

Relationships and Families

Topics covered:

1. Sexuality
2. Homosexuality
3. Sex outside of marriage

4. Contraception
5. Marriage/Cohabitation
6. Divorce/remarriage
7. Nature of family

8. Purpose of family
9. Polygamy
10. Gender equality

Remember: if a question is asking you for the **similarities** it means **two things the same**. If it says **contrasting** it is asking you to say **both for and against**.

6. Divorce and remarriage

- ✓ Divorce is allowed a year after marriage if the marriage cannot be saved.
- ✓ A legally recognised divorce must be obtained through a court.
- ✓ People divorce for many reasons such as: people changing, addiction, abuse, inability to have children, work and money pressure, disability and adultery.
- ✓ People can get remarried as many times as they wish to different people or their original spouse.

Christianity:

- ✓ Jesus taught that anyone who divorced and remarried was committing adultery.
- ✓ Catholics argue that marriage is permanent and therefore even if couples have a divorce through the court in the eyes of God they are still married. They therefore cannot get remarried.
- ✓ Other Christians argue sometimes divorce is the lesser of two evils. They can marry in a church with the Bishop's blessing.

'Anyone who divorce his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her'. Mark 10:11-12

Islam:

- ✓ Muslims allow divorce as a last resort but it believed to be hateful to God.
- ✓ The Qur'an encourages Muslims to reconcile their difference by allowing family members to bring them back together if it fails they can then divorce.
- ✓ The Qur'an guarantees rights of both men and women to divorce.
- ✓ Muslims are also allowed to remarry after divorce. Muhammad set this example by marrying a divorced woman.

9. Polygamy

- ✓ Polygamy is where a man or a woman has more than one married partner.
- ✓ It is consented, the other party has to welcome the next husband or wife in to the family. If it is done in secret this is **bigamy**.

Christianity:

- ✓ There are examples in the Bible of people who practiced polygamy and there are laws in the Bible to protect the rights of the first born child (**Deuteronomy 21:15-16**).
- ✓ Christians however, believe the ideal marriage is one man and one woman for life, like it was created in the beginning.
- ✓ Paul makes it clear that each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband to avoid sexual immorality (**1 Corinthians 7:2**).

Islam:

- ✓ Islam allows for a man to have more than one wife at the same time, but only under certain circumstances.
- ✓ The prophet Muhammad had several wives, which was normal at the time.
- ✓ Originally the reasons for polygamy were to protect women, who were unable to support themselves if their husbands died.
- ✓ A man can only have multiple wives if he is able to love them, support them and treat them all equally.
- ✓ He can also only do so with the formal consent of his first wife for moral and practical reasons.

8. Purpose of family

- ✓ The family serves a number of purposes: it controls sexual behaviour, it creates stability for society, it provides protection of children, it is where children learn to relate to others, it helps to provide security for the sick, elderly and disabled and for those who are religious it is where children are educated in the faith.

Christianity:

- ✓ The Church teaches that both parents and children have responsibilities to each other.
- ✓ The commandment to honour your mother and father applies to all ages, so it includes the respect and care given to elderly relatives.
- ✓ Christians believe children are gifts from God.
- ✓ Children also have responsibilities to obey, love and respect their parents for all they have done to help them grow in to mature adults.

'Listen to you father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old'. Proverbs 23:22

'Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him'. Psalm 127:3

'Children, obey your parents in everything, for this please the Lord'. Colossians 3:20

Islam:

- ✓ For Muslims, children are a blessing from God and the family is especially important for providing a stable environment for their upbringing.
- ✓ Parents have a duty to raise their children to be good Muslims.
- ✓ Children also have a duty to be respectful to their parents and elders, which continues into adulthood.
- ✓ Islam honours the elderly because they have a great deal of wisdom and experience to offer the younger generations.
- ✓ Muslims have a responsibility to care for their parents when they become ill. They would not put them in a home, and many have them living with them. It is an honour to look after them.

'Lower your wing in humility towards [your parents] in kindness and say, 'Lord have mercy on them, just as they cared for me when I was little'. Qur'an 17:24

'It is one of the greatest sins that a man should curse his parents'. Hadith

10. Gender equality

- ✓ Gender equality means that men and women should be given the same rights and opportunities as each other.
- ✓ There are many examples where gender equality does not happen. Gender prejudice and sexual stereotyping often prevents equality between genders.
- ✓ Traditionally, men held more positions of power and had more rights than women.
- ✓ In a family, the mother brings new life into the world and is usually the baby's prime carer. The father may help and will support the wife and the baby.
- ✓ Just because roles are different doesn't mean that they are unequal. Each family decides what will work for them.

Christianity:

- ✓ Believe that all people have been created equal in the image of God.
- ✓ For Christians discrimination is wrong, due to the commandment to love one another.
- ✓ Jesus treated women with respect and welcomed them as disciples and showed that they were capable of more than just completing domestic chores. **Story of Mary and Martha. (Luke 10:38-42)**
- ✓ Some traditional Christians believe that men are the head of the family and women should mainly stay home to care for the children. This belief could stem from a literal interpretation of the Bible where Even is punished for her disobedience.
- ✓ Most Christians today see marriage as an equal partnership where the different gifts of each person, male and female strengthen family life.

'With painful labour you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you'. Genesis 3:16

Islam:

- ✓ Muslims believe God created all people equal. The Qur'an teaches that men and women were created from a single soul.
- ✓ Men and women have the same religious and moral responsibilities.
- ✓ Muhammad taught that anyone, man or woman, who does a good deed for God's sake will be rewarded. (**Qur'an 16:97**).
- ✓ Islamic law recognises the full property rights of women before and after marriage.
- ✓ In some Muslim countries women are not given full rights under the law, but this is against the teachings of the Qur'an.
- ✓ Muslim families place high value on the mother's role in bringing up the children in Islam. Men are expected to provide for the family and make decisions about their general welfare.
- ✓ Many non-Muslims assume that women suffer gender prejudice such as wearing the veils, girls' education and restrictions on women's freedom. Muslims point out that in some countries discrimination does happen but this is due to cultural practices rather than because of the teachings in the Qur'an.

'People, we created you from a single man and a single woman, and made you into races and tribes so that you should recognise one another'. Qur'an 49:13.

7. Nature of family

- ✓ There are several different types of family (look up key words).
- ✓ The role of parents in a family is very important. It is their duty to bring the child up to know right from wrong.

Christianity:

- ✓ They place very high value on family life, as love is at the heart of all relationships and this is where children learn to love.
- ✓ Christians believe it's important to look after the elder generations of the family and to respect their parents because of the commandment **'honour your mother and father'. Exodus 20:12**
- ✓ Some traditional Christians disapprove of same sex parents because they feel the ideal is for children to grow up with a male and female role model. Others would say it's more important for children to be in a secure and loving family regardless of the gender of their parents.

Islam:

- ✓ For Muslims the extended family is the basis of Islamic society and part of God's plan.
- ✓ The family shapes the moral values and character of the child.
- ✓ Muslims care for their elderly parents and grandparents with love and respect as they cared for them when they were young.
- ✓ Muslim parents are expected to love and care for their children, set a good example for them and bring them up in the faith.
- ✓ Women have an important role in looking after the home, raising children and making decisions about the household. Traditionally, men are expected to work and provide for their family. **'Heaven is under the feet of the mothers'. Hadith**

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1. Sexuality

- ✓ Human sexuality refers to the way people express themselves as sexual beings.
- ✓ A **heterosexual relationship** is a relationship with a member of the opposite sex.
- ✓ A **homosexual relationship** is a relationship with a member of the same sex, either between a man and another man or a woman and another woman.

Christianity:

- ✓ The Church teaches the only valid place for a sexual relationship is in a marriage.
- ✓ In the past, the Church was more powerful and the majority of society accepted this view point. However, times and laws have changed and so views on sex have also altered.

Islam:

- ✓ Muslims believe sexuality is part of the human being, not wrong or unhealthy.
- ✓ Islam teaches that sexuality must be used in a responsible way, there are certain expectations surrounding sex.
- ✓ It is expected Muslims will marry and have a family.

Age of Consent:

- ✓ In the UK, the 'age of consent' for anyone to have sex is 16 years old.
- ✓ The law tries to protect anyone under the age of 16 from exploitation and abuse.
- ✓ Children under 13 are protected by additional specific laws to prevent abuse.

2. Homosexuality

- ✓ A homosexual relationship is a relationship with a member of the same sex.
- ✓ In the UK, homosexuality was **illegal** until 1967. In some Muslim countries it is still illegal and can be severely punished.
- ✓ In 2004 same-sex couples could have a **civil partnership** (the same rights as marriage).
- ✓ It was only in 2013 that same-sex marriage was recognised in law.

Christianity:

- ✓ Christians have differing opinions on homosexuality.
- ✓ Some Christians disagree with homosexuality because it says in the Bible that sexual relationships between two men are forbidden.
- ✓ The Catholic Church teaches the homosexual people are not sinful because of their sexual orientation but they should remain **celibate** in order to not commit a sin.
- ✓ Church of England welcomes homosexuals who have a faithful, committed relationship, but they cannot marry in church.

'Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable'.

Leviticus 18:22

'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Mark 12:31

Islam:

- ✓ In Islam, sexual orientation is considered a choice.
- ✓ Considers same-sex relationships to be against the natural law created by God.
- ✓ Most Muslims believe that the Qur'an and Hadith teach that homosexuality is against God's will.

'Must you, unlike [other] people, lust after males and abandon the wives that God has created for you? You are exceeding all bounds'. Qur'an 26:165-166

3. Sex outside of marriage

- ✓ In the past, sexual relationships outside of marriage was considered shocking, especially for a woman.
- ✓ Times have changed and it is becoming more accepted to have a sexual relationship before marriage happens.

Christianity:

Sex before marriage:

- ✓ Many Christians believe it is important to be sexually pure before marriage, because sex is a part of the loving, trusting relationship that should be developed in marriage.
- ✓ Christians believe it is wrong to use people for sex, and irresponsible to spread STI's.
- ✓ Although Anglican and Catholic churches teach that unmarried people shouldn't have sex some Christians do accept sex before marriage.
- ✓ They say sex before marriage is acceptable if it is within the boundaries of a stable relationship as a way to express their love for each other.

'Flee from sexual immorality'. 1 Corinthians 6:18-19

Sexual relationships outside of marriage:

- ✓ Christians believe adultery (cheating) is wrong because it involves secrecy, lies and a betrayal of trust.
- ✓ Adultery breaks the promises couples make before God to be faithful to each other.
- ✓ It threatens a stable relationship and breaks up families.

'You shall not commit adultery'. Exodus 20:14

Islam:

Sex before marriage:

- ✓ Muslims believe casual sex is wrong. They believe it can lead to promiscuity and other evils such as rape and deception.
- ✓ The Qur'an expressly forbids sex before marriage. Under Islamic law it is considered to be a sexual offense.

'A man should not stay with a woman in seclusion unless his is a Dhu-Mahram (relative)'. Hadith

Sex outside of marriage:

- ✓ Adultery is considered a serious sin. Muslims should avoid situations which could lead to this sort of sin.
- ✓ They believe it is wrong because it is a betrayal of trust and goes against the marriage promises.
- ✓ In some countries governed by Shari'ah law the punishment for adultery is death. However, it is very difficult to get a conviction.

'And do not go anywhere near adultery: it is an outrage, and an evil path'. Qur'an 17:32

5. Cohabitation

- ✓ Living together before marriage.

Christianity:

- ✓ Christians who are opposed to sex before marriage believe cohabitation is wrong.
- ✓ Catholics are opposed to any sexual relationship outside of a marriage.
- ✓ Anglicans accept that although marriage is best, people may live together if they are in a loving and committed relationship.

'The sexual act must take place exclusively within marriage'. Catechism 2390

Islam:

- ✓ Believe it's wrong as sex should only occur within a marriage.

4. Contraception

- ✓ Contraception is a way of preventing pregnancy.
- ✓ There are several different methods of contraception:
 - The pill
 - Condoms
 - Coil
 - Implant
 - Injection

Christianity:

- ✓ The Catholic Church teach that artificial methods of contraception goes against God's laws.
- ✓ God's purpose of marriage and sex is to have a family.
- ✓ Catholics are not against family planning, but think parents should use natural forms of contraception to regulate their family.
- ✓ Anglicans accept people should only have as many children as they are able to care for therefore would accept contraception, not to stop children completely but to regulate the amount of children.
- ✓ Many Christians agree that some forms of contraception shouldn't be used because conception has already taken place which they would see as abortion which is wrong.

'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth'. Genesis 2:24

Islam:

- ✓ Contraception is only acceptable in the context of marriage, not for unmarried people.
- ✓ There is an expectation that Muslims will have children, but they believe the couple should be able to decide when to have the family and how many children to have.
- ✓ They accept contraception as long as it's not used for preventing children altogether.
- ✓ There are some Muslims who believe it is wrong as it interferes with God's plans.

'God wishes to lighten your burden.' Qur'an 4:28

'Do not kill your children for fear over poverty – we shall provide for them and for you – killing them is a great sin'. Qur'an 17:31

5. Marriage

- ✓ Marriage is a legal contract that brings security as it protects the rights of each partner and is a serious lifelong commitment.
- ✓ In 2004 same sex couples were allowed to register their union in a civil partnership which gives them the same rights as married couples in the UK.
- ✓ Same-sex marriage became legal in the UK in 2014.

Christianity:

- ✓ Marriage was a gift from God at creation.
- ✓ Some believe it is a lifelong union blessed by God, that reflects the love of Jesus and an agreement before God which cannot be broken.
- ✓ For Christians the purpose of marriage is to provide a stable environment for family life.

'This is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh'.

Islam:

- ✓ Consider marriage to be the foundation of family life.
- ✓ The Qur'an and Hadith make it clear that marriage was intended by God for the sharing of love.
- ✓ Adults are considered to marry because it is a normal part of life. It helps them to develop spiritually because it prevents them from sinning.

'There is no institution in Islam more beloved and dearer [to God] than marriage'. Hadith