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GCSE

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES A

8062/2B Paper 2B Thematic Studies (including textual studies)  
Report on the Examination

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8062/2B  
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## General comments

This year the overwhelming majority of the students made a good attempt at this paper. Many were very well prepared by their teachers and they had a good grasp of the passages set for study in St Mark's Gospel. As always there were some who did not follow the rubric. Some students answered all the questions on the paper and in this case only the best four questions could be credited. Others did not answer Themes G and H at all and this had the effect of them losing 48 marks. Themes G and H are compulsory. The key message though is that the better the students know the text (even if they just know the story), the better they will do in the examination. It is difficult to guess the answer or offer a general comment in these two themes.

There was a notification sent to all centres about the rubric for 7.5 and 8.5. This amendment was effective and arrangements were made to ensure that those few students who did not explicitly refer to St Mark's Gospel in their 7.5 and/or 8.5 answers were not disadvantaged. It is worth reminding students that leaving questions blank means that there is no chance of gaining any marks.

## Theme G: St Mark's Gospel: the life of Jesus

### 7.1

This question was well answered. Almost 85% of students gained a mark here. Those who gave the answer C (three) were probably imagining a picture of the crucifixion as a whole, not noticing that the question asked how many were crucified 'with Jesus.' In multiple choice answers the student must write their answer in the answer book and the letter is enough.

### 7.2

The question asked for two things Jesus said when he prayed in Gethsemane. There were many here who muddled Jesus' words from the cross with his prayers in Gethsemane. Whilst the references to the prayers from the cross were very often correct, it was not possible to credit them because they are very different in content. There was also confusion between Gethsemane and the prediction that Peter would deny Jesus or the sayings of Jesus at the Last Supper.

### 7.3

The essentials of the miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand were generally well known. The details sometimes went awry though. The question did not require detailed knowledge of how many loaves and fish were used, just what the miracle may have taught believers. The best answers offered two ideas clearly identified with a development. For example, it was a miracle showing Jesus or God's power and then it showed Jesus' compassion. Others successfully referred to interpretations such as that the description of the people's seating arrangements looked like an army, or it was a challenge to the disciples' faith. More creative answers referred to it being an example to Christians to feed the hungry and meet physical needs.

### 7.4

This question asked for two lessons Christians might learn from Jesus' reply to the request made by James and John. This was not a well-known passage. The best answers were able to identify that James and John were being ambitious and Jesus explained that they were called to follow his example. The quotation required for the fifth mark was not always accurate but credit was given if the student was able to get over the idea that James and John had to share the cup that Jesus had to drink, or be baptised in a reference to suffering that Jesus was to follow. This is a good example of a question where if students know the story they could achieve 2 marks.

**7.5**

The AO2, 12 mark, questions are designed to help students to draw from their knowledge of different parts of Mark's Gospel. This question enabled students to refer to the titles used by Jesus of himself and those used by others and make a decision as to whether they are helpful today. Most students were able to refer to Son of David and Son of God. There was the occasional reference to 'Son of Mary' and 'Carpenter's Son' taken from the rejection in Nazareth. Although these are not usual titles of Jesus they were credited. The best answers took several titles in turn and explained the meaning and then came to a conclusion as to whether the titles of Jesus were helpful today. This gave a good structure to the argument.

**Theme H: St Mark's Gospel as a source of religious, moral and spiritual truths****8.1**

This question on what Jesus told his disciples to take with them on their mission was not as well-known as the crucifixion question at 7.1. Still, the majority of students were able to correctly identify D (staff (stick)) as the correct answer.

**8.2**

The question asked for two instructions that Jesus gave to the rich man who wanted to inherit eternal life. Most students remembered that the rich man was told by Jesus to give all that he had to the poor. Many referred to Jesus telling the rich man to keep the commandments. Other answers referred to loving God, or helping those in need, rather than the specific 'follow me' command of Jesus. These general comments were too far from the text to credit.

**8.3**

Students were asked to explain two contrasting beliefs about the importance of the meeting of Jesus with the woman with a haemorrhage. This is another answer where just relating the story would have gained marks. Any reference to Jesus' power, his cloak or clothes and the faith of the woman was credited. That the miracle demonstrated that Jesus was the Messiah was also credited. In the teaching of the three miracles, in this part of the specification, there are some ideas which are held in common and may be credited. Ideas such as God's power, Jesus' power, the faith of the person, the willingness of Jesus to meet need, that the miracles changed peoples' lives are all creditable points, even if the student cannot remember the exact details of the text. An example of this was that those who confused this incident with that of the Greek (Syro-phoenician) woman's daughter were still able to gain some credit if they referred to these overarching themes.

**8.4**

The question asked about two things that Christians might learn from the healing of the man with leprosy. Many students were able to gain credit by mentioning that Jesus touched the man and this demonstrates to Christians that those who were regarded as outcasts need to be helped. Some responses confused this incident with the healing of Bartimaeus and very few mentioned the healed man being sent to the priest to be certified as free from disease.

The key part of this answer was 'two things that Christians might learn'. Again, credit was lost by those who did not address this but saw the question as a text recall exercise. The application of the miracles and parables for today is at the heart of the specification. The mark scheme does give some possible ideas about going into medicine, faith healing etc. However, there is a real chance for students to come up with their own ideas. One that was common in this answer was that Christians should help those who are outsiders to society which was encouraging and creditable.

The important aspect of this question is the need to have a very clear reference to a text or authoritative teaching. What are essential here are quotations which begin, '(St) Mark's Gospel states...' or 'Jesus said, '...' This makes the source of the quotation very clear.

### **8.5**

Almost all students were able to make an attempt at evaluating the statement, 'Obeying the Commandment to 'love God' is all that a believer must do to live a Christian life'. Those who contrasted the command to love God, especially those who remembered that it was the first commandment that Jesus gave, were able to develop an argument in which they contrasted the personal attitude with doing good works, for example. Some were critical and referred to those who did not believe in God, but nevertheless, students argued, their contribution in helping others was of value. Most answers began with an explanation of what loving God might mean, and then contrasted it with other things that Christians might do as well.

### **Spelling Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG)**

SPaG is awarded to the best of the twelve mark answers. Handwriting is not assessed as such, but communication is helped by clear handwriting.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.