

3.2.1.1 Theme A: Relationships and families

Students should study religious teachings, and religious, philosophical and ethical arguments, relating to the issues that follow, and their impact and influence in the modern world. They should be aware of contrasting perspectives in contemporary British society on all of these issues.

They must be able to explain contrasting beliefs on the following three issues with reference to the main religious tradition in Britain (Christianity) and one or more other religious traditions:

- Contraception.
- Sexual relationships before marriage.
- Homosexual relationships.

Sex, marriage and divorce

- Human sexuality including: heterosexual and homosexual relationships.
- Sexual relationships before and outside of marriage.
- Contraception and family planning.
- The nature and purpose of marriage.
- Same-sex marriage and cohabitation.
- Divorce, including reasons for divorce, and remarrying.
- Ethical arguments related to divorce, including those based on the sanctity of marriage vows and compassion.

Families and gender equality

- The nature of families, including:
 - the role of parents and children
 - extended families and the nuclear family.
- The purpose of families, including:
 - procreation
 - stability and the protection of children
 - educating children in a faith.
- Contemporary family issues including:
 - same-sex parents
 - polygamy.
- The roles of men and women.
- Gender equality.
- Gender prejudice and discrimination, including examples.

Theme A – Relationships and Families

Sex and Sexuality

Reasons for sex	Age of consent: This is when you are old enough by law to choose to have sex. It is 16 for anyone.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Love Lust Fun Money Create life 	<p>Celibacy: They decide to wait until marriage to have sex (chastity) or they don't marry and have sex (celibacy).</p> <p>Heterosexuality: People of opposite genders in a relationship</p> <p>Homosexuality: People of the same gender in a relationship</p> <p>Adultery: Having an affair (a sexual relationship) with someone who is not your marriage partner.</p>

Topic	CHRISTIAN	MUSLIM
Adultery	'whoever sins sexually sins against their own body' 'do not commit adultery'	'Do not commit adultery. It is shameful and an evil way to act.' (Qur'an)
Sex before marriage	Liberal Christians and most Church of England say sex before marriage in a loving relationship is okay if it leads to marriage. Sex before marriage is seen as fornication , a sin.	Sex before marriage is Zina (a sexual sin). 'The only way to protect all society is to maintain a society where only a man and his wife share the act of sex.'

Contraception and Family Planning

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

Natural: Withdrawal method, Rhythm method

Artificial: Pill, Injection, patch, condom, femidom, IUD

Good	Not matter	Not OK
In contemporary British society contraception is used to combat STIs and lead to responsible parenthood. Accept its use in family planning, for health and financial reasons.	Humanists believe we should use science to better our lives.	The Roman Catholic Church teaches that one of the purposes of sex is to procreate, the use of artificial methods interferes with God's creative act and against the Natural Law . 'Be fruitful and multiply '.
Most Protestant Christian groups believe that sex is not exclusively for procreation .	Quakers are happy for each couple to decide for themselves	Every sexual act should have the possibility of creating life.
Muslims believe that artificial contraception can be used within a marriage as long as it does not stop people having children all together. Some Muslims oppose their use as it goes against Allah's plans. Allah gives strength to cope with any children that come along.		

Marriage and the Family

Single parent, Childless, Reconstituted (divorced parents remarried), **Extended** (other relatives), **Nuclear** (2 parents and one or more children), **Polygamy** (multiple wives)

Roles: who leads the upbringing of the children, who earns money for the family. Traditionally, the man went out to work, but in society today these roles are changing.

Nature: children should 'Honour your parents', religious duty to marry and have a family.

Marriage ceremonies

Christian

In the Roman Catholic ceremony, marriage takes place as part of the Mass: it is a sacrament.

- Priest reads a **homily** (a moralising lecture) about what Christian marriage is.
- He asks three set questions → so they understand the responsibilities of the marriage.
- The couple make vows to each other, e.g. "to love and to cherish."
- They have agreed before God and priest accepts their decision. "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder".
- The rings are blessed, exchanged and the priest blesses the marriage.
- The couple sign the marriage register. 'man and woman become one flesh'

Muslim

- Last up to 5 days and the ceremony takes place on day four called **nikkah**, performed at the home of the bride or groom and not in the mosque.
- The groom has to declare a **mahr** (a dowry), showing his respect for the bride.
- The **imam** leads the ceremony, can be any respected male.
- The bride doesn't have to be there → given consent before hand.
- The imam recites verses from the Qur'an and **Nikkah Khutba**, about the purpose of marriage.
- The consent of the bride is asked for three times by the imam.

Cohabitation, adultery and same-sex marriage

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

CHRISTIAN	MUSLIM
Some Christians, e.g. members of the Church of England , accept cohabitation if it will lead on to marriage, while still advocating marriage as the ideal. 'Flee from sexual immorality' If for example, the couple were homosexual and were unable to have a religious marriage ceremony, cohabitation is an alternative	Often, the couple is not allowed to date before the wedding and must meet only with their families present (they are never left alone). Cohabitation is entirely out of the question. Marriages are often arranged by the family, so there is no need for the couple to date and socialise in the way that many non-Muslims do.
Some Christians, e.g. Roman Catholic Christians do not accept cohabitation as they believe sex should only happen in marriage.	The Qur'an states that the punishment for adultery is 100 stripes.

Civil Marriage: registration is about being married, but not through a religious ceremony.

Civil Partnership: is the legal registration of a same-sex couple.

CHRISTIAN (mainly Roman catholic and Anglican views)	MUSLIM
'Do not have sexual relationships with a man as one does with a woman, that is detestable' St Paul's letters included in the Bible, he condemns homosexuality as 'unrighteous' Homosexuality is an 'objective disorder' (only leading towards sin) God created humans, 'and it was very good' (Genesis 2) regardless of their sexuality	In most Muslim countries homosexual acts are against the law. People who commit sexual sins are 'fornicators' Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, 'if you find anyone doing as Lot's people did, kill the one who does it, and the one to whom it is done.' Some Muslims argue that it is homosexual lust that is condemned in the Qur'an and not faithful homosexual love.

Parenting – the purpose of families

- All religions emphasise the need for kids to respect their parents in return for their parents love and commitment. It is a part of the ten commandments to 'honour your parents'.
- Christian beliefs stay with them. Christian community supports them through hard times.
- 'Bring up a child in the way he should go and he will not depart from it'. Christians believe their religion gives children a secure basis and helps them through difficulties.
- Muslims believe children should care for elderly parents with kindness and respect because they loved them when they were young.

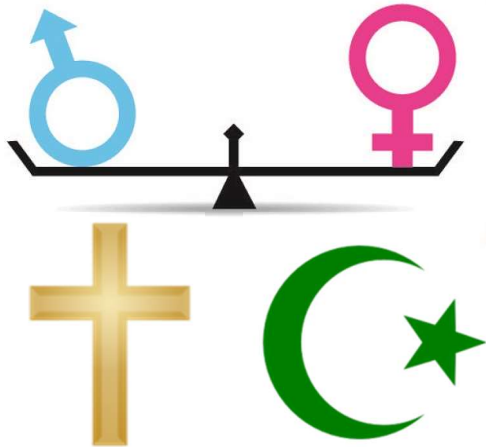
Same-sex parents

- Sexual orientation has nothing to do with whether or not they would be good parents, a faithful committed relationship is more important for bringing up children.
- Muslims** do not approve of same-sex parents as they believe that homosexual relationships and same-sex marriage is morally wrong
- Same-sex parents would not be able to set a good example to their children as there would not be both male and female role models

Divorce and remarriage

Divorce is the action or an instance of legally dissolving a marriage.

Roman Catholic	Church of England/Anglican	Muslim
<p>Roman Catholics believe that divorce cannot happen, but that annulments can because it is demonstrating that the marriage never happened. Marriage is a sacrament. This means that the couple is united in the eyes of God, and that a bond is formed between God and the couple.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Church of England do not encourage divorce because they want to help struggling couples to work on their differences. In cases of abuse, the harm to children is greater than the harm done by separation – utilitarian principles. Humans make mistakes, and it is more compassionate to allow divorce when people have irreconcilable differences, and the most compassionate act is the right act. 	<p>Overall, in Islam, people believe that divorce and re-marriage should be permitted because on many occasions, it is the last resort.</p> <p>If divorce is still the solution, then the man states, “I divorce you” three times before witnesses. He must then wait three months – to be sure his wife is not pregnant, and perhaps to resolve the problems. After that, he must pay the second part of the dowry to show the marriage has ended.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through marriage and consummation, the couple become ‘one flesh’ and this cannot be undone. ‘God himself is the author of marriage’ By marrying other Roman Catholics they can achieve a ‘perfect union of mind and full communion of life’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Matthew, Creation of mankind marriages were meant to last for life. ‘Whoever divorces...then marries another; it is as if he committed adultery’ – Jesus However, in John, Jesus freely forgives a woman caught in the act of adultery We should forgive those who wrong us, and show love to all – Jesus 	<p>If the woman initiates the divorce, it is called a Khula. The wife can divorce her husband but must repay the dowry, unless the cause for divorce is his fault, and she will not be supported by him, a man still has responsibility for the support of his children in all circumstances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prophet of Muhammad said, that ‘The most detestable of lawful things before Allah is divorce’ Sunni Muslims requires no witnesses, but Shi’a Muslims require two witnesses. They believe that before the divorce is finalised, there must be a waiting period to ensure that the woman is not pregnant.



Gender equality and prejudice

Gender equality means that men and women should be given the same rights and opportunities as each other.

- In the past men had positions of power e.g. in the workplace, and women were not allowed to vote, or get a divorce unless it was their husband wanted
- The Sex Discrimination Act (1975) made gender discrimination in the UK illegal – despite this it still occurs.
- The gender pay gap is 15.5% in the UK
- Just because some religions assign a different role to women within the family does not mean women do not have equal rights.

Gender equality within the Church and Christianity	Sexism within the Church and Christianity
<p>Christians believe ‘Love your neighbour’ and that women and men are created in the image of God → means that discrimination is wrong.</p> <p>‘There is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, slave nor free, for all are one in Christ Jesus’</p>	<p>I permit no women to teach or have authority over men, she is to keep silent. St Paul</p>
<p>Jesus treated women with respect and welcomed them as disciples. Mary and Martha being prime examples.</p>	<p>The Lord chose men to form the twelve apostles ... for this reason the ordination of women is not possible. The Roman Catholic church</p>
<p>“There is neither Greek nor Jew, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ.” Galatians 3:28 St Paul</p>	<p>In the Catholic Church only men can become priests and bishops.</p>
<p>In 2014 the Church of England finally voted, after years of debate, to allow women to become bishops and the first women bishops were ordained in 2015.</p>	<p>Some traditional (literal/fundamentalist) Christians believe that men are the head of the family and that women should mainly stay at home and care for the children. This may stem from a more traditional and literal interpretation of the Bible.</p>

Gender equality beliefs within Islam

- Men and women have the **same spiritual nature**, according to the Qur’an.
- Prophet Muhammad said, **‘I command you to be kind to women.’**
- I shall not lose sight of the labour of any of you who labours in my way, be it man or woman; each of you is equal to the other (Qur’an 3:195)
- There are different attitudes within Islam towards the roles of women and men in worship and authority. Muslims believe that Allah views men and women as equal, but they have different purposes. It is part of Allah’s design and purpose for men and women to have different physical characteristics.

