

Teacher Resource Bank

GCSE Religious Studies Specification A

Unit 10 *Judaism*

Exemplar Scripts and Commentaries



Script 1

PART A

A1 The Synagogue

- (a) Describe how the Ark is used in synagogue worship. (2 marks)

The Ark contains the Torah Scrolls, and these are taken out during prayer. It is to remind the Jews of the Ark in the temple which has been lost. The selected Jews take out the Torah Scroll and take it to the Bimah.

Commentary

Two creditable points are made in the first two sentences. The third is unnecessary and the reference to the Bimah irrelevant.

(2 marks)

- (b) Explain how a synagogue is used by its Jewish community. (4 marks)

A synagogue is used for Shabbat prayer and all the Jews of the community, that can, come to the synagogue. Also there is a place of learning called the Kollel which Jews go to, to learn about their religion. Bar Mitzvahs take place here, with the boy reading his Sidra on the Bimah. The synagogue may also have a Mikveh which women can use to purify themselves.

Commentary

Again, more is written than is necessary. Enough is written in the first three sentences to gain full marks.

(4 marks)

- (c) 'Worship in the synagogue is the most important part of Jewish life.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. (6 marks)

Worship in the synagogue is a major part of a Jew's life as he became a man there, learnt there and also prays there.

However, some argue that it is not the most important part of a Jew's life as a woman would not pray there, or even touch the Torah.

My conclusion is that worship in the synagogue is not the most important part of a Jew's life as men or women do different amounts of activities there. I think is a major part of a man's life but not a woman's.

Commentary

This response only just reaches level 4, thanks to the conclusion, which shows an attempt to argue and develop. Much of the answer reads like a list. The second view is much weaker than the first. Comment might have been made on worship as being central to the Ten Commandments and on the community aspect of the synagogue. The second view might have been developed with reference to the synagogue being seen as a social occasion even during worship, and how religion in the home might be seen as more important.

(4 marks)

A2 Family Life

- (a) Explain the importance of the Jewish mourning period known as shiva. (4 marks)

The Shiva means seven and lasts a week. In this week, the mourners may not shave, bathe, work or change their clothes. This is really important as the mourners grieve intensely so that later on, the loss is not so much painful. Excessive mourning is seen as rebuking God, so the Jews try and let out all their pain and grief out in a week, to help get over the person quickly.

Commentary

There is a real focus on the question, which starts: 'Explain the importance'. Clear knowledge and understanding are shown and the descriptive part of the answer is tied into the element of explanation.

(4 marks)

- (b) Explain why a Jewish baby boy is circumcised. (2 marks)

A baby boy is circumcised to show that he has entered the same covenant of Abraham and God. It is a constant reminder that he is a Jew and must follow God's rules. The covenant makes him become a Jew and is known as Brit Milah (covenant of cutting).

Commentary

The first two sentences make two valid and clearly expressed points, gaining full marks. The third sentence is repetitive and irrelevant.

(2 marks)

- (c) 'Rules and customs in the home strengthen Jewish family life.'

What do you think? Explain your opinion. (3 marks)

I think that rules and customs does strengthen Jewish family life as it brings them together to help each other to follow the rules and please God. It also means that they will have something in common and can relate to each other better and build on strong family relationships.

Commentary

This is a well argued response to the statement.

(3 marks)

- (d) Explain what happens at a Bar Mitzvah ceremony. (4 marks)

At a Bar Mitzvah, the boy receives a tablet and Tephillin. He also gets the prayer book. He carries the Torah to the Bimah and reads the Sidra of the Shabbat. He gets lots of money and can be part of the religion. The next day, the family will usually have a party with lots of celebrations. They will all say 'Mazel Tov' to the boy, meaning congratulations.

Commentary

The final two sentences are irrelevant to the question. A number of points are made in the early part of the answer, but there is insufficient development for level 4. The part played by the boy's father and the rabbi might have been included, together with the significance of the Bar Mitzvah as signifying the boy's maturity and responsibility for his own actions.

(3 marks)

A3 Beliefs and Sources of Authority

- (a) Explain what Jews believe will happen in the Messianic Age. (3 marks)

Orthodox Jews believe the Messiah will come and rebuild the temple. He will also destroy all of Israel's enemies and restore the holy land. Progressive Jews believe that the Messiah will not be a person but a time when everyone is peaceful and in harmony with one another.

Commentary

This is an excellent response, though the first sentence is sufficient for level 3.

(3 marks)

- (b) 'For Jews, God's covenant with Abraham was the most important covenant of all.'

What do you think? Explain your opinion. (3 marks)

I think that the covenant with Abraham was the most important covenant of all as it was with him and God and that the religion started. The covenant is what Jews today join so it must be important. However, I understand that the covenant with Moses was significant as it gave the Jews the Tenakh and all the rules.

Commentary

The impression given by this response is that the candidate found it difficult to develop arguments in support of the statement. Reference might have been made to the promise of land and descendants. The candidate decided to present a different view and this was sufficient to reach level 3.

(3 marks)

- (c) 'The Torah and Talmud are too old to be helpful to Jews today.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. (6 marks)

I think that the Torah and Talmud aren't too old to be helpful as the Torah is the word of God. Even if it takes a lot of interpreting. I think the Torah has the answers.

On the other hand, I see that rules that involve new technology like the internet or Viagra will not be written in books from thousands of years ago.

Even though the Talmud is a bunch of discussions I think that it is useful as it provides a borderline to these things that are allowed and not. It all adds up to make the Halaka.

Commentary

Again, one viewpoint is much better argued than the other. Although balance is not essential for level 6 to be reached, the answer is insufficiently well argued and coherent to be awarded level 6. The candidate might have given examples of teaching that Jews might find helpful, e.g. protection of the most vulnerable in society (orphans and widows). On the other side of the argument, it might have been argued that the Torah and Talmud came from a patriarchal society. The conclusion repeats what was stated in the first paragraph.

(5 marks)

A4 Personal Lifestyle

- (a) Explain the importance of the mezuzah for Jews. (3 marks)

The Mezuzah tells everyone that this house is Jewish and blesses the house. It contains the Shema and is very holy. The Torah instructs the Jews to put these on the gates and door posts of the house. When a Jew buys a new house and these are fitted it is a special time.

Commentary

A very full answer. The final sentence is not needed to gain full marks.

(3 marks)

- (b) 'Keeping the Jewish laws in everyday life is not possible today.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. (6 marks)

I agree that not all Jewish laws are possible. For example, the Jews are instructed to pray in the Tabernacle (Temple), however as it has been destroyed, this is not possible.

On the other hand, I can see that it is compulsory for Jews to follow the laws and that they must do all of them. It is not a bargain, but a contract that said that the Jews will follow all rules.

If a Jewish community is not large enough then they may not be able to afford a Mikveh and so women will not be able to perform the purifying after a period; this is an example of a rule that can't be followed.

My conclusion is that not all rules can be followed but a Jew should do as many as possible.

Commentary

Sound reasons are given for both views and the conclusion takes the argument a little further, but it is not sufficiently well structured for level 6 to be awarded.

(5 marks)

- (c) Give two ways in which a Jewish kitchen is organised to follow Jewish dietary laws. (2 marks)

No response given.

Commentary

No response given.

(0 marks)

PART B

N.B. Candidates choose **either** Question **B5** or Question **B6**.
In this exercise students have attempted parts of both questions.

B5 Festivals and Pilgrimage

(d)(ii) 'To visit the Western Wall is the highlight of a Jew's life.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. (6 marks)

I don't agree with this statement as there are much more important aspects of a Jew's life, for example, circumcision. They may not remember it, but it is what made them a Jew. Without it they would not be able to have a Bar Mitzvah which makes them a 'son of the commandments' which I think is much more important than visiting the remaining wall of the temple.

However, I can understand that being at the place is where the holy temple was and seeing on a bit of it left is inspiring and amazing. The place where Jews would gather and pray and also it was where the Ark was. It will certainly be a memory to remember but I don't think it is the highlight of a Jew's life.

At the time of the Bar Mitzvah, the boy probably feels that it is the highlight of his life. That is the same as visiting the Western Wall.

My conclusion is that visiting the Western Wall must be great for Jews, but it is not the highlight of a Jew's life. This is a matter of opinion.

Commentary

This just makes level 6. The conclusion might have been stronger, as it adds little to the response, but the candidate's own viewpoint is well argued and the other side of the debate is supported with sound reasons.

(6 marks)

B6 Justice and Equality

- (b) Explain how Progressive Judaism (Reform and Liberal) has changed the role of women in the synagogue. (4 marks)

A woman's role in a progressive synagogue has changed, they can now touch and read the Torah, be at the centre of the prayer. Open the Ark and carry the Torah as well as sitting with the men. The progressive Jews have made the synagogue an equal place and make Orthodox Jewish women feel as if they're deprived. The women in progressive synagogues have more freedom and it is no longer separate between men and women.

Commentary

The opening sentences read rather like a list, but the final two focus on the command word 'explain', drawing out the significance of the facts given earlier in the answer.

(4 marks)

Script 2

PART A

A1 The Synagogue

- (a) Describe how the Ark is used in synagogue worship. (2 marks)

The Ark is used to place the Torah in you are not allowed to turn your back on it at the top are ten commandments.

Commentary

The first point is creditable. For the second point the candidate might have pointed to the Ark as representing the Ark of the Covenant that was in the Temple or to its positioning in the Temple as directing the congregation towards Jerusalem.

(1 mark)

- (b) Explain how a synagogue is used by its Jewish community. (4 marks)

The synagogue is used for weddings, Bar Mitzvahs, funerals and a place for worship.

Commentary

A mere list of points is given. This shows elementary rather than sound knowledge and understanding. The candidate might have referred to the synagogue's use as a social centre and as a place of study.

(2 marks)

- (c) 'Worship in the synagogue is the most important part of Jewish life.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. (6 marks)

Yes it is because God has told them to 'pray only to me' and to pray is the most important. However other aspects of rules are important to follow all the 10 commandments and the 613 rules.

Commentary

Two simple points are made. In support of the statement it could have been argued that worship of God is central to the Ten Commandments, that its atmosphere encourages worship and that the synagogue enables Jews to feel part of a mutually supportive community. Against the statement, it could have been claimed that the synagogue is little more than opportunity to meet up with and chat to others, even during worship, and that Jewish culture is promoted more effectively in the home.

(2 marks)

A2 Family Life

- (a) Explain the importance of the Jewish mourning period known as shiva. (4 marks)

It is a 7 day mourning period for all of the family no music, bathe and not allowed to have sex.

Commentary

The response is descriptive, whereas the question states: 'Explain the importance of...'
Comment might have been made on the family aspect of shiva and on the support given to the bereaved by the community.

(1 mark)

- (b) Explain why a Jewish baby boy is circumcised. (2 marks)

To be put in a covenant with God as Abraham did and as his God told him.

Commentary

This is a sound answer, linking circumcision to the Abrahamic covenant.

(2 marks)

- (c) 'Rules and customs in the home strengthen Jewish family life.'

What do you think? Explain your opinion. (3 marks)

It does strengthen because if you start from an early age all aspects of Jewish customs will be human nature and if they have taught well they will be keen on teaching this to their own children.

Commentary

There is just enough development here to merit level 3. The candidate's response is fully focussed on the statement.

(3 marks)

- (d) Explain what happens at a Bar Mitzvah ceremony. (4 marks)

A boy has reached 13 he will read from the Torah presented with gifts such as tephillin, tallit also it would usually occur on the first Shabbat. At the end they might have a big party.

Commentary

This answer is confused and the final sentence is irrelevant. The candidate might have commented on the significance of the event as the boy taking his place as part of the minyan and as marking his responsibility for fulfilling the mitzvot. His father's and the rabbi's part in the ceremony might also have been included.

(2 marks)

A3 Beliefs and Sources of Authority

- (a) Explain what Jews believe will happen in the Messianic Age. (3 marks)

There messiah will come and rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.

Commentary

One simple point is made. Reference might also be made to the expectation of the Age as one of perfection and universal peace, fulfilling the Isaianic prophecy of swords being beaten into ploughshares.

(1 mark)

- (b) 'For Jews, God's covenant with Abraham was the most important covenant of all.'

What do you think? Explain your opinion. (3 marks)

I agree because that covenant represents that you're a Jew because behind all your clothes your circumcision represents that you're a Jew.

Commentary

This just makes level 2. The candidate might have commented on the importance for many Jews of the promise of land and descendants.

(2 marks)

- (c) 'The Torah and Talmud are too old to be helpful to Jews today.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. (6 marks)

I agree because say if you wanted to know if Viagra will be ok to have and that it's not allowed in Judaism obviously it wouldn't be there on the other hand the torah is very reliable and it covers most traditional aspects such as Shabbat or Bar Mitzvah.

Commentary

This response just reaches level 3, giving one simple reason and another that shows slight development. An easier example to develop in support of the statement might have been related to the role of women; it might have been argued that the Torah and Talmud were products of a patriarchal society. Against the statement, examples of teachings relevant to modern society might have been given, such as the protection of the vulnerable (defending the orphans and widows).

(3 marks)

A4 Personal Lifestyle

- (a) Explain the importance of the mezuzah for Jews. (3 marks)

A mezuzah represents that this is a Jewish house also the Shema is placed inside and that is the most important prayer.

Commentary

This just makes level 3. Two creditable points are made, together with comment on the status of the Shema. The candidate might have referred to the command given in Deuteronomy.

(3 marks)

- (b) 'Keeping the Jewish laws in everyday life is not possible today.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. (6 marks)

I disagree because a lot of kosher food in Britain is very easy to find and two sinks are quite common nowadays but it must be harder if your not as wealthy and live in france or spain where it is much harder.

Commentary

This is not far from a level 3, but some of the arguments are very weak. The reference to kosher food as readily available and the contrasting argument that people might not be able to afford two sinks were worthy of credit. The candidate might have argued that some of the laws could only be kept in the Temple and that in modern society some of the punishments seem unacceptable, e.g. stoning to death Sabbath breakers. Against this, it could be argued that a good Jew will organise life so that all the mitzvot can be obeyed and that to do so shows respect for one's faith.

(2 marks)

- (c) Give two ways in which a Jewish kitchen is organised to follow Jewish dietary laws. (2 marks)

No response given.

Commentary

No response given.

(0 marks)

PART B

N.B. Candidates choose **either** Question **B5** or Question **B6**.
In this exercise students have attempted parts of both questions.

B5 Festivals and Pilgrimage

(d)(ii) 'To visit the Western Wall is the highlight of a Jew's life.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. (6 marks)

It is very very important to visit the western wall as it's important as visiting Mecca for the Muslims the main reason is that it is the only piece of the temple left as it was destroyed twice before. However if you was a poor Jew and wasn't very good at keeping the rules and lived near the western wall in general it wouldn't be so special. Also there are other important places such as mount sinia that could have been as important. In my conclusion I still believe the western wall is a highlight in a Jew's life.

Commentary

Three simple arguments are made. The significance of the Temple for the Jews might have been considered, or the Pesach prayer 'next year in Jerusalem'. From another viewpoint, the candidate might have pointed to some other event, e.g. Bar Mitzvah, as more significant or to the fact that some Jews cannot visit Jerusalem.

(3 marks)

B6 Justice and Equality

- (b) Explain how Progressive Judaism (Reform and Liberal) has changed the role of women in the synagogue. (4 marks)

The role has changed dramatically in reform Judaism in the synagogue because they can sit where they want and also girls can have Bar Mitzvahs they are treated as equal as men. Also there can also be women Rabbis so they are given high authority.

Commentary

This answer is brief, perhaps because the candidate was running out of time, but it explains the significance of women sitting with men and Bat Mitzvah for girls as indicating equality. It then goes further by stating that the possibility of women being rabbis gave them 'high authority'.

(4 marks)