



GCSE

Religious Studies B

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

Report on the Examination

8063
June 2024

Version: 1.0

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General Comments

As in previous series, 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, with Theme C as the least popular this series, presumably because students were tempted by question 2.5 over 3.5. However, there were still many students who attempted all three Themes, therefore limiting the time they could spend on each, resulting in responses that usually lacked development or depth. Centres might wish to emphasise the disadvantage of this practice, in particular regarding the impact on the 12-mark essay questions.

In addition, when answering the 5-mark question (01.4, 02.4 or 03.4) many students are still just providing a quote as a source without writing the actual source from which it derives. Centres may wish to stress to students that sources of authority are the texts or religious figures where the teachings or beliefs originate. For example, stating “be fruitful and multiply” would not gain source credit, but “in Genesis, which teaches ‘be fruitful and multiply’ ...” would. That said, examiners have noted the wider range of sources of authority referred to this series. Many students made good use of Youcat as well as of the more traditional sources of Catholic teaching, particularly with reference to question 01.4. ‘Love your neighbour’ did appear, particularly in reference to questions 02.4, 02.5, and 03.5, however centres may wish to point out to their students that this is not one of the Ten Commandments.

Theme A: Religion, relationships, and families

1.1

This question asking for recognition of the definition of annulment was answered correctly by over 80% of students who attempted it.

1.2

Although this question concerning Christian teachings showing that women and men are equal was answered successfully on the whole, some students struggled to refer to ‘teachings’ and instead gave what could be considered ‘views’. More successful responses tended to refer to specific teachings such as ‘Imago Dei’ or ‘there is no male or female...all are one in Christ.’

1.3

The majority of responses successfully addressed the question concerning views about remarriage after divorce and were able to give contrasting viewpoints. However, on occasion the phrase ‘remarriage’ was misinterpreted to mean a second marriage ceremony (possibly renewing wedding vows) to a spouse. Some responses only referred to divorce and did not link to remarriage. Many successful responses were able to provide a contrasting viewpoint from a non-religious perspective.

1.4

Many students were able to identify at least one Christian belief regarding sex before marriage. However, some referred to extra-marital sex, adultery or procreation prior to marriage and didn’t always link any of these points back to the question context. Some students also struggled to identify relevant sources of authority. Of the successful responses many referred to St John Paul II’s The Theology of the Body,

Youcat or reference to ‘one flesh’ in the Bible, which were not just in addition to the points made, but fundamental to them. Many successful second beliefs were drawn from other Christian perspectives, for example liberal views permitting sex before marriage in certain situations.

1.5

Many responses successfully identified different viewpoints about whether procreation was an essential part of being a Catholic family and were able to construct logical chains, making clear reference to religion. Genesis, ‘go forth and multiply’ was often referred to, along with the marriage vow to be open to children from God. For other viewpoints, many responses made excellent reference to concern for overpopulation, living within one’s means, different vocations (which might include celibacy or not having children), infertility, the importance of the other Catholic marriage vows, and other types of Catholic families that don’t necessarily involve procreation. Unlike in previous years, students seemed to have little trouble in making clear reference to religion.

Theme B: Religion, peace, and conflict

2.1

This was answered correctly by over 59% of all who attempted this question on what was meant by nuclear deterrence.

2.2

Within Theme B, this question was the one most often not attempted. Students tended to either know Catholic teachings about Just War theory and were able to give correct responses, or they did not and what appeared to be guesses were incorrect. The phrase ‘Catechism of the Catholic Church 2309’ caused confusion for some, who seemed to think it was referring to a future year rather than the paragraph and focused on this aspect rather than referring to Just War theory.

2.3

Many students successfully referred to the teachings of Jesus, the Lord’s Prayer, Old Testament views such as ‘a life for a life’ in addition to non-religious perspectives. Very few were not able to identify two contrasting viewpoints. A small number of students focused on God’s forgiveness of sins rather than the interpretation intended by the specification.

2.4

This question was also not attempted in many instances by students answering Theme B. In some cases where it was attempted, it was apparent that students did not know what torture was and instead referred to war, acts of violent crime, bullying or righteous anger. More successful responses referred to the *use* of torture explicitly, as either being something that goes against the dignity of a person and the teachings of Jesus, or that its use can be justified in certain situations where it could be the lesser of two evils. More often, sources were more successfully linked to beliefs in opposition, for example Jesus’ teaching of “love thy neighbour.” Some excellent responses referred to Pope John Paul II’s encyclical *Veritas Splendor* which stated that torture was not only shameful, but “intrinsically evil.”

2.5

Unfortunately some responses to the statement: 'Religion is never a good reason for going to war' seemed to result from misreading the question and did not address the 'religion is never a good reason' aspect, instead writing a response about war more generally. However of those that did address the specific question, some excellent points were made, referring to things such as Holy war, Just War theory, examples of war in the Old Testament, righteous anger, Jesus as a political liberator, the beatitudes, sanctity of life, pacificism, Pax Christi, stewardship, and more recent comments from Pope Francis.

Theme C: Religion, human rights, and social justice**3.1**

This was answered correctly by over 67% of students who attempted this question on the term meaning 'treating people fairly' ie justice.

3.2

Of all the 2-mark questions, this one achieved the highest number of successful responses. Many answers referred to reasons why Christians may disagree with discrimination more generally, and some gave reasons based on gender or sex rather than sexuality.

3.3

Many responses to this question concerning views about the Christian teaching to 'love your neighbour' wrongly attributed 'love your neighbour' to being one of the Ten Commandments. That aside, there were many successful responses referring to views such as the interpretation of the teaching (locally or globally, literally, or metaphorically) or the importance of the teaching (catholic social teaching, teaching of Jesus, or outdated), often with exemplification by way of an example. Some responses only provided one view.

3.4

This question asked for explanations of beliefs about being wealthy and was well attempted with many responses successfully providing two developed Christian beliefs and a relevant link to a source of authority. Often, students referred to the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus or the Rich Fool and the source then was incorporated into the point. Some responses successfully referred to spiritual wealth or stewardship of wealth in contrast to material or monetary wealth. The vast majority of beliefs were developed or exemplified appropriately, for example with reference to charity.

3.5

The question asked for evaluation on the statement: 'The 'Preferential Option for the Poor' is not fair'. It was apparent that some students were unaware what the question was asking and instead thought that the 'preferential option for the poor' referred to a viewpoint wherein the poor have opted to be poor. However, most responses identified the general theme of the question and were able to gain credit for weighing up views for and against helping the poor. The stronger responses however clearly understood

the concept and the wording of the question, so were able to address in depth different views about whether the Preferential Option for the Poor is fair or not, with justified developed reasoning.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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