Muslims believe that men and women complement each other. The [Qur'an](#) states: “O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another.” *Qur'an 49:13*

In many Islamic societies, the woman's role is in the home and the man's role is in the public realm of the working world.

The Qur'an and the [Hadith](#) refer to the biological differences that mean men are generally physically stronger than women. Men, therefore, are regarded as protectors of women and families, and providers of financial support. Women are expected to have children and to fulfil the role of wife and mother.

## Protection and nurturing

Many Muslims believe that family life is the foundation of human society providing a secure, healthy and nurturing environment for parents and growing children. The best place to pass on and develop human virtues such as love, kindness, mercy and compassion is in a family.

The family unit should encourage the individual to see themselves as part of a wider community and should discourage anti-social behaviour. Many Muslims believe that these values are not just for the benefit of individual families, but also the worldwide Islamic community, the **Ummah**.

# Gender equality

- Roles of Men & Women in the Church
- There are different attitudes within the different Churches/denominations:
- Catholics believe that women should not be Priests:
  - the twelve Apostles of Jesus were men
  - the priest at Mass takes on the role of Christ blessing the bread and wine and because Christ was a man a woman cannot take on this role
  - Eve was the first to sin thus showing that women are weaker than men
  - St. Paul said that women should be silent in church
- However although they do not accept that women should take a teaching or leadership role within the church, they still believe women can do other things in the church. **Protestants** believe women should have the same role as men in the church:
  - Jesus had women followers
  - At his resurrection Jesus appeared first to women (Mary Magdalene)
  - In his letters to the early Church, St. Paul praised Priscilla for her work in the church
  - In his letter to the Galatians St. Paul said that everyone was equal in the eyes of God.
- Although the Church of England now allows the ordination (making of) women as priests/vicars, they are still divided on whether women should be Bishops. Some Church of England vicars have left the church because there are now women vicars.

## Muslim Attitudes towards women

Islam also teaches that men and women are equal in the sight of **Allah**. They are individually accountable for their actions, and will be judged equally by Allah.

However, although men and women are equal, they are not the same. They have different purposes. Some of these differences and responsibilities are mentioned in the following words from the **Qur'an**:

❖ *“O Prophet, direct thy wives and daughters and the women of the believers that they should pull down their outer cloaks from their heads over their faces. This will make it possible for them to be distinguished so that they will not be molested.”* **Surah 33:59**

❖ *“Wives have rights corresponding to those which the husbands have, in equitable reciprocity, though, in certain situations men would have the final word and would thus enjoy a preference.”* **Surah 2:229**

❖ *“Men are appointed guardians over women, because of that in respect of which Allah has made some of them excel others”* **Surah 4:35**

Although the rights of women are different to those of men, they do have the right to choose whom they marry, to **divorce**, to study, to own property, to conduct business and to take part in politics.

The **Prophet Muhammad** stressed the importance of women and the respect that should be shown to them when he said: **Paradise lies at the feet of your mother. (Sunan An-Nasa'i).**

## Responses to Civil Partnerships & Gay Marriage

A Civil partnership is the name given to the ceremony which allows same sex couples to be married “in the eyes of the law”. The ceremony has no religious significance. Gay marriage is the same as a heterosexual marriage except between two people of the same gender and give them the same rights a married couples. Religious buildings or leaders do not have to perform a gay marriage if it does not agree with their beliefs.

- **Catholics** are against civil partnerships & gay marriage because
  - They believe homosexual activity is wrong because it is condemned in the Bible: “Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable” (Leviticus 18:22)
  - The Old Testament says that if people commit the sin of homosexuality they should be put to death.
  - St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians said that a homosexual would not go to heaven.
  - Catholics also believe that civil partnerships are making a mockery of marriage – God created Adam and Eve to be “one flesh”.
- **Some Christians** might agree with civil partnerships & gay marriage because:
  - God creates everyone (in his image) and therefore he must have created homosexuals – it is the way they are born (genes). Therefore Christians should not condemn them.
  - Some believe that the couple can love each other but should be celibate (not carry out the sexual act of homosexuality).
- The **Quakers** will allow homosexual couples in their church

Muslims do not support civil marriage or gay marriage as they believe [homosexuality](#) is [haram](#) (forbidden). They believe marriage is a contract between a man and woman which has the potential to create children.

Modern British attitudes are that a gay marriages and civil partnerships are a good thing. It enables people who are gay to make commitments to each other, celebrate their love and have the potential to begin a family either through adoption or other means.

It was also considered a form of discrimination to deny marriage to two people on the grounds of their sexuality.

## Divorce and remarriage

Divorce is the legal ending of marriage. If you wish to marry again you will have to prove your marriage has been legally ended.

### Some Christians believe divorce is wrong

- The Old Testament says that *“God hates divorce”*
- Jesus taught that no-one should break up a marriage: *“let no man separate”*
- God blesses the marriage and the **vows**/promises were made in front of God and should be kept no matter what the circumstances: *To love & to cherish; for richer or poorer; for better or worse; in sickness or health; till death us do part.*
- St. Paul taught *“a man must not divorce his wife”*

### Catholics are against divorce because

- Marriage is a sacrament – it is a sacred act blessed by God and only God can undo it.
- If the couple want to they can live apart but if they start to have a sexual relationship with someone else they are breaking their marriage vows .
- They do accept an **annulment** - saying that the marriage never happened. The Pope has to agree for this to happen and it can only happen if:
  - one of the partners did not understand what was happening
  - one of the partners cannot fulfil the duties of marriage
  - if the marriage was not consummated (the couple has not had sex). This is because Catholics believe the marriage is not a proper marriage until sex has taken place – the couple has become “one flesh”.

### Some Christian beliefs allow divorce:

The Old Testament teaches that a man can divorce his wife if she commits adultery

Jesus said that because it says this in the Old Testament divorce was allowed for adultery. However he also you would be committing adultery if you married someone else whilst your partner was still alive.

Some Churches allow it if marriage is completely broken down (abuse etc.)– they see divorce as a necessary evil and an act of compassion “love your neighbour”.



## Remarriage is getting married again after your first marriage has been legally ended.

### What does Islam say about divorce and remarriage?

Although it is not encouraged, most Muslims agree that divorce is permitted if a marriage has broken down, and generally Muslims are permitted to re-marry if they so wish.

However, there are differences between Muslims about the procedures for divorce and remarriage:

- [Sunni](#) Muslims do not require witnesses. The husband must express his desire for a divorce on three separate occasions with a waiting period of three months.
- [Shi'ah](#) Muslims require two witnesses, followed by a waiting period before a marriage can end.
- If a woman initiates a divorce it is called **khula**. There must be a waiting period to ensure the woman is not pregnant.

Although [Shari'ah Law](#) permits divorce, in the [Hadith](#), [Abdullah ibn Umar](#) reported that the [Prophet Muhammad](#) said, The most detestable of lawful things before Allah is divorce. So although divorce is allowed, Muslims should try to avoid it, if possible.

This means that many Muslims who experience marital difficulties will try to resolve their issues. It is also because they have made a contract before God, called a **nikah**, to remain together for life and divorce would mean breaking that contract.

### What does this mean in practice?

A couple can go to their [mosque](#) for advice and support from the [Imam](#) if they are experiencing marital problems. However, in some situations a couple might feel divorce is their only option.

## Remarriage in a Church – blessed by God

### Reasons for remarriage in a Church

- Everyone makes mistakes and Jesus taught that Christians should forgive; also God forgives: *the parable of the Lost Son/Lost Sheep*
- The couple will work harder at the marriage this time
- Maybe the divorce was not the fault of one of the partners – e.g. abuse so the wronged partner is allowed happiness



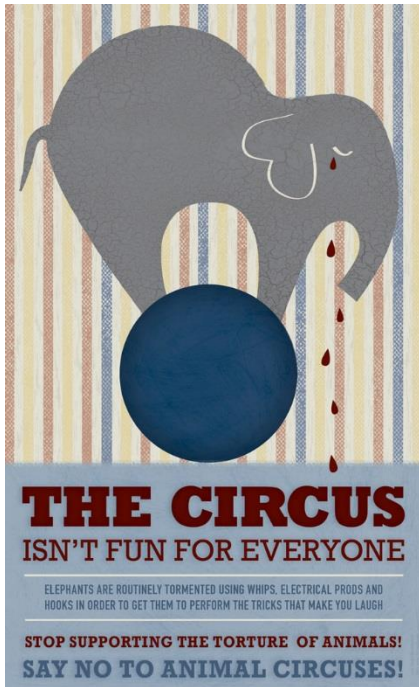
### Reasons against remarriage in a Church

- Marriage is seen as a sacrament – a special holy union and so it should be up to God to break up the marriage by death – not for the couple to change their mind and want to marry someone else.
- Jesus was against divorce “*let no man separate*” so therefore it shouldn’t happen
- Jesus taught that if you marry someone else while your first partner is alive this is adultery (7<sup>th</sup> commandment)
- The promises were made in front of God and therefore it is an insult to break them and make them with someone else
- Christians should work at a marriage – they should remember their vows.

# GCSE Religious Studies

## Thematic Studies

### Theme B: Religion and Life



**the BIG**  
**BANG**  
**THEORY**



# The Origins of life: Science vs religion.

In the **Genesis** story God created the world and every living thing in 6 days and rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> and when it was complete he **& “saw that it was good”**. According to the story **& “God created mankind in his own image”** they were then **“blessed”** by God.

## Different interpretations

**Creationist** – A few Christians take the Genesis story literally and believe that God created the world in literally 6 days. They believe that fossils are tricks from the Devil to tempt people away from God.

**Intelligent Design** – Many Christians say that the Bible story is a simplified story with a true meaning. These Christians believe that God created the scientific processes which allowed for the Big Bang and Evolution. It was always God’s plan that humans would evolve and God intervened to make sure this happened. These Christians point to the complexity of the human eye and central nervous system and use it as evidence that a system this complex would not have been able to evolve on its own.

**Metaphor** – Most Christians accept scientific explanations such as the Big Bang and evolution. They take the view that the Genesis story is just a story but its meaning is true. It doesn’t matter how the world was created, but that it was created and God is ultimately responsible for all existence.

## Scientific accounts

Many Christians accept scientific accounts of creation: that the Universe began with the Big Bang and human beings then evolved over a very long period of time.

Evidence for the Big Bang – stars are currently still all moving away from each other, showing that the Universe is expanding. The discovery of the Higgs-Boson particle supports mathematical models of the Big Bang.

Evidence for evolution – fossils of early human like animals and evolution can be observed in animals like fruit flies.

## AWE AND WONDER

“The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders” Christians look at the variety, majesty and beauty of many places in the world and see it as evidence of the power of God and it inspires a sense of awe.

- Places of wonder include- The Grand Canyon, Mount Everest.
- For many Christians who are also Scientists seeing the natural wonders of the world inspires them to discover more about God’s creation. They believe that God created the world and by understanding it they can better understand God. For them it also helps prove God’s existence.
- For example: The Golden Ratio 1.61803398875
- This is a mathematical formula that exists in nature for example; stalks of wheat, the nautilus shell, a human face and a dolphin’s body all conform to the Golden Ratio. A more apt description of the Golden Ratio might be beauty. Because it exists some religious people say it points to an evidence of designer who created a set of laws that underpin all of existence. For Christians this inspires awe and wonder.

# Stewardship

**Stewardship – The belief that all of creation belongs to God and we are stewards or caretakers who have the duty to care for it.**

1. God made humans to be special, we are 'like' God.

**So God created Human beings, making them to be like himself. He created the male and female, blessed them, and said, 'have many children, so that your descendents will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals. I have provided all kinds of grain and all kinds of fruit for you to eat; but for all the wild animals and birds I have provided grass and leafy plants for food ' – and it was done... the Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it.**

2. Human beings are to live all over the planet and we can control what happens to it.

3. There is enough food for all humans but animals are given their own food.

4. 'Cultivate' means to grow. So we should grow nature and guard it e.g. not destroy it.

So basically – God created just the right environment for every living thing (3). Only human beings have the ability to alter that balance if we choose to (1 & 2). However, at the same time we must be take responsibility for our actions and obey God's instruction (4).

One example of a Christian organisation that works for stewardship

**A Rocha UK is a Christian charity working for the protection and restoration of the natural world.**

This is our response to the biblical mandate to care for the earth, and a demonstration of the Christian hope for God's world. We do this through:

- practical involvement in nature conservation projects and ecological research;
- campaigning on biodiversity issues;
- engaging with churches, schools, communities and individuals.

Part of the worldwide family of A Rocha organisations committed to conservation action as an expression of Christian mission, we work collaboratively with others who share our passion for the planet and our desire for its flourishing.

# Islam and Creation

## What accounts of the origins of the universe are found in Islam?

Islam is very clear about the belief that [Allah](#) was responsible for the creation of the universe. There is no single story of creation, but there are references to it in many places in the [Qur'an](#). From these it is possible to build a picture:

- Allah is eternal, and so not bound by the constraints of time.
- Allah decided to create the universe and because of His unlimited power and authority He commanded things to come into being.
- Allah then made all living creatures, the [angels](#), the planets and the rain to allow vegetation to grow.
- Allah sent angels to Earth to collect seven handfuls of soil, all different colours, and that with soil Allah made the first man, Adam, breathing life and power into him.
- Eve, the first woman, was created from the side of Adam and lived with him in [Paradise](#).
- Adam and Eve disobeyed Allah, though they were forgiven, and were sent from Paradise to the Earth which Allah had created.
- The Earth had been created to allow Adam and Eve and their descendants (the human race) to live and thrive.
- Creation took Allah six days to complete.

He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six days – and His Throne was over the waters.

*Qur'an 11:7*

## Is the Big Bang theory compatible with Islam?

Muslims regard the existence of the universe as proof for the existence of Allah, the Creator. They also believe that the Qur'an is a divine [revelation](#) from Allah and so cannot be questioned. However, it is possible to interpret the Qur'an in different ways.

Some Muslims say that the Big Bang can be seen as additional evidence of Allah's creation and can therefore be accepted as scientific truth. However, because it does not include reference to a designer and creator, it is at best incomplete, describing the process that Allah used in creation.

The heavens and the earth were joined together as one unit, before We clove them asunder.

*Qur'an 21:30*

Most Muslims believe that if there are any disagreements between the two theories, the teachings found in the Qur'an are correct. The words of Allah are superior to the words of human scientists.

Some Muslims take a less literal view but do not lessen the role of Allah. They focus more on the meaning of the story. At the heart of the story is the belief that Allah is great.

# Muslim views

## Islamic belief about the environment

Although human beings are seen as the most intelligent life form on earth, they are responsible for almost all the **damage** done to the planet. If we imagined the earth is aged 46, all the damage done has taken place in the last 60 seconds of the earth's life.

The ***Qur'an*** says that Allah (God) is the **Creator** of the world. Human beings are on the world as trustees - they are told to look after the world for Allah and for the future.

In the ***Qur'an***, Muslims are instructed to look after the environment and not to damage it " follow the nature designed by Allah, the nature according to which He has fashioned mankind. There is no altering the creation of Allah.

### ***Surah 30:30***

Muslims have to look after the earth because it is all Allah's creation and it is part of a human's duty to Allah

Allah is He Who raised up the heavens without any pillars that you can see. Then He settled Himself on the Throne, and constrained the sun and the moon to serve you; each planet pursues its course during an appointed term. He regulates it all and expounds the Signs, that you may have firm belief in the meeting with your Lord. He it is Who spread out the earth and made therein firmly fixed mountains and rivers, and of fruits of every kind He has made pairs. He causes the night to cover the day. In all this, verily, are signs doer a people who reflect.

### ***Surah 13:3-4***

Because of this passage, people see themselves as being **responsible** for the world which Allah created and they have to make their own decisions about how to do this.

# Problems caused by pollution

- Not everyone, and not even all Christians care for the environment. Many people take the view that the Earth belongs to human beings as the dominant species, whether God put us in charge or not. Others simply don't care as they live to enjoy the present with no concern about the future. This has led to the following problems.....

**Toxic chemicals and pesticides** are either deliberately put in water systems or run off or carried by the wind. The result is water pollution which kills animals who rely on the water. And recently there was a massive decline in the bee population possibly as an unintended consequence of pesticides.

**Acid rain** caused by pollution destroys natural habitats and disrupts delicate eco systems.

## The effects of Climate Change

**Severe weather droughts, floods, famine, destruction of crops.**

Climate change creates more severe weather which means that some places are more likely to flood leading to the spread of diseases. While others experience severe droughts resulting in failure of crops which leads to famine.



**Oil spills** Oil being transported across the ocean is spilt in accidents. The results are thousands of dead marine animals and birds.



## Effects of modern lifestyle

It's not just about the big things that companies and governments do to affect the environment. Day to day living also has an effect.

**Emissions from cars** Every time someone drives a car it creates harmful Co2 emissions. The more we drive the more emissions there are. There are around 1.2 billion cars on the planet.

**Factories** Buying cheap mass produced products creates Co2 due to the transportation of raw materials to create goods, the energy used to create the goods themselves and the transportation of goods often from far around the world. But people demand cheap goods which then drives companies to be less environmentally friendly.

**Waste and recycling** All the products we buy come in packaging. Some of this packaging can be recycled but isn't, some if it can't be recycled any. This waste then ends up either in landfill or polluting the natural environment and killing wildlife. Sometimes it can travel far out to sea. There is thought to be an 'island' of plastic in the Pacific Ocean bigger than the UK.

# The use and abuse of natural resources

- **"God placed man in the Garden of Eden to guard and cultivate it"** for Christians this quote justifies the use of natural resources, as you cultivate things to use them.
- Christians do not have a problem with making use of the world's resources to help humanity and give us a good quality of life. However, as we have seen the use of these resources can lead to pollution and destruction from methods such as fracking.
- The Amazon rainforest is a wealth of natural resources and an important habitat for thousands of species found nowhere else in the world. It is being chopped down at an alarming rate to clear room for cattle, to grow crops like palm oil found in products like instant noodles, margarine and soap, and for the wood itself.

## Deforestation

**Aren't 2 sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God"**

This verse shows that even the smallest creature is important to God. As we have seen many animals are losing their homes and becoming endangered due to human action. Some Christians see this as failing to **&"cultivate and guard"** as commended by God.

**"I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals"** God put us in charge and we are **"blessed"**. So some Christians believe that if we choose ourselves over animals than that is perfectly acceptable.

Some Christians may have problems with scenes such as these baby turtles being unable to find their way to the sea after hatching due to the confusing presence of artificial man made light. They argue this disruption to natural habitat is not good stewardship

However many poor people and countries rely on exploiting natural resources to make money and buy essentials. Because they should **"Love your neighbour"** there is a conflict for Christians, they want to enable poor people to have a good lifestyle but they are also commanded to care for the environment.





# Use of animals

- **As pets, for help/work** such as guide or police dogs
- **Sport** – such as greyhound or horse racing.
- **For food** – such as meat, dairy or eggs. Vegetarians and vegans disagree.
- **For fashion accessories or leisure** – such as leather and fur. Laws have been passed to protect animals which may be killed only for their ivory or fur.
- **For education and preservation of the environment** - Some people are against animals beings kept in zoos as they believe it doesn't provide a natural environment and restricts the animals' freedom.
- **For experiments and scientific developments** - animals were used for testing cosmetics but this is now illegal in the UK. Animals are still used to test drugs before they are given to humans. Animals have been [genetically altered](#) in a laboratory in order to study the effects of genetic diseases and to find out how genes work.
- **For entertainment** - animals sometimes form part of circus acts. Some people argue that animals enjoy the tasks and are well treated while others believe that no animal should be kept caged.

Reasons for using animals for testing	Reasons for not using animals for testing
Using animals for testing saves lives, without vaccines millions of people would die and we wouldn't have transplants.	Animal testing results in animals being killed.
Sometimes medicines can only be tested on animals to test their safety.	Animals cannot consent for testing.
Animal testing is needed to develop treatments to help animals themselves.	Some animal tests do not have the same results in humans.
You only need to test on few animals and it will benefit millions of people.	Animals have the ability to feel pain and testing on them causes suffering.

# Religion and use of animals

## What does Islam teach about animal rights?

Muslims believe [Allah](#) created the world and everything in it, therefore all of creation is precious. Allah has given humans [dominion](#) over other creatures. He has made them '[vicegerents](#) on earth' (Qur'an 35:39). This is a duty and a responsibility. Muslims should not abuse their privilege or exploit animals, because God will punish them if they abuse this power.

Animals have been given to people by Allah and should be used wisely: "It is God who provided for you all manner of livestock, that you may ride on some of them and from some you may derive your food. And there are other uses in them for you to satisfy your heart's desires. It is on them, as on ships, that you make your journeys". *Qur'an 40:79-80*

Muslims believe animals are aware of their treatment and should be treated with kindness and [compassion](#), which will win favour with Allah. According to one [Hadith](#), the Prophet Muhammad said: "One who kills unnecessarily, even a sparrow, will be questioned by Allah on the day of Judgement." *Hadith*

## What does Christianity teach about animal rights?

Many Christians believe that God created the Earth and all living things, and that therefore the whole of Creation ultimately belongs to God: "To the Lord belongs the earth, and everything in it." *Psalms 24:1*

The story of how God created the Earth and every living thing is told in [Genesis](#). When he had finished his creation, God said that it was 'good' and showed that he cared about everything in it. He also said that mankind was made in his image and that he would have dominion over creation. "Fill the earth and subdue it, have dominion over the fish in the sea, the birds of the air and every living thing that moves on the earth." *Genesis 1:28*

Christians today interpret this to mean that human beings have **stewardship** over God's creation and should care for everything in it, including all animal life which is valuable and to be respected. God has given humans the right to use animals for their survival but they are expected to do so humanely and sustainably. With this power and privilege comes the responsibility to exercise it with care.

This is reinforced by the story of [Noah](#) and the flood: "I am now establishing my covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, all birds and cattle, all the animals with you on earth." *Genesis 9:9-10*

From this we can see that God establishes his covenant not only with all mankind, but also with all living creatures, which establishes the importance of animals for God and how they should be treated.

### The sanctity of life

Most Christians believe in the sanctity of life, which means that life is sacred because it is created by God. It therefore belongs to God, and is only God's to give or take away. This extends to non-human life and therefore anyone who neglects or ill-treats animals is not respecting God's creation. Although for many Christians humans have superiority as we alone were made in "God's image"

# The importance of life

- The miracle of life.

Is life a miracle? Technically yes! The path begins with the odds of your dad meeting your mum (**1 in 20,000**). This is multiplied by the chances of them staying together long enough to have kids (**1 in 2,000**), and so on... The probability of you existing at all comes out to **1 in 10<sup>2,685,000</sup>** — yes, that's a 10 followed by 2,685,000 zeroes! Just remember a being with your DNA has never existed before and never will again.

The term **sanctity of life** means that all life is sacred, special or holy. For Christians it applies to humans only as they are made in his image and this makes us special. The Bible also says that there is something holy from God inside of us, making us temples. It also says that God knew us all from conception and we were all made by God. Finally the Bible states that we are not to kill, instead preserve the sanctity of life.

"Children are a gift from the Lord. They are a reward from him and a blessing"

"So God created man in his own image"

"Your body is a temple of the holy spirit"

"For you created my innermost being. You knit me together in my mothers womb, I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

# The issues surrounding when life begins.

**“When I was growing there in secret, you knew that I was there – you saw me before I was born.”**

For many Christians such as the Roman Catholic Church life begins at conception. Therefore abortion is always wrong as there is a human being alive from the moment egg and sperm meet.

For other's it is not so straightforward

- Prolife atheists – believe that life begins at conception as there is human DNA.
- The Church of England – do not put a date on when life begins.
- Pro Choice atheists – do not put an exact date on when life begins but say it is somewhere between when the baby develops a central nervous system and is able to survive outside of the womb.
- Muslims – believe you get a soul at 21 weeks, so you are alive then.

For allowing abortion	Against allowing abortion
For some believers life does not begin until several weeks after conception. If a foetus is not alive there is nothing wrong with terminating pregnancy.	“When I was growing in secret you knew me” Life begins at conception. Ending a life is wrong “Do not kill”
“Love your neighbour” If a woman has been raped surely the kindest thing is to allow to her end her pregnancy if it is too upsetting to face continuing.	An unwanted child can always be adopted. Some women find by giving their baby to a family that something good comes out of something bad.
“Love the sinner while hating the sin” It is a woman’s body it is her right to choose even if you don’t like it.	“Your body is a temple of the holy spirit” Your body belongs to God, you do not have the right to end the pregnancy God gave you.
When abortion was illegal many women would risk death to end their pregnancy. Abortion is needed to save the lives of vulnerable women and protect them.	Women do not take abortion seriously enough. Too many have it for reasons like not wanting to use contraception.

# Abortion – the law and alternatives

- Abortion is the premature exit of the foetus from the womb. It is the loss of a pregnancy and does not refer to why that pregnancy was lost. A spontaneous abortion is the same as a miscarriage

**Under the 1967 Abortion Act and the 1990 Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act abortions is permitted if 2 doctors agree that one of the following conditions applies:**

- **The woman might die unless the pregnancy is ended.**
- **There is a substantial risk of the baby being severely physically or mentally disabled.**
- **There is a risk to woman's physical or mental health.**
- **There is a risk to the physical or mental health of her existing children.**

**In 1990 the act set the time limit for abortion at 24 weeks. However if the baby will have a severe mental or physical disability there is no time limit.**

**To avoid an unwanted pregnancy, the following options can also be considered:**

•**Contraception** - education about contraception helps people to take responsibility and avoid an unwanted pregnancy.

•**Avoiding sexual activity** - avoiding sexual activity until the person is ready for parenthood is thought by some to be effective. Some people, and many Christians, wait for marriage before beginning a sexual relationship.

When a pregnancy is unwanted, the following options can be considered:

•**Adoption** - an individual or a couple become a child's legal parent(s) after its birth. The child's birth parents no longer have any rights or responsibilities towards the child. Adoption is usually the preferred option if the child's birth parents are not able to look after the child.

•**Practical support to keep the baby** - some organisations provide new mothers with financial support for housing and to buy baby clothes and food. This is to encourage the mothers to have the child rather than to have an abortion. This might mean that the child can be brought up by its birth mother.

•**Counselling** - this can support an individual faced with an unexpected pregnancy in coming to terms with the situation, and thinking through the options calmly before making a decision.

# Religious views on abortion

## What does Christianity teach about abortion?

For Christians, human life is [sacred](#); a gift from God which is to be respected and protected. This teaching is called **The Sanctity of Life**. The Bible teaches that human beings are created in the image of God. It also teaches that murder is forbidden. Jesus reminded his followers that each person is precious to God, so much so that God has counted every hair on their head.

## What does this mean in practice?

Christians understand and apply the guiding principle of the sanctity of life in a variety of ways to the issue of [abortion](#). Within the same church, views may differ. The four main positions are as follows:

The four main positions are as follows:

- Pro-life** - some Christians, including many [Roman Catholics](#), believe that abortion is morally wrong because of their belief that human life begins at conception. They may make an exception if an abortion is essential in order to save the life of the mother (the '[principle of double effect](#)'), assuming all efforts have been made to save the foetus.
- Pro-choice** - it is up to the woman to decide whether it is right for her to have an abortion because it is her body. Some Christians believe that a woman has a right to a safe abortion, and that it shows compassion if the law allows this.
- Absolute moral** - abortion is wrong in every circumstance.
- Relative moral** - abortion is permitted in certain circumstances

## What does Islam teach about abortion?

For Muslims, all human life is precious and a sacred gift from [Allah](#). There is no explicit mention of abortion in the [Qur'an](#) but there are several verses used to form their opinion on the subject. For example "Do not kill your children for fear of want. We shall provide sustenance for them as well as for you. The killing of them is a great sin."  
*Qur'an 17:31*

## Ensoulment

Although Islam gives high priority to the [sanctity of life](#), most Muslim scholars agree that [abortion](#) may be permitted, before [ensoulment](#) if there are valid reasons such as the mother's life is endangered by the pregnancy, or if the [foetus](#) is detected to have severe disabilities and/or a genetic disease that would cause pain. However, some Muslim communities believe life begins at conception and would not tolerate abortion.

After ensoulment, abortion is forbidden except where it is vital to save the mother's life. Most Muslims believe that ensoulment occurs at about 120 days of the pregnancy, but others will say it occurs at 40 days. After ensoulment, most Muslims consider abortion to be murder. According to the [Hadith](#), anyone who carries out an abortion, or allows an abortion to be carried out after ensoulment will be punished in [Hell](#). In the Qur'an it says that parents who kill their children will have to answer to Allah on the Day of Judgement and their children will be witnesses against them.

## What does this mean in practice?

There is no general approval of abortion amongst Muslims but there is no unanimous ban on it either.

# Euthanasia

**Euthanasia** means 'gentle and easy death'. The term is used to describe the deliberate ending of a person's life for compassionate reasons because they are suffering.

## **What does UK law say about euthanasia?**

[Euthanasia](#) is illegal in the UK. Euthanasia is punishable by law and can carry a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

[Assisted suicide](#) is also illegal in the UK. It is punishable by law and can carry a penalty of up to 14 years' imprisonment.

- There are various types of [euthanasia](#):
- **Active euthanasia** - something is done to a person to make them die more quickly, eg giving drugs with the intention of bringing about death.
- **Passive euthanasia** - any form of treatment that might extend a person's life is withdrawn, e.g. a life support machine is turned off, or a feeding tube is removed. This is legally allowed in the UK, and so would not be called euthanasia.
- **Voluntary euthanasia** - a person asks for their own life to be ended.
- **Non-voluntary euthanasia** - a person cannot make a decision about euthanasia or cannot make their wishes known, and so someone else, e.g. a doctor or a family member, decides that it would be in the person's best interest if their life was ended. For example, if the person is in a coma.
- **Involuntary euthanasia** - a person wants to live, but someone else, e.g. a doctor or a family member, decides that it would be in the person's best interest if their life was ended. For example, if a person has had an accident that will lead to imminent and painful death, a decision might be made to end their life even if the person wanted to live.
- **Assisted suicide** - deliberately assisting or encouraging another person to end their own life.

## **What are the alternatives to euthanasia?**

**Hospice** - this is where specialist medical staff look after the terminally ill. [Palliative](#) drugs are used to help ensure that the person does not suffer any more pain than is absolutely necessary. Staff are able to talk with patients about death and dying and any fears they may have. They are also available to support the family of the dying person.

**Refusing treatment** - in the UK all adults have the right to refuse treatment as long as they have the capacity to understand the situation they are in and to make an informed decision

# Arguments on euthanasia

**People with different beliefs may agree with many of these arguments.** For example, an [atheist](#) may recognise that there are dangers in allowing euthanasia (the [slippery slope](#) argument), but they might argue that an individual's right to direct their own life outweighs other good arguments.

## Arguments for euthanasia

- Human beings should have the right to be able to decide when and how they die ([self-determination](#)).
- Euthanasia enables a person to die with [dignity](#) and in control of their situation.
- Death is a private matter and the state should not interfere with the individual's right to die.
- It is expensive to keep people alive when there is no cure for their illness. Family and friends would be spared the pain of seeing their loved one suffer a long-drawn-out death.
- Society permits animals to be put down as an act of kindness when they are suffering; the same treatment should be available to humans.

## Arguments against euthanasia

- euthanasia would weaken society's respect for the value and importance of human life
- proper [palliative](#) care is available which reduces or removes the need for people to be in pain
- it would lead to worse care for the terminally ill
- it would put too much power in the hands of doctors, and damage the trust between patient and doctor
- some people may feel pressured to request euthanasia by family, friends or doctors.
- it would undermine the commitment of doctors and nurses to save lives
- it would discourage the search for new cures and treatments for the terminally ill
- some people unexpectedly recover
- [voluntary euthanasia](#) could be the first step on a slippery slope that leads to [involuntary euthanasia](#), where those who are undesirable or seen as a problem could be killed

## The hospice movement as an alternative to euthanasia.

A hospice is a house or home dedicated to the care of terminally ill patients. The first hospice was set up by Christian nuns in 1900 in Ireland. There are about 100 hospices in the UK. Many of them have a Christian basis, set up by Christians who believe they are the best alternative to active euthanasia.

**What do hospices do?** There are 3 main aims of hospice care:

**To relieve pain.** Hospice staff believe all pain, however severe, can be brought under control, allowing for a peaceful and relatively pain-free death.

**To help patients, friends and relatives face up to death.** Although many hospices are Christian foundations, no attempt is made to persuade patients to become Christians. Opportunities are given to the patients and to family members to discuss death and dying.

**To care for emotional needs.**

The hospice movement believes that the patient is still living and should be encouraged to have a life even while they are dying. In a hospital, the patient wouldn't be given the personal care he/she would receive in a hospice. For example, in a hospice, hair dressers come in and patients can have manicures. They are encouraged to get dressed and get up rather than stay in bed. If they wish to die at home, nurses attached to the hospice can often support patients at home.

Many who do not support euthanasia believe that hospices allow people to die with dignity. If the pain is kept under control the individual can live well up to the moment they die. Many Christians support the hospice movement and believe that if there were enough spaces available for all who wished to go there, that euthanasia would not be needed.



# Christian views on euthanasia

**What does Christianity teach about euthanasia?** (Different Christian [denominations](#) take different views.)

Most Christians believe that life is [sacred](#) and given by God, and therefore only God can decide when life ends. This means that many Christians trust God to end life when the proper time comes and would not accept any intervention that would end a life before God decides. Christians follow the [Ten Commandments](#), one of which says: "You shall not murder." *Exodus 20:13* The deliberate ending of a life could be classed as murder.

However, another key Christian teaching is: "Love your neighbour as yourself." *Luke 10:27*

Some Christians believe that ending pain and suffering, even if this means ending a life before God decides, to be an act of love and compassion.

When Jesus was being crucified on the cross, we are told in the [Gospel of Mark](#) (Mark 15:23) that he refused the mixture of 'wine and gall' which could have eased his pain. Following this example, many Christians believe that suffering is an inevitable part of life that should be endured and offered up to God in union with Jesus's suffering.

**What does this mean in practice?**

The [Roman Catholic](#) Church teaches that no person has the right to deliberately end the life of another person, or his or her own life. However, it also teaches that it is not acceptable to unquestioningly prolong the life of a dying person.

Most [Protestant](#) denominations also teach that euthanasia and assisted suicide are unacceptable solutions to the problem of suffering.

Some Christians, however, accept that if a person is terminally ill and in extreme pain or distress, euthanasia may be an act of compassion, provided the dying person requests it and fully understands the consequences of their request.

They may also use the teaching on [free will](#) to justify the right to choose to die. However, those Christians who support euthanasia only do so if it is [voluntary](#) and [passive](#), and never if it is [involuntary](#) or [active](#).

Many Christian denominations support the [hospice](#) movement. Hospices provide [palliative](#) care and support for a dying person and their families to help ease the pain of death and allow them to come to terms with the death

# Islam and Euthanasia

## What does Islam teach about euthanasia?

- The Islamic teaching on [euthanasia](#) is clear. Life is [sacred](#), and only [Allah](#) can give life or take life away. It is wrong for any person, even a patient or doctor, to end or request to end a life before Allah does, because it would go against Allah's plan for that life. The [Qur'an](#) makes this clear: "It is not possible for one to die except by permission of Allah. "*Qur'an* 3:145
- According to Muslim teaching, people who break this rule will not go to [Paradise](#).
- If a person is suffering, they should cope with it and have faith that Allah will not allow them to suffer more than they can endure. Suffering is seen as a test from Allah and those who manage their suffering, without disobeying the teachings of Allah, will be rewarded in Paradise.
- Euthanasia is interpreted as [suicide](#), which is also against the teachings of Islam. One [Hadith](#) states: "Whoever commits suicide with something will be punished with the same thing in the (hell) fire." *Hadith Bukhari* 78.647
- Anyone who facilitates euthanasia, or helps someone to take their own life, is guilty of the sin of [zulm](#), because they deny the dying person his right to life and do not fulfil their obligation to care for him.

## What does this mean in practice?

The guiding principles for Muslims, when considering the issue of euthanasia, are obedience to Allah, trust in Allah to test them and the principle of family responsibility.

Muslims support the aims of the [hospice movement](#) and should do all they can to care for and support the person who is dying or suffering. This is often seen as a family responsibility, and care and support is more likely to be offered in the home. This allows specific [spiritual](#) support to be provided by both the family and the local Muslim community, including an [Imam](#). Expert medical help will be brought into the home as required.

As a last resort, a hospice will be used if care at home is not possible.

[Passive euthanasia](#) is defined as the withdrawal of medication or life support which is keeping a person alive, perhaps for longer than Allah has planned. The [absolute morality](#) associated with Islamic teachings about life and death means that many Muslims accept passive euthanasia but do not encourage it. It is only accepted if there is no hope of survival

## Case study - Tony Nicklinson

[Tony Nicklinson](#), a man with a condition called locked-in syndrome, who fought for the right to legally end his life, died on 22 August 2012.

The 58 year old was paralysed from the neck down after suffering a stroke in 2005 and described his life as a 'living nightmare'. In the week before his death, Mr Nicklinson lost his High Court case to allow doctors to end his life. From that point he refused food.

Mr Nicklinson had said he was heartbroken by the High Court decision that he could not end his life at a time of his choosing with the help of a new doctor. He had thought that his legal argument would succeed but conceded that he had forgotten about the emotional component to what he was asking.

Mr Nicklinson had made an [advanced directive](#) in 2004 refusing any life-sustaining treatment.

# Death and the afterlife

## Why do Christians believe in life after death?

**Eternal life** - Jesus promised that his followers would have eternal life.

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies." *John 11:25-26*

**Jesus' life as an example** - God sent Jesus to Earth in order that humans could overcome death and have eternal life. Jesus' suffering during his crucifixion can be a source of strength for Christians going through suffering as it teaches them to accept any pain and suffering they may experience in their lives.

**Resurrection of the body** - when Jesus rose from the dead he rose with a body. St Paul teaches in the Bible that people will have [resurrection](#) bodies like that of Jesus: "The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable" *1 Corinthians 15:42-44*. So those who have been disabled, very ill or in pain before their death will be free from their suffering in the afterlife, provided they go to heaven.

**Immortality of the soul** - Jesus told the criminal crucified with him that he would go straight to paradise. And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." *Luke 23:39-43*

Christians interpret the teachings of the Bible on life after death to mean that humans will have a spiritual existence after death, rather than a physical one. Belief in life after death may be influenced by the meaning and purpose that it gives to the lives of Christians.

## What does Islam teach about life after death?

Islam teaches that there is life after death, and this is known as [Akhirah](#). In Islam, it is [Allah](#) who decides when a person dies and most Muslims believe that when they die, they will stay in their graves until the [Day of Judgement](#). On that day, they will be raised from their graves and brought before Allah and judged on how they lived their earthly lives. This belief is known as the resurrection of the body.

Those who have performed more good deeds than bad will enter **Jannah**, or [Paradise](#). Jannah is a place described as a 'garden of everlasting bliss' and a 'home of peace'. In Jannah there will be no sickness, pain or sadness.

Those who have performed more bad deeds than good will enter **Jahannam** or Hell. This is a place of physical and spiritual suffering.

Muslims believe that Allah is forgiving, merciful and compassionate, so not all bad actions will be punished. Allah will forgive those who have repented for their sins and those who have done some good in their lives, for example showing kindness to others.

## Why do Muslims believe in life after death?

Muslims believe that Allah is in charge of their lives and decides how long they will live. People's deeds will be taken into account on the Day of Judgement. The Qur'an states that the good will receive reward, while the bad will receive punishment:

Belief in life after death is central to the meaning and purpose of most Muslims' lives. Many Muslims believe that they are on this earth for a relatively short time and during this time they are preparing themselves for [eternal](#) life after death. They view this life as a test and try to do as many good deeds as they can. Muslims also believe that suffering in this life can help pay for sins, they teach that by accepting the suffering surrounding death Muslims can hope for a better one in the afterlife.

# GCSE Religious Studies

## Thematic Studies

### Theme D: Religion, Peace and conflict



# The concepts of peace and Justice in relation to war and peace.

## Peace & Justice

**Peace** = a state of harmony without conflict leading to happiness.

**Justice** = fairness and equality for all.

**Peace "Blessed are the peacemakers for they are God's children"** Jesus always preferred peaceful resolutions to violent ones. He told his followers to **"Those who live by the sword shall die by the sword"**. However even Jesus recognised that sometimes there needs to be some kind of sacrifice or violence if true peace is to be achieved. After all Christians believe he sacrificed himself for them.

- **Justice "An eye for an eye"** – justice needs to be served and so sometimes violence can be met by violence. (Although Jesus later said instead to "turn the other cheek").
- **"Whatever you did for the least of my brothers it is as if you did it for me"** Christians should stand up for the weakest and most needy of us. War can be a way of stopping the injustices which affect many people.

## Religion and Protest

Both Christians and Muslims believe that it is important to protest to draw attention to and attempt to stop injustice in the world today. They both believe that God is Just and as His followers they should act to create a fairer world.

Neither Christians or Muslims believe that violence or terrorism is an acceptable form of protest. As it may cause harm to innocent people.

Religious people may protest about: inequality, to protect human rights, the right to religious freedom.

Jesus said "Those who live by the sword will die by the sword"

# The causes of war

## **Greed**

This is war to gain, for example, **more** land, **more power** or more resources. Most religious teaching would not support this as a reason.

**Greed comes from selfishness**, which are both characteristics not approved of by religions.

Considering the numbers of soldiers and casualties in war, greed could never be seen as a justifiable reason for it.

## **Self-defence**

Religious holy books and texts describe wars, the Old Testament and The Qur'an suggest that war may be necessary in self-defence.

If a country or religion is under attack, then conflicts can happen. It would be seen as entirely right and proper to defend your own country against attack. The problem comes when the response is disproportionately large, and self-defence turns into aggression for its own gain.

## **Retaliation**

At times, a country will be attacked in a way which provokes retaliation. For example, the First World War began as retaliation against a political assassination. The problem with retaliation is that it is often a spontaneous reaction which leads to the escalation of a situation, and hence war. Religions would all say that peaceful negotiation and discussions to resolve issues are better than simple retaliation because they diffuse rather than exacerbate issues.

In 2003 US President George W Bush and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair sent a coalition of American and British troops into **Iraq** in an act of war. This was justified by international concerns about the Iraqi Dictator Saddam Hussein. Hussein was a dictator who took power of his country in a coup in 1979. He was guilty of crimes against humanity such as; he brutal suppression of political opponents, using chemical weapons and invading Kuwait and supporting the terrorist organisations responsible for 9/11. Hussein had also refused to allow UN inspectors into Iraq so that they could check to see if he had been stockpiling nuclear weapons.

The 'war' itself lasted 21 days, killed around 7,500 civilians and around 4,500 allied soldiers. However there was no peace as a result and allied forces remained in Iraq 2011 and cost over \$2trillion.

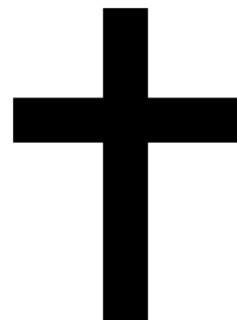
## Christian views towards war and peace

The teachings of Christianity are peaceful. Jesus taught a message of love and Christianity has a strong pacifist tradition.

Christians do not actively **want** war. Peace will always be the preferred option. However Christians can and do accept war if it is **just**.

- **Put away your sword. Those who live by the sword die by the sword. – Jesus (Matthew 26:52)**
- **Blessed are the peacemakers. – Jesus (Sermon on the Mount)**
- **Love your enemies, and pray for them. – Jesus (Sermon on the Mount)**
- **Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. – Jesus (John 14:27)**
- **Everyone must commit themselves to peace – Pope John Paul II**

All the earliest Christians were pacifists and most Christians today feel this way. The Quakers are a good example of this.



**One meaning of the word Islam is peace.** Allah has 99 names known to Muslims. One of them is *As-salaam*, which means 'the source of peace'. It is said that if all people followed the Muslim way of life, there should only be peace. Muslims should work to keep the peace; **war should only occur when all peaceful means have been exhausted.** Only then do Muslims have a duty to fight in the defence of Allah and the weak and oppressed. Islam teaches:

- Greet others *salaam alaikum*, which means 'peace be upon you'.
- Greater jihad is every Muslim's personal struggle to follow Allah, the lesser jihad is holy war in defence of Islam.
- To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight. (Qur'an)
- Those who die in the name of Allah will be rewarded with paradise. (Qur'an)
- Hate your enemy mildly; for he may become your friend one day. (Hadith)

When Muhammad was alive, the Muslim community **had to defend themselves** by fighting. If they had not, they would all have been killed. Allah ordered Muslims to fight back when attacked, so **holy war became a duty for Muslims.** The Muslim religion realises that sometimes to defend people's rights or to change a terrible situation, we have to fight.



# Religion and war

- Modern people often regard the idea of a holy war as a contradiction. Killing thousands of people seems to be as far from holiness as one can get. However just involving God as part of the campaign does not make a war a holy war.

Holy wars have three elements:

The achievement of a religious goal

Authorised by a religious leader

A spiritual reward for those who take part

There are five causes for holy war:

To spread the faith

To retrieve countries that were once Christian, even though there are no Christians left there

To rescue Christians in countries that were once Christian from 'the servitude of the infidels'

Recover and purify consecrated places that are presently being 'polluted and profaned'

Avenge blasphemous acts, or cruelties and killings of Christians (even if these took place long ago)

## Just war

A Just War is one which has to be fought but is conducted according to certain conditions. Developed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century they are still referred to by Christians today. It is intended to stop Christians going to war unless absolutely necessary. **Terrorism** is not allowed under Just War as it attacks civilians, is a form of evil in itself and is rarely given by a legally recognised authority.

### Authority

It must be given by a legally recognised authority e.g. Prime Minister and government

### Outcomes

There is a reasonable chance of success. Peace is established after.

### Conditions of just war

### Motivations

The intention is to establish good over evil. It's a last resort.

### Protection of life

Only reasonable force may be used "Do not kill" Every effort must be made to protect civilians.

## **WW2 was Just!**

It was fought by Germany and the Allied countries who were legal authorities.

Germany invaded other countries first.

The intention was to correct the evil Hitler was doing.

The Allies felt that they had a reasonable chance of success and they did win.

All forms of negotiation with Hitler had failed.

Most of the fighting was limited to the armies concerned.



'Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits... if they cease let there be no hostility.'

**Qur'an**

Do not go over the top

If they stop  
being violent

fighting

## Lesser Jihad

Lesser jihad means holy war. Remember the Qur'an uses the word jihad to describe a personal struggle against committing sin. Holy war is the **lesser** meaning of the term.

For Muslims a holy war is a **just war**. There are rules for how a Muslim should fight a war. These are written in the Qur'an.

How is the war fought?

- It may only begin when the enemy attacks and it ends when the enemy shows they want peace.
- Civilians must not be harmed, attacked or mistreated.
- Crops should be left alone. Holy buildings especially should not be damaged.
- Prisoners of war should be treated well. Money collected for *zakat* can be used to pay for food for them.

How does the war end?

- When people regain their rights.
- When the enemy calls for peace.

# Terrorism

**Terrorism is an act of violence which is intended to create fear.**

A terrorist is anyone who plans or carries out such an act. Terrorist acts are often directed at civilians and because of this many consider them to be **unlawful acts of war and violence**. The United Nations Security Council regards terrorist attacks as criminal: *Acts intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act.*

**Why do terrorists carry out attacks? They claim that:**

- They are fighting against social and political injustice, where a group of people are being denied their human rights.
- They are fighting against poverty.
- They are fighting to assert their religious beliefs, especially where they feel these are denied to them.

**Christians do NOT support terrorism as:**

Jesus taught “blessed are the peace makers” – terrorism creates fear and the opposite of peace.

The 10 Commandments state “Do no kill” – Terrorism kills innocent people and is therefore wrong.

**Christians respond to terrorism by:**  
Praying for the victims.

They may pray for the terrorists themselves; that they see the error of their ways and seek forgiveness “love your enemies and pray for those you persecute you”.

Increasing community support, so that people do not get taken in by terrorist gangs.

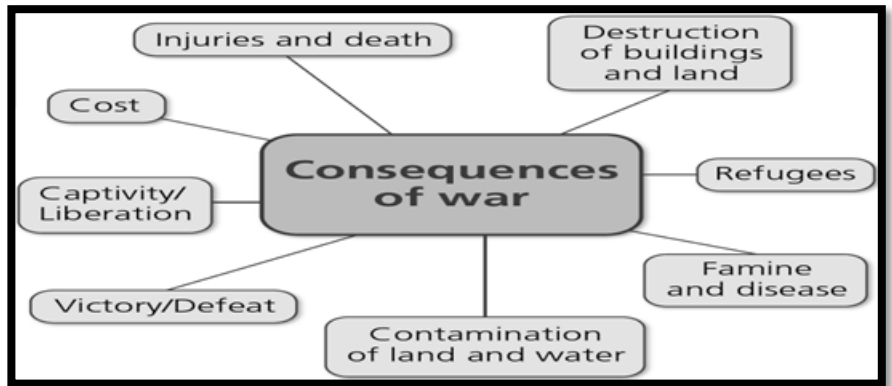
**Muslims do NOT support terrorism as:**

It is wrong to kill innocent people, particularly women and children. Terrorists leaders are not a religious authority and cannot declare a jihad. Muhammad taught Muslims should not be the aggressor.

**Muslims respond to terrorism by:**  
Challenging extremist views in the Mosque.

Educated people about the differences between terrorism and Islam.  
Supporting the victims of terrorism.

# Support for victims of war



## Helping the victims of war

There are many organisations which try to help the victims of war, both when war is happening and after it. Part of that is to try to bring about peace. It is part of all religions to help those in trouble and defend those who cannot defend themselves, so it is natural that religions will try to help the victims of war. To do so fits with the basic teaching of the Golden Rule 'Treat others as you would be done by' which every religion follows.

## How do Christians & Muslims help victims of war?

The **International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement** was founded by a Swiss businessman who witnessed the Battle of Solferino in 1859. He was appalled when he saw thousands of wounded soldiers left with no medical care. He created a committee of military and medical staff who would be protected on the battlefield to care for the casualties of war. It is based on the Christian teachings of love and care for all - even your enemies, "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"

The movement now has branches in nearly every country, and is called Red Crescent societies in Muslim countries. These rely on Muslim volunteers to help care for casualties in wartime.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement also helps [refugees](#) fleeing for safety. Volunteers of the International Red Crescent help by:

- providing refugees with the essentials for survival
- protecting children who have been orphaned by war
- assisting the injured
- sending food and clothing
- raising funds
- praying for victims

# Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs)

**1 Nuclear weapons** – also known as atomic bombs; they cause immediate destruction of all life and structures within their range. The radioactive ‘fallout’ has long-term effects.

**2 Biological warfare** – also known as germ warfare, uses living disease-causing bacterium or viruses such as anthrax, to bring about the death or serious illness in people.

**3 Chemical warfare** – uses non-living toxins such as nerve agents and mustard gas, to cause death, incapacity or illness in people.

**4 Radiological weapons** – also known as ‘dirty bombs’ are weapons that use **conventional** explosives to create bombs that can disperse radioactive material.



## Roman Catholic

The Roman Catholic Church does not agree with the use of WMD but thinks they are acceptable as a deterrent.

## Hinduism

Hinduism would argue that use of WMD goes against the teaching of **ahimsa**. It **is not possible to restrict the impact** of WMD, and they affect humans, animals and nature alike for very long periods of time. There is no justifiable reason for this destruction and the suffering caused.

## Buddhism

The stance of Buddhism would be that **WMD bring death and suffering on a massive scale**, so their use **can never be justified** under the **Precept of not hurting other sentient beings**. Not only do these weapons impact now, they **would impact negatively on many generations in the future**.

## Quaker

The Quaker Society **utterly condemn WMD**. They are pacifists, and no outward weapons are acceptable. WMD are **indiscriminate and beyond control**.

## Christianity and pacifism

Peace is not just the absence of war, but is a state of harmony, where justice exists for all and freedoms are respected. All religions teach the importance of peace on Earth and encourage their followers to live peacefully. Throughout history there have always been people prepared to refuse to use violence or fight in wars, even if it meant they faced imprisonment for their beliefs.



**Pacifists** believe that all violence is morally wrong. They will not participate in any war, regardless of the reasons for that war.

**Conscientious objectors** are people who **refuse to participate** directly in fighting wars on the grounds of conscience. However, they will assist in non-military ways such as **medics, relief work and mediators**. Many believe they have a **peace-making role**.

# The Quakers (Christian)

This is a pacifist group within Christianity. As a Church they believe they are following the true teaching of Jesus by maintaining a completely pacifist stance. Their Peace Testimony makes clear that they will not use violence under any circumstances. It says that they denounce all violence, whatever its form. They totally oppose all outward wars and strife, and fighting with outward weapons, for any end, or for any reason. They believe that all relationships should be loving ones, including those between countries. During wars they will take on peace-making roles, for example, mediate for peace between the warring nations. They also do non-combat work such as training to be, and acting as medics for any side, and doing work with refugees and victims of war.

**“Blessed are the peacemakers”**

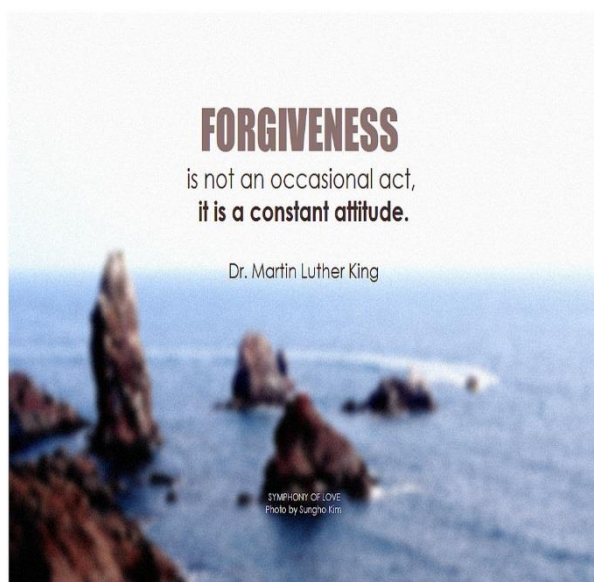
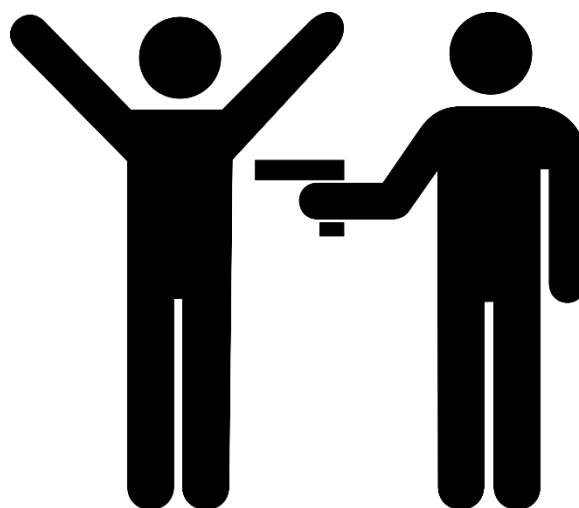




# GCSE Religious Studies

## Thematic Studies

### Theme E: Religion, Crime and punishment



# The Law and Punishment

## Why do we need laws?

- we need laws if we are to organise society and everyone in it
- they allow businesses and companies to work and be successful
- so that the weak are protected from the strong

## Why do laws have to be 'just'?

- If they do not have justice in them, then people will break them
- If some are unjust, people will think they are all unjust
- Bad laws will lead to protests in society, disrupting normal life
- Laws without justice could result in civil war.

Types of crime:

**Crime against the person;** those which harm people e.g. rape.

**Crimes against the state;** crimes which endanger society e.g. treason.

**Crimes against property;** crimes which damage or deprive people of property e.g. theft.

## Theories of punishment

There are 4 reasons why we punish people with things like prison, fines, tagging and community service. These are:

**Retribution** – criminals should pay for their crimes. They should get a punishment in proportion to what they have done

**Deterrence** – punishments should put people off committing the crime in the first place. If it is strong enough, they will be scared to do it.

**Reform** – criminals should be taught not to commit the crime again. It is a good way to stop crime. Teach someone how to get a job and they will not steal.

**Protection** – the punishment protects society from the criminal. The death penalty removes any threat; prison keeps them away from the public

Why is justice important for...

Christians	Muslims
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the Bible says that God will reward the good and punish the bad</li><li>• Jesus said the rich should share with the poor</li><li>• many different Christian Churches have said that rich countries should cancel the debt for poorer countries</li><li>• groups like Jubilee Research and Christian Aid work to justice for the poor in the</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the Qur'an says that on the Last Day, all Muslims will be judged, with the good rewarded and the bad punished</li><li>• one of the roles Muslims have is to follow Shariah law, which has strict rules about justice</li><li>• Muslims do not lend money as it is unfair to poor people</li><li>• groups like Muslim Aid and Islamic Belief</li></ul>

# Reasons for crime and punishment

There are many theories to explain why people commit crime, but there is general agreement on how people become criminals. [Criminal behaviour](#) fits into one, or more than one, of these categories:

- criminal behaviour can be caused by a person's free choice
- criminal behaviour can be caused by a person's [environment](#), eg a broken home or failure at school could be a [catalyst](#) for the change to becoming a criminal
- criminal behaviour can seem like the only option for a person if they are unable to conform to society
- criminal behaviour can develop through being associated with other criminals

## What are the aims of punishment?

People are punished for a purpose. Often the aims of a punishment overlap, eg the death penalty acts to [deter](#) people from committing similar crimes and it aims to protect the public from the individual who is guilty of the crime. There are six recognised aims of punishment:

- deterrence** - punishment should put people off committing crime
- protection** - punishment should protect society from the criminal and the criminal from themselves
- reformation** - punishment should [reform](#) the criminal
- retribution** - punishment should make the criminal pay for what they have done wrong
- reparation** - punishment should [compensate](#) the victim(s) of a crime
- vindication** - the punishment makes sure that the law is respected

## How are types and aims of punishment associated with each other?

Different methods are used to punish criminals for their offences. Each punishment is associated with different aims.

Punishment	How this meets an aim of punishment
Prison	deterrence/protection/reformation
Electronic tagging	deterrence/protection
Fines	retribution/reparation
Community service	reformation/retribution
Capital punishment	protection/deterrence
Probation	reform/vindication

# Christians and crime

## What does Christianity say about crime?

Christianity teaches that [sin](#) is a part of human nature and that all people have the potential to commit a crime. This is shown in the story of the fall of **Adam and Eve** in [Genesis](#), when they disobeyed God and ate the forbidden fruit.

Many Christians believe that the [Bible](#) teaches the difference between right and wrong. Following God's will leads people to the right path; ignoring God's will leads to disaster.

A typical set of guidelines from the Bible is the [Ten Commandments](#).

Christians should follow these guidelines to be good people. This belief is emphasised in the [gospel](#) "Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God."

Christianity also teaches that:

- People should be treated fairly.
- God wants the world to be ruled justly.

Christians do not believe in taking [revenge](#) when they have been wronged. They believe that they should forgive the sins of others, in the same way that they believe God forgives them for their sins. When asked how many times they should forgive Jesus said, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." *Matthew 18:21-22*

## What does Christianity say about how criminals should be treated?

Christians believe in [justice](#) and therefore Christians believe that criminals should be treated justly. They follow the example of Jesus, who taught that Christians should [reform](#) sinners and not be **judgemental** in their attitude: "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?" *Matthew 7:3*

As well as reform, some Christians would consider protection and [deterrence](#) to be important aims of punishment. These help to ensure safety in society. They would also believe criminals should be treated justly while in prison, and be given the opportunity to reform.

Some Christians consider [Old Testament](#) teachings to be as important as [New Testament](#) teachings and therefore they may believe that [retribution](#) is an important aim of punishment. They may think that criminals should be treated in a way that reflects the crime they have committed. In [Exodus](#) it states: "But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth." *Exodus 21:23-24*

This punishment is limited, eg it is only one eye for one eye. But it is also important to note that Jesus qualified this teaching: "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also." *Matthew 5:38-39*

## How do Christians respond to crime in society and those who commit crime?

Many Christians are concerned with the [welfare](#) of prisoners. They may campaign for prison reform, visit prisoners, or vote for a political party that reflects their views on justice equality. Jesus taught in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats that people who help those in prison will go to [Heaven](#). This is because Jesus identifies himself with the outcasts, including prisoners. Those who treat the outcasts well will have eternal life, which means they will go to Heaven.

# Capital punishment

## What is the current UK law about capital punishment?

[Capital punishment](#) is illegal in the UK. It was abolished for murder in 1965 and abolished for all crimes in 1998. In 2004 the UK agreed not to restore the death penalty for as long as it is part of the [European Convention](#).

## Reasons FOR capital punishment

- If people know they will be killed if they murder someone, they will be less likely to commit the crime
- the best way to protect society from murderers and terrorists is to kill them
- human life is so important that the only payment someone can make is to get the death penalty

## Reasons AGAINST capital punishment

- No court can be sure the verdict is correct – what happens if the person was innocent?
- If you look at countries with the death penalty and those without, there is no difference in the amount of murders
- most murderers don't think about the punishment when they commit the crime
- human life is sacred, and the best way to show that is not to kill under any circumstances
- life in prison could be worse than death anyway.

## What they think about capital punishment...

### Christians

- [Some agree](#) because the death penalty is used many times in the bible. The Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England have made statements in the past supporting it.
- [Other Christians disagree](#) as they say Jesus wanted to reform sinners, and you cannot reform a dead person. Life is also very special and sacred. Jesus also said we should forgive people and to turn the other cheek.

### Muslims

- [Many Muslims agree](#) with capital punishment for murder, adultery and apostasy (denying your own religion). This is because it is in the Qur'an. It was also used by Muhammad. Shariah law accepts it.
- [Other think](#) it is only recommended by the Qur'an, but it is not compulsory. Shariah law also gives the option for blood money to be paid instead of giving the death penalty.

# Religion and capital punishment

## Christian arguments in favour of capital punishment

Some Christians argue that [capital punishment](#) helps to maintain order and protection in society. They would say this because:

- The [Bible](#) sets down the death penalty for some crimes, so it must be acceptable to God.
- The [Church of England](#) has not repealed the statement in Article 37 of its [Thirty Nine Articles](#) which says: The Laws of the Realm may punish Christian men with death for heinous and grievous offences.
- [St Thomas Aquinas](#) argued that peace in society was more important than reforming the sinner. He reflects the [Roman Catholic](#) Church's teaching that the protection of the whole of society is more important than the individual.

## Christian arguments against capital punishment

Some Christians would argue that capital punishment can never be justified. They would say this because:

- They believe Jesus Christ came to Earth to reform sinners, as he did with the woman caught in adultery.
- Jesus amended the Old Testament teaching on retribution in [Matthew](#) 5:38-39 when he said: You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.
- Christians believe in the sanctity of life, that life is holy and belongs to God and therefore only God has the power to take life. In [Romans](#) 12:17-19 it states: Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody ... Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to revenge; I will repay, says the Lord'.

## Muslim arguments in favour of capital punishment

Muslims accept that the death penalty is a punishment established by God in the [Qur'an](#): ...Take not life, which God has made sacred, except by way of justice and law. Thus does He command you, so that you may learn wisdom.

*Qur'an 6:151*

This verse teaches that although murder is considered a [sin](#), it is acceptable to use capital punishment when required by law.

Other reasons Muslims may accept the death penalty include:

- The [Prophet Muhammad](#) sentenced people to death for murder.
- [Shari'ah law](#) states that the punishment for murder, adultery and denying Islam is the death penalty.

## Muslim arguments against capital punishment

Some Muslims may argue against capital punishment for the following reasons:

- Although capital punishment is allowed in the Qur'an they do not think it is [compulsory](#).
- [Shari'ah law](#) states that the family of a murder victim can accept money as [reparation](#) rather than enforce the death penalty.
- They believe that only Allah has the right to take life, and therefore carrying out the death penalty is 'playing God' and committing the sin of [shirk](#).

# The origin of evil

## What does Islam say about the origin of evil?

The Qur'an teaches that evil originates from the refusal of [Shaytan](#), also called [Iblis](#), to bow down to [Adam](#) when ordered to by Allah. For his disobedience Iblis was cast out of Heaven, and he vowed that in revenge he would spend eternity trying to tempt humans to do evil.

## What does Christianity say about the origin of evil?

Many Christians believe that evil is the result of [Adam and Eve](#)'s disobedience to God. This is known as '**the fall**'.

Some Christians believe that all people inherited the tendency to sin from Adam and Eve. This belief is called [original sin](#). According to this belief, all humans are born with a tendency towards evil and the ability to cause suffering. In [Genesis](#) it states: "...the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth." *Genesis 8: 21*

Most Christians also believe that as well as a power for good (God) there is also a power for evil. Christians refer to the power for evil as [Satan](#) or the **Devil**. Satan is traditionally thought to have been an [archangel](#) who disobeyed God and so was thrown out of heaven.

## What does Islam teach about evil and suffering?

Islam teaches that individuals should know, without having to be informed, which actions are evil and will contribute to the suffering of others, and which actions are good. This inner sense of right and wrong is called [fitrah](#).

Most Muslims believe they have [free will](#) and they must choose between right, using the guidance of [Allah](#). Many Muslims believe that suffering can be caused by the selfishness and evil of human beings which leads to bad decisions. They can overcome suffering in their own lives and help to ease the suffering of others by following Allah's path set out by the Quran and Sunnah

## How do Christians respond to evil and suffering?

### Praying

Christians should pray either that God will remove the causes of evil or that he should help Christians to bear evil and suffering.

If a person has committed a moral evil, eg murder, a Christian would not believe it their place to judge, but they would trust that God would punish the person for his/her action.

### Helping

Christians should follow Jesus' example in life. This means that they should help those who are suffering, through their actions.

There are teachings which make it clear how Christians should respond to suffering and evil. The parable of the Sheep and the Goats in [Matthew](#) 25:31-46, in which Jesus returns to reward all those who have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited those in prison, and cared for the sick, teaches Christians to care for those who are suffering.

Jesus' message here is that by ignoring a sick or hungry person, a Christian would be ignoring Jesus himself. Christians are also taught in the words of the Lord's Prayer to forgive others just as they have been forgiven.

# Good and evil

## What is evil and suffering?

- **Evil** is a cause of human suffering.
- There are two types of evil:
  - ❖ Moral evil - the acts of humans which are considered to be morally wrong.
  - ❖ Natural evil - natural disasters, such as earthquakes or [tsunamis](#)
- These two types of evil can work together e.g. a drought brought on by lack of rainfall, causes crops to fail, the policies of a government can make the food shortages for the poorest people worse.
- **Suffering** is the bearing or undergoing of pain or distress. Suffering is often a result of evil.
- Most people experience suffering at some time in their life. Religions attempt to explain suffering, help people to cope with it and learn from it. The fact that people suffer can raise difficult questions about why God allows this to happen.

## IS CRIME EVIL?

Some people think yes:

- Some crimes are so awful, such as those involving children, that they fit the definition of evil.
- Crime can cause human suffering, therefore it is a type of evil.
- Laws are often based on religious ideas or teachings “Do not steal” “Do not kill” when you break the law you are also breaking a religious teaching. This is going against God and therefore evil.
- Many people commit crimes for purely selfish reasons, they care so little for others that they can be considered evil.

Some people think no:

- If someone steals food because they are starving or their family is starving then they are not evil just desperate. If society forces someone to commit a crime because it is so unfair or forces people into poverty then society is wrong.
- Some laws are unjust and need to be broken e.g. in the 1960's Black Civil Rights protestors broke laws that discriminated against people of colour. It is not evil to commit a crime in order to challenge and unfair law.
- Crimes are just the laws of men not God. Laws change so they do not reflect what is 'evil' just what society thinks is an acceptable way to behave at the time.
- Religious laws are more important than the laws of man. If the law says you cannot practice your religion then it is not evil to break that law in order to follow the laws of God.



# How do religious people know how to be good?

## Why do Christians want to make good and positive social changes?

**The Golden Rule** is to 'treat others like you would want to be treated'. This means helping those who need help, just like you would want to be helped.

**The parable (story) of the sheep and the goats.** This was a story told by Jesus about how all the good people helped those in need by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting those in prison and attending the sick. These good people were like sheep because they followed the rules, and would go to heaven.

**The bible story of "Am I my brother's keeper?"** This story tells of a man who kills his brother then says he did not need to look after him anyway. He is told by God that he should have looked after his brother, as we should look after others.

## **There are 3 main ways which Christians make moral decisions.**

- **The bible.** It has the teachings of Jesus in it, all the things he said, all the things he did and the stories he told. It has laws like the 10 commandments in it. Christians believe it has been written by people inspired by God.
- **The Church.** This is the organisation of the Church, all the people like the priests and the Church councils. They think that this community of Christians can give them guidance about how to live their lives because they are experts in religious ideas. Roman Catholics think that priests and the Pope know best what is right and wrong.
- **Conscience.** The voice telling people right and wrong could be from God. Some famous Christians like Saint Aquinas and Saint Paul have said that your conscience is essential for making moral choices.
- Some Christians think there is another way which uses all the above. **This is called situation ethics.** This was started by a man called Joseph Fletcher who said that although all the Church's rules about the bible were correct, sometimes we have to break the rules in order to do the most loving thing.
- For example, to do the right thing sometimes might mean allowing someone to have an abortion, even though the Christian Church is often against abortion. Jesus forgave people and sometimes broke the rules so He could do the most loving thing and help them. This means Christians should do the same.

# Attitudes towards suffering

## How do Christians respond to evil and suffering?

### Praying

- Christians should pray either that God will remove the causes of evil or that he should help Christians to bear evil and suffering.
- If a person has committed a moral evil, eg murder, a Christian would not believe it their place to judge, but they would trust that God would punish the person for his/her action.

### Helping

- Christians should follow Jesus' example in life. This means that they should help those who are suffering, through their actions.
- There are teachings which make it clear how Christians should respond to suffering and evil. The parable of the Sheep and the Goats in [Matthew](#) 25:31-46, in which Jesus returns to reward all those who have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited those in prison, and cared for the sick, teaches Christians to care for those who are suffering.
- Jesus' message here is that by ignoring a sick or hungry person, a Christian would be ignoring Jesus himself.
- Christians are also taught in the words of the Lord's Prayer to forgive others just as they have been forgiven.

## Islamic responses to suffering

### Following the Sunnah and Quran

Many Muslims believe that suffering can be caused by the selfishness and evil of human beings which leads to bad decisions. They can overcome suffering in their own lives and help to ease the suffering of others by following Allah's path. This path is set out in the [Qur'an](#) and in the [Sunnah](#).

### Acceptance of personal suffering

Some Muslims also believe that any suffering you experience in this life, even if it is as small as pin prick is payment for sin. Muslims try and bear and suffering they are given knowing it will prepare them for the next life.

### Helping others

Giving Zakah, one of the pillars of Islam, means that no Muslim should ever be poor enough to starve or need to resort to crime to support themselves. If this is the case it is the community to blame and not the individual. During Ramadan Muslims will give up time to help those in need and relieve their suffering. Muhammad taught his followers they should be like bee's, treading lightly and spreading good things.

# Forgiveness

## **Christian teachings on forgiveness**

Forgiveness is a very important teaching in Christianity. There are many accounts and examples in the Bible which tell Christians about forgiveness.

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant tells the story about a King who showed mercy to a servant who owed him money, but when the servant did not show the same mercy to a friend who owed him money the king was angry and punished the servant. The moral was to show forgiveness to others and treat people as you would want to be treated.

After the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, Peter came and said to Jesus, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times." *Matthew 18:21-22*

This outlines the idea that forgiveness is not a one-time action. If someone asks for forgiveness over and over again, then it is the duty of an individual to forgive them. In Matthew's Gospel, the teaching on forgiveness is continued, with Christ making it clear that in order to be forgiven, humans must forgive others: "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*

## **The Lord's Prayer**

The Lord's Prayer, in which Jesus taught about forgiveness, is one of the most important prayers in Christianity. It is the responsibility of humanity to forgive sins, as Jesus gave the disciples the commandment to go out, teach and forgive sins.

## **Islamic teachings about forgiveness**

Islamic teachings about forgiveness strongly encourage Muslims to forgive wrongdoing. Just as Allah will forgive people on the Day of Judgement for things which they have done.

Muslims believe no person is perfect, and everyone is capable of wrongdoing and deserves forgiveness. "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, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." *Qur'an 64:14*

And whatever strikes you of disaster - it is what your hands have earned; but he pardons much. *Qur'an 42:30*

# Prisons and the treatment of criminals

## **Prisons fulfil the aims of punishment by:**

- ✓ Long sentences deter people from committing crime.
- ✓ Is a form of retribution – the length of time and type of prison you go to depends on the crime you commit. So people get punished for their actions.
- ✓ Prisons have a duty to reform and rehabilitate offenders. Education is provided so that inmates can find a job when they leave. There are also programmes to help people with addictions which may have led them to crime.
- ✓ People who commit crimes are kept away and so cannot cause further harm.

## **Religious attitudes towards prisons**

Christians support prisons in general as they believe it is important that Justice is done.

Many Christians are concerned with the [welfare](#) of prisoners. They may campaign for prison reform, visit prisoners, or vote for a political party that reflects their views on justice equality.

Jesus taught in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25: 36) that people who help those in prison will go to [Heaven](#). This is because Jesus identifies himself with the outcasts, including prisoners. Those who treat the outcasts well will have eternal life, which means they will go to Heaven.

An example of a Christian response to those who commit crime is the Paulist Prison Ministries. They work with prisoners and detainees, helping to rehabilitate them into society.











Muslims agree with this.

## **Community service as punishment.**

Community service is giving back to society. For some crimes and criminals who have committed minor offences that cause no physical harm it is often thought better for criminals to serve their punishment in the community. It can also help them understand the impact of their actions. It also prevents them from being associated with more dangerous criminals.

Religious believers support it if used properly as it gives people the opportunity to change and be part of the community.

# Victims of crime

Violence against the person	762,515	
Sexual offences	53,665	
Robbery	74,690	
Burglary	501,053	
Offences against vehicles	417,444	
Other theft offences	1,105,117	
Fraud and forgery	141,241	
Criminal damage	631,221	
Drug offences	229,103	
Other offences	60,263	

Religious views: Christians follow the command “love thy neighbour” and so believe it is good thing to help victims of crime.

Muslims believe in helping others and so will also offer support to victims of crime.

Victims of reported crime are sent contact details for Victim Support by the Police. Some victims do not need this support but it is offered because you can never know how a victim responds to crime.

6 key areas of victim support are:

1. Emotional and practical support.
2. Practical tips to keep safe.
3. Specific support in certain areas e.g. rape.
4. The rights of a victim.
5. Help for young victims.
6. Help for foreign language speakers.

Case study:

I suffered abuse on social media and no one understood how it made me feel, but Victim Support did. Young people can respond differently to adults so having some one who could listen and support me made me feel less helpless.