

Marriage:

Marriage is an important rite of passage in Christianity, For Christians, marriage is traditionally accepted as being between a man and women, and is seen as the correct context in which to have a sexual relationship and children.

The Christian purpose of marriage:

1. To provide companionship, friendship and support between a husband and wife
2. To enjoy a sexual relationship within marriage and to have children and raise a family
3. To make a life long commitment to create a stable environment to raise a family.

Christian beliefs about marriage:

- o Most Christians believe marriage is a sacrament – a ceremony where God is involved (this shows that marriage is sacred and binding)
 - o Marriage is believed to be a gift from God
- o Provides security and a stable environment for children
- o Although it is important, God does not want everyone to be married. Jesus himself wasn't married and some priests will not marry as they have a vocation from God.

Sexual relationships:

Christians believe sex is a gift from God and intended for procreation, therefore they believe that sex should take place only within marriage.

Teachings on sexual relationships in the Bible:

- o Causal relationships are wrong – marriage intended for sexual relationships.
 - o Adultery is forbidden in the Ten Commandments
- o Married couples should be faithful to each other as promised in the marriage vows.
- o St Paul in the Bible condemns homosexual acts

Alternative Christian views:

- In a modern society, some of the ideas in the Bible about sexual relationships are outdated. A sexual relationship between a cohabiting couple who are in a stable relationship can be allowed.

Families

Family life has changed over the past 50 years as society has modernised.

Types of families:

1. Nuclear family- two parents (man and women) and their children living together
2. Blended family – Stepfamilies that have joined together through remarriage
3. Extended family – parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins.
4. Single parent family – One parent and children
5. Family with same sex parents – Two same-sex parents and children.

Purpose of the family:

Christians believe that family was God's intention for humans when he created them. Christians believe the purpose for a family is:

Provide the right place for a marriage couple to have children, to teach morals, to raise children into the Christian faith.

Gender prejudice and discrimination:

Role of men and women in the family:

- ❑ Men and women were both made in the image of God
- ❑ Some parts of the Bible suggest that God made women as a 'helpmate' for man. A literal interpretation could be men are the head of the household with women looking after the home and children/
- ❑ Catholics accept men and women were created in the image of God but given different roles.

Gender discrimination in the Church:

Catholic Christians only accept men to hold the position of bishops, priests or deacon and pope. They believe the roles represent Jesus. Who as male.

Promoting gender equality:

Many Christian organisations promote gender equality, including gender equality, including Christian Aid and Tearfund, which believe that gender inequality goes against human rights.

Marriage & the family

Paper 1: Section 2



Roles within the family

Family is important to Christians. Each member within the family is seen to have a special role that they believe God expects them to fulfil.

Christian teachings about the importance of family and role within the family:

Parents:

- Responsibility to get married and have children as that is what God intended
- Parent have a responsibility to love and support their children and keep them safe
- Christian parents have a responsibility to raise their children as Christians – getting them baptised or Christened and introducing them to the Christian community.

Children:

- The Bible teaches that children should honour; obey and respect their parents
- Children are expected to care for their parents in old age.

The family in the local parish

How can the parish help families?

- ✓ Supporting couples who are expecting children e.g. organising classes and social events
- ✓ Organising family events and family worship services
 - ✓ Running parental support classes
- ✓ Being involved in rights of passage, e.g. christenings or marriage within the family
- ✓ Encouraging children to attend Sunday School and special services e.g. crib survives
 - ✓ Providing counselling support

Worship:

- Local churches will hold family services to allow families to worship together
- In Sunday School children learn more about the Christian faith

Rights of passage:

Rites of passage celebrate key points in a person's life. They include occasions such as birth and marriage. The Church recognises the importance of these key events as a family.

Relatives and friends may attend a baptism or marriage ceremony as well as members of the wider Church community.

Divorce:

Divorce is the legal termination of a marriage and different Christians hold different views about it. Attitudes to divorce have significantly changed in recent years.

What Catholic Christians believe:

- Divorce is not recognised because marriage is for life
 - Jesus said divorce is wrong
- Marriage is a sacrament and divorce would break the promises made by God.

What liberal Protestants believe:

- Divorce is not encouraged, but may sometimes be necessary
 - Divorce must be acceptable as the UK law allows it
- People can make mistakes and God is ready to forgive sins

Humanists and atheist views:

Humanists believe that the breakdown of a marriage can cause problems within the family

Family Planning:

Contraception is the intentional prevention of pregnancy.

Types of contraception:

Natural methods of contraception include the rhythm method, which is when a couple have sex when the woman is not ovulating.

Artificial methods are human-made – made objects designed to prevent pregnancy. They include the condom and the birth control pill.

Catholic beliefs about contraception:

- Every sexual act should be open to the possibility of children.
- Contraception prevents the main purpose of sex – having children.
- Contraception could encourage promiscuity.

Liberal Protestant beliefs about contraception:

- The main purpose of sex is procreation, but sex is also for pleasure as an expression of love between a husband and wife
- Contraception is a sensible method of family planning
- Using artificial methods of contraception does not go against God's teachings

Important key words:



Monogamy: marriage is only to one person at a time

Cohabitation: Living together in a sexual relationship without being married

Sacraments – an outward ceremony through which God's grace is given

Diocese – a Church area under the direction of the bishop

Gender prejudice – believing one sex is superior to another

Gender discrimination – putting the prejudice into action and treating one sex differently because of their sex

Sources of wisdom and authority:

- 'A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh' (Mark 10:6-9)
- 'You shall not commit adultery' (Exodus 20:14)
- 'Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit' (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)
- 'Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring are a reward from him' (Psalms 127:3)
- 'Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.' (Mark 10:9)

