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WJEC EDUQAS GCSE (9–1) **Religious Studies** **ROUTE A**

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Covering:

- **Component 1:** Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World through Christianity, Islam and Judaism
- **Component 2:** Study of Christianity
- **Component 3:** Study of Islam and study of Judaism

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How to use this book

Introduction

This book covers the subject content, from a Western religious perspective only, for the new Eduqas GCSE Religious Studies qualification. The book spans the whole of the philosophical and ethical core content, and the Christianity core course content. It also includes material for the study of the two religious traditions of Islam and Judaism.

The book is set out in the order of the Eduqas specification to help students and teachers work through any course of study in specification order.

The book includes information on all of the key concepts and detailed content for each part of the specification.

There is some inclusion of references to relevant sources of wisdom and authority, including scripture and/or sacred texts.

There is no choice of questions in any of the three Eduqas examination papers, all questions are compulsory.

In your course of study there are some important things you might need to consider about religious belief and practice in Great Britain today.

- ▶ This book takes account of the changing landscape of religious belief and practice in Great Britain. Christianity was traditionally the main religion in Britain but today there is great diversity of belief and practice.
- ▶ All of the six main world faiths are practised by people in Britain.
- ▶ Within different religions there is some diversity of belief and practice.
- ▶ Many people claim to have no religious belief and practise no religion and may describe themselves as atheists, agnostics or humanists.

What is the assessment structure?

The assessment structure for the GCSE Religious Studies qualification requires students to complete three component examination papers.

Component one

Component one is the compulsory study of religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world. The approach is to adopt a distinctive issues-based approach. This component consists of four distinct themes. These themes are entitled:

- ▶ Relationships
- ▶ Life and death
- ▶ Good and evil
- ▶ Human rights.

Each theme is covered in detail in this textbook.

The length of the examination paper for this component is two hours.

1

Issues of relationships

► The Big Picture

Key Concepts



Adultery Voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and a person who is not their spouse.



Divorce To legally end a marriage.



Cohabitation To live together in a sexual relationship without being married or in a civil partnership.



Commitment A sense of dedication and obligation to someone or something.



Contraception Methods used to prevent a woman from becoming pregnant during or following sexual intercourse.



Gender equality People of all genders enjoying the same rights and opportunities in all aspects of their lives.



Responsibilities Actions/duties you are expected to carry out.



Roles Position, status or function of a person in society, as well as the characteristics and social behaviour expected of them.

Core Questions



Is there such a thing as a typical family?

Are women and men equal?

Should divorced individuals be allowed to remarry in places of worship?

Is cohabitation more popular than marriage?

Should same-sex marriages be allowed in a place of worship?

Do men and women have equal roles in leading worship?

Overview

Human relationships are at the heart of human existence. Many human beings are born into a family and the family is the basic building block of society. Because of the importance of relationships for many aspects of human life, all religions have attitudes to, and beliefs about, the importance and nature of human relationships.

In this theme you will have the opportunity to consider the attitudes towards and teachings about relationships of the three **monotheistic religions** of Christianity, Islam and Judaism and also the attitudes of a non-religious people, such as humanists.

You will also consider a number of the most important issues regarding relationships. These include:

- ▶ The changing nature and role of family life in Britain. Christianity, Islam and Judaism all regard marriage as the basis for family life and many humanists would agree with this view.
- ▶ Changing attitudes to marriage as people are increasingly choosing to cohabit or marry in non-religious ceremonies. These changing attitudes raise issues about topics such as adultery, separation, divorce and remarriage.
- ▶ Different attitudes to sexual relationships. All three religions have specific teachings about the nature and purpose of sex and the conditions under which contraception may be used. In twenty-first-century Britain there have been significant changes in attitudes to same-sex relationships.
- ▶ Attitudes towards men and women and issues of gender equality.

Task

Discuss some of the 'core questions' on page 1 in pairs. Write a brief answer to one of them, showing you have thought about different perspectives.



Diversity within religion and society

In order to understand the range of teachings and attitudes about human relationships in and between religions it is important to understand the diverse nature of religious belief in twenty-first-century Britain.

Some religious believers think that the teachings contained in sacred texts need to adapt or change because of changing views in society. Others do not believe in changing any teachings and hold them to be absolutely true. The diversity of attitudes and beliefs towards issues relating to relationships is explained by this.

In addition to the diversity within religious traditions, twenty-first-century Britain is an increasingly **secular** country with a steady decline in the number of people claiming to belong to any religion or belief. Many people who claim no religious affiliation may describe themselves as atheist, agnostic or humanist and may not accept traditional religious viewpoints. There is an increasing **pluralism** of religious belief and practice in British society and different religions will have different perspectives and viewpoints on human relationships. The increasing pluralism and secularisation in Britain has implications for changing attitudes towards issues concerning relationships.

Monotheistic religions religions that believe there is only one God.

Secular a society where religious beliefs and practices are increasingly less important to a growing number of people.

Pluralism the existence of different groups and beliefs within society.

Relationships

What is a family?

Task

- 1 In the quote on the right, Rabbi Schneerson says the 'family is a microcosm of the universe.' By this he means a representation of the universe in miniature. Why do you think he calls the family this? (The rest of the quote should help you.)



The family is the foundation for all human activity. It is where all human relationships begin and are developed. Within each family the norms and values of society are lived out in practice and a new generation of children are brought up into adulthood. The importance of the family for society may be summed up in the following quotation:

'The home should be perceived as a microcosm of the universe: The harmony that permeates the home and the family extends beyond, fostering harmony between families, communities, and ultimately the nations of the world. In the absence of harmony between one's own family, we can hardly expect to find harmony between strangers.'

Rabbi Menachem Schneerson



Task

Look at each type of family discussed on this page. In pairs discuss the positives and negatives of each family type.



Types of family

There are many different types of family. The traditional form of the family, an extended family, has been replaced by a variety of family forms.

The most common types of family are:

Nuclear family

The most common type of family in modern Britain is the nuclear family. It consists of two parents and one or more child(ren) all living in the same house.

Extended family

The extended family structure consists of a number of adults and children who are related living in the same home. This may include many relatives living together in close proximity; for example, cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents all living together and sharing in family roles.



Extended families consist of different relatives all living together

Reconstituted family

Some divorced adults choose to remarry or live in a co-habiting relationship. This may lead to the creation of a reconstituted family. This type of family structure is made up of a mix of step-parents and step-children.



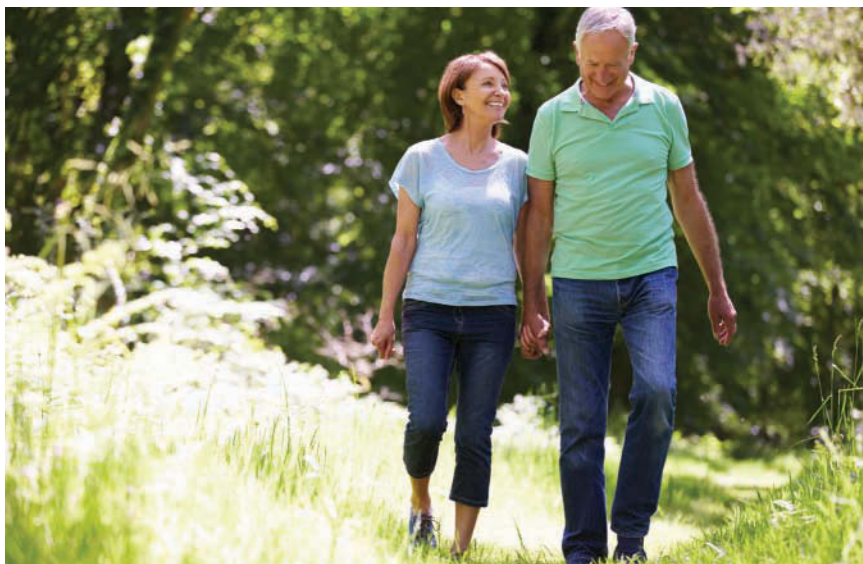
Single parent families are becoming more common in Britain

Single parent family

The single parent family is where one parent raises one or more children alone. The number of single parent families has continued to rise in modern Britain as a result of an increasing rate of divorce.

Childless family

A childless family is where a married or co-habiting couple are either unable to have children naturally or decide not to have children. Same-sex couples are often a childless family.



Some couples decide not to have children

► Roles of men and women in the family

Key Concepts



Roles Position, status or function of a person in society, as well as the characteristics and social behaviour expected of them.



Responsibilities Actions/duties you are expected to carry out.

Within a family the members have different **roles** and **responsibilities**. These could include:

- caring for children
- caring for other family members, for example looking after elderly relatives
- maintaining the family home
- earning money to support the family.

Both women and men aim to provide love, comfort, protection and support for each other and for any children. Both have a role to play in the education of children to become responsible adults and future parents. They should show mutual support of each other. Men and women are both important role models for children.

Traditional views

In the past Christianity, Islam and Judaism all held a very traditional view of the role of women and men in family life. The man was responsible for providing for the family through work and the mother was responsible for domestic life. The views of the three religions were '**patriarchal**' (the opposite of **matriarchal**) in the sense that the man was seen very much as the leader of the family.

For example, the following quotation from the Qur'an shows a very traditional view of the family roles. Men are in charge of the family unit, with women referred to as their 'subjects'. Women are responsible for the home and children:

'God's Apostle said, "Surely! Everyone of you is a guardian and is responsible for his charges: The Imam [ruler] of the people is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects; a man is the guardian of his family [household] and is responsible for his subjects; a woman is the guardian of her husband's home and of his children and is responsible for them; and the slave of a man is a guardian of his master's property and is responsible for it. Surely, everyone of you is a guardian and responsible for his charges."

Hadith Sahih Bukhari 9:89:252

The last sentence, however, could be used to support a more modern view in which both parents are responsible for the children in a family.

Patriarchal a family or society controlled by men.

Matriarchal a family or society controlled by women.

Task

Look at the different roles in the family. Which do you think were traditionally carried out by:

- women
- men
- both men and women?

Do you think this has now changed in society? Discuss as a class, using evidence from these pages.

Christians, Jews and Muslims all regard family as the most important foundation of society and as such believe in the need to create strong nuclear and extended families.

Changing views

These traditional views are changing, however, and women and men are now often regarded as much more of a partnership in family life with shared responsibilities.

It is now much more common for women to go on working when they get married and have a family, and increasing numbers of men are taking on the role of 'house-husband' while their wives or partners go out to work. In 2014 the Office for National Statistics reported that the number of 'stay at home' dads has doubled since 1993, with over 229,000 fathers staying at home to look after their children.

The law is also changing to reflect this. In 2015 it became possible for men and women to share parental leave. Parents can decide who takes leave to care for the baby, rather than it automatically being the mother.

What have families got to do with religion?

Religion and the family are interlinked in many ways.

For many people it is in the home where religious belief is 'taught' and 'caught'. The family is a domestic arena in which religious belief, practices and teachings are lived out. Family life is where religion is experienced by young children and young adults through the example of their parents. Most religious believers think it is a religious duty for parents to bring up their children to share in their faith and teach the values which are important to them, such as the Ten Commandments. These basic values, or attitudes to living, are shared by Christians, Muslims and Jews: respect your parents, no killing or murder, no adultery, no stealing, no lies and no envy or greed.

In terms of religious practice, parents:

- ▶ are expected to take their children to a place of worship
- ▶ teach them how to read and understand sacred texts
- ▶ teach them how and when to pray
- ▶ join in the celebration of festivals
- ▶ understand the importance of rites of passage.

Many people today, such as humanists, think that children should make up their own ideas about religion or that parents should not share their religious beliefs and faith with their children. Humanists believe all people should be able to make a free choice about accepting or rejecting religious beliefs.

Task

The photos and the list below show some examples of how faith is experienced in family settings. For each, explain how the family is important in strengthening religious belief and/or practice.



1 Jewish family worshipping together in a synagogue.



2 Christian family baptising their child.



3 Muslims celebrating the festival of Eid.

Worldwide family

For many religious believers, those who share in their faith are regarded as an extended family. Christians use the phrase, 'People of God' for all Christians, and Muslims use the word 'ummah' for the worldwide community of Islam.

'It is very important to reaffirm the family, which remains the essential cell of society and the Church; young people, who are the face of the Church's future; women, who play a fundamental role in passing on the faith and who are a daily source of strength in a society that carries this faith forward and renews it.'

Pope Francis

In the Christian tradition, the quotation from Pope Francis reinforces two ideas:

- ▶ The family is the basis of human society.
- ▶ The role of the mother in passing on religious faith is fundamental.

▶ The nature and purpose of marriage

Key Concept



Commitment A sense of dedication and obligation to someone or something.

Humanist attitudes to marriage



Humanists view marriage as a significant part of human life and understand why a couple may want a special ceremony to show their commitment. Such a ceremony may reflect the important nature of marriage and the significance for a couple and society but would include no religious aspect.

The traditional teaching of Christianity, Islam and Judaism has been that marriage is the basis of family life. Marriage is regarded as:

- ▶ God given
- ▶ the best basis for creating an environment into which children should be born
- ▶ a lifelong **commitment**.

A wedding ceremony is an important rite of passage in many religious traditions. It is a celebration that recognises the importance of marriage and it includes ritual and symbolism, which often reflect the purposes of marriage.

Christian attitudes to marriage



Some Christians regard marriage as a gift given to humanity by God – a sacrament. In the Christian wedding service the phrase 'ordained by God' is used giving marriage a very special significance for all Christians. The vows exchanged between a bride and a groom in a Christian wedding ceremony reflect this.

In the Gospels Jesus teaches about the importance of marriage. This refers back to the idea in Genesis that, as part of God's creation, God made man and woman. Jesus uses powerful language to convey the meaning that marriage is



the complete joining together of two people in a very special way. It is implied that the relationship becomes the most important human relationship for the couple who are married.

'But at the beginning of creation God "made them male and female". "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh". So they are no longer two, but one flesh'.

Mark 10:6-8

The phrase from the marriage service 'what God has joined together, let no man put asunder' is interpreted to mean marriage should be a lifelong union.

Christian wedding ceremony

Christians believe that marriage is a gift from God and traditionally Christian marriage ceremonies have taken place in a chapel or church to reflect this belief.

A typical wedding ceremony in the Church of England is performed by a vicar and would be as follows:

- The vicar welcomes everyone and gives a short sermon on the nature and purpose of marriage.
- The couple exchange their vows which reflect the main Christian beliefs about marriage:

*To have and to hold
From this day forward
For better for worse
For richer for poorer
In sickness and in health
To love and to cherish
Till death do us part
According to God's holy law
And this is my solemn vow.*

- The couple exchange rings as a sign of commitment and say:

*With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

- The vicar declares the couple married.
- There are prayers and Bible readings and the priest gives a sermon.
There may also be hymns with an appropriate theme.
- The legal requirement in Britain is for the newly married couple to sign the register, witnessed by a registrar and witnesses, which makes the marriage ceremony legal.

Different denominations have different names for the member of the clergy who carries out the wedding ceremony:

- minister (Baptist Church)
- pastor (Evangelical Churches)
- priest (Catholic Church)
- vicar (Church of England)



■ In an Orthodox wedding the ceremony has a different format. During the wedding ceremony a bride and groom are 'crowned'. The placing of crowns on the heads of the couple represents the power of the Holy Spirit.





■ In an Anglican Church the couple always marry in front of an altar or table.



■ In a non-conformist chapel there is no altar so a couple marry in front of a table or lectern. There is more of an emphasis on Bible readings and hymn singing.

Tasks

- 1 The Church of England wedding vows reflect the main Christian teachings about marriage. Can you match the vows to their meaning?

Vows	Meaning
(a) To have and to hold	(i) To be physically together in a sexual relationship
(b) From this day forward	(ii) That the marriage is ordained by God
(c) For better for worse	(iii) That the marriage should last whether the couple are wealthy or poor
(d) For richer for poorer	(iv) That the marriage is expected to be a lifelong commitment
(e) In sickness and in health	(v) This day marks the beginning of the marriage
(f) To love and to cherish	(vi) That the vows are a serious commitment taken by the couple
(g) Till death do us part	(vii) That the marriage should last through both good times and times when life is more difficult
(h) According to God's holy law	(viii) The couple should support and care for each other
(i) And this is my solemn vow.	(ix) And in spite of mental or physical illness

- 2 Look at the two photos of different Christian wedding ceremonies above. Choose one or two symbols which show that this is a Christian wedding ceremony.

Explain what the symbol means and how it is related to Christian views on the nature and purpose of marriage.

Muslim attitudes to marriage

In the Qur'an there are a number of references to the importance of marriage and how it is the basis of family life. All Muslims are encouraged to marry in order to have a companion and, although divorce is permitted, the ideal is that marriage is for life.

The following quote from the Qur'an shows that Muslims believe marriage is a gift from God and that people

should marry. It says that within this relationship the couple are able to show affection towards one another and are able to support each other in their religious faith.

'And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.'

Qur'an 30:21

The Muslim wedding ceremony

The nikah is a simple marriage ceremony in which a man and woman declare their commitment to one another as husband and wife. It might take place in a mosque, where it could be led by an imam. However, it may also be at the bride's home.

- The wali or woman's guardian in marriage offers the bride to the groom.
- There must be two witnesses who have attained adulthood and are good Muslims.
- There is the payment of mahr (dowry or marriage gift) by the groom to the bride.
- A marriage contract is signed by the bride and groom and witnesses. For the nikah there must be the consent of both parties.
- A sermon is given to bless the marriage.
- Vows are not necessary but may be exchanged if the bride and groom choose to do so. Traditionally the bride would vow to be honest, obedient and faithful and the husband would vow to be helpful and faithful.
- The wedding ceremony ends with prayers for the bride and groom, their families, the local Muslim community and the worldwide Muslim community.
- The wedding banquet or walima is traditionally held by the groom after the nikah has taken place. It may take place immediately following the nikah or on the following day but the purpose of the banquet is for family and friends to share in the groom's happiness on the occasion of his marriage and to give thanks to God.

A separate civil ceremony must also take place to make the marriage legal.



■ Muslim weddings can take place in various settings



Temporary unannounced marriage

Some Shi'a Muslims, those known as Twelver Shi'as, practise Nikah Mut'ah, which means temporary unannounced marriage.

This is a form of marriage that lasts only for a limited period of time. It is a formal arrangement; there is a contract (a nikah) which specifies the terms of the arrangement, including the length of the marriage and any rules of behaviour during the marriage. The man may give the woman a gift (dowry/mahr).

Historically, during the time of Muhammad, the practice was used by men who were travelling away from home for a long period of time to allow them to take a wife while they were away. Today in the UK some Shi'a Muslims are engaging in temporary unannounced marriages because they want to date and socialise with members of the opposite sex and wouldn't otherwise be allowed to do so under Shari'ah law.

Twelver Shi'as point to passages in the Qur'an and hadith that say temporary unannounced marriage is acceptable.

Sunni Muslims and other Shi'a groups say that temporary unannounced marriage is completely wrong. They say that it is simply a means of having sex before marriage, which is not permitted in Islam. Sunni Muslims point to the teaching of the Second Caliph (second successor to Muhammad in Sunni Islam, see pages 224–25) who banned temporary unannounced marriage.

Task

Read the information about the Muslim wedding ceremony and create a spider diagram which summarises its key features.



Jewish attitudes to marriage



Jews regard marriage as being a blessing from God and it is an important spiritual ceremony. Both partners must enter marriage with the right intentions and are expected to respect and be faithful to each other. Marriage is seen as the basis of family life.

Weddings can take place in a synagogue, or any suitable place. The ceremony is made up of two parts:

- The kiddushin
- The nisuin



■ A Jewish wedding ceremony being held under a huppah.



The Kiddushin

- The ketubah is the formal marriage contract that states how the husband will care for his wife. The wife will retain the ketubah throughout the marriage.
- A wedding will be conducted by a rabbi and the main part of the ceremony will take place under a chuppah. This is a shelter with four sides, often with a blessing in Hebrew written across it. It represents the Jewish home.
- Under the chuppah the groom will make the declaration: 'Behold you are consecrated to me by means of this ring according to the rituals of Moses and Israel'. He will also read the ketubah aloud.
- Two blessings are said in the kiddushin – one for the wine and the second for the commitment that the bride and groom make to each other.
- The groom stamps on a glass. This could act as a reminder of the fragility of marriage or some people believe it is a reminder of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem.
- The groom places a ring on the bride's index finger, which is believed to be connected to the heart. The round ring is a symbol of eternity.

The nisuin

In the second part of the ceremony seven blessings are said. These blessings praise God for creating the human race and bringing happiness to the couple. The blessings are:

- 1 Blessed are you, God, who brings forth fruit from the vine.
- 2 Blessed are you, God who shapes the universe. All things created speak of your glory.
- 3 Blessed are you, Holy One, who fashions each person.
- 4 We bless you, God, for forming each person in your image. You have planted within us a vision of you and given us the means that we may flourish through time. Blessed are you, Creator of humanity.
- 5 May Israel, once bereft of her children, now delight as they gather together in joy. Blessed are you, God, who lets Zion rejoice with her children.
- 6 Let these loving friends taste of the bliss you gave to the first man and woman in the Garden of Eden in the days of old. Blessed are you, the Presence who dwells with bride and groom in delight.
- 7 Blessed are You, who lights the world with happiness and contentment, love and companionship, peace and friendship, bridegroom and bride. Let the mountains of Israel dance! Let the gates of Jerusalem ring with the sounds of joy, song, merriment, and delight — the voice of the groom and the voice of the bride, the happy shouts of their friends and companions. We bless you, God, who brings bride and groom together to rejoice in each other.

Task

Read the information on the Jewish wedding ceremony. What key beliefs about the nature and purpose of marriage does it symbolise? Try and find at least five symbols and their meaning.



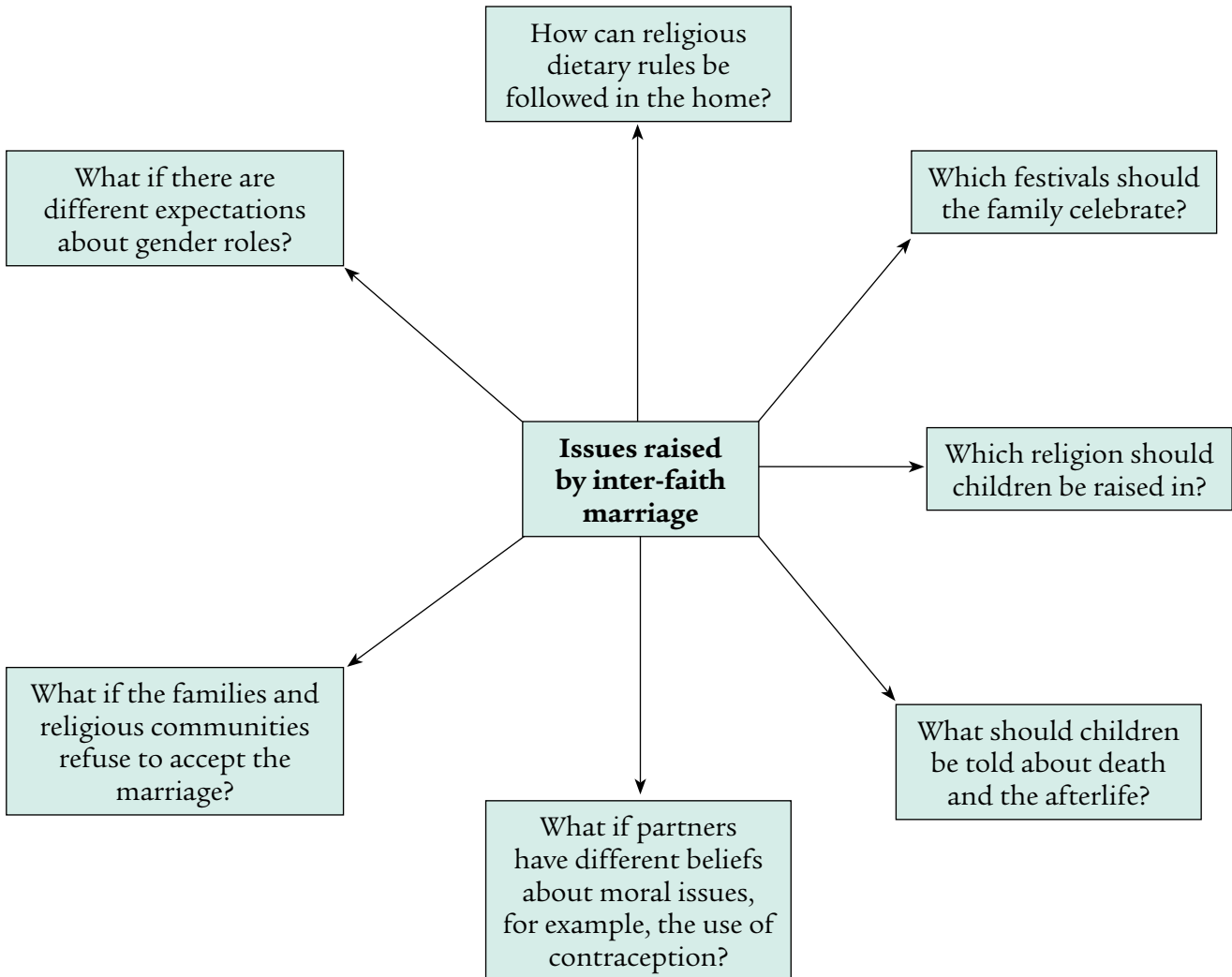
► Marriage outside religious traditions

In a pluralist society inter-faith marriage – where two people of different faiths marry – is an issue which religions have to respond to. Some of the issues raised by inter-faith marriage are outlined in the mind map below. There may also be an issue about where an inter-faith wedding ceremony can take place.

Examples of issues raised by inter-faith marriages are:

- In the Christian Orthodox tradition a marriage in church only takes place if an Orthodox Christian is marrying a baptised Christian.
- In the Catholic tradition the partner who is not Catholic must agree to any children of the marriage being allowed to follow the Catholic faith.
- In the Jewish Orthodox tradition only Jews may marry each other in a synagogue.

Where there is an issue about people marrying in a place of worship because of different religious beliefs, it is possible to have a civil ceremony followed, for example, by a religious blessing.



Cohabitation

Jewish attitudes to cohabitation



For many Jews it is important that couples get married rather than cohabit. In the Torah, for two people to live as husband and wife, they require the blessings of God. This may only take place when they declare marriage vows. In practice though, some Jewish people do choose to cohabit.

Key Concept



Cohabitation To live together in a sexual relationship, without being married, or in a civil partnership.

Cohabitation is where two people who are not married live in a romantic partnership which may involve an intimate and sexual relationship. Some couples choose to cohabit and never marry, while some couples will marry after a period of cohabitation.

In 2012 there were 5.9 million people cohabiting in the UK and it was the fastest growing family type.

Muslim attitudes to cohabitation



Although in practice some Muslims may choose to cohabit, according to the teachings of Islam it is always wrong. Muslims believe that for a couple to live together in a sexual relationship they must first be married.

Christian attitudes to cohabitation



Although Christian doctrines have traditionally prohibited cohabitation there has been an increasingly more tolerant line taken in some denominations towards couples who cohabit. Liberal Anglicans, for example, accept cohabitation where it is part of a committed relationship, although they still believe that marriage would be the ideal.

However, some denominations disagree with cohabitation as they believe it devalues the special and sacred nature of sex, which should only take place within marriage. The Catholic Church and more conservative Anglicans do not accept cohabitation and expect a couple to not have sex before marriage. Some Baptist Churches may refuse to marry a couple who are cohabiting.

Adultery

Key Concept



Adultery Voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and a person who is not their spouse.

Extra-marital sex or **adultery** is when a married person has a sexual relationship with someone other than their husband or wife. In Britain the vast majority of people disapprove of adultery on moral and social grounds and the law recognises adultery as a justifiable reason for the granting of a divorce.

Christianity, Islam and Judaism all consider adultery a great sin. Adultery is clearly forbidden in the Ten Commandments.

Task

Acrostics are a good way of remembering key information. Can you think of one for adultery? The first letter has been done for you:

Against the Ten Commandments

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Y

Christian attitudes to adultery

Christianity teaches that adultery is wrong for the following reasons:

- Marriage is sexually exclusive and should not be shared with anyone else.
- The Ten Commandments forbid adultery:

'You shall not commit adultery.'

Exodus 20:14

- Marriage is a sacrament – a gift from God – and adultery goes against this.
- Committing adultery destroys the special relationship between a husband and wife.
- Committing adultery can harm the family unit and cause the partner to feel cheated and betrayed.

Jewish attitudes to adultery

Judaism teaches that adultery is wrong for the following reasons:

- The Ten Commandments forbid adultery:

'You shall not commit adultery.'

Exodus 20:14

- Sex is only acceptable within a marriage.
- Halakhah (code of conduct) emphasises that a husband should be sexually considerate towards his wife and not be sexually disloyal.
- Men and women are most fulfilled through marriage, which is referred to as 'kiddushim' (sanctified).

Muslim attitudes to adultery

Islam teaches that adultery is wrong for the following reasons:

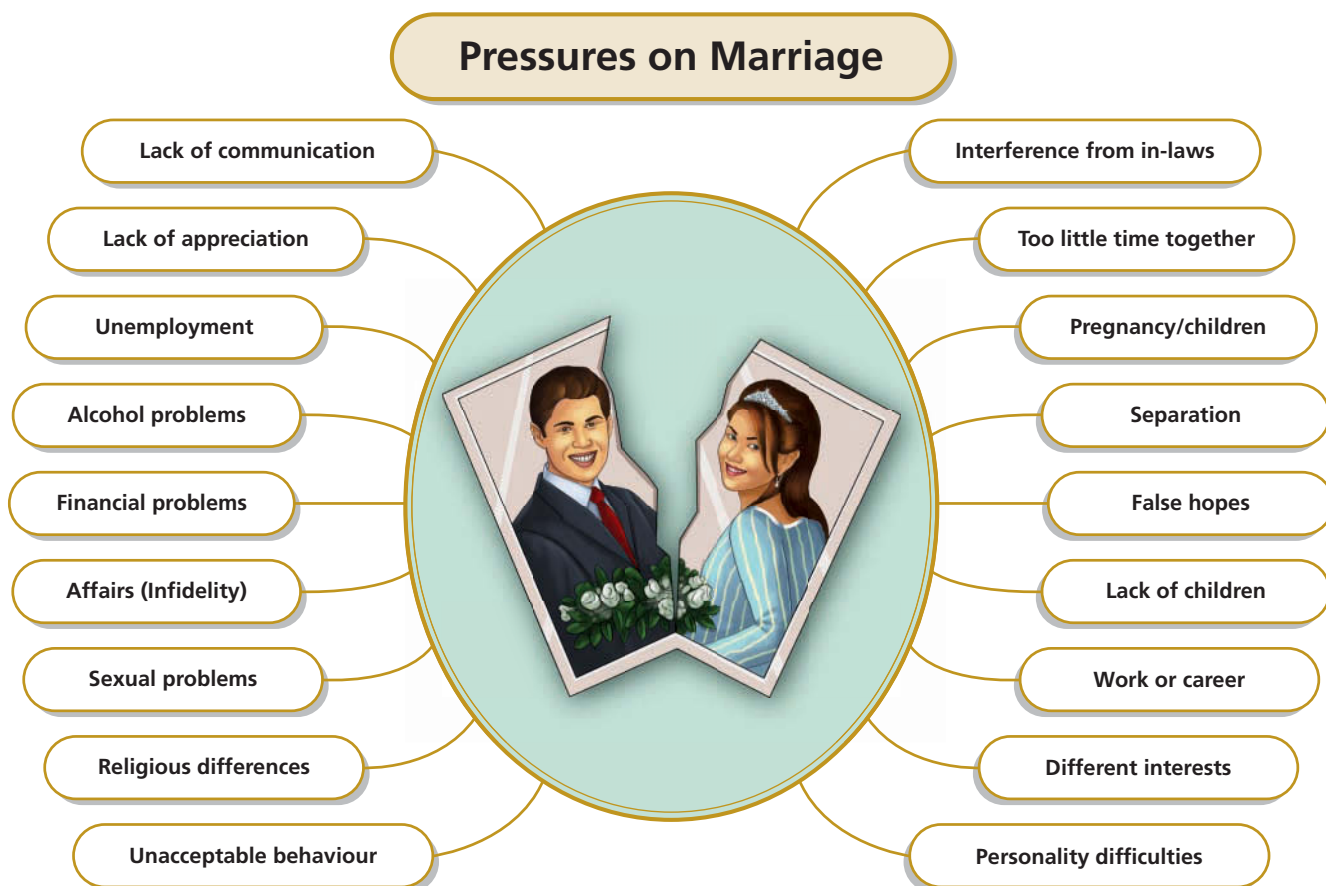
- Sex outside of marriage is generally strongly disapproved of.
- Marriage is a life-long union based on trust, morality and devotion.
- Vows promising to be faithful to one another might be exchanged in the marriage ceremony.
- Adultery is seen as harmful to society, so against the unity and peace of the ummah (brotherhood).
- Adultery is seen as a form of theft of the worst possible sort.
- The Qur'an teaches that adultery is wrong:

'And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way.'

Qur'an 17:32

► Why some marriages fail

All religions understand that there is conflict in human relationships, including within marriages. Within a marriage there are many things that may cause conflict as the diagram below shows.



Task

Look at the pressures on marriage diagram. Can you categorise the pressures under different headings?

Once you have categorised them discuss in pairs the key causes of conflict in a marriage.

When people argue or are in conflict, making up is essential and is known as 'reconciliation'.

Religious communities can help couples who are having relationship problems to reconcile. The religious leader might offer counselling and guidance to the couple, or the wider community might offer support and prayers.

However, sometimes a couple cannot reconcile, in which case they might decide they no longer wish to be married and set about ending their relationship. This might involve:

- divorce – the legal ending of marriage
- separation – deciding to live separately
- annulment – a legal way of cancelling a marriage in the Catholic Church.

Eventually a person who has been married may want to marry someone else. This is known as remarriage.

▶ Divorce and separation

Key Concept



Divorce To legally end a marriage.

When a couple's married relationship breaks down they are likely to separate and decide to live apart. Separation may only be for a short period until they can get a **divorce** or some couples may not get a divorce and just remain separated. For example, the Catholic Church does not permit divorce. So some Catholics many remain separated rather than divorce.

If one of the partners wants to remarry they need to have a divorce first; marriage to someone else while still married is known as **bigamy** and is illegal.

Divorce is the legal ending of a marriage and couples need to apply via the court system.

Bigamy entering into a marriage with someone while still being legally married to another person.

Christian attitudes to divorce and separation



There are significant differences between the different Christian denominations when it comes to attitudes towards divorce.

The Catholic Church does not recognise divorce and regards marriage as a lifelong commitment. In the situation where a marriage breaks down and there is no chance of a reconciliation the two options for a Catholic are either an annulment or separation. Catholics base this belief on teachings of the Bible, for example:

'Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."

Matthew 19:8–9

'Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.'

Mark 10:9

Catholics who are separated are expected not to cohabit with anyone else and if they do this they are not allowed

to receive Holy Communion during mass. Of course some Catholics do get divorced, however, this would not be recognised by the Catholic Church.

In other Christian traditions there is diversity of viewpoints. Because divorce is the legal ending of a marriage by the state, all other Christian denominations accept divorce but the issue becomes complicated if a divorced Christian wants to remarry. For example, in the Anglican church divorce is accepted but remarriage of a divorced person is left to the personal decision of a minister.

The diagram on the next page outlines some of the different denominations' attitudes towards divorce.

Annulment

An annulment (or 'nullity of marriage' or 'nullity of domestic partnership') is when a court says your marriage or domestic partnership is not legally valid. The Catholic Church teaches that annulment is the only acceptable way a marriage can be dissolved. An annulment may be granted for the non-consummation of marriage, which means a married couple have not had sex, or where it is proved the marriage should not have taken place. →