



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCSE
RELIGIOUS STUDIES – UNIT 3: CATHOLIC
CHRISTIANITY AND ETHICAL THEMES**

SUMMER 2019

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RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GCSE

Summer 2019

Unit 3: Catholic Christianity and Ethical Themes

General Comments

Most candidates made a good attempt at the paper and a wide range of marks were awarded. The knowledge and understanding of candidates were, for the most part, very good and there appeared to be an understanding of the skills needed for each type of question. Key concepts were well answered, although there were some difficulties with question 2a. Regarding the 'd' questions, the use of formulas to create answers seems to be limiting for candidates and is unhelpful in assisting critical thinking. However, candidates who were able to explain, analyse and critically evaluate each point made achieved band 4 more easily.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1**
- (a)** Candidates answered this question very well and many gained both marks. A range of examples were provided, showing the breadth of learning experiences candidates are receiving.
 - (b)** This was answered well, on the whole. Candidates could refer to popular Catholic practices within the season of Lent, and could accurately describe them. A few candidates were confused between Lent and Advent.
 - (c)** Many candidates were able to explain the key features of a Catholic Church and could confidently use appropriate religious language. Some candidates described the features in the Church rather than explaining them. It would be beneficial for centres to encourage candidates to explain the features rather than describe what they are.
 - (d)** Most candidates attempted to answer this question. The answers were relevant and the writing was both extended and detailed. It is important that candidates read each question carefully as some of them described teachings about life after death with little evaluation, or evaluated beliefs about life after death rather than whether they are the most important belief. Candidates were clearly aware of the need to check their SPAG on this question, and the full range of SPAG marks were awarded. Marks cannot be awarded if the candidate does not attempt the question therefore, in a few cases, 21 marks were lost here.
- Q.2**
- (a)** Most candidates that attempted this question gave a good definition and some were able to make relevant links to the current Pope. However, a significant number of candidates did not attempt this question.
 - (b)** This question was answered well. Most candidates were able to confidently use religious language, and many referred to significant pieces of art such as the Pieta and the Creation of Adam. Candidates could achieve marks here through describing several depictions of beliefs or by giving a detailed description of one artistic depiction.

- (c) Again, this question was answered well. Candidates were aware of the importance of Mary and were able to articulate this well in their answers. Many candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the key terms associated with Mary and used religious language appropriately.
- (d) Many candidates demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the role of the Pope, and some were able to evaluate whether to obey him or not. In order to achieve the higher bands, it is essential that candidates show evidence of critical thinking through evaluation and analysis of the statement.
- Q.3** (a) Most candidates knew what was meant by 'adultery' and were able to give relevant examples. Some candidates included reference to the Ten Commandments to support their answer.
- (b) Many candidates responded to this question by describing Catholic teachings on marriage. However, the question asks for teachings specifically linked to Jesus. Many candidates referred to key ideas including unity, exclusivity and indissolubility. Sources of wisdom were referred to correctly, including relevant quotes from Jesus on the nature of marriage.
- (c) Most candidates were able to confidently explain Catholic teachings on the use of artificial contraception, displaying a very good level of knowledge and understanding on this. Many candidates correctly referred to the purposes of sex as unitive and creative and some candidates referred to natural family planning as an alternative to artificial contraception.
- (d) This appeared to be a very accessible question and candidates of all abilities attempted to answer it. Many candidates were able to refer to a range of arguments in their answers, and some made clear links to concepts such as equality and discrimination. Sources of wisdom and authority were included in many responses, and some candidates were able to justify points through reference to teachings such as Galatians 3:27-28 and Genesis 1:27. The example of Jesus was discussed by many candidates and Catholic practices such as male ordination to the priesthood was mentioned in many answers. Fewer candidates linked this practice to the idea of apostolic succession. The standard of evaluation and analysis seemed to be higher in this question, and candidates were more able to offer a reasoned response to the statement.
- Q.4** (a) The majority of candidates were able to offer a good definition of discrimination, along with relevant examples to support their answer. However, there is still some confusion between discrimination and prejudice.
- (b) Many candidates answered this question well. There was a clear understanding of human rights, and what Catholics can do in order to support and promote these. Candidates were able to describe these practices, and some made relevant links to Catholic charities such as CAFOD, CARJ and the SVP.
- (c) This question was not very well answered on the whole. Many candidates simply focused on the idea of wealth, and did not distinguish between gaining it and using wealth. However, those who achieved band 4 were able to refer to relevant biblical teachings, such as Mark 10:25, and showed an understanding of discernment in jobs and careers in order to gain wealth honestly.

Some candidates referred to the importance of a focus on spiritual wealth in order to gain eternal life. A significant number of candidates failed to attempt this question.

- (d) A significant number of candidates failed to attempt this question. This could, of course, be due to it being the last question on a lengthy paper. However, of those who answered it, links were made to relevant sources of wisdom and authority, including the example of Jesus. Those who achieved a band 4 put forward a range of arguments and showed evidence of evaluation and analysis. However, teachers would be well advised to focus on the skills needed for (d) questions at every opportunity in order to help candidates apply their knowledge and understanding to the statement. Confident use of religious language was evident in some answers, but there were a few candidates who were unsure of the meaning of the word 'tolerant' and were therefore unable to fully answer the question.

Summary of key points

- Candidates should continue to develop skills of evaluation and analysis in order to achieve the highest bands in 'd' questions.
- Candidates should be encouraged to carefully read all questions to ensure understanding of what is being asked.
- It is very important that all candidates are encouraged to learn all key concepts and their definitions.
- Candidates should be reminded to attempt all questions in order to gain as many marks as possible. This is particularly important for the 1d question where 21 marks are available.



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