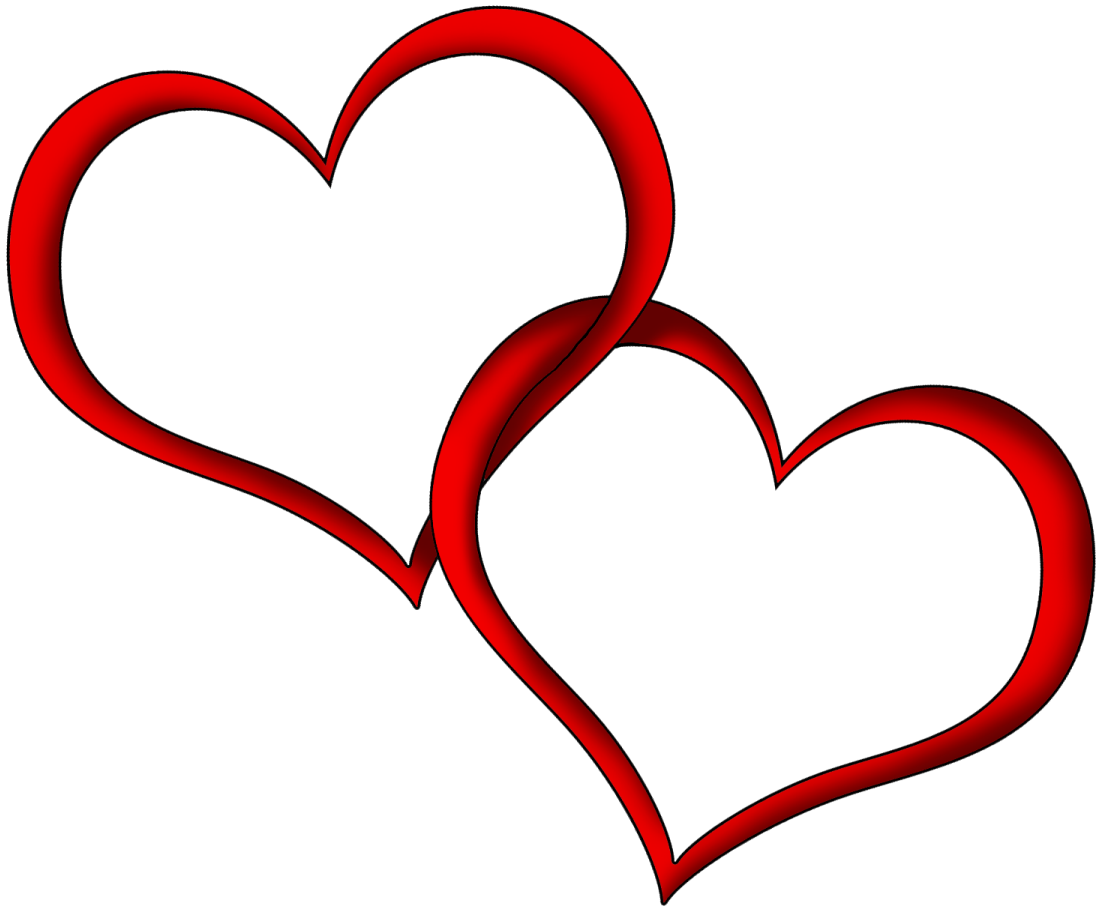


GCSE Religious Studies

Relationships



Name:



Key Concepts in Philosophy and Ethics: Relationships

Adultery: Voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and a person who is not their The commandments say, 'thou shalt not commit adultery.' Christians believe that adultery is a sin because it goes against God's

Divorce: To legally end a marriage In some circumstances, divorce is preferable where reconciliation and counselling have been tried and have

Cohabitation: Living together in a sexual relationship without being or in a civil partnership. Some Roman Catholics believe that this can lead to breaking the vow of made to God.

Commitment: Dedication and to someone or something. For example, the wedding vows state, 'til us do part.'

Contraception: The deliberate use of methods to prevent pregnancy. Some Church of England Christians allow contraception within a relationship, if both partners agree.

Gender Equality: Equal rights between the Christians believe that we are all 'created in God's image,' meaning that we all deserve equal rights and

Responsibilities: we must carry out. For example, looking after others is a responsibility within Christianity because of Jesus' to, 'love on another'.

Roles: Position, status or function of a person in, as well as characteristics and social behaviour expected of them. Each person can have different roles within a family or a, for example a priest has a role to look after his congregation.

Word Box

contract
death
loving
chastity
spouse
teaching
failed
church
married
artificial
obligation
genders
commandments
opportunities
duties
society

Diversity Within Religion and Society

Some religions believe that the teachings in **sacred texts**, such as the **Bible**, need to be adapted or changed because of changing views in society.

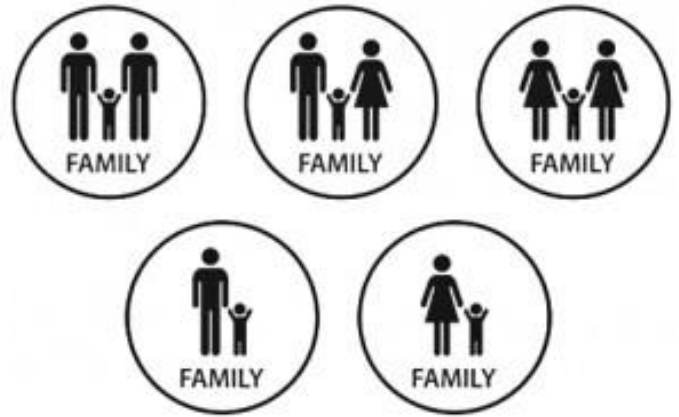
In addition, Britain is becoming an increasingly **secular** society. This means that more and more people are claiming not to belong to any religion or belief. These people would describe themselves as **atheist** (believing that there is no God), **agnostic** (unsure if there is a God) or **humanist**, (believing that we need to live an ethical existence for humanity alone).

There is an increasing **pluralism** of belief in Britain, meaning that there are becoming many more different religious groups within society.

These changing statistics in Britain means that there are ever-changing attitudes towards relationships.

What is a family?

- Foundation for all human activity
- Where human relationships begin and develop
- Where the norms and values of society are lived out and practiced
- Where new generations are brought up into adulthood



Types of Family

Nuclear

Two parents and one or more children living in the same house

Extended Family

Number of adults and children who are related living in the same home, e.g. aunts, cousins etc.

Reconstituted Family

Divorced adults remarried or cohabiting and may include children from the new relationship.

Single Parent Family

One parent raising one or more children alone. Increased rates of divorce has led to more single-parent families.

Childless Family

Married or cohabiting couple without children due to choice or inability to conceive.



Diversity Questions

1. Why do some people believe that sacred texts, e.g. the Bible, need to be adapted?

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2. What does 'secular' mean?

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3. What is the meaning of 'atheist'?

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4. What is the meaning of 'agnostic'?

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5. What is a 'Humanist'?

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6. What does 'pluralism' mean?

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7. What is a family?

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8. What are the five different types of family?

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Roles of Men and Women in the Family



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



Responsibilities: Actions/duties you are expected to carry out

Family members can have the following roles:

- Caring for children
- Caring for other family members, e.g. elderly relatives
- Maintaining the family home
- Earning money to support the family
- Men and women both have important roles within the family, e.g. showing mutual respect and being role models for the children

Traditional Views

- Traditionally in Christianity, the man was responsible for providing for the family through work
- The mother was traditionally responsible for domestic life (everything to do with the home)
- The man used to be seen as the leader of the family. This is called **patriarchy**, which means a family or a society controlled by men

Changing Views

- Women and men are now seen as in a partnership in family life, with shared responsibilities
- Women sometimes choose to stay on at work and there might be a 'house-husband' nowadays. The number of 'stay-at-home' dads has doubled since 1993. The law is also changing to reflect this – in 2015 it became possible for men and women to share parental leave. Parents can decide who takes leave to look after the baby, rather than it automatically being the mother



Families and Religion

- Religious belief is taught and learned in the home. Religious beliefs, practices and teachings are lived out in the home and young children learn by example
- It is a religious **duty** for parents to bring children up in faith and teach the values of the religion
- The Ten Commandments, and other basic values, are shared by all Christians (including Muslims and Jews). These values include: respect your parents, no murder, no adultery, etc
- Parents are expected to:
 - Take their children to church
 - Teach children how to read and understand the Bible
 - Teach children how and when to pray
 - Join in the celebration of festivals, e.g. Christmas and Easter
 - Understand the importance of rites of passage, e.g. baptism and the Eucharist

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

Worldwide Family

- Everyone in the Christian faith is regarded as part of the worldwide family
- Christians use the phrase 'people of God' for all Christians
- Pope Francis said:
 - The family is the basis of human society
 - The role of the mother in passing on religious faith is fundamental



Roles of Men and Women Questions

1. What the meaning of 'roles'?

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2. What is the meaning of 'responsibilities'?

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3. What roles can family members have?

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4. What are the traditional views surrounding a 'family'?

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5. What are the changing views surrounding families?

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6. Where is religious belief learned and taught?

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7. What is a duty for religious parents?

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8. What are parents expected to do?

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9. What do Humanists believe about passing on religious beliefs?

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.....

10. What is the 'Worldwide Family'?

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The Nature and Purpose of Marriage



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

Humanist Attitudes to Marriage

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

Christian Attitudes to Marriage

Marriage is the basis of family life. It is regarded as:

- **God-given**
- The best basis for creating an environment into which children should be born
- A lifelong commitment

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

For Christians, marriage is:

- A **gift** given to humanity by God
- A **Sacrament** – an important rite of passage
- 'Ordained by God', as stated in the Christian marriage service, meaning 'set aside' for a particular job or role. In this case, married couples believe that their role is to now live in a partnership with God. The vows exchanged between a bride and groom in a Christian wedding service reflect this.



In the Gospels, Jesus teaches about the importance of marriage. This refers back to the idea in Genesis that, as part of God's creation, **God made man and woman**. Jesus uses powerful language to express the meaning that marriage is the complete joining together of two people in a very special way. It is implied that the relationship becomes the most important human relationship for the couple who are married.

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

The marriage service says, '**what man has joined together, let no man put asunder,**' meaning that marriage should be a lifelong union.



Nature and Purpose of Marriage Questions

1. What the meaning of 'commitment'?

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2. What are the Humanist attitudes to marriage?

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3. What three things to Christians regard marriage as?

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4. What does 'ordained by God' mean in terms of marriage?

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5. What happened in Genesis?

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6. According to the quote from Genesis, what will the married couple become?

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7. What does it say in the marriage service and what does this mean?

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.....

Christian Wedding Ceremonies

Christians believe that marriage is a gift from God and traditionally Christian marriage ceremonies have taken place in a chapel or a church to reflect this belief. A typical wedding ceremony in the Church of England is performed by a vicar and would include:

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

Vows:

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

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

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

- The vicar declares the couple married
- There are **prayers** and **Bible readings**; the priest gives a **sermon**
- There may be **hymns** with an appropriate theme
- The legal requirement in Britain is for the newly married couple to **sign the register**, witnessed by a registrar and witnesses, which makes the marriage ceremony legal
- In an Anglican church the couple always marry in front of the **altar**



Christian Wedding Ceremonies: Questions

1. Who do Christians believe marriage is a gift from?

.....

2. What would a typical Church of England wedding ceremony include? (Name three)

.....

.....

.....

3. State two lines from the Christian wedding vows.

.....

.....

4. When the couple exchange rings, what do they say?

.....

.....

.....

5. What happens after the vicar declares the couple married?

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6. Which part of the ceremony makes the union legal?

.....

7. What might a couple do at an Anglican ceremony?

.....

Marriage Outside of Religious Traditions

In a pluralist (multi-faith) society, inter-faith marriage – where two people of different faiths marry – is an issue that religions must respond to. Examples of issues raised by inter-faith marriage are:

- In the Orthodox tradition, marriage can only take place if the Christians have been baptised
- In RC, the partner who is not Catholic must agree to any children of the marriage being allowed to follow the Catholic faith
- Where there is an issue about a couple marrying in a place of worship, a civil ceremony can happen with a religious blessing



INTERFAITH MARRIAGE GROWS

MARRIED 2010 OR LATER: 4 in 10 marriages interfaith



MARRIED BEFORE 1960: 2 in 10 marriages interfaith



© 2015 Religion News Service. Source: Pew Research Center, "America's Changing Religious Landscape" survey, May 2015
Graphic by Tiffany McCallen

Issues faced by inter-faith marriage:

- Following religious dietary rules in the home (e.g. if one partner follows kosher laws)
- There might be different expectations about gender roles
- Religious communities might refuse to accept the inter-faith marriage
- Different beliefs about moral issues, e.g. the use of contraception
- Children might be told different things about death and the afterlife
- Parents might be torn between religions that children are raised in
- Families might want to celebrate different religious festivals

Marriage Outside Religious Traditions: Questions

1. What is an interfaith marriage?

.....

2. What is needed in Orthodox traditions, in order for the couple to marry?

.....

3. What must be agreed if there is an interfaith marriage in the RC tradition?

.....

4. What else can happen, instead of marriage in a church?

.....

5. What are three issues faced by inter-faith marriage?

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.....

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Cohabitation



Cohabitation: to live together in a sexual relationship, without being married or in a civil partnership

Some couples choose to cohabit rather than marry, whilst some couples will marry after a period of cohabitation. In 2012, there was 5.9 million people cohabiting in the UK and it was the **fastest growing family type**.

Christian Attitudes to Cohabitation

Christianity has become increasingly more tolerant of cohabitation. Liberal Christians, such as some Church of England Christians, accept cohabitation where it is part of a **committed relationship**, although they still believe that **marriage would be the ideal**.

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



Cohabitation: Questions

1. What is the meaning of 'cohabitation'?

.....

2. Finish the sentence: Cohabiting families are the fastest growing....

.....

3. What do liberal Christians believe about cohabitation?

.....

4. Which denomination disagrees with cohabitation?

.....

5. Why disagree with cohabitation?

.....

Adultery



Adultery: voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and a person who is not their spouse

Extra marital sex (or adultery) is generally frowned upon in Britain. The majority of people in UK disapprove of adultery on moral and social grounds and the law recognises adultery as a justifiable reason for the granting of a divorce.

Christian Attitudes to Adultery

Christianity considers adultery as a sin. The Ten Commandments forbid adultery: "do not commit adultery."

Christianity teaches that adultery is wrong for the following reasons:

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

Why do some marriages fail?

- Lack of communication
- Lack of appreciation
- Unemployment
- Alcohol/drug problems
- Financial problems
- Affairs (adultery)
- Sexual problems
- Religious differences
- Unacceptable behaviour
- Interference from in-laws
- Too little time together
- Pregnancy/children
- Separation
- False hopes
- Work or career
- Different interests
- Personality difficulties



When people argues or are in **conflict**, making up is essential and is known as '**reconciliation**'. Religious communities can help those who are having relationship problems to reconcile. The religious leader might offer **counselling and guidance** to the couple, or the wider community might offer support and prayers.

However, sometimes the couple cannot reconcile, in which case, they might want to end the relationships. This could involve:

- **Divorce** – the legal ending of a marriage
- **Separation** = deciding to live separately
- **Annulment** – a legal way of cancelling a marriage in the Catholic Church

Eventually, a person who has been married and divorced, might want to marry someone else. This is known as **remarriage**.

Cohabitation: Questions

1. What is the meaning of 'adultery'?

.....

2. Why do the majority of people in Britain object to adultery?

.....

3. What does the law recognise adultery as?

.....

4. What do the Ten Commandments say about adultery?

.....

5. Why is adultery wrong for Christians? (name three reasons)

.....

.....

.....

6. Why do some marriages fail? (Name three reasons)

.....

.....

.....

7. What is reconciliation?

.....

8. How might a religious community help couples who are in conflict?

.....

.....

.....

9. What three options do a couple who cannot reconcile have?

.....

.....

.....

10. What is remarriage?

.....

Divorce, Separation and Remarriage



Divorce: To legally end a marriage

Marriages break down, which can result in separation or divorce. The RC Church does not permit divorce, so some Catholics will choose to remain separated rather than to divorce. However, divorce is necessary if someone wants to marry someone else. Otherwise it is known as **bigamy** and it is illegal.



Bigamy is entering into a marriage with someone whilst still being legally married to another person. Couples can apply for a divorce via the court system.

Christian Attitudes to Divorce and Separation

Roman Catholic

- Do not recognise divorce
- Marriage is a lifelong commitment that cannot be broken
- In some cases, annulment is given, which is where the marriage is declared as having never happened
- Jesus said, "*Anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.*"
- The Bible says, "*Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.*"
- Catholics who separate are expected not to cohabit with anyone else and if they do this, then they are not allowed to receive Holy Communion during Mass
- Catholics who do divorce can apply through the courts, just like everyone else. However, the Catholic Church do not recognise couples who are legally divorced. They believe that, in God's eyes, you are still married
- Annulment is when a court says that your marriage is not legally valid. This might be in the case that there is no consummation of the marriage (the couple haven't had sex) or when it is proved that the marriage should never have taken place, e.g. because it was forced



**SOMETIMES
DIVORCE IS THE
ONLY OPTION**



HUFF
POST

Church of England

- Divorce is recognised by the Church of England as it is **legal** (allowed by the law)
- Issues arise when it comes to remarriage. Remarriage is okay if the minister allows it – but it is up to their own discretion

Is divorce acceptable?

Maybe

No

It is not God's intention

It is breaking the solemn promises made before God and the Christian family

Anglicans/Church of England

Divorce is best avoided. However UK law accepts divorce, therefore it is OK in some circumstances, e.g. abuse

Remarriage is discouraged but if chosen then a non-church wedding is preferred

Remarriage permitted if it seems suitable and acceptable to all concerned

No minister can be forced to conduct a remarriage service against their will

Catholics do not recognise divorce

Marriage is a sacrament and it cannot be dissolved (unless for special reasons, e.g. it was a forced marriage)

Some marriages can be annulled for special reasons, e.g. the marriage has not been consummated

If a Catholic remarries without annulments then they can attend Mass but cannot receive Holy Communion (bread and wine)

Divorce, Separation and Remarriage: Questions

1. What is the meaning of 'divorce'?

.....
.....

2. What is bigamy?

.....
.....

3. What is an annulment?

.....
.....

4. What did Jesus say about divorce and adultery?

.....
.....

5. What does the Bible say about separation?

.....
.....

6. What might happen to Roman Catholics who divorce, but live (cohabit) with another partner?

.....
.....

7. Why do Roman Catholics not recognise a couple who are legally divorced?

.....
.....

8. Why might a marriage get annulled?

.....
.....

9. Why does the Church of England allow divorce?

.....
.....

10. When might remarriage be allowed?

.....
.....

Sexual Relationships

Sexual relationships are an important part of being human. **Sex is a gift from God** and part of God's creation. It allows for the continuation of the human race and is an important part of human **identity**. It is also a **physical expression of love** for others.

Promiscuity (having a number of casual sexual relationships) is regarded as wrong or a **sin** in Christianity, because sex should be part of a committed relationship between two people who have deep feelings for each other. As sex can result in children, fidelity in sexual relationships is really important for the upbringing of children by two parents.

The Purpose of Sex

Sex is a **powerful human instinct** and drive. It is linked with **procreation**, but the development of successful and widely available contraception, e.g. the contraceptive pill, has allowed the act of sex to be divorced from the act of procreation. Therefore people are able to have sex without becoming pregnant. This has significantly changes attitudes towards sexual activity.



Christian Attitudes to Sex

- Promiscuity is not acceptable
- Sex should take place within a marriage
- Sex is a gift from God. It is **holy** and **sacred**
- Sex should only be done with the person you love
- Casual sex devalues people and devalues the sex itself (it becomes meaningless)
- Concerns from some Christians about children being born outside of a **stable home environment**

Chastity

- The **promise to not have sex until marriage**
- Traditionally in Christianity, a person would remain chaste (a virgin) until marriage
- In America, Christians wear a ring on their wedding finger as part of the 'Silver Ring Thing' or 'True Love Waits' movement, which highlights a person's choice to not have sex until marriage. When married, the person will replace this silver ring with their wedding ring

Celibacy

- The decision to never have a sexual relationship
- In the RC faith, priests, monks and nuns take a vow of celibacy. It is made as a positive choice of lifestyle in order to dedicate one's life to the service of God

Purpose of Sex: Questions

1. Finish the sentence: Sex is a gift from God and part of...

.....

2. What does sex allow for?

.....

3. What is promiscuity and why is it seen to be a sin?

.....

.....

.....

4. What do Christians believe about sex? (Name three)

.....

.....

.....

5. What is chastity?

.....

.....

6. What was the traditional view towards sex?

.....

.....

7. What is the 'Silver Ring Thing' movement?

.....

.....

8. What is celibacy?

.....

.....

9. Who might choose to take a vow of celibacy?

.....

.....

10. Why might someone choose to take a vow of celibacy?

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.....

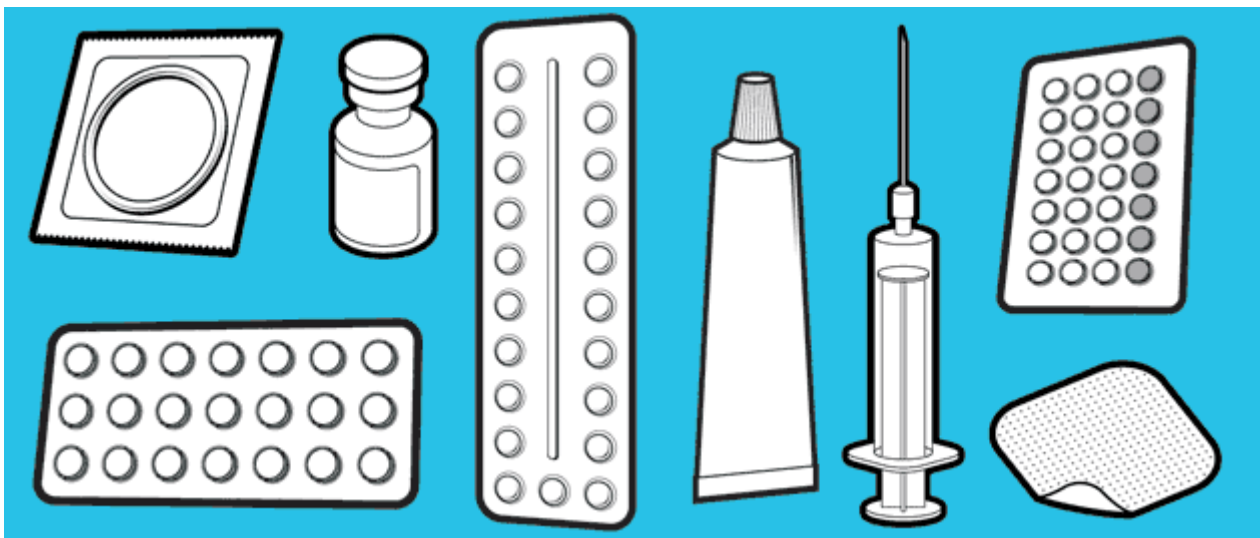
Contraception and Family Planning



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

There are two types of contraception:

- **Natural contraception:** This can include *Natural Family Planning*. This is when a person doesn't have sex during the time of the month when they are most likely to become pregnant. Natural contraception also includes the *Withdrawal Method*, where the man 'pulls-out' before he ejaculates. However this is an extremely unreliable method of contraception.
- **Artificial contraception:** These methods include the pill, injection or condom to prevent contraception.



Christian Attitudes to Contraception

Roman Catholic:

The Roman Catholic Church opposes artificial contraception. However, population growth is currently a debate throughout the planet, so some Catholics will consult their consciences when making a decision about using contraception

Many Catholics also want to enjoy sex without the worry of having more children that they can't look after or afford.

St. Thomas Aquinas developed a theory on **Natural Law**, which many Catholics consult when making moral decisions. Aquinas said there are some fundamental laws laid down by God and are the basis of how human should live and carry out their lives. There are five primary precepts:

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

From these primary precepts, Aquinas set out secondary precepts that fulfil and maintain the primary precepts. For example, the second precept says that we should reproduce, therefore contraception is wrong as it would prevent reproduction.



Natural Law should always be followed. If Natural Law states that we should continue the species, then contraception is going against that! - Aquinas

The Catholic Church takes an **absolutist** view of Aquinas's Natural Law, meaning that the rules Aquinas laid down should always be followed. Therefore, contraception should not be used as it goes against Natural Law.

Church of England

Natural Law is not an absolute set of laws, but a relative set of laws. God gave humans intelligence and creativity so that they can use their consciences to decide what is right in any given situation. There might be some situations where using contraception is the **moral and responsible thing to do**, e.g. where the parents already have children and cannot afford any more, or when considering global over-population.

In addition, contraception doesn't just prevent pregnancy, but the spread of STIs/STDs, so it is a good thing for this reason.

Humanism

Contraception is allowed so that people can enjoy their lives and limit the size of families. Sex is regarded as an **expression of human affection** and love between two people and it has no religious or sacred aspect.

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



Contraception and Family Planning: Questions

1. What is the meaning of 'contraception'?

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2. What is artificial contraception?

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.....

3. What is natural contraception?

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.....

4. What do Roman Catholics believe about contraception?

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5. What is 'Natural Law'?

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.....

6. What does Natural Law suggest about the use of contraception?

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.....

7. What do the Church of England believe about the use of contraception?

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.....

8. What other benefit is there of using contraception?

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.....

9. What do Humanists believe about the use of contraception?

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.....

10. What is the purpose of science, according to Humanists?

.....
.....

Same-Sex Relationships

- Traditionally, relationships were between one man and one woman
- In 1967, homosexuality was **decriminalised** in UK
- British attitudes to same-sex relationships have changed over time
- The **Civil Partnership Act of 2004** enabled same-sex partners to have essentially the same legal rights and responsibilities as married couples. This was followed by the **Marriage Act in 2013**, which legalised same-sex marriage in England and Wales. So now couples who wish to be legally joined have two routes they can take: Civil Partnership or Marriage

**MARRIAGE
IS ABOUT
LOVE
NOT GENDER**

Christian Attitudes to Same-Sex Marriage

- Traditionally, same-sex marriage was seen as wrong
- Many Christians oppose same-sex marriage on Biblical grounds:
 - *"If a man has sexual relations with a man as he does a woman, both of them has done what is detestable. They are to be put to death."* (Leviticus 20:13 – Old Testament)
 - *"The law is made for lawbreakers and rebels...for those practicing homosexuality"* (Timothy 1: 8-10)
- However, other Christians believe that the above quotes reflect the cultural and social values of the time they were written in and that they don't apply in today's society
- Liberal Christians point out that there are a lot of things that are condemned in the Bible that are seen as perfectly acceptable today, e.g. eating snails, consulting psychics or mediums, wearing provocative clothing, having tattoos or wearing polyester – or any other fabric blends!

Roman Catholics

- RC Church is against same-sex marriage as it believes that sexual relationships should only exist between a man and a woman in marriage
- Pope Francis wrote in 2010, *"A marriage made up of a man and a woman is not the same as the union of two people of the same sex... a father is not the same as a mother."*

Other Christian Churches

- Some Anglicans believe that same-sex marriages should not happen in a church
- Others believe that same-sex couples can receive a blessing in a church
- Quakers conduct same-sex services but the couple will also need a Civil Ceremony in order to be legally married
- The United Reform Church has recently decided to allow same-sex marriages to take place

Humanist Attitudes to Same-Sex Marriage

- Humans should find personal happiness in this lifetime
- Same-sex marriages are a positive expression of finding personal happiness and a quality of life that only a stable, loving relationship can provide



Same-Sex Marriage: Questions

1. When was homosexuality decriminalised in UK?

.....

2. What did the Civil Partnership Act of 2004 enable?

.....

3. What did the Marriage Act of 2013 allow?

.....

4. What does Leviticus say about same-sex marriage?

.....

.....

5. What does Timothy say about same-sex marriage?

.....

.....

6. What do some Christians believe that the above two quotes reflect?

.....

7. What do Liberal Christians believe?

.....

.....

8. What else is said in the Bible to be forbidden that we ignore as a rule now?

.....

9. What do Roman Catholics believe about same-sex marriage?

.....

10. What did Pope Francis write in 2010?

.....

.....

11. Other than a marriage, what else can happen for a same-sex couple?

.....

12. What do Humanists believe about same-sex marriage?

.....

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.....

Issues of Equality: Gender Prejudice and Discrimination



Gender Equality: People of all genders enjoying the same rights and opportunities in all aspects of their lives

Gender equality and the changing relationships between men and women is one of the most significant changes in society in recent times and across the world.

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

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

A graphic with a black background. On the left, the text "Are you a HeForShe?" is written in white. Below it, in smaller white text, is "A HeForShe believes that gender equality is a human rights issue that affects all of us." In the bottom left corner is the HeForShe logo, a white cross with a pink arrow pointing right. In the center, there are white silhouettes of a woman and a man, with a pink equals sign between them. At the bottom, the text "WE ARE EQUAL" is written in pink. In the top right corner, the UN Women logo is visible.

Christian Attitudes to the Roles of Women and Men in Worship and Authority

Arguments for Gender Equality in Christianity:

- In Jesus' time it was normal for men to take up positions of authority. Society is different now and women are more equal
- Jesus' actions showed that he respected women and he had women amongst his closest followers, which would have been very unusual at the time
- In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus taught that you should not discriminate
- Humans are all "*Created in the image of God*", so each human life is sacred and equal
- Gender is irrelevant, as long as you have faith in Jesus:
 - "*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*" (Galatians 3:27-29)

Arguments against Gender Equality in Christianity:

- In the early Christian Church, the original disciples were all men

- Women are different to men and should not have authority over men: *“A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet.”*

The Church of England

- Men and women can take up equal roles within leadership and worship
- 32 female ministers were ordained in 1994 and the first female bishop was ordained in 2014. Therefore women can become ministers and lead Christian congregations in worship
- The Archbishop of Canterbury said that the Church was “entering a completely new phase of our existence” when the first female bishop was ordained
- However, there is still a huge imbalance between male and female bishops

The Roman Catholic Church

- Women can take up active roles in worship. They can become a nun or a ‘sister’, taking vows to dedicate their lives to God
- Women are equal members of the Church congregation, supporting the church in a number of ways, e.g. serving on church committees or helping ministers to lead worship
- However, women cannot be ordained (process of being given religious authority). Therefore, women cannot become priests in the RC Church
- Men and women are equal but they have different strengths and contributions to make to society. Men take more religious leadership roles, whilst women have an equally important role to play in their families and communities



Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus, is one of the most iconic figures in the Catholic Church. She, above all others, was chosen by God: *“Blessed are you amongst women.”*

Mary did her duty for her faith and bore God’s son, Jesus. She is portrayed as a caring mother: a role model for women everywhere.

Mary is believed to be chosen, holy and pure (without sin). She is one of the only other Bible characters who was also assumed (bodily raised) into heaven.

Equality, Gender Prejudice and Discrimination: Questions

1. What is the meaning of 'gender equality'?

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2. What does UK law say about gender equality?

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3. State three arguments for gender equality in the Christian Church:

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4. State two arguments against gender equality in the Christian Church:

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5. When was the first female bishop ordained in the Church of England?

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6. What is there an imbalance between in the Church of England?

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7. What roles can women take up in the Roman Catholic Church?

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8. In which Church can women not become priests in?

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9. Finish the sentence: Men and women are equal but they have different strengths and...

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10. Why is the Virgin Mary important in the Roman Catholic Church?

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11. How is Mary portrayed?

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12. Finish the sentence: Mary is one of the only other Bible characters who was also...

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