

Religious teachings about human sexuality

Human sexuality: refers to how people express themselves as sexual beings

Heterosexual: Sexually attracted to members of the opposite sex

Homosexual: Sexually attracted to members of the same sex



For homosexual relationships	Against homosexual relationships
Reform Jews believe that loving, committed homosexual relationships should be allowed.	Catholic Church teaches that homosexual relationships are wrong because they do not allow for new life to be created.
Church of England allows homosexual relationships	Orthodox Judaism considers homosexual relationships to be wrong

Key quotes
 “Do not lie with a male as one lies with a woman; it is an abhorrence”
 Leviticus 18:22 [Tenakh]

Sexual relationships before and outside of marriage

Adultery: voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and someone who is not their husband or wife

Sex before marriage

Some liberal Christians believe that sex before marriage can be a valid expression of love, as long as they are in a committed relationship. Others argue that sex before marriage is wrong.

Traditionally, Judaism considers sex before marriage as sinful and wrong.

Sex outside marriage

Adultery is against one of the Ten Commandments ‘thou shalt not commit adultery’ Exodus 20:14 (Judaism and Christianity)

Both religions believe adultery breaks the spiritual bond of marriage



Contraception and family planning

Contraception: methods used to prevent pregnancy (e.g. condoms, the pill – artificial), the rhythm method – natural

Most Christians and Jews accept family planning in certain circumstances, but not to stop having children altogether

Christian views

Catholics → artificial contraception goes against natural law. Sex should be about creating new life (rhythm method is allowed)

Other Christian’s → contraception should be allowed for family planning

Jewish views

Orthodox → accepts use of contraception by married couples

Reform → allow contraception for many reasons including social and financial reasons.



Divorce and remarriage

Divorce: legal ending of marriage

Remarriage: when someone marries again while their former husband or wife is still alive

Why do people get divorced?

Adultery, people changing and growing apart, work and money pressures, addiction, inability to have children etc.

Christian views on divorce and remarriage

Some Christians believe in the sanctity of marriage and divorce is wrong. Catholics can separate but not remarry whilst their partner is still alive.

Other Christians believe divorce is the lesser of two evils and should be allowed.

Jews believe marriage is a voluntary contract, so divorce is allowed



Religious teachings about marriage

Marriage: legal union between a man and woman as partners in a relationship (same-sex marriage is legal in the UK)

Cohabitation: refers to a couple living together and having a sexual relationship without being married

What is the nature and purpose of marriage? → Jews have a binding contract (Ketubah) that protects the woman’s financial security. It provides a secure foundation to raise a family

Christians believe marriage is the proper place to enjoy sex, raise children and provide a secure and stable environment for family life

Cohabitation and same – sex marriage

Catholics and Orthodox Jews oppose cohabitation as they believe sex should only take place within marriage. Against same-sex marriage

Reform and liberal Jews → accept same-sex marriage & cohabitation



The nature of families

Different types of families



Nuclear family → a mother, father and children (most common family type in the west)

Extended family → includes grandparents and other relatives. Jews view themselves as an extended family, descending from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

Families with same-sex parents → when a homosexual couple raise children together. Some Christians and Orthodox Jews disapprove as they believe children should have both male and female role models.

Polygamous families → when a man has more than one wife. Illegal in UK

Role of parents → love and care for children, educate them about their faith, encourage positive morals and values

Role of children → love and respect parents, support and care for them

The purpose of families

Procreation: bringing babies into the world

For Christians and Jews the purpose of families is to procreate, educate children in the faith and to protect children and keep them safe

Procreation

- Mainly takes place within the family. Jews consider a large family a blessing from God. For Christians, procreation is an important purpose of the family.

Stability and the protection of children

- Families provide secure, stable environments for children to grow up in

Educating children in a faith → The Shema instructs parents to teach children God’s laws. Christians are expected to teach children good morals and Christian values.



Religious attitudes to gender equality

Gender equality: men and women should have the same rights and opportunities as each other

Gender prejudice: holding biased opinions about people based on their gender

Sexual stereotyping: having a fixed idea or image of how men and women will behave

Gender discrimination: acting against someone on the basis of their gender

- Christians believe all people are created in the image of God → “There is neither Jew nor Gentile” Galatians 3:28 [NIV]
- In Reform Judaism, women can be rabbis however this is not allowed in Orthodox Judaism. Women take on more traditional roles within Orthodox Judaism



Paper 2

Thematic studies

Theme A: Relationships and families

Theme B: Religion and life

Theme D: Religion, peace and conflict

Theme E: Religion, crime and punishment

Within the themes, we will be exploring both Christian and Jewish responses to relevant issues in our society.

In your exam questions, it will ask you to ‘refer to the main religious tradition of Great Britain’ → this is simply Christianity

