



**Key content**

**Christianity**

Students should be aware that Christianity is one of the diverse religious traditions and beliefs in Great Britain today and that the main religious tradition in Great Britain is Christianity. This knowledge may be applied throughout the assessment of the specified content. Students should study the beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity specified below and their basis in Christian sources of wisdom and authority. They should be able to refer to scripture and/or sacred texts where appropriate. Some texts are prescribed for study in the content set out below and questions may be set on them. Students may refer to any relevant text in their answers and AQA will publish a list of appropriate texts as part of the supporting material for this specification. These additional texts will not be required for study, alternatives may be used, and questions will not be set on them. Students should study the influence of the beliefs, teachings and practices studied on individuals, communities and societies. Common and divergent views within Christianity in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout. Students may refer to a range of different Christian perspectives in their answers including Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant. They must study the specific differences identified below.

**Beliefs and teachings**

**Key beliefs:**

The nature of God: • God as omnipotent, loving and just, and the problem of evil and suffering • the oneness of God and the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. • Different Christian beliefs about creation including the role of Word and Spirit (John 1:1-3 and Genesis 1:1-3).

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• Different Christian beliefs about the afterlife and their importance, including: resurrection and life after death; judgement, heaven and hell.

Jesus Christ and salvation • Beliefs and teachings about: • the incarnation and Jesus as the Son of God • the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension • sin, including original sin • the means of salvation, including law, grace and Spirit • the role of Christ in salvation including the idea of atonement. 3.1.2.2

**Practices:**

Worship and festivals • Different forms of worship and their significance: • liturgical, non-liturgical and informal, including the use of the Bible • private worship. • Prayer and its significance, including the Lord's Prayer, set prayers and informal prayer. • The role and meaning of the sacraments: • the meaning of sacrament • the sacrament of baptism and its significance for Christians; infant and believers' baptism; different beliefs about infant baptism • the sacrament of Holy Communion/Eucharist and its significance for Christians, including different ways in which it is celebrated and different interpretations of its meaning. • The role and importance of pilgrimage and celebrations including: • two contrasting examples of Christian pilgrimage: Lourdes and Iona • the celebrations of Christmas and Easter, including their importance for Christians in Great Britain today.

The role of the church in the local and worldwide community • The role of the Church in the local community, including food banks and street pastors. • The place of mission, evangelism and Church growth. • The importance of the worldwide Church including: • working for reconciliation • how Christian churches respond to persecution • the work of one of the following: Catholic Agency For Overseas Development (CAFOD), Christian Aid, Tearfund.

## **Judaism**

Students should be aware that Judaism is one of the diverse religious traditions and beliefs in Great Britain today and that the main religious tradition in Great Britain is Christianity. This knowledge may be applied throughout the assessment of the specified content. Students should study the beliefs, teachings and practices of Judaism specified below and their basis in Jewish sources of wisdom and authority. They should be able to refer to scripture and/or sacred texts where appropriate. Some texts are prescribed for study in the content set out below and questions may be set on them. Students may refer to any relevant text in their answers and AQA will publish a list of appropriate texts as part of the supporting material for this specification. These additional texts will not be required for study, alternatives may be used, and questions will not be set on them. Students should study the influence of the beliefs, teachings and practices studied on individuals, communities and societies. Common and divergent views within Judaism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout. Students may refer to a range of different Jewish perspectives in their answers, for example, Orthodox, Reform and Liberal Judaism. They must study the specific differences identified below.

### **Beliefs and teachings**

#### **Key beliefs:**

- The nature of God: • God as one • God as Creator • God as Law-Giver and Judge, loving and merciful. • The divine presence (Shekhinah). • Beliefs about life after death, including judgement and resurrection. • The nature and role of the Messiah, including different views on the role and importance of the Messiah. • The Covenant and the mitzvot • The promised land and the Covenant with Abraham, Genesis 12:1-3. • The Covenant at Sinai and its importance including the role of Moses and the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20:1-17. • Key moral principles including justice, healing the world, charity and kindness to others. • The importance of the sanctity of human life, including the concept of 'saving a life' (Pikuach Nefesh). • The relationship between free will and the 613 mitzvot.

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- Mitzvot between man and God and mitzvot between man and man, including the difference between them and their importance.

#### **Practices:**

The synagogue and worship • The synagogue and its importance. • The design and religious features of synagogues including bimah (reading platform), aron hakodesh (ark), ner tamid (ever burning light) and associated practices; differences between Orthodox and Reform synagogues. • Public acts of worship including: • synagogue services in both Orthodox and Reform synagogues • the significance of prayer, including the Amidah, the standing prayer. • Shabbat in the home and synagogue and its significance. • Worship in the home and private prayer. • Tenakh (the written law) and Talmud (the oral law), and their study, use and significance in daily life.

Family life and festivals • Rituals and their significance: • ceremonies associated with birth including Brit Milah. • Bar and Bat Mitzvah • the marriage ceremony • mourning rituals. • Dietary laws and their significance, including different Jewish views about their importance. • kosher and trefah • separation of milk and meat. • Festivals and their importance for Jews in Great Britain today, including the origins and meaning of: • Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur • Pesach.

## **Religious, philosophical and ethical studies**

Students should be aware of different religious perspectives on the issues studied within and / or between religious and non-religious beliefs such as atheism and humanism. Students must also study religious, philosophical and ethical arguments related to the issues raised, and their impact and influence on the modern world. Students will be expected to show their understanding of religion through the application of teachings from religion and beliefs. They will also be expected to make specific references to sources of wisdom and authority including scripture and/or sacred texts. They may refer to any relevant religious text such as the Pali Canon, the sermons of the Buddha, the Bible, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Vedas and Upanishads, the Qur'an and Hadith, the Torah and Talmud, and the Guru Granth Sahib. As part of the supporting material for this specification, AQA will publish a list of appropriate texts; alternatives may be used and no questions will be set on them. Students must demonstrate knowledge and understanding that:

- the religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian
- the religious traditions in Great Britain are diverse. Students may draw upon Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, as well as other religions and non-religious beliefs such as atheism and humanism.

### **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.

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- 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 B: Religion and life:**

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:

- Abortion.
- Euthanasia.
- Animal experimentation.

- The origins and value of the universe
- The origins of the universe, including: • religious teachings about the origins of the universe, and different interpretations of these • the relationship between scientific views, such as the Big Bang theory, and religious views.
- The value of the world and the duty of human beings to protect it, including religious teaching about stewardship, dominion, responsibility, awe and wonder.
- The use and abuse of the environment, including the use of natural resources, pollution.
- The use and abuse of animals, including: • animal experimentation • the use of animals for food.

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The origins and value of human life • The origins of life, including: • religious teachings about the origins of human life, and different interpretations of these • the relationship between scientific views, such as evolution, and religious views. • The concepts of sanctity of life and the quality of life. • Abortion, including situations when the mother's life is at risk. • Ethical arguments related to abortion, including those based on the sanctity of life and quality of life. • Euthanasia. • Beliefs about death and an afterlife, and their impact on beliefs about the value of human life.

#### **Theme D: Religion, peace and conflict:**

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: • Violence. • Weapons of mass destruction. • Pacifism.

Religion, violence, terrorism and war • The meaning and significance of: • peace • justice • forgiveness • reconciliation. • Violence, including violent protest. • Terrorism. • Reasons for war, including greed, self-defence and retaliation. • The just war theory, including the criteria for a just war. • Holy war. • Pacifism. Religion and belief in 21st century conflict • Religion and belief as a cause of war and violence in the contemporary world. • Nuclear weapons, including nuclear deterrence. • The use of weapons of mass destruction. • Religion and peace-making in the contemporary world including the work of individuals influenced by religious teaching. • Religious responses to the victims of war including the work of one present day religious organisation.

#### **Theme F: Religion, human rights and social justice:**

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: • Status of women in religion. • The uses of wealth. • Freedom of religious expression.

Human rights • Prejudice and discrimination in religion and belief, including the status and treatment within religion of women and homosexuals. • Issues of equality, freedom of religion and belief including freedom of religious expression. • Human rights and the responsibilities that come with rights, including the responsibility to respect the rights of others. • Social justice. • Racial prejudice and discrimination. • Ethical arguments related to racial discrimination (including positive discrimination), including those based on the ideals of equality and justice.

Wealth and poverty • Wealth, including: • the right attitude to wealth • the uses of wealth. • The responsibilities of wealth, including the duty to tackle poverty and its causes. • Exploitation of the poor including issues relating to:

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• fair pay • excessive interest on loans • people-trafficking. • The responsibilities of those living in poverty to help themselves overcome the difficulties they face. • Charity, including issues related to giving money to the poor.

## 2.2 Assessments

### Component 1: The study of religions: beliefs, teachings and practices

#### What's assessed

Beliefs, teachings and practices of **two** from:

- Buddhism
- Christianity
- Catholic Christianity
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Judaism
- Sikhism.

Christianity and Catholic Christianity is a prohibited combination.

#### How it's assessed

- Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
- 96 marks, plus 6 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG)
- 50% of GCSE

#### Questions

Each religion has a common structure of two five-part questions of 1, 2, 4, 5 and 12 marks.

Each religion is marked out of 48.

## Component 2: Thematic studies

### What's assessed

**Either** four religious, philosophical and ethical studies themes **or** two religious, philosophical and ethical studies themes and two textual studies themes.

Religious, philosophical and ethical studies themes:

- Theme A: Relationships and families.
- Theme B: Religion and life.
- Theme C: The existence of God and revelation.
- Theme D: Religion, peace and conflict.
- Theme E: Religion, crime and punishment.
- Theme F: Religion, human rights and social justice.

Textual studies themes:

- Theme G: St Mark's Gospel – the life of Jesus.
- Theme H: St Mark's Gospel as a source of religious, moral and spiritual truths.

### How it's assessed

- Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
- 96 marks, plus 3 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG)
- 50% of GCSE

### Questions

Each theme has a common structure of one five-part question of 1, 2, 4, 5 and 12 marks.

Each theme is marked out of 24.

There are two routes through this specification. Students should enter the qualification either including or excluding Textual studies.

## Christian ethos

The GCSE covers a range of the major world religions, six contemporary ethical themes and two textual studies, ensuring you and your students have a diverse choice of intriguing subjects to explore. Students will be challenged with questions about belief, values, meaning, purpose and truth, enabling them to develop their own attitudes towards religious issues. Students will also gain an appreciation of how religion, philosophy and ethics form the basis of our culture. They will develop analytical and critical thinking skills, the ability to work with abstract ideas, leadership and research skills. All these skills will help prepare them for further study.

## British values

Students should consider different beliefs and attitudes to religious and non-religious issues in contemporary British society. They should be aware that the religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian, and that religious traditions in Great Britain are diverse. They include Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, as well as other religious and nonreligious beliefs such as atheism and humanism. This knowledge may be applied throughout the assessment of the subject content.



<b>Month</b>	<b>Key Questions</b>
September	<p>'Understanding Christianity' - REflection</p> <p>Who is God?                      What is the Trinity?                      What is the incarnation?</p>
October	<p>Why is it so important in Christian worship?                      What is the nature of God?                      What is The Fall?                      Why is there need for atonement?                      What is prophecy?                      What is gospel? How does it link to salvation?                      Who are the people of God?                      Who is the person of Christ?</p>
<b>Half term holiday</b>	
November	<p>Religion vs Science</p> <p>What are the main debates?                      How was the world created?</p>
December	<p>Why do people disagree on the origin of the world?                      What is the 'God of the Gaps'?                      Why did Aquinas believe in the existence of God?                      What is the cosmological and teleological argument?                      Why are these credible arguments for the creation of God?                      What did key atheists say?                      Why are Darwin, Dawkins and Hawkings against the existence of God?                      Why do some belief, like Einstein, that science compliments religion?</p>
<b>Christmas holiday</b>	
January	<p>AQA GCSE Religious Studies: Christian Beliefs</p> <p>Why do Christians believe in the nature of God?                      What are the three characteristics of God?</p>
February	<p>What are the problems of evil and suffering in relation to the qualities of God?                      What is the holy Trinity?                      What are the different Christian beliefs about how the Earth was created?                      What is meant by the incarnation of Jesus?</p>
<b>Half term holiday</b>	
March	<p>AQA GCSE Religious Studies: Christian Beliefs</p> <p>What are the details about the Crucifixion of Jesus?                      What is the meaning and significance of resurrection and ascension of Jesus?                      What is the meaning and importance of different Christian beliefs about resurrection and life after death?                      What are the different Christian beliefs about the afterlife and judgement?                      What are the Christian concepts of heaven and hell?                      What are the Christian beliefs about the origin and nature of sin/original sin?                      What is the role of Jesus's crucifixion and salvation?</p>

	<b>Easter holiday</b>
April	<p>AQA GCSE Religious Studies: Jewish Beliefs</p> <p>Introduction to Judaism – what’s different from KS3?</p>
May	<p>What are the key beliefs about the nature of God?</p> <p>What are the key beliefs about The divine presence? (Shekhinah)</p> <p>What are the key beliefs about life after death?</p> <p>What are the key beliefs about the nature and role of the Messiah?</p>
	<b>Half term holiday</b>
June	<p>AQA GCSE Religious Studies: Jewish Beliefs</p> <p>What is a covenant? What examples do you know?</p>
July	<p>Why is The Covenant central to Judaism?</p> <p>What are The Mitzvot?</p> <p>Why are The Mitzvot important?</p> <p>What was The Covenant at Sinai?</p> <p>Why is The Covenant at Sinai?</p> <p>What are the key moral principles and why are they important?</p> <p>What is the Sanctity of life? Why is it important?</p> <p>What is Free will? Why is Free Will central to Judaism?</p>





<b>Month</b>	<b>Key Questions</b>
September	<p>AQA GCSE Religious Studies: Relationships</p> <p>What does religion teach about human sexuality and sexual relationships?                      What are religious attitudes to sex before marriage?                      What are religious attitudes to sex outside of marriage (adultery)?</p>
October	<p>What are religious attitudes to contraception?                      What do the ideas of commitment, covenant and responsibility mean in marriage?                      What are Christian teachings about divorce and remarriage?                      What are the Christian beliefs and teaching on the nature of the family?                      What are the Christian beliefs and teachings about the purpose of families?                      What are the religious beliefs about gender equality?</p>
<b>Half term holiday</b>	
November	<p>AQA GCSE Religious Studies: Religion and Life</p> <p>What is the relationship between scientific views, such as the Big Bang theory, and religious views?</p>
December	<p>What are the religious teachings about the origins of the universe?                      What are the religious teachings about the origins of human life?                      What are the religious teachings about the origins of the universe and the origins of life, including different interpretations?                      What is the the relationship between scientific views and religious views?                      What is the relationship between scientific views and religious views?                      What are the religious teachings about the value of the world and the duty of human beings to protect it, including stewardship, dominion, responsibility and awe and wonder?                      What are the religious teachings, beliefs and attitudes about the use and abuse of the environment, including the use of natural resources, pollution?                      What are the religious teachings about the use and abuse of animals, including animal experimentation and the use of animals for food?                      What are the the concepts of sanctity of life and the quality of life?                      What are the religious teachings, beliefs and attitudes about abortion, including situations when the mother's life is at risk?                      What are the religious teachings, beliefs and attitudes about euthanasia?</p>
<b>Christmas holiday</b>	
January	<p>AQA GCSE Religious Studies: Peace and Conflict</p> <p>Is war a way of resolving differences?</p>
February	<p>What does the UK Law say about protesting?                      What are the Christian beliefs about terrorism?                      Why are wars fought?                      What are the Christian attitudes/reasons for war?                      What are the different weapons of mass destructions?</p>
<b>Half term holiday</b>	

	AQA GCSE Religious Studies: Peace and Conflict
March	<p>What are the implications of using weapons of mass destruction?</p> <p>What are the criteria of the Just War theory?</p> <p>What do they mean?</p> <p>How realistic is the theory in the Modern world?</p> <p>What are the religious teachings about peace and conflict?</p>
	<b>Easter holiday</b>
April	<p>AQA GCSE Religious Studies: Human Rights</p> <p>What are the religious teachings about prejudice and discrimination in religion and belief, including the status and treatment within religion of women and homosexuals?</p>
May	<p>What are the issues of equality, freedom of religion and belief including freedom of religious expression?</p> <p>What are Human rights and the responsibilities that come with rights, including the responsibility to respect the rights of others?</p> <p>What are the religious teachings about Social Justice?</p>
June	<b>Half term holiday</b>
July	<p>AQA GCSE Religious Studies: Human Rights</p> <p>What are the religious teachings about racial prejudice and discrimination?</p> <p>What are the ethical arguments related to racial discrimination (including positive discrimination), including those based on the ideals of equality and justice?</p> <p>What are the religious teachings, beliefs and attitudes about wealth, including its uses?</p> <p>What are the religious teachings, beliefs and attitudes about the responsibilities of wealth including the duty to tackle poverty and its causes?</p> <p>What are the religious teachings about exploitation of the poor including issues relating to fair pay, excessive interest on loans and people trafficking?</p> <p>What are the religious teachings about the responsibilities of those living in poverty to help themselves overcome the difficulties they face?</p> <p>What are the religious teachings about charity, including issues related to giving money to the poor?</p>



<b>Month</b>	<b>Key Questions</b>
September	<p>AQA GCSE Religious Studies: Judaism (Practices)</p> <p>What is the synagogue and its importance?            What is the design and religious features of synagogues including reading platform (bimah), ark (aron hakodesh), ever burning light (ner tamid) and associated practices; differences between Orthodox and Reform synagogues?</p>
October	<p>What are public acts of worship including:            Synagogue services in both Orthodox and Reform synagogues?            What is the significance of prayer, including the Amidah, the standing prayer?            Why is Shabbat in the home and synagogue important?            What does worship in the home and private prayer look like for Jews?            What is the written law (Tenakh) and the oral law (Talmud) and their study, use and significance in daily life?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Half term holiday</b></p>
November	<p>AQA GCSE Religious Studies: Judaism (Practices)</p> <p>What are the main Jewish rituals and what is their significance?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ceremonies associated with birth including Brit Milah;</li> </ul> </p>
December	<p>What is Bar and Bat Mitzvah and why is it significant?            What is the Jewish marriage ceremony and why is it significant?            What are the Jewish mourning rituals and why is it significant?            What are the dietary laws and what is their significance, including different Jewish views about their importance?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kosher and trefah;</li> </ul>           What are the main Jewish Festivals and what is their importance for Jews in Great Britain today, including the origins and meaning of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Pesach?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Christmas holiday</b></p>
January	<p>AQA GCSE Religious Studies: Christianity (Practices)</p> <p>What is Christmas and why is it important to Christians?            What is Liturgical, informal (non-liturgical) and private worship and why is it important to Christians?</p>
February	<p>What is The Lord's Prayer, set prayers and informal prayer and why are they important to Christians?            What is the meaning of sacrament?            What is the rite of infant baptism and what is its significance for Christians?            What is the rite of believers' baptism and what is its significance for Christians?            What is the significance for Church of England/Roman Catholic Christians?            What is the significance for Orthodox Christians?            What is its significance for Baptist and Pentecostal Christians?</p>

	<b>Half term holiday</b>
March	<p>AQA GCSE Religious Studies: Christianity (Practices)</p> <p>What are two contrasting examples of Christian pilgrimage? (Lourdes and Iona)</p> <p>What is Easter and why is it important to Christians?</p> <p>What does Christian practice look like in the local community? (food banks/ street pastors?)</p> <p>What is mission, evangelism and church growth and why is it important to Christians?</p> <p>What is the work for reconciliation and why is it important to Christians?</p> <p>How do Christian churches respond to persecution?</p> <p>What is Catholic Agency For Overseas Development (CAFOD), Christian Aid, Tearfund and why are they important to Christians?</p>
	<b>Easter holiday</b>
April	AQA GCSE Religious Studies: Revision
May	