



Examiners' Report

June 2022

GCSE Religious Studies A 1RA0 2B

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Introduction

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies Religious Studies A – Faith and Practice in the 21st Century

Paper 2: Area of Study 2 – Study of Second Religion Option 2B – Christianity

This paper contributes 25% to the overall award.

The paper includes two questions, and each covers a section of the specification.

Candidates are expected to answer both questions: there is no element of choice on the paper.

The detail of the assessment content is provided in the specification. Centres are expected to use the Edexcel specification rather than other published resources, when planning and teaching the course content. The questions set to assess candidates are based on the specification only.

This paper allows an in-depth study of Christianity as a lived religion within the United Kingdom, and its beliefs and teachings.

This unit engages the interest of young people because it addresses many Christian beliefs and teachings, in addition to some issues affecting young people today.

Note: Some questions require, and have marks allocated for, correct use of spelling and grammar – SPaG.

Question 1 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings: Bullet point 1.7

The problem of evil/suffering and a loving and righteous God: the problems it raises for Christians about the nature of God, including reference to omnipotence and benevolence including Psalm 103; how the problem may cause believers to question their faith or the existence of God; the nature and **examples of natural suffering**, moral suffering. (bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question).

The question asked was: Outline three things that Christians consider natural suffering.

The majority of candidates completing this question gained full marks.

Candidates usually did not achieve marks because either they gave examples of moral evil, or a definition, or a list.

It is very important to ensure candidates do not lose marks by listing correct answers.

Use examples of lists and outlines to demonstrate the difference. The examiner must want more than a list or they would have used the word list!

1 (a) Outline **three** things Christians consider to be natural suffering.

(3)

One thing is earthquakes which is a type of natural disaster
A second thing is floods / floodings which is also a natural
disaster which can destroy homes.
A third is tsunamis which is a natural disaster and can
cause damage to areas and the loss of lives.



This candidate follows previous examiner advice: they provide three examples in three sentences, gaining full marks.

Total: 3 Marks

Question 1 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings: Bullet point 1.1 The Trinity: the nature and significance of the **Trinity as expressed in the Nicene Creed**; the nature and significance of the oneness of God; the nature and significance of each of the Persons individually: including reference to Matthew 3:13 – 17; how this is reflected in Christian worship and belief today (bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question).

The question asked was: Explain two beliefs about the Holy Spirit found in the Nicene Creed.

The Nicene Creed says,

I believe in Jesus Christ..... For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit

..... We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

The candidates who had learned the Creed could reference it with regard to the Holy Spirit. Many candidates had other beliefs about the Holy Spirit, but these were not included in the Creed and therefore could not be credited.

Centres are advised to read the specification bullet points carefully and teach every detail, in order to prepare candidates fully for examinations.

Another belief is through the holy spirit the virgin mary gave birth to jesus, without jesus there would be no christianity.

Another belief is the holy spirit taught christians through the prophets meaning he can be in anyone and that he is a true being.



This candidate gives two developed beliefs:

- 'through the Holy Spirit the virgin Mary gave birth to Jesus' (1) developed by 'without Jesus there would be no Christianity.' (1)
- 'taught Christians through the prophets' (1) developed by 'meaning he can be in anyone' (1)

Total: 4 Marks

Question 1 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings: Bullet point 1.6* Christian eschatology: divergent **Christian teachings about life after death**, including the nature and significance of resurrection, judgement, heaven, and hell and purgatory, with reference to the 39 Articles of Religion and Catholic teachings; **how beliefs about life after death are shown in the Bible**, including reference to 2 Corinthians 5:1 – 10 and divergent understandings as to why they are important for Christians today. (bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question).

The question asked was: Explain two teachings from the Bible about life after death.

A 'Source of wisdom' is one of the following:

- The candidates do not have to reference a quote or quote it word for word.
- If markers of candidate work in centres are unsure if the quote will be accepted, use a search engine. Enter the gist of the paraphrase and 'Bible' or 'Christian teaching'.
- If the candidate states that it is in John 1:18 and then states another verse from John – then this can be awarded. We are not holding candidate to 'verses' but it must be the correct book.
- If the candidate gives the paraphrase and then puts (John 1,18) in brackets the paraphrase can have the mark and the bracketed reference is ignored.
- If a candidate quotes Jesus and it was Paul or vice versa; and the quote is not accredited to them, it is not awarded.

Candidates were able to respond to this question confidently gaining the higher marks. There was a minority of candidates who thought reincarnation was a Christian belief.

Many candidates put together the beliefs in Hell and Heaven as one point and did not develop both points, so could only achieve 3 marks over all.

(c) Explain **two** teachings from the Bible about life after death.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

One teaching from the Bible about life after death is that there will be a heaven and for those who believe and follow the commands of Jesus will be rewarded with heaven. In the Bible when it says about Jesus' crucifixion Jesus says to the man next to ~~the~~^{him} that 'we shall reunite in heaven'. Another teaching from the Bible about life after death is that there is a hell where those who broke their oaths and ~~we~~ didn't follow ~~a~~ Jesus with a good christian life will go there.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate gives two points and a source of wisdom:

- 'There will be a heaven' (1) 'developed by 'for those who believe and follow ... Jesus' (1) supported by a reference to a source of wisdom '...Jesus says to the man next to him we shall reunite in heaven' (1)
- '...there is a hell' (1) developed by 'for those who did not follow Jesus' (1)

Total: 5 Marks

Question 1 (d)

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the (d) items. The candidates are assessed on AO2, Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief. This constitutes 50% of the overall mark.

The question is '**Evaluate**' this statement **considering the arguments for and against and reach a justified conclusion** – there must be some consideration of the arguments (appraise, judge the value of, the arguments to reach the higher levels).

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings: Bullet point 1.4 The last days of Jesus' life: the Last Supper, betrayal, arrest, trial, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus; the accounts of these within the Bible, including Luke 22 – 24 and **the significance of these events to understanding the person of Jesus Christ**. (bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question).

The question asked was: "The person of Jesus can be understood best through the events of his last days."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Many candidates gave excellent answers, citing reasons for and against, but not considering the value of them or analysing/evaluating them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments, limiting candidates' progression to the higher levels.

Many centres had attempted to introduce a writing frame to encouraged appraisal, but the candidates did not appear to understand the demands of the skill required.

Some candidates wrote: 'This is a strong argument because ...' and repeated the previous point or gave another point or reason referring to the statement, not the argument given.

In other examples, Candidates wrote 'This is a weak argument because...' and gave generic statements such as 'it's not in the Bible'.

The majority of answers did not address the reasons for the diversity within the beliefs of Christianity.

In some cases, candidates focussed on the strength/weakness of an argument, but had not demonstrated any understanding of religion and belief.

Centres should refer to training materials online. Candidates require the religious understanding of the diversity within the religious tradition, and the arguments for and against, before they can begin to evaluate.

Candidates should be encouraged to give a fully developed reason for and against and consider these arguments, as referenced in the question.

The consideration of the value (evaluation) of the arguments will enable candidates to reach Level 3.

* (d) "The person of Jesus can be understood best through the events of his last days."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

(15)

Some Christians agree with the statement that 'the person of Jesus can be understood best through the events of his last days.' This is because this was Jesus' sabbath way of suffering and it showed us his true character and also what he was really like because when you're suffering it brings out your true self. So during his last days we can really study and understand the person of Jesus. Furthermore it would give us an insight of his behaviour and give us a side of Jesus that we have never seen before to understand.

However despite this some Christians disagree 'the person of Jesus can be understood best through the events of his last days.' This is due to the fact that he knew he was going to be portrayed which he said in his last supper like 'oh, oh', he could have been scared or under pressure and it doesn't give us a clear depiction of who Jesus was. Furthermore there are better ways

to understand Jesus, for example through his scriptures and accounts that he made. The person of Jesus could also be understood best through his teachings and the daily lifestyle he had.

In Conclusion I disagree with the statement that 'the person of Jesus can best be understood through the events of his last days' because I believe the best way to understand him is through his disciples. His disciples were with him everyday and they saw first hand the way Jesus live and who he really was.



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Examiner Comments

In this response, there is a simple 'for and against', which demonstrates a limited understanding of religion and belief.

The candidate gives some development of the reasons given for and against, and attempts a conclusion.

To gain higher marks in the level the candidate would need to:

- demonstrate a more detailed/developed understanding of the issues raised
- give a justified conclusion, that reflected the arguments given

4 Marks

SPaG 3 Marks

Total: 7 Marks

Question 2 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings: Bullet point 2.5 Christian religious celebrations: **the nature** and history of Christian festivals in the church year including Christmas and Easter; the significance of celebrating Advent and Christmas; the significance **of celebrating Holy Week** and Easter with reference to interpretations of 1 Corinthians 15:12 – 34. (bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question).

The question asked was: Outline three ways Christians celebrate Holy Week.

The candidates performed well on this question.

Many could identify the events within the Church calendar and outline how Christians would mark these events.

Some candidates were unsure of what Holy Week was and wrote about Christmas.

2 (a) Outline **three** ways Christians celebrate Holy Week.

(3)

they may go on ~~pigrimage~~ ~~pilgrimage~~ pilgrimage to honour the last days of Jesus.
other christians would celebrate by giving chocolate eggs to ~~sygn~~ symbolise a new life.
Another is by going to the church and having bread and wine.



This candidate is able to gain three marks because they provide three ways in three sentences.

Total: 3 Marks

Question 2 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings: Bullet point 2.4 Pilgrimage: the nature, history and **purpose of pilgrimage**, including interpretations of Luke 2:41 – 43; the significance of the places people go on pilgrimage; divergent Christian teachings about whether pilgrimage is important for Christians today with specific reference to Catholic and Protestant understandings; the activities associated with, and significance of, Jerusalem, Iona, Taizé and Walsingham. (bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question).

The question asked was: Explain two reasons why Christians may go on pilgrimage.

Candidates were able to explain why Christians would go on pilgrimage and give examples of the places chosen, in most cases.

The mark awarded for a reference to a source of wisdom for the question was rarely awarded, because candidates did not have sufficient knowledge.

(b) Explain **two** reasons why Christians may go on pilgrimage.

(4)

One reason is to become closer to God and to form a better connection with him, as if you are going on pilgrimage your sole purpose is to worship, remember God, so your relationship with God is bound to become stronger.

Another reason is to meet other Christians and communities there. For e.g. in Taizé and Iona there are Christian communities and Christians could maybe receive advice or guidance from these Christian communities.



In this example the candidate is awarded full marks for two developed reasons.

- 'to become closer to God' (1) developed by 'sole purpose is to worship' (1)
- 'meet other Christians and communities there ' (1) developed by 'for example Taizé' (1)

Total: 4 Marks

Question 2 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings: Bullet point 2.2 The role of the sacraments in Christian life and their practice in two denominations: the role of the sacraments/ordinance as a whole; the nature and importance of the meaning and celebration of baptism and the Eucharist in at least two denominations, including reference to the 39 Articles XXV – XXXVI; divergent **Christian attitudes towards the use and number of sacraments in Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant traditions.**

The question asked was: Explain two different views about the number of sacraments celebrated.

In some responses, candidates were able to list and discuss the various sacraments celebrated. They were unable to explain the different attitudes to the number of them, within different Christian traditions.

The specification indicates this as part of the bullet point, but many centres appeared not to have prepared candidates for this.

Centres should refer to the specification bullet point and cover all the different parts of it.

These bullet points are the basis of question setting.

(c) Explain **two** different views about the number of sacraments celebrated by Christians.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

One view about the number of sacraments that should be celebrated is that some Christians only celebrate two of the seven. ~~Some~~ ^{Some} only celebrate Eucharist and Baptism as in the Bible Jesus commands to "take ~~me~~ this bread as my body... and ~~me~~ this wine as my blood".

Another view is that Catholics believe that you should celebrate all seven sacraments. These include reconciliation, marriage ~~now~~, confirmation, holy orders (for men), anointing of the sick, Eucharist, ^{and} Baptism.



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The example gains full marks.

- 'some Christians only celebrate two of the seven' (1) developed by 'only celebrate eucharist and baptism' (1)
- It offers 'take this bread as my body' as a source of wisdom (1) 'Catholics believe you should celebrate all seven' (1) 'these include reconciliation....' (1)

Total: 5 Marks

Question 2 (d)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings: Bullet point 2.3 The nature and purpose of prayer: the nature of and examples of the different types of prayer; set prayers; informal prayer and the Lord's Prayer, including Matthew 6:5 – 14; **when each type might be used and why; divergent Christian attitudes towards the importance of each type of prayer for Christians today.** (bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question).

The question asked was: "The Lord's Prayer is the only one needed".

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against. In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- refer to different Christian points of view
- reach a justified conclusion

This question engaged candidates of all abilities and produced a wide range of marks. All candidates should be encouraged to answer every question because every mark is important.

Many candidates did not gain more than Level Two because they did not consider the value of the arguments given in answering the question.

A significant number of candidates went away from answering the question and began to evaluate arguments for and against liturgical worship.

(d) "The Lord's Prayer is the only one needed."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- refer to different Christian points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

(12)

Some Christians might agree with this as Jesus himself said to pray with this prayer. As Jesus is omniscient and only wants best for his people he wouldn't command something that is not good for the people. As when his disciple asked him how to pray he said "so pray this". This is a strong argument as Jesus wants his people to be successful and do good in this life and the next. As ~~to stop~~ praying in other ways could distract a Christian as it says "when you worship don't babble like pagans". This shows Christians should follow what Jesus said as he used this prayer and also told his followers too.

Some may disagree as other prayers said are also needed and beneficial.

to a christian. For example the Nicene Creed as it is all the fundamental beliefs for christians.

Some may agree this is a strong point as the Nicene Creed informs christians of their many beliefs. As it says "the only son of God" and "we believe in the father" and also "we believe in the holy spirit". This shows the belief of the trinity and reminds christians of their belief. This shows them the power of God but also the love of God. As the trinity shown in the Nicene Creed helps christians feel at peace as they know the holy spirit is always with them. This will also make a christian feel more connected to God.

Overall I think the disagree point is stronger as christians can worship in anyway if they feel connected to God as they will ^{feel} receive the comfort and peace from worship and prayer.



In this example the candidate gives arguments for and against, that demonstrated an accurate understanding of the issues raised. Then they began to consider the strengths and weakness of these arguments. The candidate gained the middle mark of Level 3.

In this example, the writing frame supported the candidate: however, there were many examples of the more-able candidates being hindered by a writing frame.

Candidates who could evaluate successfully tried to force information into a Level 3 format that restricted the coherency of the answer.

Total: 8 Marks



Use writing frames to support the less-able candidates may help them to gain more marks, but be aware that they can restrict the flow of arguments for the more-able candidates.

Paper Summary

Based on this year's examination, centres are advised to:

- Use the specification to prepare candidates appropriately, this report having exemplified the way that questions are sourced from the bullet points
- Every part of the bullet point is of equal weight and should be taught thoroughly
- Candidates should be reminded to write three clear sentences that give one point each, in (a) questions
- Candidates should be taught to 'consider' the evidence/arguments they have given in (d) items
- Centres should consider carefully the use of writing frames to support the more able candidates – they are not always advisable

Grade boundaries

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