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# GCSE

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES B

8063/2A Paper 2 Section B: Perspectives on faith (themes)  
Report on the Examination

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## **General comments**

Responses displayed a wide range of ability and there were fewer unattempted questions than last year. Students seemed to find the paper accessible and there were some excellent AO2 responses in all three parts of the paper. Theme A was again the most popular of the three options, but there were still many students who attempted all three parts. Centres might wish to emphasise the disadvantage of this practice, as it means that students are not able to give sufficient time to the essay questions on this paper and to the religions paper that is taken at the same time.

## **Question-based comments**

### **Theme A: Religion, relationships and families**

#### **1.1**

This question, which asked which of the multiple choice options was not a teaching in 'The Theology of the Body' was answered correctly by approximately 80% of students.

#### **1.2**

For this question required two ways in which Christian parents can make a loving home for their children. It allowed for a wide range of possible answers and most students gained full marks.

#### **1.3**

On the whole this question answered very well. The question asked for explanation of two contrasting views on homosexuality. Most students seem to be very confident in dealing with this topic, giving either two different Christian views or a Christian and secular approach. Relevant textual support was frequently given.

#### **1.4**

This question proved challenging to some students, who confused gender discrimination with other types of discrimination. There were also some inaccurate statements of the Catholic Church's position on this; many did not appear to know that the Church opposes it, and that this is clear in its teachings. According to some answers, Christians teach that women should stay at home to look after the house etc. There were, however, some very competent responses that referred to creation of women and men in the image of God and to Paul's teaching on gender distinctions no longer being significant. Others explained what was meant by the view that women and men have different but complementary roles, sometimes exemplifying this from the creation of Adam and Eve. Many, however, gained 4 rather than 5 marks because their textual references were not attributed.

#### **1.5**

Requiring evaluation on the statement, 'The Catholic marriage vows (promises) are outdated' elicited a wide range of quality in students' answers. There were some excellent responses that showed maturity and perception. Vows used currently in Catholic marriage ceremonies were quoted, explained and discussed. Possible issues with continuing to use these vows were considered in depth, as were arguments in retaining them. Often, however, answers were superficial and sometimes inaccurate. Promises that implied male dominance were thought to be used in modern ceremonies, which meant that some of the discussion about the status of women was irrelevant. It was also often assumed that couples getting married had to use these vows wherever they were married. There were also very general comments made, where there was no reference to particular vows.

Students need to be clear about the importance of including evidence and exemplification in their answers to AO2 questions in order to reach the higher levels.

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

### **2.1**

Here students were asked for the meaning of the term 'conflict resolution' was answered correctly by over 95% of students.

### **2.2**

This question on why Christians believe terrorism is wrong was also answered very well. Some of the responses were specific to terrorism, but more general points about it were accepted, providing they were relevant. As with 1.2, some students' second points were a repetition of the first.

### **2.3**

This was the most poorly answered question on the paper, and almost 10% of those answering Theme B did not attempt it. The question required students to explain two contrasting Old Testament teachings about going to war. Some students did not show any knowledge of Old Testament teaching relating to war and often made very vague points. Many answers quoted from the Gospels, eg 'turn the other cheek', or gave Just War criteria. There were, however, some very good answers that referred to the use of holy war in the Old Testament period, the conquest of Canaan, David and Goliath and the Maccabees. A few answers hinted at or clearly referred to the text in Isaiah 2:2-4 or Micah 4:1-4.

### **2.4**

Here students were asked for two Christian views about anger as a response to injustice. The question was not attempted by over 8% of students, but of those who did answer it, almost 60%, were awarded 4 or 5 marks. Nearly 40% of students referred to a source of authority, usually scriptural, and attributed it. Many of these students gave the example of Jesus overturning the tables in the Temple, clearly applying it to the question.

### **2.5**

This question, requiring evaluation of the statement, 'The consequences of going to war are never good' was the best answered of the AO2 questions. Some students wrote more generally for and against going to war, but most focused on the question, which related to the consequences of war. The argument against the statement was potentially more challenging, but there were some excellent responses that sought to argue that the good of regaining freedom or removing oppression might outweigh the ill effects of war. Answers often included reference to World Wars 1 and 2 and to the conflict in the Ukraine. A few students failed to include any religious content, and so their answers were capped at Level 2. There were, however, many outstanding responses that quoted not just the usual 'do not kill' but also statements from Church teaching.

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

### **3.1**

This question, which asked for the term meaning 'taking unfair advantage of the poor' was answered correctly almost all students.

### **3.2**

Question 3.2, on the causes of poverty, was also answered very well, though occasionally the first point was repeated, and sometimes results of poverty were given rather than causes.

**3.3**

This question, requiring two contrasting views about stewardship of wealth was answered well by most students, with many gaining full marks. A few did not understand the phrase ‘stewardship of wealth’, writing instead about environmental issues, and some gave very general responses about wealth. Some answers included no reference to a Christian view, and these were capped at 2 marks. There were, however, some excellent responses, many of which made use of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

In learning Christian views on the stewardship of wealth, students might find it helpful to include in their studies the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:16-20).

**3.4**

This question about Christian beliefs about justice produced some very detailed responses, with reference to Kingdom values, the teachings of Jesus and Catholic social teaching. Those answers that referred to Jesus’ action in the Temple were credited, providing they linked it to the concept of justice. Many referred to justice as being given by God, and this was acceptable, but often weaker answers drifted into an explanation of beliefs about judgement and life after death.

**3.5**

Here students were asked to evaluate the statement, ‘If everyone obeyed Christian teachings, there would be no need for laws about human rights’ and there were many interesting and thoughtful responses. Some wrote very general responses, with little explicit reference to Christian teachings or human rights laws, but they were generally able to produce simple arguments.

The quality of discussion and standard of evaluation in some of the responses were very impressive. Students referred to a range of teachings that uphold human dignity, often linking them to specific human rights. They also explained how some of these teachings might be used to support attitudes that would lead to actions considered in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as discriminatory, and therefore making human rights laws essential. The concepts of original sin and free will were also used to defend the need for laws.

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

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