



GCE AS MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2018

**AS
RELIGIOUS STUDIES
COMPONENT 1 - OPTION A
AN INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIANITY
B120UA0-1**

INTRODUCTION

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2018 examination. It was finalised after detailed discussion at examiners' conferences by all the examiners involved in the assessment. The conference was held shortly after the paper was taken so that reference could be made to the full range of candidates' responses, with photocopied scripts forming the basis of discussion. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners.

It is hoped that this information will be of assistance to centres but it is recognised at the same time that, without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation.

WJEC regrets that it cannot enter into any discussion or correspondence about this marking scheme.

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

Band	Assessment Objective AO2- Part (b) questions 25 marks <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i>
5	<p style="text-align: center;">21-25 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue. • A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set. • Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
4	<p style="text-align: center;">16-20 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposeful analysis and effective evaluation of the issue. • The main issues raised by the question are identified successfully and addressed. • The views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	<p style="text-align: center;">11-15 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue. • Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed. • Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
2	<p style="text-align: center;">6-10 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue. • A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed. • A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
1	<p style="text-align: center;">1-5 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue. • An attempt has been made to identify and address the issues raised by the question set. • Little attempt to justify a view with reasoning or evidence. • Some use of basic specialist language and vocabulary.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No relevant analysis or evaluation.

GCE AS RELIGIOUS STUDIES

SUMMER 2018 MARK SCHEME

Option A: An Introduction to Christianity

MARK SCHEME

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

Section A

1. (a) Outline the arguments supporting infant baptism *and* adult baptism in Christianity. [AO1 25]

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

The arguments for infant baptism:

- The Council of Carthage (418) confirmed baptism as forgiveness of original sin i.e. 'what they have received by birth'.
- There are many New Testament passages to support it: John 3:5 'no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit'; 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'.
- In general, the apostles baptised whole 'households' (Acts 16:33; 1 Cor. 1:16). The term indicates a family as a unit, including children and infants.
- Augustine argued it was a 'tradition received from the apostles'.
- Augustine was a main proponent in supporting infant baptism: baptized infants are 'ingrafted' into the body of Christ; baptized infants are not able to profess personal faith but believe 'through the Church's faith communicated to them'; baptism is a sacrament – a religious rite that imparts spiritual grace and so infants cannot be excluded from God's grace.
- 416CE the Council of Mileum II endorsed this teaching and quoted Paul in Romans 5:12 referring to original sin and hence the need for its forgiveness through baptism.
- Zwingli argued that although it did not remove sin, by infant baptism, the divine promise is guaranteed to infants on the basis of their parents' pledge to bring them up in the Christian faith.

The arguments for adult baptism:

- Evidence from the New Testament supports adult or believer's baptism: 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.
- Often linked to receiving of the Holy Spirit.
- Adult baptism is only for people who are old enough, mature enough and therefore, responsible enough to make their own decision.
- Baptism is a conscious response to, and acknowledgement of, faith. Baptism follows belief.
- Barth's argument that baptism does not bring about human salvation, but bears testimony to salvation and is therefore a response that reflects an individual's faith.
- Barth argued that infant baptism was not an act of obedience and not administered according to proper order and that it was therefore 'clouded baptism'.

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

- (b) 'Baptism is nothing more than a symbolic act.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

This debate centres on the nature of the act of baptism itself; that is, what it 'is' and what it may 'do'. Some of the following arguments may be presented in evaluation:

- Depends on the view of the act itself. While baptism most certainly does have symbolic aspects, it is not primarily a symbol. It is primarily a sacrament, a rite that imparts God's grace. Many Christians, would present this case: both those who take the believer's baptism view and link it to receipt of the Holy Spirit (rejecting Barth's understanding); but also those who follow the Augustinian view of the imparting of God's grace.
- It must also be remembered that converts to Christianity are baptised by those who follow the teachings of infant baptism and the act in this case, as in the New Testament texts, an imparting of God's grace through the Holy Spirit. The whole point for those who practise infant baptism is that it takes away 'original sin'. Therefore, whether infant or adult, the act of baptism is not symbolic but an actual spiritual process.
- Supporting this line of argument would be the view 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, baptism is much more than symbolism. 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).
- The alternative argument would be the view that baptism is not integral to salvation. In other words, it follows belief and confirms it and does not actualise the salvatory act. 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. Baptism is therefore highly symbolic but nothing more.
- This line of argument would agree that it is, nevertheless, rich in symbolism and spiritual meaning for the participant. First, 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. It is symbolic in that some would argue that the participant demonstrates willingness to empathise with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.
- Karl Barth argument is clear, baptism does not bring about human salvation, but bears testimony to salvation.

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

2. (a) Explain how Easter is celebrated in the Eastern Orthodox church. [AO1 25]

- **Easter calendar**

Celebrated on different dates: Calendars: Western (Gregorian) and Eastern (Julian). Eastern sets the dates according to the actual, astronomical full moon;. Eastern Easter always falls after the Jewish Passover; **Lent**

Eastern begins on clean Monday and involves a week of strict fasting for Clean Week.

- **The weeks running up to Easter week**

2nd week St Gregory Palmos commemoration in the Eastern church and Veneration of the Cross in the third week. Jin the Eastern church it is an extension of the Veneration of the Cross and the fifth week the Eastern church calls Mother of God Sunday etc.

- **Holy Week**

Eastern churches have Lazarus Saturday prior to Palm Sunday and bless the palm leaves on Palm Sunday; 'Holy and Great' Monday-Saturday have specific stories (Cursing of the Fig Tree; Parable of the Ten Virgins and the anointing of Jesus at Bethany; the Mystical Supper; The Passion; and, Jesus' Burial and his Descent into Hell). Thursday is festive, remembering the institution of the eucharist; Friday is solemn with an evening Lamentation and ceremony sprinkling rose water and petals over Jesus' burial sheet (epitaphios); Saturday is also a day of strict fasting. Liturgical colours turn from black to white reflecting sorrow to joy.

- **Easter Day**

Eastern churches have Midnight Office and the epitaphios is moved to the altar, lights extinguished and at midnight resurrection of Jesus is procliamed. Candles are lit and there is a procession around the church with chanting and finishing with bell ringing. Easter Matins and Liturgy begins, paschal eggs are blessed and often an agape meal s shared. Later during the afternoon of Easter Sunday Agape Vespers are sung and extracts from John's gospel are read in many different languages. Easter week (Bright Week) begins in which there is no fasting, and the Easter greeting 'Christ is risen', and the response is: 'He is risen indeed'.

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

- (b) 'A member of the Eastern Orthodox Church would not recognise Easter celebrations in a western church.' [AO2 25]

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

- First of all, some may argue that the 'essentials' of Easter can be recognised beyond the differences e.g. solemnness of Good Friday, the meal on Thursday of Holy Week and the celebrations during the Easter Day services. For example, Easter is preceded by the forty day season of Lent. In the Western Church, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and in the Eastern Church, it begins on Clean Monday, and although there is much more emphasis on strict fasting than in the Western Church, essentially they are similar.
- The opposing view would be that these 'essentials' are actually embroidered with very different threads of ceremony and meaning that they are so very different. In addition, while they agree on the formula for setting the date of Easter, in most years Western and Eastern Orthodox churches celebrate the festival on different dates. The Eastern Church also insists that Easter should fall after the Jewish Passover.
- In support of this, the pre-Easter season of Lent includes several significant dates, but they are different in both churches. For example, in the Western Church, the Sunday which marks the halfway point between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday is traditionally known as Laetare Sunday. More recently it has become a celebration of motherhood (Mothering Sunday). The Eastern Church celebrates the Veneration of the Cross on this day. Again, the Eastern Church has a different theme for each day of Holy Week, whereas the Western Church celebrates only Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday.
- Again, during the events of celebration on Easter Day there are stark contrasts. In Western churches Easter Day is celebrated during the daytime on the whole but in the Eastern Church, however, the main Easter celebration is an all-night service including the Paschal Vigil, leading to Easter Matins, the Easter Hours and the Easter Divine Liturgy.
- An alternative perspective is that it is the preaching and fellowship that give meaning to Easter and break down any barriers caused by differences in how the acts of Christian history are remembered and presented. Both Eastern and Western Churches consider Easter to be the most important festival in the Christian calendar because it celebrates the fundamental Christian belief in the resurrection. They prepare carefully for it and celebrate it joyously and jubilantly and therefore this unites them and makes them recognisable to each other.

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

Section B

3. (a) Explain the following Atonement theories:

- (i) Christus Victor and
- (ii) The death of Jesus as a moral example.

[AO1 25]

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

- Candidates may begin with a definition of the Atonement. Atonement is the process by which men and women are reconciled with God through the death of Jesus on the cross after the separation through original sin. The New Testament presents different models of atonement: Jesus as ‘the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world’; the payment of a ransom to free a slave; a military victory. However, there is no universally agreed doctrine of atonement Christianity that gives an absolute definition of what the death of Jesus means.

Christus Victor

- Associated with the book ‘Christus Victor’ Swedish theologian Gustaf Aulén who repopularised the Ransom model. It proposes that the hostile powers of death and the devil had bound humanity and the atoning work of Christ was liberating humanity from these bonds: ‘the work of Christ is first and foremost a victory over the powers which hold mankind in bondage: sin, death, and the devil’. Atonement was therefore primarily a matter of victory of good over evil.

Moral example

- Another model of the atonement is the Moral Example model favoured by modern liberal theologians. This model proposes that Jesus died, not as an appeasement for God through punishment or to demonstrate victory of good over evil, but rather to show human beings the depth of God’s love for them. The purpose was to lead people to repentance. Thus, the atonement is not aimed at the appeasement of God’s justice, but at the moral improvement of humankind.

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

(b) 'Christian explanations of the Atonement are totally contradictory.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- On the one hand, the three images propose totally different means of salvation. The Moral Example model teaches that salvation can be achieved through personal moral effort. The Sacrificial and Penal Substitution theories teach that salvation can be achieved only through the death of Christ and our faith in him. Liberal theologians would argue the case against more conservative theologians and vice versa. To add to the confusion, there are distinct areas of focus for the exact meaning and purpose of the atonement that give very different understanding of Jesus death and resurrection.
- From this one could argue that the statement is correct and because the matter is so crucial in that it refers to the whole idea of Christian salvation. How can one have faith if the object of that faith is uncertain?
- On the other hand, the three theories all involve overcoming the problem of sin whether it be through conquering evil, atoning for evil or leading believers to repent from evil. In this way, the opposite of causing confusion, the theories actually work together to enhance understanding of the act.
- Again, even if this universal approach is not accepted, the three theories are not seen as contradictory but complementary by the Christian church as they all help to bring out different aspects of the atonement. All three may be different but part of the whole story of atonement and are accepted. All three can be justified with reference to scripture or to the history of interpretation of the Bible within Christianity.
- Indeed, supporting this view, the evangelical theologian John R.W. Stott proposed that the Moral Example model can be seen as part of the Penal Substitution model. Whereas the Penal Substitution theory focuses entirely on the death of Jesus, the Moral Example theory sees Jesus' death in the wider context of his ethical teaching. Jesus was sentenced to die because of what he taught. Thus, Moral Example and Penal Substitution are interconnected within the larger story of Jesus' incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection.
- In this way, rather than cause confusion, the theories of the atonement help to clarify, deepen and strengthen faith.

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

4. (a) Outline ways in which the Bible is used as a source of authority in Christian daily life. [AO1 25]

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

- The Bible can be read in many ways: as great poetry, as a law book or a history book, or as a basis for theological reflection. For Christians, however, the main aim of the Bible as a source of authority is practical in that it gives instruction on the meaning and purpose of life, and that it is both a guide to everyday living and a source of comfort and encouragement.
- The Bible as a religious authority is used in many ways:
 - for theology and religious instruction: beliefs about the nature of God and understanding the nature, role and life of Jesus and the role of the Holy Spirit
 - a source of belief: examining the many aspects of the Christian faith such as angels, revelation, prophecy, spiritual gifts and fruits, establishing kerygma and creed
 - as moral teaching: for example the parables of Jesus such as the Good Samaritan
 - in religious ritual: at weddings the role of 1 Corinthians 13 and Genesis 2:23-25
 - in personal devotion: such as daily readings, prayers
 - for unity of the religious community: its use in law and as for the creed
 - as spiritual edification: delivering religious sermons, hymns
- The Bible as a source of authority is used to discover the overall purpose of human life: that is, to find God; to know God; to do God's will; to serve God; to obey God; to share knowledge of God with the world; and, finally, to worship God and to give God the glory that is due.
- The Bible is a source of comfort and encouragement. Because it deals with the timeless elements of human nature, it portrays men and women with whose hopes and failures Christians in all ages can identify. It also portrays a God whose love for human beings does not change from age to age.
- The human condition is fundamentally the same today as it was in biblical times. People still struggle with the same difficulties as their forebears – temptation, sin, bereavement, poverty, conflict, the fear of death. The Bible has something to say on all these matters.

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

- (b) 'The Bible provides the best guide to the meaning and purpose of life.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- For many Christians, the Bible is not meant to be a systematic essay on the meaning and purpose of life in its entirety. However, it does tell 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.
- For example, the Bible begins with a mythic account of how God created the universe and for Christians this makes sense of the world around them. However, the creation of humans is tainted by sin and is passed on to all generations. God, however, sends his only Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. Salvation comes through faith in Jesus and in his resurrection and affirming that he is the Son of God. This argument suggests that the Bible therefore provides a coherent answer to the question 'what is life all about' and it certainly provides a definitive answer for many Christians.
- 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, because God is life. Every single person has been created in the image of God, and created for eternity. This certainly suggests that it is the best answer to the meaning and purpose of life.
- Therefore, the meaning and purpose of human life is clearly set out in the Bible for many Christians and is found in many elements of its teaching: to find God, to know him, to do his will, to serve him, to obey him and to show him to the world. Many Christians would argue that life is to worship God and to give him the glory that is due to him. This all provides an ideal explanation on the meaning and purpose of life for many Christians.
- However, there are other arguments to consider:
 - There are other Christian writings that influence how we actually understand the Bible and these may question the understanding of some key answers the Bible gives, for example, creation stories, death and the afterlife etc.
 - Some Christian theologians may argue that it presents only some answers and that of these answers only some of them are adequate.
 - There are other religious texts that claim to provide an answer to the meaning and purpose of life and also that their understanding may be the best.
 - There are also alternative ways of looking at life e.g. a scientific view and even by Christians this may seem to be 'better' or more appropriate for the 21st century.
 - A final argument could be that it provides one answer among many but whether it is the best or not is dependent not upon some eternal, universal criterion but on the world view one has.

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

5. (a) Examine the religious life of the New Testament community of believers with reference to Acts 2:42-47. [AO1 25]

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

The Specification indicates 'with reference to Acts 2: 42-47' which should be clear from the answer given although additional references can be used in support of the answer.

The Acts of the Apostles is the earliest account we have of the New Testament community of believers. The life of the early Christian community is characterised mainly by its enthusiasm under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. From the beginning, however, it demonstrates elements of an organised structure, reflected in its practices, communal life, worship and discipline. These are described in Acts 2:42-47.

- **Religious teaching**
 - ***devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship***: the New Testament community of believers had a basic organisational structure of apostles as leaders before later in Acts we see the emergence of other roles.
- **Providing worship and sacraments**
 - ***to the breaking of bread and the prayers***: the New Testament community of believers practised the sharing of the meal that remembered the last supper and here we see the early development of the Eucharist celebration although no detail is given.
 - ***praising God***: worship was a fundamental part of Christian life for the New Testament community of believers.
- **Fellowship for the community of believers**
 - ***the believers were together and had all things in common***: the New Testament community of believers had a kind of cooperative lifestyle of living together and sharing although sometimes there were difficulties e.g. Ananias and Sapphira.
 - ***every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts***: the New Testament community of believers had daily gatherings or regular gatherings for fellowship and were seen as essential for promoting and maintaining Christian faith and unity of the community.
 - ***ate together with glad and sincere hearts***: socialising was also an important feature of fellowship for the New Testament community of believers.
- **Mission, service and outreach**
 - ***sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need***: the New Testament community of believers clearly followed Jesus' teachings on the cost of being a disciple, on riches, and that wealth should be used and distributed to help those in need.
 - ***the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved***: the New Testament community of believers clearly had an evangelistic impact.
 - ***enjoying the favour of all the people***: this clearly indicates that the New Testament community of believers was well received and had respect from non-believers.

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

- (b) 'Contemporary Christian churches have very little in common with the New Testament community of believers.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

The evaluation may focus on themes as listed below and may focus on some of the following material. In addition to this, an evaluation that questions the 'ideal' and 'perfect' nature of the New Testament community of believers through inconsistencies and conflicts must also be recognised.

Religious teaching

- On the one hand and in support of the statement, the church has split into many denominations each with different religious teachings. Indeed, to add to the confusion, all contemporary Christian denominations claim that they too, like the early Christian community, follow closely the teaching of the apostles.
- On the other hand another line of argument against the statement is that despite their many differences, they all share the basic belief that Jesus is the Christ; that he performed God's work on earth, preaching, teaching and healing the sick; that he was crucified and buried, and then raised from the dead; that he was resurrected and that it is through him that people's sins are forgiven.

Worship and sacraments

- In contrast to the statement, some Christians would say that the church itself is a sacrament and certainly the Eucharist and baptism sacraments are still widely practised. However, the alternative argument is that not all practise the same sacraments and in addition to that they are often interpreted differently.

Fellowship for the community of believers

- Evidence to support the statement includes: the sharing of possessions is not compulsory in modern Christian communities; communal meals are not expected.
- However, in contrast to the statement some denominations have religious orders made up of monks or nuns who live, work and pray together and hold everything in common; some churches practise tithing, where members agree to give one tenth of their income towards the church's work.

Mission, service and outreach

- Whilst all denominations do what they can to assist the sick and the poor in the community, this is probably the most contested area. There are arguably many, many widely appreciated examples of how the church is active in the world today. It responds to natural disasters such as famine, epidemics and earthquakes and man-made crises such as wars and acts of terrorism; committed to helping refugees to resettle and rebuild lives; delivers programmes for health and child development in poor, third world countries; seeks to give vulnerable communities access to basic necessities such as clean water; maintains several initiatives to foster peace in dangerous conflict zones etc.
- However the contrasting argument is that it does not do enough in terms of poverty and also that the focus on evangelism is not as strong as that of the New Testament community of believers.

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