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# **GCE AS MARKING SCHEME**

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**SUMMER 2024**

**AS  
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - COMPONENT 1  
OPTION A: AN INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIANITY**

**B120UA0-1**

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## About this marking scheme

The purpose of this marking scheme is to provide teachers, learners, and other interested parties, with an understanding of the assessment criteria used to assess this specific assessment.

This marking scheme reflects the criteria by which this assessment was marked in a live series and was finalised following detailed discussion at an examiners' conference. A team of qualified examiners were trained specifically in the application of this marking scheme. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners. It may not be possible, or appropriate, to capture every variation that a candidate may present in their responses within this marking scheme. However, during the training conference, examiners were guided in using their professional judgement to credit alternative valid responses as instructed by the document, and through reviewing exemplar responses.

Without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers, learners and other users, may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that this marking scheme is used alongside other guidance, such as published exemplar materials or Guidance for Teaching. This marking scheme is final and will not be changed, unless in the event that a clear error is identified, as it reflects the criteria used to assess candidate responses during the live series.

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## **Marking guidance for examiners, please apply carefully and consistently:**

### **Positive marking**

It should be remembered that candidates are writing under examination conditions and credit should be given for what the candidate writes, rather than adopting the approach of penalising him/her for any omissions. It should be possible for a very good response to achieve full marks and a very poor one to achieve zero marks. Marks should not be deducted for a less than perfect answer if it satisfies the criteria of the mark scheme.

Exemplars in the mark scheme are only meant as helpful guides. Therefore, any other acceptable or suitable answers should be credited even though they are not actually stated in the mark scheme.

Two main phrases are deliberately placed throughout each mark scheme to remind examiners of this philosophy. They are:

- “Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.”
- “This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.”

### **Rules for Marking**

1. Differentiation will be achieved on the basis of candidates' response.
2. No mark scheme can ever anticipate or include every possible detail or interpretation; examiners should use their professional judgement to decide whether a candidate's particular response answers the question in relation to the particular assessment objective.
3. Candidates will often express their ideas in language different from that given in any mark scheme or outline. Positive marking therefore, on the part of examiners, will recognise and credit correct statements of ideas, valid points and reasoned arguments irrespective of the language employed.

### **Banded mark schemes**

Banded mark schemes are divided so that each band has a relevant descriptor. The descriptor provides a description of the performance level for that band. Each band contains marks. Examiners should first read and annotate a candidate's answer to pick out the evidence that is being assessed in that question. Once the annotation is complete, the mark scheme can be applied. This is done as a two stage process.

#### **Banded mark schemes stage 1 – deciding on the band**

When deciding on a band, the answer should be viewed holistically. Beginning at the lowest band, examiners should look at the candidate's answer and check whether it matches the descriptor for that band. Examiners should look at the descriptor for that band and see if it matches the qualities shown in the candidate's answer. If the descriptor at the lowest band is satisfied, examiners should move up to the next band and repeat this process for each band until the descriptor matches the answer.

If an answer covers different aspects of different bands within the mark scheme, a 'best fit' approach should be adopted to decide on the band and then the candidate's response should be used to decide on the mark within the band. For instance if a response is mainly in band 2 but with a limited amount of band 3 content, the answer would be placed in band 2, but the mark awarded would be close to the top of band 2 as a result of the band 3 content.

Examiners should not seek to mark candidates down as a result of small omissions in minor areas of an answer.

### **Banded mark schemes stage 2 – deciding on the mark**

Once the band has been decided, examiners can then assign a mark. During standardising (at the Examiners' marking conference), detailed advice from the Principal Examiner on the qualities of each mark band will be given. Examiners will then receive examples of answers in each mark band that have been awarded a mark by the Principal Examiner. Examiners should mark the examples and compare their marks with those of the Principal Examiner.

When marking, examiners can use these examples to decide whether a candidate's response is of a superior, inferior or comparable standard to the example. Examiners are reminded of the need to revisit the answer as they apply the mark scheme in order to confirm that the band and the mark allocated is appropriate to the response provided. Indicative content is also provided for banded mark schemes. Indicative content is not exhaustive, and any other valid points must be credited. In order to reach the highest bands of the mark scheme a learner need not cover all of the points mentioned in the indicative content, but must meet the requirements of the highest mark band.

### **Awarding no marks to a response**

Where a response is not creditworthy, that is it contains nothing of any relevance to the question, or where no response has been provided, no marks should be awarded.

## AS Generic Band Descriptors

Band	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions [25 marks]</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</i></li> <li>- <i>influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</i></li> <li>- <i>cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice</i></li> <li>- <i>approaches to the study of religion and belief.</i></li> </ul>
5	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>21-25 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• An extensive and relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates extensive depth and/or breadth. Excellent use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
4	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>16-20 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• A detailed, relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth. Good use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
3	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>11-15 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainly accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• A satisfactory response, which generally answers the main demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth in some areas. Satisfactory use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
2	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>6-10 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Basic level of accuracy and relevance.</li> <li>• A basic response, addressing some of the demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates limited depth and/or breadth, including limited use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Some accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
1	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1-5 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Low level of accuracy and relevance.</li> <li>• A very limited response, with little attempt to address the question.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates very limited depth and/or breadth. Very limited use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Little or no reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary.</li> </ul> <p><b>N.B. A maximum of 2 marks should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'</b></p>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No relevant information.</li> </ul>

<b>Band</b>	<b>Assessment Objective A02- Part (b) questions [25 marks]</b> <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i>
<b>5</b>	<b>21-25 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set.</li> <li>• Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>16-20 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purposeful analysis and effective evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• The main issues raised by the question are identified successfully and addressed.</li> <li>• The views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>11-15 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed.</li> <li>• Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>6-10 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed.</li> <li>• A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>1-5 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• An attempt has been made to identify and address the issues raised by the question set.</li> <li>• Little attempt to justify a view with reasoning or evidence.</li> <li>• Some use of basic specialist language and vocabulary.</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No relevant analysis or evaluation.</li> </ul>

**GCE AS RELIGIOUS STUDIES – COMPONENT 1**  
**OPTION A: AN INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIANITY**  
**SUMMER 2024 MARK SCHEME**

To be read in conjunction with the generic level descriptors provided.

**Section A**

**Either,**

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| <b>0</b> | <b>1</b> |
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- (a)
- Explain the origin of the Holy Spirit, within the doctrine of the Trinity, with reference to the filioque controversy.**
- [AO1 25]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity in Christianity and as such is a part of the Triune God. It is God's continued presence on earth and is a symbol of peace.
- In John 14, Jesus informs his disciples that he will be leaving but that his Father will send the Holy Spirit as an advocate to bring peace and reiterate the teachings of Jesus. In John 14:26 Jesus says, '...the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name ...'.
- The filioque (the term "and the Son") appears in the phrase "proceeds from the Father and the Son" in the Nicene Creed in Western Christianity, but both the phrase and the teaching are rejected by the Eastern Orthodox Church.
- As such, Western Christians will normally include "and the Son" in the recitation of the Nicene Creed (but do not insist upon it).
- Western Christianity teaches that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son as well as the Father; Eastern Orthodox Christians may see this as undermining the role of the Father.
- The Western Church emphasises the divinity of the Son and the unity of the Trinity by having the Holy Spirit proceed from both the Father and the Son.
- The Eastern Orthodox Church emphasises the "monarchy of the Father" and teaches that this results in unity between the three persons of the Trinity – since both the Son and the Holy Spirit come from the Father, there is one 'source' for all three persons, and the unity of the three can also be represented by just one of the three (the Father).
- Answers may note that there are diverse positions within the Eastern Orthodox Church: some hold that the teaching that the Holy Spirit also proceeds from the Son is serious doctrinal error; others consider the divergences within Christianity to be primarily due to misunderstandings and different emphases.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

- (b) **‘It is impossible to understand the God of Christianity without first understanding the doctrine of the Trinity.’**  
**Evaluate this view.** [AO2 25]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- The doctrine of the Trinity is necessary to understand the God of Christianity because it explains the nature of God. You could not be a Christian without an understanding of the God you worship, and the Triune nature of God is integral to an understanding of God.
- The doctrine of the Trinity explains the relationship between the Persons of the Trinity. Without it, there would be mass confusion regarding the nature and roles of the different Persons. This has to be understood by believers because otherwise it could lead to idol worship or polytheism.
- The Immanent Trinity adequately explains the nature of God as three in one. This is necessary to understanding the monotheistic nature and Triune God of Christianity and must be understood first in order to know God.
- On the other hand, The Economic Trinity is concerned with people's experiences of God or what God does in the world. The Trinity is adequately explained through seeing God as: Father, who creates; Son, who redeems and Holy Spirit, who sanctifies. In this sense, it could be argued that experience of God comes before understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity.
- Trinity Sunday is one of the few feasts in Christianity that celebrates a doctrine rather than an event, highlighting its importance to the faith and therefore its necessity in understanding the God of Christianity but this alone does not indicate that the doctrine must be understood first.
- The Bible mentions worship of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit but also states that there is only one God. Understanding how these seemingly contradictory statements can be reconciled is necessary for understanding the God of Christianity.
- However, this complicated doctrine may not be accessible for many believers. It would be wrong to say these people don't have faith or know God simply because they cannot understand a complex doctrine. The Immanent Trinity is not clearly defined; many Christians struggle to articulate the Triune nature of God but would still be able to describe the God in whom they believe.
- Some Christians believe they understand the doctrine of the Trinity but actually don't. How can this doctrine be central to understanding the God of Christianity if so many do not understand it?
- God can be known personally through reading and engaging with scripture and through prayer. This does not require an understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity.
- It does not make sense to see God as three Persons but one God. It is a complex, arguably impossible, doctrine to understand. To say that Christians have to understand the doctrine of the Trinity to understand God would be to exclude many who call themselves Christian.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**



**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Human beings have been corrupted with the potential for sin since the disobedience of Adam and Eve found in the Genesis creation story. This original sin has influenced humans to err from the right path as can be seen throughout many stories of the Old Testament.
- Humans therefore needed divine forgiveness which God provided in the form of Jesus' sacrifice 'made once for all upon the cross' (the Church of England Eucharistic Prayer). Two of the theories of the Atonement are most appropriate for answering this question about divine forgiveness:
- The death of Jesus as a substitution:  
This covers two related beliefs: (a) that Jesus died in place of the people to free humanity from sin – God put the sins of humanity on to the sinless Jesus, who took the punishment that humanity deserved (penal substitution theory); and (b) that, since the debt of sin is owed to the divine (God) by the people (humanity), only Jesus (both divine and human) could act as a sacrifice by God for the sake of humanity. The penal substitution theory emphasises God's justice – God has to uphold God's laws and teachings, which means that justice must be served, and sin must be punished. Jesus' sacrifice provided the divine forgiveness necessary for the sins of humanity.
- The death of Jesus as a moral example:  
This theory (also called the "moral influence theory" or "moral exemplar theory") suggests that the life and works of Jesus were given to humanity as a moral example of how to live and die.  
This moral example inspires humans to overcome sin in their lives and grow closer to God. Understanding this theory of Atonement allows humans to receive divine forgiveness themselves by accepting Jesus as saviour.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

- (b) **'Theories of Atonement are incompatible with a loving God.'**  
**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 25]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- A loving god must be just. It would be unjust to allow people to gain access to heaven if they have committed sins and not been forgiven, therefore the theories of Atonement are consistent with a loving god.
- However, some would argue that sacrificing an innocent individual is unjust and therefore not an act of a loving god.
- The death of Jesus as Christus Victor model of Atonement is not compatible with a loving god. A loving god would not sacrifice his only son to triumph over evil when other methods could be used to the same effect. This is also incompatible with an omnipotent god as God should not need any form of sacrifice to defeat the devil.
- It could be argued that the penal substitution model is incompatible with a loving god as it is unjust and unloving to use a sinless Jesus as a scapegoat for humanity.
- However, it could be argued that this is more loving than having to sacrifice any human to achieve the same result.
- Jesus is a part of the Trinity and is therefore God. Jesus may have the characteristics of God such as impassibility and therefore will not have suffered on the cross as an ordinary human would have.
- However, others argue Jesus is not impassible, citing evidence from the Bible where Jesus cries out during his crucifixion, 'Why have you forsaken me?' Matthew 27:46. This would mean God is unloving for causing the pain and suffering of his sinless only son for the sake of sinful humans.
- If the Atonement is seen as God paying a ransom to the devil, as was taught by Origen, many would argue this is not the act of a loving god as a loving god would not bow down to the ransom requests of Satan.
- The death of Jesus as a moral example might be compatible with a loving god as humans need examples to follow to make the teachings of the Bible clearer and easier to follow. The example of Jesus as a role model for moral living is useful in improving the actions of humanity.
- However, a loving god would choose a different way of showing Jesus as a moral example without the need for him to die a painful death.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

## Section B

- |   |   |
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| 0 | 3 |
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 (a) Explain the key Christian moral principles of: (i) regard for truth and (ii) the role of conscience. [AO1 25]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Candidates may begin with a general explanation of Christian moral principles being based on God's law regarding human behaviour.

### Truth

- For Christians, the Bible communicates the truth about meaning and purpose of life, the nature of God, the creation of the world, the sanctity of life, the person of Jesus and the history of salvation.
- In 1 Samuel 12:24, the Israelites are called to, 'fear the Lord and serve him faithfully...' to thank the Lord for leading them out of slavery to safety. Christians observe this commandment due to their concern for the truth of the biblical narrative.
- Jesus declared to his disciples, 'I am the way, the truth and the life, no-one comes to the father except through me'. This indicates that truth is the ultimate meaning, purpose and value of existence not only in this life but for eternity.
- Ephesians 4:25 teaches, '... Each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour, for we are all members of one body.'
- Bearing witness to the truth for the Christian is not simply a case of not lying but of witnessing to Christ who is 'the truth' and not to do so dishonours him and even breaks one's relationship with him.

### Conscience

- The moral principle of conscience arises from the understanding that human beings are created in the image of God and therefore have an innate sense of right and wrong.
- Conscience is a gift from God to all, regardless of time or place, as a means of knowing God's will concerning right and wrong.
- The conscience can be further informed by reading and following the Bible and by the work of the Holy Spirit in each individual leading and guiding each to a greater holiness, i.e. sanctification.
- The human feeling of 'guilt' is evidence of the conscience at work.
- If that voice of conscience is not listened to but rather ignored, then one's sensitivity to moral issues can be eroded.
- The Christian's goal is to develop a mature conscience – for which truth is a vital ingredient. This ensures the conscience is not overly sensitive or desensitised.
- Paul writes of his conscience in 2 Corinthians 1:12 where he states, 'Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity'.
- In 1 Timothy 1:5, Paul writes, 'The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith'. Paul is here combining Christian principles of truth and conscience, explaining that a good conscience is necessary for spreading the truth of God (since the commandment to which he is referring here is to spread the truth and oppose those spreading false doctrines).

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

- (b) **‘There is no moral principle greater than love of neighbour.’**  
**Evaluate this view with reference to Christianity.** [AO2 25]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Candidates may argue that there cannot be a moral principle greater than love of neighbour as this simple phrasing of a commandment incorporates all of the key moral principles of Christianity.
- Every other moral teaching can be reduced to love of neighbour.
- However, Jesus said that love of neighbour was one of two greatest commandments alongside love of God. It could be argued that love of God is a greater moral principle because it is for the love of God that Christians should be moral.
- But this line of argument has flaws as many Christians would argue that love of God is an act of worship rather than a moral principle.
- On the other hand, ‘God is love’ and therefore we cannot know what love is without God. This would indicate that loving God is the greater moral principle as it is the only way we can learn how to love one’s neighbour.
- Some may argue that ‘Do to others as you would have them do to you’ is a greater moral principle as it is commonly known as the Golden Rule of Christianity. This is also a Golden Rule in other religions, arguably making it more important than love of neighbour.
- However, it can be argued that ‘do unto others as you would have them do to you’ is the same thing as loving one’s neighbour. For example, paying workers fairly because we would want to be paid fairly is showing them love.
- Candidates may argue that other moral principles are greater, for example forgiveness. You don’t have to love someone to forgive them so it can be argued that this moral principle isn’t reducible to love of one’s neighbour. It may be seen as a greater moral principle due to it being necessary for personal wellbeing and it is a key teaching repeated in the Bible. Extraordinary examples of personal forgiveness may be mentioned, such as Gee Walker who forgave her son’s murderers or Archbishop John Sentamu who forgave the people who send him racist hate mail when he became the first black Archbishop in the UK.
- It can be argued that love of neighbour cannot be the greatest moral principle as it is too difficult to truly achieve. Following agape means to love everyone unconditionally and this can be seen as impossible in many situations.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

- (a) **Explain ways in which the Bible could be considered authoritative as a source of moral advice.** [AO1 25]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- The Bible is a source of moral advice for Christians due to the teachings contained within it. The Bible's wisdom and authority makes it a source of moral advice for daily life.
- The Bible offers clear moral advice for a variety of situations, including (but not limited to) responses to injustice, war, poverty, etc.
- For example, Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 instructs Christians to 'fear God and keep his commandments'. It can be argued that following the commandments contained within the Bible provides moral guidance for Christians.
- Candidates are likely to include examples of commandments in their answers, such as the Ten Commandments found in Exodus.
- Luke 6:36-37 gives the moral advice to, 'Be merciful, just as your father is merciful' and 'Forgive, and you will be forgiven.' There are many other teachings on forgiveness and mercy in the Bible, such as Matthew 18:22 which can be interpreted to mean Christians should always forgive and Luke 17:3 which states that if someone repents, they should be forgiven. Candidates may explore the varied nature and interpretations of some teachings and use these to explore whether the Bible could offer different moral advice to different people.
- Luke 6:37 gives the moral advice to not be judgemental. This is also seen elsewhere in the Bible, for example in Matthew 7:3-5 where Christians are taught not to be hypocritical and judge others for things they have done themselves. This is also seen in the story of the adulterous woman in John 8:1-11 where Jesus tells the crowd, 'Let any one of you who is without sin throw the first stone.'
- The moral advice to love one's neighbour, including one's enemies, is also prevalent throughout the Bible. This commandment is found in the Old Testament in Leviticus 19:9-18. This teaches Christians to be thoughtful to the poor and needy; not discriminate against people with disabilities; pay workers fairly and love others instead of hating them. Jesus reiterates the importance of love of neighbour in the parable of The Good Samaritan in Luke 10:29-37 and even extends this to love of enemies in The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:44. All of these teachings are relevant to modern life and therefore still act as sound moral advice.
- All of the moral advice in the Bible can be summed up as treating others as we would like to be treated, as stated in Matthew 7:12, 'So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, this sums up the Law and the Prophets'.
- The regard for truth and honesty can be seen as key moral advice given in the Bible. For example, Ephesians 4:25-27 teaches to, 'put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour'.
- Candidates may include a wide range of biblical examples to explain how the Bible can be seen as a source of moral advice. They may make synoptic links to theme 3.
- As well as the commandments and teachings given in the Bible, various stories in the Old and New Testaments can act as moral examples (e.g. the life and works of Jesus).

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

- (b) **‘Only the Bible provides guidance on the meaning and purpose of life.’**  
**Evaluate this view with reference to Christianity** [AO2 25]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- The Bible tells the story of God’s plan to save human beings from sin. This view, therefore, initially, provides one answer to the meaning and purpose of life for Christians. The Bible begins with a mythic account of how God created the universe, helping Christians make sense of the world around them. However, the creation of humans is tainted by sin and is passed on to all generations. But then God sends his only Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to provide salvation. This argument suggests that the Bible provides a coherent answer to the question ‘what is life all about’ and it certainly provides a definitive answer for many Christians. This guidance only comes from the Bible as a source of wisdom.
- On the other hand many Christians receive these messages from sermons and discussions with clergy in church as opposed to the Bible. There are Christians who will not have read these messages directly from the Bible but for whom the account of God’s plan for humanity has great significance, showing that it is not only the Bible that provides guidance on the meaning and purpose of life.
- Another argument could be that for many Christians, the Bible story teaches that there is more to life than food and clothing (Matthew 6:25). Hence, humanity can find no meaning in life apart from God. This understanding of the meaning of life can only be found in the Bible.
- Alternatively, many Christians believe that God gave humans free will and that we make our own choices in life as a result. Some may argue that this allows Christians to make their own meaning and purpose in life.
- The Bible contains many teachings that can be considered guidance on meaning and purpose of life, including specific commandments and less specific moral guidance. The range and depth of guidance on the meaning and purpose of life for Christians cannot be found elsewhere.
- The Bible is not intended to be a guide to life or a guide of how to get to Heaven. It was not written for the purpose of being a guide to the meaning and purpose of life and should not be used as such.
- For Catholics, the Pope is another source of wisdom and authority on the meaning and purpose of life. The Pope’s encyclicals offer more specific, modern guidance than that found in the Bible and so may have greater influence over Catholics.
- Guidance on the meaning and purpose of life is found in the writings of Christian theologians such as Karl Barth’s teachings on baptism or Aquinas’ Natural Law. Arguably these provide more specific guidance than the Bible.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- The Council of Carthage (418) confirmed baptism as forgiveness of original sin i.e. 'what they have received by birth'. Both infant and believer's baptism can function to remove original sin.
- There are many New Testament passages to support both infant baptism and believer's baptism, showing both were practised in early Christianity. Biblical support for believer's baptism: the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19) 'make disciples of all nations, baptising them ...'; Acts 2:38-39 'Repent, and be baptised every one of you ... For the promise is for you, for your children'. Acts 8:35-36, the Ethiopian eunuch is baptised; Acts 9:18, the apostle Paul is baptised; Acts 10:44-48, Peter baptises Cornelius and his household; Acts 16:14-15, Lydia and her household are baptised; Acts 19:5-6, the disciples of John the Baptist are baptised. These passages may be used by candidates to examine the case for believers' baptism.
- Baptism is a sacrament – a religious rite that imparts spiritual grace. This is true no matter whether the individual being baptised is a child or an adult as God's grace is not dependent upon anything.
- 416CE the Council of Mileum II endorsed the teaching of baptism as a sacrament and quoted Paul in Romans 5:12 referring to original sin and hence the need for its forgiveness through baptism. While this can be argued to support infant baptism, it can also show any form of baptism is important in Christianity, so may be used by candidates to argue the case for believer's baptism.
- For Barth, Baptism is a conscious response to, and acknowledgement of, faith: baptism follows belief. In adult baptism, someone is pledging adherence to the Christian faith: in infant baptism the promise is made on behalf of the infant and in believer's baptism the promise is made by the individual themselves, but in both cases, baptism is a conscious choice to accept the beliefs and teachings of the religion.
- Baptism is a sign of the new covenant with God just as circumcision was a sign of the Abrahamic Covenant. This can come at any point in someone's life.
- Baptism as a sign of forgiveness symbolises the forgiveness already achieved through Christ's sacrifice; therefore it does not matter when this practice is performed.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

- (b) **'Infant baptism is only a symbolic act.'**  
**Evaluate this view with reference to Christianity.**

**[AO2 25]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Whether it is a purely symbolic act depends on the view of the act itself. While baptism certainly does have symbolic aspects, it is not primarily a symbol. It is primarily a sacrament, a sacred rite that imparts God's grace. Many Christians would present this case and so argue that it is not a purely symbolic act.
- For many Christians, infant baptism is an important practice to remove original sin. This is a spiritual process, not a symbolic act.
- Others may argue that baptism as a practice to remove original sin is, in fact, a symbolic procedure: it is a symbol of Jesus' death and resurrection bringing about salvation and therefore freeing humans from sin but nothing in the process of baptism physically removes sin from an individual.
- Many Christians argue that baptism is integral to the act of salvation; in other words, some see it as an act of the will to receive salvation and therefore essential to salvation. This stance could be taken by those proposing infant baptism if they follow the Augustinian tradition of the 'ingrafting' of belief 'through the Church's faith communicated to them'. Therefore, infant baptism is much more than a purely symbolic act. Theologians call this an ontological change. An ontological change is a change in the nature of someone's existence, in this case a profound change in the nature of the soul. The baptised person is 'a new creation' (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- Opposing this view is the argument that baptism does not bring about salvation. Baptism is not mandatory for salvation: both the thief on the cross (Luke 23:42) and Saul (Acts 9:17-18) were saved before being baptised. Karl Barth states that baptism bears testimony to salvation but does not bring it about. If this is true, infant baptism is not necessary for salvation and is therefore a purely symbolic act.
- It could be argued that infant baptism is a purely symbolic act as it is a practice rich in symbolism and spiritual meaning for the participant, their family and the Christian community. It is a symbol of the forgiveness that is already received. It is not the means of spiritual regeneration, but merely its sign and seal. It is also symbolic of being accepted into the Christian church and the replacement of circumcision as a sign of belonging to the new covenant. The promises made on behalf of the infant symbolise the commitment to raising the child with an understanding and acceptance of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**