



GCSE

Religious Studies A

8062/13 Paper 1 Christianity

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

Candidates demonstrated a broad range of Christianity knowledge across both beliefs and practices, and most candidates attempted all questions. There were some outstanding displays of evaluative writing in 1.5 and 2.5 to make answers persuasive. Some candidates struggled to answer questions where there was a key term in the question that required an understanding of that specific belief or practice, and this was particularly apparent in 1.3 and 2.2. Centres are recommended to refer to the AQA subject specific vocabulary glossary for this specification when teaching Christian beliefs and practices and to ensure candidates are confident in their understanding of differences between various Christian beliefs (such as Resurrection and Ascension) and practices (such as the different forms of worship).

1.1

Over 95% of students chose the correct answer to this question on the nature of God and the vast majority followed the rubric (by ticking only one box).

1.2

A higher number of students than usual did not attempt this question which asked for two Christian beliefs about salvation. Many credible responses referred to salvation being achieved by either grace, works, or the spirit. Other successful responses included outlining how believing in salvation means that Christians can be saved from sin or connecting salvation to the atonement of Jesus Christ through his crucifixion and resurrection.

Where students did not achieve marks was where their answer failed to demonstrate understanding of the key term 'salvation'. Students are advised to ensure they are familiar with the AQA subject specific vocabulary glossary for this specification available on the AQA website's teaching resources.

1.3

In line with 1.2, students who did not demonstrate understanding of the key term 'Ascension' were less successful than those who were able to outline clear influences for Christians from believing in the Ascension of Jesus. Some students seemed to confuse the term 'Ascension' with other aspects of Jesus' life and Passion, either writing about influences from the crucifixion or resurrection on the third day after his crucifixion. Successful students referred to the influence of the disciples seeing Jesus ascend in front of them onto Christian actions today, or on this proving to Christians that Jesus' resurrection was not the end of his journey as there were forty days between the resurrection and the ascension and how this might influence Christians today.

This was an influence question, and as such students were required to demonstrate how a belief about the Ascension leads to an active belief or action that a Christian now holds or does because of this.

1.4

Many students were able to refer to the Genesis account of Adam and Eve, and the Fall from the Garden of Eden, with great success when answering this question about original sin. Other students outlined

specific details from the Genesis account which teaches Christians about the role of the Devil/Satan (snake) in causing original sin. Other responses detailed the consequences of the cause of original sin and how this teaches Christians about evil and suffering being present today. Students also successfully referred to baptism as a means by which original sin can be removed, whilst a handful of responses referred to the writings of St Augustine and the theodicy of free will as demonstrated by the original sin from Genesis.

Some students answered about sin generally rather than the specifics about original sin, which could not be credited. Other students wrote two detailed teachings about original sin but without a clear reference to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief in their answer and could not be awarded the fifth mark.

1.5

There were some excellent responses to this question, and many students demonstrated a clear ability to evaluate the merits of the Resurrection of Jesus being the most important belief in Christianity. There were some impressive references to biblical accounts of the Resurrection of Jesus and the impact this had on people, and how the Resurrection of Jesus was the culmination of Jesus' mission and proof that life after death is possible given the atoning sacrifice on the cross.

A number of students wrote excellent detail about the Resurrection of Jesus and various opposing views, but were not able to demonstrate Level 4 response criteria in their responses; students who presented different points of view and described them rarely accessed the Level 4 marks, with more successful responses making attempts to evaluate the strength of arguments on either side.

Some students seemed to confuse the Resurrection with the Ascension of Jesus, perhaps due to the presence of question 1.3, and a significant number used the Ascension of Jesus as a counter-argument to the Resurrection being the most important Christian belief. Other students seemed to confuse the Resurrection with the Crucifixion. Given the presence of key terminology in the specification and therefore in questions in this paper, students are advised to be aware of the AQA Religious Studies Subject Specific Vocabulary to avoid such misconceptions.

2.1

Almost 70% of students chose the correct answer to this question about which option may be used in the celebration of Easter, and the vast majority followed the rubric (by ticking only one box).

2.2

This question required students to understand what is meant by the key term 'private worship', i.e. worship that is done alone, as opposed to worship generally. A significant number of students answered this question with 'liturgical' and 'non-liturgical', perhaps misreading the question as asking for two different types of worship generally. Other incorrect responses included examples of worship done collectively, such as going to church with friends and family. Successful responses were clearly examples of worship that a Christian does alone, in line with the Subject Specific Vocabulary definition for private worship as published by AQA.

2.3

This question was generally well answered, with the best students writing concisely about the reasons a Christian might go on pilgrimage with effective detail about where this might take place. Many students referred successfully to why a Christian might go on pilgrimage to places like Iona, Lourdes, Walsingham, Jerusalem, Rome, or other places. Some students referred successfully to how a Christian might wish to go on pilgrimage to care for others or help them travel to such a place of healing. A minority of students did not seem to understand what the term ‘pilgrimage’ meant, or else gave wholly secular responses about going on holiday to relax.

2.4

Students approached this question with a variety of understandings of the term ‘Church’, which led to a wide range of successful responses to this question. Some students referred to Church growth as an increase in numbers attending church services and why it would be important for Christians to work towards this. Other students referred to why Christians seek to grow the strength of the Church’s faith or the faith of individual members of the Church. Finally, other students referred to why Christians seek to grow the witness of the Church in the community through various social projects to adhere to Jesus’ teachings. The majority of students successfully referred to Jesus’ teaching of the Great Commission to secure the ‘source’ mark.

A minority of responses outlined ways in which Church growth is achieved without answering the crux of the question being ‘why’ Christians work to bring about Church growth. Whilst examples of how Church growth is achieved can be effective detail in answers, students must ensure they answer the specific demand of such questions and understand what is being required in their responses as the core focus.

2.5

Many students approached this question by effectively evaluating how Holy Communion/Eucharist could be, on the one hand, the most important aspect of Christian worship, and then going on to evaluate well-reasoned arguments about alternative parts of Christian worship, such as informal, private, non-liturgical, or indeed other celebrations through the Christian liturgical year. Some responses gave detailed specific examples from the Holy Communion/Eucharist liturgy and evaluated why this demonstrated heightened importance for Christians, with many students linking words from the Holy Communion/Eucharist service to Jesus’ Last Supper with his disciples. Some students successfully evaluated different denominational beliefs around Eucharistic concepts such as transubstantiation or consubstantiation.

Some students appeared to use a writing frame in order to demonstrate evaluative writing. Whilst this was successful for many students, there were instances of students stating that a point of view was effective, convincing, or weak but without any reasons for this.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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